

Physical Manifestations of The Holy Spirit

Many in the Church, even today, still seem dismissive of physical manifestations of the presence of The Holy Spirit.

Many are of the view that in the first century of the Church, yes, there were manifestation of The Holy Spirit, but not now. "God doesn't act that way any longer," they say.

However, the Bible shows a different story, and perhaps presents physical manifestations of the presence of The Holy Spirit in ways, which many Christians have not previously appreciated.

To start with, however, let us remember who we are in Christ, or rather, who or what Christ is in us, as Christians. Second Corinthians 6:16 says of us Christians:

"For you are the temple of the living God, as God has said, 'I will dwell in them and walk among them; and I will be their God, and they shall be My people.'"

I believe this is an important starting point, for God is not external to a Christian, but both external and internal. This is why, when we received a word from God, it can and does speak to the deepest most inner parts of us.

His Words can change us permanently and instantly, for they can change us from the inside out. His Words, it could be said, echo and shake the temple which is within us. We, the walls, roof and the floor to the temple may reverberate to the words of God.

The Bible tells us we can react to The Holy Spirit of God in various ways: trembling, shaking, trances, visions, dreams, tears, and even illness and physical collapse. Personal experiences of Spirit filled prayer or healing sessions will uncover all of those manifestation, and perhaps many more.

Can these manifestations be counterfeited at a Christian church meeting? Certainly yes, and our emotions can certainly be confused with physical manifestations of The Holy Spirit. This is why we are warned in First John 4:1

"Beloved, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits to see whether they are from God, for many false prophets have gone out into the world."

Yes, we are to test the Spirit which produced the manifestations, but also first determine if the manifestation is from the flesh, or the spirit.

We are also to test the fruit of the spirit, for as Galatians 5:22-23 says "the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness,

gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law,” and by this fruit, will we be known in Christ.

In the Bible there are perhaps two broad categories of God’s physical manifestation. The first category represents spectacular and visible phenomena. Exodus 19:15-25 gives of an understanding of the manifestations which are listed above saying:

“On the morning of the third day there were thunders and lightning’s and a thick cloud on the mountain and a very loud trumpet blast, so that all the people in the camp trembled. Then Moses brought the people out of the camp to meet God, and they took their stand at the foot of the mountain.

Now Mount Sinai was wrapped in smoke because The LORD had descended on it in fire. The smoke of it went up like the smoke of a kiln, and the whole mountain trembled greatly. And as the sound of the trumpet grew louder and louder, Moses spoke, and God answered him in thunder.

The LORD came down on Mount Sinai, to the top of the mountain. And The LORD called Moses to the top of the mountain, and Moses went up.

And The LORD said to Moses, “Go down and warn the people, lest they break through to The LORD to look and many of them perish. Also let the priests who come near to The LORD consecrate themselves, lest The LORD break out against them.”

And Moses said to The LORD, “The people cannot come up to Mount Sinai, for you yourself warned us, saying, ‘Set limits around the mountain and consecrate it.’”

And The LORD said to him, “Go down, and come up bringing Aaron with you. But do not let the priests and the people break through to come up to The LORD, lest he break out against them.”

So Moses went down to the people and told them.”

We can see from this passage that the physical manifestations above, trembling, shaking, trances etc., may seen as the result of “Theopathy” [Greek for God and passion.] a religious suffering; suffering for the purpose of subduing sinful propensities, i.e. the presence of God.

Angelic appearances also cause similar responses in humans, as Matthew 28:4 says of the Roman guards who saw the Angel of The LORD who rolled back the stone of The LORD’s tomb, “And for fear of him the guards trembled and became like dead men.”

Fear descends upon mankind at hearing the audible voice of God, as Mathew 17:6-7 demonstrated saying:

“When the disciples heard this, they fell on their faces and were terrified. But Jesus came and touched them, saying, ‘Rise, and have no fear.’”

This is exactly what happened in the Old Testament as described in Exodus 20:18-20 after the Hebrews heard God Himself speak to them, and they feared Him:

“And all the people saw the thunderings, and the lightning’s, and the noise of the trumpet, and the mountain smoking. And when the people saw, they trembled, and stood afar off. And they said to Moses, You speak with us, and we will hear. But let not God speak with us, lest we die.”

Visions also are described in both the Old and New Testaments as ways of The LORD communicating with us and depending on the situation, and ours, they can bring on a dramatic reaction:

Daniel 8:27 “And I Daniel fainted, and was sick for days. Afterward I rose up, and did the king’s business. And I was amazed at the vision, but there was no understanding.”

Daniel 10:1-11 “In the third year of Cyrus king of Persia a thing was revealed to Daniel, whose name was called Belteshazzar. And the thing was true, and a great conflict. And he understood the thing, and had understanding of the vision. In those days I, Daniel, was mourning three full weeks ate no food for delight, neither came flesh nor wine in my mouth, nor did I anoint myself at all, until three whole weeks were fulfilled.

And in the twenty-fourth day of the first month, as I was by the side of the great river, which is Tigris, then I lifted up my eyes and looked, and behold, a certain man was clothed in linen, whose loins were girded with fine gold of Uphaz. His body also was like the beryl, and his face looked like lightning. And his eyes were like lamps of fire, and his arms and his feet in colour were like polished bronze, and the voice of his words like the sound of a multitude.

And I, Daniel, alone saw the vision. For the men who were with me did not see the vision; but a great quaking fell on them, so that they fled to hide themselves. Therefore I was left alone, and saw this great vision, and there remained no strength in me. For my beauty was turned within me to corruption, and I kept no strength.

Yet I heard the voice of his words. And when I heard the voice of his words, then I was in a deep sleep on my face, and my face was toward the ground. And behold, a hand touched me, which set me shaking on my knees and the palms of my hands.

And he said to me, O Daniel, a man greatly beloved, understand the words that I speak to you, and stand upright. For to you I am now sent. And when he had spoken this word to me, I stood trembling.”

Acts 10:10-23 “And he became very hungry and desired to eat. But while they made ready, an ecstasy fell on him. And he saw the heaven opened and a certain vessel like a sheet coming down to him, being bound at the four corners

and let down to the earth; in which were all the four-footed animals of the earth, and the wild beasts, and the reptiles, and the birds of the heaven. And a voice came to him, saying, Rise, Peter! Kill and eat! But Peter said, Not so, Lord, for I have never eaten anything that is common or unclean. And the voice spoke to him again the second time, What God has made clean, you do not call common.

This happened three times, and the vessel was received up again into the heaven. And while Peter doubted within himself what the vision which he had seen might be, even behold, the men who were sent from Cornelius had asked for Simon's house and stood on the porch. And they called and asked if Simon whose last name is Peter was staying there. And while Peter thought on the vision, the Spirit said to him, Behold, three men are looking for you. Therefore arise and go down and go with them without doubting, for I have sent them.

And going down to the men, those sent to him from Cornelius, Peter said, Behold, I am the one you are seeking. For what reason have you come? And they said, Cornelius the centurion, a just man and one who fears God, and one of good report among all the nation of the Jews, was warned from God by a holy angel to send for you to come to his house and to hear words from you. Then he called them in and lodged them. And on the next day Peter went away with them, and certain brothers from Joppa went with him."

We have a similar reaction to the Word of God as it was spoken in truth in the Garden of Gethsemane as they arrived to arrest Jesus. They approached Him, (John 18:3-6)

"Then Judas, having received a band and officers from the chief priests and Pharisees, came there with lanterns and torches and weapons. Jesus, knowing all things that were coming upon Him, went out and said to them, Whom do you seek? They answered Him, Jesus of Nazareth. Jesus said to them, "I AM!" And Judas who betrayed Him also stood with them. Then as soon as He had said to them, I AM, they went backward and fell to the ground."

We can see from the examples above that the recipients of God's words or visions experienced both a tangible and visible experience. Contact with the Living God, the maker of heaven and earth, leaves a permanent mark on the recipient.

But Scripture also records our physical manifestations to the works and presence of God, which we cannot see. My experience also supports this.

We manifest physical reactions to The Holy Spirit's presence, though there is no visible or tangible presence, nor are there any spiritual phenomena such as audible voices, visions, angelic appearances or theophanies.

As the writer of Psalm 119:120 records,

“My flesh trembles in fear of You; and I am afraid of Your judgements.”

The writer captures the immensity of God and our rightful attitude towards Him, that of Godly fear.

God knows He will bring out this reaction in us, as in Jeremiah 5:22 He asks

“Do you not fear me? Says Jehovah. Will you not tremble at my presence, I who have placed the sand for the boundary of the sea by a never-ending decree, so that it cannot pass it? And though they toss themselves, yet they cannot prevail; though its waves roar, yet they cannot pass over it?”

Jehovah asks, “Do you not fear Me?” When God asks a question, it is not for His lack of knowledge, but for ours. When God asks a question, it is good that we learn the answer and then live that answer, for that is His expectation of us.

In this case, it is good and fitting and proper that we fear God. Trembling, shaking and tears are typical human manifestations of fear. It is not unreasonable, therefore, that we demonstrate them before even the unseen presence of God.

Indeed, it is to be expected, for in the presence of God we cannot even stand in our fleshy and sinful bodies. Isaiah 66:2 adds to this understanding saying:

“For all those My hand has made, and all those exist, says Jehovah. But to this one I will look, to the afflicted and contrite spirit, and the one who trembles at My Word.”

Ezra 9:4 adds further to this idea adding that in addition to trembling, he was dumb, unable to speak. Again, another typical human manifestation as a result of fear:

“Then everyone who trembled at the words of the God of Israel was gathered to me, because of the sin of those who had been exiled. And I remained dumb until the evening sacrifice.”

The Prophet Ezra brought the Word of The LORD back to the Hebrews after a long absence from it and for three days the Word of The LORD was read aloud so that all may hear and know.

As the Law was read, the Word began to affect changes in the hearers as Nehemiah 8:9 says, they all began to weep:

“And Nehemiah, the governor, and Ezra the priest and scribe, and the Levites who taught the people, said to all the people, This day is holy to Jehovah your God. Do not mourn or weep. For all the people wept when they heard the words of the Law.”

Weeping was and is a reaction to and a physical manifestation of The Holy Spirit's presence. The weeping of the Hebrews was not out of an emotional manipulation or a mass hysteria, but as a direct result of the Word of God.

It brought to them the fact of their sinful nature and disobedience to God. Their leaders even sought to stop the weeping, but to no avail.

The Word of the Law spoke to Hebrew hearts and minds in such a profound way that it brought them to tears. The presence of The Holy Spirit, though unseen and intangible, can and does do the same to us today.

Weeping over our sin and our failures to keep the Word of The LORD, is as relevant today as it was for Ezra. Thousands of years have passed and the Son of God has come and lived among us, yet we are no less sinful as they were.

Indeed, one could argue the point that perhaps we have even more to weep for, than those whom Ezra served.

Weeping for sin is a good sign, for it means we are teachable and have a heart which God can use. It shows that we are sensitive to God and to the Word of The LORD.

In Acts 22:17-18 Paul says he went into a trance:

“And it happened to me, I returning to Jerusalem and praying in the temple, I became in an ecstasy. And I saw Him say to me, Hurry and go quickly out of Jerusalem, for they will not receive your testimony concerning Me.”

This trance, a tangible manifestation of Holy Spirit was to deliver Paul a message; that his life was in danger. Here, not only did The Holy Spirit save Paul's life, but in doing so, changed his ministry as we read in Acts 22:19-21

“And I said, Lord, they know that I was imprisoning and beating those who believed on You throughout the synagogues. And when the blood of your martyr Stephen was poured out, I also was standing by and consenting to his death, and holding the garments of those who killed him. And He said to me, Go, for I will send you far away to the nations.”

Christians in the presence of The Holy Spirit may also experience a condition of apparent drunkenness. Before looking at the famous Pentecost manifestations of

this type, let us first look back to the Old Testament where in First Samuel 1:12-17 we find Hannah, during prayer, exhibiting the same characteristics:

“And it happened as she continued praying before Jehovah, Eli noticed her mouth. Now Hannah spoke in her heart, only her lips moved, but her voice was not heard. And Eli thought she had become drunk. And Eli said to her, How long will you be drunken? Put away your wine from you!

And Hannah answered, No, my lord, I am a woman of a sorrowful spirit. I have neither drunk wine nor strong drink, but have poured out my soul before Jehovah.

Do not count your handmaid for a daughter of wickedness, for out of the abundance of my meditation and grief I have spoken until now.

And Eli answered and said, Go in peace, and the God of Israel grant to you your petition that you have asked of Him.”

The second Old Testament example is Saul in First Samuel 19:23-24, though here the word drunk is not specifically quoted, though the recorded actions support this assertion where he disrobed and remained that way for some time.

“And he went there to Naioth in Ramah. And the Spirit of God was on him also, and going on he went and prophesied, until he came to Naioth in Ramah. And he stripped off his clothes also, and prophesied before Samuel, even he. And he lay down disrobed all that day and all that night. Because of this they say, Is Saul also among the prophets?”

Acts 2:14-21 is perhaps the most famous scripture supporting apparent drunkenness as a physical manifestation of the presence of The Holy Spirit saying:

“But Peter, standing up with the Eleven, lifted up his voice and said to them, Men, Jews, and all who dwell at Jerusalem, let this be known to you, and listen to my words.

For these are not drunk as you suppose, for it is the third hour of the day.

But this is that which was spoken by the prophet Joel:

“And it shall be in the last days, says God, I will pour out of My Spirit upon all flesh. And your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams. And in those days I will pour out My Spirit upon My slaves and My slave women, and they shall prophesy.

And I will give wonders in the heaven above, and miracles on the earth below, blood and fire and vapour of smoke. The sun shall be turned into darkness and the moon into blood, before that great and glorious Day of The LORD. And it shall be that everyone who shall call upon the name of The LORD shall be saved.”

The final set of physical manifestations comprising the second category can be found in the deliverance of people from demonic spirits, with screams, curses, shrieks, convulsions and general noise and chaos typically being displayed.

Two portions of Scripture exemplify this:

Mark 1:23-28 “And in their synagogue was a man with an unclean spirit. And he cried out, saying, What is to us and to You, Jesus of Nazareth? Have You come to destroy us? I know You, who You are, the Holy One of God. And Jesus rebuked him, saying, Be quiet, and come out of him. And the unclean spirit, convulsing him, and crying with a loud voice, he came out of him. They all were amazed, so as to question among themselves, saying, What is this? What new doctrine is this? For He even commands the unclean spirits with authority, and they obey Him. And immediately His fame went out into all the Galilean neighborhood.”

Mark 9:14-29 “And coming to His disciples, He saw a great crowd around them, and scribes arguing with them. And immediately all the crowd, seeing Him, were greatly amazed, and they were running to Him to greet Him. And He asked the scribes, What are you discussing with them? And one of the crowd answered and said, Teacher, I have brought my son who has a dumb spirit to You. And wherever he seizes him, he dashes him. And he foams and gnashes his teeth and pines away. And I spoke to Your disciples that they should cast him out, and they could not. He answered him and said, O faithless generation, how long shall I be with you? How long shall I bear with you? Bring him to Me!

And they brought him to Him. And when he saw Him, the spirit immediately convulsed him. And he fell on the ground and wallowed, foaming. And He asked his father, How long ago has it been since this came to him? And he said, From childhood. And oftentimes it has cast him into the fire and into the waters to destroy him. But if you can do anything, have compassion on us and help us. Jesus said to him, “If you can believe, all things are possible to him who believes”. And immediately the father of the child cried out and said with tears, Lord, I believe. Help my unbelief. And seeing that a crowd is running together, Jesus rebuked the unclean spirit, saying to him, “Dumb and deaf spirit, I command you, come out of him and enter no more into him!” And the spirit cried out, throwing him into convulsions, and came out of him. And he was like one dead, so that many said, He is dead. But Jesus took him by the hand and lifted him up, and he arose. And He entering into a house, His disciples asked Him privately, Why could we not cast him out? And He said to them, “This kind can come out by nothing except by prayer and fasting.””

Reviewing the above in terms of a Christian being the Temple of God in which God resides, makes sense when we appreciate that we are not just a mind and a will. God is capable of touching our minds, body and emotions any way and any time He wishes.

This is made clear in the above Scriptures. We all react to the presence of The Holy Spirit in many ways, even when we are unable to sense His presence, and we react in many and varied ways.

As Acts 2:17 says

“And it shall be in the last days, says God, I will pour out of My Spirit upon all flesh. And your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams.”

Without doubt, we are in the last days now.

As Christians we need to aware that physical manifestations of The Holy Spirit are natural and a necessary and legitimate part of our interaction with Him.

Not only that, they are Scriptural and supported by the Bible.

“Physical Manifestations of the Holy Spirit” to the physical evidence of the presence of God. If we take the verses you used to support your title and read with discernment you realize most have absolutely nothing to do with the manifestation of the Holy Spirit. Before you get all upset about my response let me say, I only do this in good faith to “rightly divide the word of TRUTH.” In Ex.19, the physical presence of the King was lightning, thunder, fire, smoke and earthquake, or the temple shaking and curtains ripped in two when Christ died, NOT the human body shaking, vibrating, etc.

Isaiah 66, trembling, shaking and weeping exhibits a contrite human spirit, NOT the Holy Spirit. When a person sins(which is an abomination to God) and is convicted, broken and submits to God’s power is NOT the Holy Spirit manifesting, it is a human spirit broken.

John 18; When the soldiers fell, it was NOT manifesting of the Holy Spirit. The soldiers were sinners who did not know the Lord, they fell because of the FEAR of the glory of the Father upon Christ. All the “fallings” in the Bible before the King is more prostrate in nature; out of respect and fear in awe of His glory, NOT the manifestation of the Holy Spirit. People bow or prostrate in the presence of a higher power, NOT because the Holy Spirit is manifesting.

A “trance” or vision is when the spirit of a man is engaged spiritually such that they are disconnected from their flesh, NOT the Holy Spirit trying to manifest

Himself in the person. If anything, He is rather talking or showing the person something in the spirit.

Like you rightly said, demons would rather throw a person down, convulse, shake or put up a fight before leaving a possessed body. That is why we must be careful.

The state of “drunkenness” by Hannah or Acts of the apostles is a state of bodily overwhelm, exhaustion or fatigue due to spiritual travailing NOT the Holy Spirit Manifesting Himself. Just like Christ’s last hours in the garden praying or travailing.

We could go on and on and on, but in summary: God’s physical presence has been fire, wind, thunder, lightning, loud voice, still voice, water, smoke, dove, trumpet sound for all to see NOT in an individual, canal body, in ONLY one person. Paul says he will not have us being ignorant of the spiritual (1 Cor. 12), for the manifestation of the Holy Spirit is given to every man to profit withal (v.7) i.e. Wisdom, Healing, Discernment, Tongues, etc. So when a person shows wisdom not of this world, or lay hands and the sick is heal, etc they are manifesting the physical presence of the Holy One.

I leave the rest to the guidance of the Holy Spirit. And may all who read beseech the Lord for the revelation to redeem their souls.

We should not use “signs and wonders” as a litmus test for the presence of the King but as a “confirmation” of His saving grace and mercy on us. Because, He WILLS when He WANTS not by our desires.

Shalom