

# MISCONCEPTIONS ABOUT THE HOLY SPIRIT

Philip S. Hunt | Equip Conference 2025 | Workshop

## Introduction:

When I was asked to handle this topic, I set about to do some informal research. On November 4, I posted on my Facebook Page: (Copied from <https://www.facebook.com/hunt.philip>)



### Zambia & Africa Friends — I Need Your Input!

I've been invited to teach a workshop at the upcoming Equip Conference at Central Africa Baptist University on "Misconceptions About the Holy Spirit."

Before I teach, I'd love to hear from YOU!



What do you believe are the most common misconceptions about the Holy Spirit in our churches today?

Your insight will help shape this workshop and serve leaders across Africa.

Drop your thoughts in the comments or send me a message!



Let's seek truth together, for the glory of God and the strengthening of the church.

We live in an age of much confusion and misunderstanding about the person and work of the Holy Spirit. In this session, we will discuss popular misconceptions and look for the biblical answers to them.

## 1. The Holy Spirit Is an Impersonal Force or Feeling

### Misconception:

- The Spirit is viewed as wind, force, power, or energy, not a Person — **Ugen Gerson; Salim Mpambanya; Bruno Mupeta; Curtis Chirwa**
- Considered one spirit among many ("clean spirit") due to Bantu-language categories — **Tawanda Njovu**
- Spirit treated like an ancestral power that can be accessed or controlled — **Junior Mpiana**

- The Spirit can be commanded or manipulated — **Junior Mpiana**
- Confusion about His gender or identity (“she,” “it”) — **Mandy Smith**
- Viewed as less divine — “least of the Godhead” — **Lorraine Makungu**

#### **Biblical Correction:**

The Holy Spirit is a divine Person, coequal with the Father and the Son.

- Matthew 28:19
- Acts 5:3–4
- Intellect — 1 Corinthians 2:10–11
- Will — 1 Corinthians 12:11
- Emotion — Ephesians 4:30

## **2. The Spirit Must Be Invited, Summoned, or Appeased**

#### **Misconceptions:**

- The Holy Spirit must be “invited down” during worship — **Bruno Mupeta; Curtis Chirwa; Doro Njoroge; Shannon Albert; Samson Wachira**
- Loud singing, slow worship songs, or emotional atmospheres “cause Him to come” — **Shannon Albert; Curtis Chirwa; Samson Wachira**
- Spirit comes and goes depending on the mood of worship — **Bruno Mupeta; Curtis Chirwa**
- The Spirit may come on unbelievers if “invited” — **Bruno Mupeta**

#### **Biblical Correction:**

The Spirit indwells believers permanently (John 14:16; Romans 8:9–11).

## **3. The Holy Spirit Gives Us Emotional Experiences**

#### **Misconception:**

Spirit’s presence is equated with emotional highs, atmosphere, excitement, or dramatic experience.

- Goosebumps, rolling, emotional breakdowns = the Spirit — **Ugen Gerson; Salim Mpambanya; Shannon Albert**
- Loud or dramatic preaching = anointing — **Ugen Gerson**
- Hours of loud prayer or ecstatic behavior = presence of the Spirit — **Ugen Gerson; Curtis Chirwa; Shannon Albert**

Prosperity worship often manufactures “spiritual atmosphere” and emotional frenzy as proof of the Spirit — confusing **stimulation for sanctification**.

### **Biblical Correction:**

The Spirit’s main ministry is to:

- Glorify Christ — John 16:13–14
- Convict of sin — John 16:8
- Produce Christlike fruit — Galatians 5:22–23

Emotion may accompany His work, but emotion is not evidence of the Spirit.

## **4. The Spirit Speaks Apart from or Beyond Scripture**

### **Misconception:**

Some claim new revelation equal to Scripture or personal words from God that override the Bible.

- Prophets deliver “fresh revelation” more authoritative than Scripture — **Junior Mpiana**
- “The letter kills...” used to dismiss reading Scripture — **Junior Mpiana**
- Believers told to ignore the Bible and only listen to prophets — **Junior Mpiana**

Prosperity-prophetic movements amplify this error — claiming **secret revelations** and private messages unavailable to believers through the Word.

Examples in Africa:

- T.B. Joshua — failed “prophecies”
- Shepherd Bushiri — “God showed me” accident predictions
- Emmanuel Makandiwa — lawsuits tied to prophetic claims

### **T. B. Joshua’s “prophecies” presented as direct revelations**

**What happened:** The late televangelist T. B. Joshua regularly issued “prophecies” to his global audience, framing them as revelations from God (e.g., predicting the winner of the 2016 U.S. election and later redefining the claim after it failed). These were presented not as ordinary pastoral counsel but as privileged insight available through his unique prophetic anointing.<sup>1</sup>

### **South Africa/Malawi — Shepherd Bushiri (ECG)**

**Claimed revelation:** Reported specific “prophecies,” e.g., foretelling a Mzuzu University bus crash, presented as insight God “showed” him. Bushiri claims this guidance as

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<sup>1</sup> [https://www.cfr.org/blog/prophecy-nigerias-tb-joshua?utm\\_source=chatgpt.com](https://www.cfr.org/blog/prophecy-nigerias-tb-joshua?utm_source=chatgpt.com) "The Prophecy of Nigeria's TB Joshua"

privileged revelation accessible via his special anointing, not the public Word properly interpreted.<sup>2</sup>

### **Zimbabwe — Emmanuel Makandiwa (UFIC)**

**Claimed revelation:** High-profile “prophecies” led to a multimillion-dollar civil suit by former congregants alleging losses after relying on his prophetic words. Congregants treated the leader’s “prophetic” revelations as uniquely authoritative guidance beyond Scripture.<sup>3</sup>

#### **Biblical Correction:**

The Spirit **illuminates Scripture**; He does not add to it.

- 2 Peter 1:20–21
- 2 Timothy 3:16–17
- John 16:13
- John 14:26
- Jude 3
- 2 Timothy 3:16–17

The canon is closed, and the Spirit’s voice is heard through Scripture rightly understood.

## **5. The Spirit’s Presence Is Proven by Signs, Miracles, or Tongues**

#### **Misconception:**

Charismatic extremes and prosperity ministries teach that miracles, tongues, or power displays prove the Spirit’s fullness. Miracle rallies, staged healings, and dramatic manifestations are used as supposed validations of spiritual anointing.

- Tongues are mandatory evidence of salvation or having the Spirit — **Emmanuel Kampompe; Salim Mpambanya; Bruno Mupeta; Curtis Chirwa; Shannon Albert; Junior Mpiana**
- Some have “special miracle powers” through prophets — **Junior Mpiana**
- Olive oil, water, stickers, and pens carry the Spirit — **Hon Kapui; Junior Mpiana**
- Prophets or “daddies” impart the Spirit through touch — **Junior Mpiana**

#### **Biblical Correction:**

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<sup>2</sup> [https://www.news24.com/citypress/news/shepherd-bushiri-malawians-say-they-saw-through-the-prophet-of-profit-20190211?utm\\_source=chatgpt.com](https://www.news24.com/citypress/news/shepherd-bushiri-malawians-say-they-saw-through-the-prophet-of-profit-20190211?utm_source=chatgpt.com) "Shepherd Bushiri: Malawians say they saw through the ..."

<sup>3</sup> [https://www.newzimbabwe.com/judgement-reserved-in-65-million-makandiwa-false-prophecy-suit/?utm\\_source=chatgpt.com](https://www.newzimbabwe.com/judgement-reserved-in-65-million-makandiwa-false-prophecy-suit/?utm_source=chatgpt.com) "Judgement reserved in \$6,5 million Makandiwa 'false ..."

Fruit of the Spirit — not miraculous gifts — is the true measure of spiritual maturity.

- Galatians 5:22–23
- 1 Corinthians 12:7–11

The Spirit produces Christlikeness, not theatrics.

## 6. The Spirit's Work Is Optional or Secondary

### Misconception:

Some evangelicals react to excess by neglecting the Spirit. Some are so fearful of going to an unbiblical extreme with emotionalism or the miraculous that they, in practice, deny the work of the Holy Spirit.

- Some believers downplay the Spirit because of charismatic abuses — **Curtis Chirwa** (in reaction)
- Some deny the Spirit works in prophecy or gifts today (From the viewpoint that what Paul describes as “sign” gifts are still active) — **Noah Kamutadi**

Prosperity teaching swings opposite — minimizing Scripture and elevating “Spirit-power” and experience over sound doctrine.

### Biblical Correction:

All Christian life depends on the Spirit:

- Regeneration — John 3:5–8
- Sanctification — 2 Thessalonians 2:13
- Prayer — Romans 8:26
- Mission — Acts 1:8

Christian living in the flesh is impossible — and so is Spirit-life without the Word.

## 7. The Indwelling of the Spirit Is a Repeated Event

### Misconception:

That the Holy Spirit can be lost, and therefore, we need to call on the Holy Spirit to indwell us afresh.

- Spirit baptism is a separate, post-conversion experience — **Emmanuel Kampompe; Junior Mpiana**
- Spirit baptism must be felt (physical sensations) — **Emmanuel Kampompe**
- Believers need altar calls to “receive the Spirit” again — **Mandy Smith's** reference

- Walking in the Spirit means He is outside of you — **Emmanuel Kampompe**

Prosperity movements reinforce a spiritual hierarchy where “anointed leaders” possess a higher level of the Spirit and others must depend on them to access God’s power.

#### **Biblical Correction:**

All believers receive the Spirit at conversion and must be continually filled with the Spirit.

- Spirit baptism — 1 Corinthians 12:13
- Spirit filling — Ephesians 5:18

There is no Spirit-elite class in the Christian life.

## **8. The Spirit’s Work Is Independent of the Word**

#### **Misconception:**

Some contrast “Spirit-led” ministry with careful study and sound doctrine.

- “Spirit-led ministry” is free from structure or Scripture — **Junior Mpiana; Curtis Chirwa**
- Treating spontaneity as more spiritual than sound doctrine — **Junior Mpiana**

Prosperity teachings often claim that too much scripture “quenches the Spirit,” elevating visions and impressions above the Bible.

#### **Biblical Correction:**

The Spirit never contradicts the Word He inspired

- 2 Peter 1:21
- John 6:63
- Ephesians 6:17

The Spirit does not bypass Scripture - He illuminates Scripture.

## **9. The Holy Spirit Can Be Monetized or Imparted for a Fee**

#### **Misconception:**

- Bigger financial seeds = greater anointing — **Ugen Gerson**
- Olive oil or objects sold as channels of the Spirit — **Junior Mpiana; Hon Kapui**
- Spirit’s power can be transferred through prophets for money — **Junior Mpiana**

#### **Biblical Correction:**

- Acts 8:18–24 - The Spirit cannot be purchased

## 10.The Spirit Leaves a Believer When They Sin

### **Misconception:**

- Belief that the Spirit can leave Christians who sin — **Noah Kamutadi**
- Confusion between Old Covenant and New Covenant ministry — **Curtis Chirwa**

### **Biblical Correction:**

- Ephesians 1:13-14 - Believers are sealed by the Spirit.
- John 14:16 - Jesus promised the Spirit would remain forever.

## **Summary Principle**

The Holy Spirit is the divine Person who indwells believers to glorify Christ through the Word, producing holiness, conviction, truth, and power for obedience and mission.

He does not serve human ambition, emotional manipulation, or prophetic elitism — He exalts Christ and sanctifies His people.