

Power in the Holy Spirit

1. THE WORK OF THE HOLY SPIRIT



Introduction to the Holy Spirit

Just who is the Holy Spirit? For many the Holy Spirit is a New Testament revelation. However, the Holy Spirit's presence is from the first chapter of Genesis to the last chapter of Revelation.

The Holy Spirit is not new to the pages of Scripture; He plays a vital role in God's plan of redemption, from creation to eternity. In Genesis 1:2, the Spirit of God, the Holy Spirit, hovered over the formless void of creation. In the last chapter of Revelation, the Holy Spirit invites humanity to partake in God's redemption (Revelation 22:17)

The Holy Spirit, along with the Son and Father are co-equal, or One God in Three Persons, sharing a single Divine essence or being. The term coined to describe this relationship is *Trinity*, although the word Trinity is not in the Bible, the term best describes the nature of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. One God, revealed in three persons.

As the Christian faith spread throughout out the Roman and pagan worlds, the doctrine of the Holy Spirit came into question by some. They claimed the Holy Spirit was just the *influence of God* and not a person. One of the more vocal opponents was Arius, who taught the Holy Spirit was only the "*exerted energy of God*" realized in a created world, his view was rejected at the Council of Nicea in A.D. 325¹. The church at the Council of Nicea, proclaimed the following in response, in the Nicene Creed.

And I believe in the Holy Ghost, the Lord and Giver of Life; who proceeds from the Father and the Son; who with the Father and the Son together is worshipped and glorified; who spoke by the prophets.²

Controversies and confusion regarding the nature, work and person of the Holy Spirit continue to this very day.

The name of the Holy Spirit

We see the active work of the Holy Spirit in the Old Testament, the Hebrew word for Spirit is רוּחַ *Ruwach* meaning wind or breath. The wind like the Spirit of God, is an unseen and active in the world. In the Old Testament, He is referred to as the *Spirit of God*, or the *Spirit of the Lord*, *My Spirit* or just the *Holy Spirit* (Psalm 51:11, Isaiah 63:10,11).

In the New Testament, the Greek word for Spirit is πνεῦμα *Pneuma*, which like the Hebrew is derived from the meaning of wind or breath. The Holy Spirit is also called to as the *Comforter* or *Helper*, translated from the Greek word, παρακλητος *Parakletos*, meaning one who comes alongside to plead the case before the judge (John 14:16,26;15:26). He is also called the Spirit of Jesus (Phil. 1:19).

¹ The Holy Spirit, John F. Walvoord, Pg. 5, Zondervan 1954

² The Nicene Creed

Who is the Holy Spirit?

1. The Holy Spirit is God

Both Old and New Testaments testify to the divinity of the Holy Spirit, that He is not merely a force of God, but God Himself. A sampling of the many scriptures illustrates this point.

Old Testament

In the Old Testament times, the Spirit of God was active and selectively filled people, to accomplish the task. God's Holy Spirit was involved in the creation of the universe; He gave prophetic utterances to the prophets and "filled" the Lord's servants to accomplish the task at hand (Exodus 28:3, 31:3). Only through the Spirit of the Lord could Samson kill the charging Lion, the Spirit gave him this ability, empowering him, for God's glory.

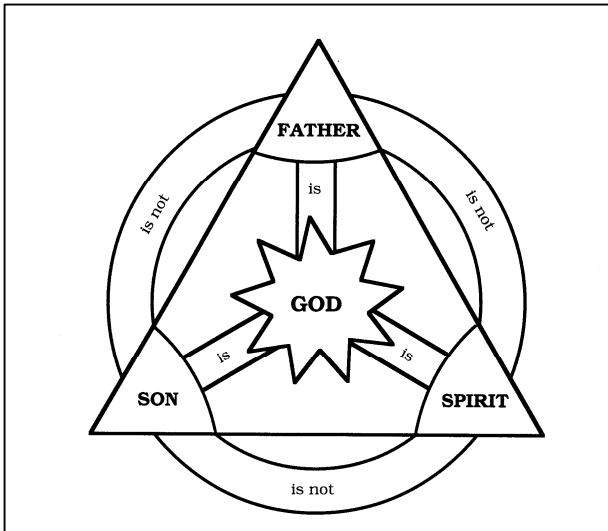
2 The earth was without form, and void; and darkness was on the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God was hovering over the face of the waters. Genesis 1:2

5 So Samson went down to Timnah with his father and mother, and came to the vineyards of Timnah. Now to his surprise, a young lion came roaring against him.

6 And the Spirit of the Lord came mightily upon him, and he tore the lion apart as one would have torn apart a young goat, though he had nothing in his hand. But he did not tell his father or his mother what he had done. Judges 14:5-6

6 So he answered and said to me: "This is the word of the Lord to Zerubbabel: 'Not by might nor by power, but by My Spirit,' Says the Lord of hosts. Zechariah 4:6.

In Zechariah, God's Spirit, is called My Spirit, demonstrating the Holy Spirit is the Lord Himself.



New Testament

In the New Testament, the Holy Spirit, the Spirit of God, knows all things and dwells in those who believe.

10 But God has revealed them to us through His Spirit. For the Spirit searches all things, yes, the deep things of God.

11 For what man knows the things of a man except the spirit of the man which is in him? Even so no one knows the things of God except the Spirit of God. I Corinthians 2:10-11

The Holy Spirit dwelling in the Believer causes our very body to become the Temple of God, since God the Holy Spirit is dwelling there.

16 Do you not know that you are the temple of God and that the Spirit of God dwells in you? I Corinthians 3:16

2. The Holy Spirit is a Person

As the Bible makes a distinction between the Father and the Son, both being distinct "persons", the Holy Spirit is also a distinct person. One God, three person, co-equal of one nature and essence, this is the nature of the Trinity. The Holy Spirit dwells in the believer, perfecting us for the day of Redemption.

The attributes given to the Spirit can only be given to a person, not an inanimate force. For example, the Holy Spirit grieves, searches, talks and teaches.

- He grieves with our actions and language. (Also Hebrew 10:29)

30 And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, by whom you were sealed for the day of redemption
Ephesians 4:30

- He intercedes for us with groaning, prompting us to pray, (Romans 8:26)
- He searches our hearts (Romans 8:27)
- He talks to us (Acts 13:2, 16:6-7, Revelation 2:7)
- He teaches all things (John 14:26)
- He reminds us of scripture (John 14:26)

3. The Holy Spirit is distinct from the Son and Father

The ministry of the Holy Spirit is distinct from the Father and the Son, and yet unified in purpose and plan. These distinctions are clear in the Gospel of John, the Holy Spirit, proceeds from the Father, sent by Jesus.

25 "These things I have spoken to you while being present with you.

26 "But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My name, He will teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all things that I said to you. John 14:25-26

26 "But when the Helper comes, whom I shall send to you from the Father, the Spirit of truth who proceeds from the Father, He will testify of Me. John 15:26

The Holy Spirit also has a mind, (Romans 8:27, I Cor. 2:10-11, 12:11). The Holy Spirit executes God's will in our life, sent from the Father, through the redemption of the Son.

The work of the Holy Spirit



The Holy Spirit was in the beginning, He was involved in the creation, and He is involved in humanities' redemption, salvation, transformation and glorification. When we understand the role of the Holy Spirit in redemption, we are enabled to plug into the vast power of God's Holy Spirit.

Robert McQuilkin has categorized the work or activities of the Holy Spirit, to ten activities, seven of which focus inward, and three of which are focus outward.³ The *inward activities* of the Holy Spirit, transform fallen humanity, allowing them to go forward and accomplish the *outward activities* of the Spirit in a fallen world.

Understanding the dynamics of the Holy Spirit and the mechanics of His relationship with the believer, could be illustrated by comparing two sailors. One sailor knows how the oceans and winds operate in relation to his boat, allowing him to sail the waters, while a second sailor ignorant of the winds and sailing mechanics can find himself destroyed by any unexpected storm.

We in many ways are sailors in the ocean of life, though we are saved when we know Christ, there is still a method to living a successful Christian walk, as opposed to living without a method.

Jesus could calm the storms, because He was the author of creation (John 1:1-3). Through God's Spirit, we have the power of Christ, dwelling in us.

God operates according to His Word; He has given us His word, that we may know Him. He wants us, to use His word that we might have His light in this dark world, and become His representatives to the lost and dying.

If we strive to understand the Holy Spirit, and how God's Spirit functions, we can become master sailors in the sea of life, powered by wind of God's Spirit, rather than our own power and strength. Many Christians try to sail the ocean of life in their own strength and power, they miss the dynamic power of God Spirit, which is within every saved person.

The Activities of the Spirit

³ Life in the Spirit, Robertson McQuilkin, 2000 Broadman & Holman Publishers, Nashville, Tennessee,

1. Creating

The Spirit of God was with Father and the Son at the creation of the Universe, in Genesis 1:2, "the Spirit of God was hovering over the face of the waters". Verse 26, God says, "Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness;". We are in the image of God, we have the characteristics of God, we create, we love, we have anger and we become jealous. God modeled us after Himself (Genesis 9:6).

When Adam and Eve fell, all mankind fell, though we were made in God's image, our nature had become fallen. Darkness came upon all the descendents of humanity, God however promised the eventual redemption of humanity through the seed of the woman (Genesis 3:15-17), the Messiah.

The fallen nature of humanity is demonstrated before and after the flood, before the flood every thought of man was continually violent (Genesis 6:13), and after the flood, the descendents of humanity were corrupted again. God's image, man is at conflict with God's Spirit (Genesis 6:3) For this reason, God scattered humanity after the tower of Babel, throughout the earth. Our iniquities separated us from God, causing a separation between humanity and the Creator, without God man is completely lost.

God however put a plan of redemption in place, which involved the revealing work of God's Holy Spirit, who through prophets, proclaimed God's salvation to the nations.

2. Revealing

Following the fall, our ability to know and understand God, let alone ourselves was damaged and corrupt. Apart from God, we could not even know who we are, or where we came from. This "blindness" is demonstrated by the thousands of different theories and religions, which have developed over the millennia. How did we get here? Where are we going? Both science and religion attempt to find the answers to these questions. Did we come from nothing? Were we created by the Sun? Are we animals? The questions go on and on.

Only through God's revelation of Himself, could we ever know who we are. Isaiah paints the picture of our lost condition, like blind men we grope along the walls. We are lost and without hope.

9 Therefore justice is far from us, Nor does righteousness overtake us; We look for light, but there is darkness! For brightness, but we walk in blackness! 10 We grope for the wall like the blind, And we grope as if we had no eyes; We stumble at noonday as at twilight; We are as dead men in desolate places.

Isaiah 59:9-10

God revealed Himself to us through His Spirit, who spoke through the prophets, Moses through the Spirit of God revealed God's will to Israel (Numbers 11:17), the people through whom God would work Redemption for all humanity.

21 for prophecy never came by the will of man, but holy men of God spoke as they were moved by the Holy Spirit.

2 Peter 1:21

Without being aware of our condition, our need for redemption, and the provision for salvation, we would remain in the lost state. Just having the word of God is not enough, we are still blind without the Holy Spirit's light. The Holy Spirit leads a lost person to redemption, the Holy Spirit reveals the light, and leads us to it, so we can understand the Word.

3. Redeeming

Before we can be redeemed, we need to know we need redemption. The problem for many, who rely on their own works, is they have a false sense of security. They don't see their need of redemption, as far as they are concerned, they are not lost.

The Pharisees illustrate this point, being lost and not knowing it, since they relied on their own works and self-righteousness, they saw no need of redemption. Contrast this to the tax collectors and harlots; they knew they were lost, because their works did not blind them.

31 "Which of the two did the will of his father?" They said to Him, "The first." Jesus said to them, "Assuredly, I say to you that tax collectors and harlots enter the kingdom of God before you.

32 "For John came to you in the way of righteousness, and you did not believe him; but tax collectors and harlots believed him; and when you saw it, you did not afterward relent and believe him.

Matthew 21:31-32

The Holy Spirit has a two-fold part in redemption, first the Holy Spirit *convicts us of sin*, then the Holy Spirit leads us to *repentance of sins*. We can't repent if we don't think we need repenting. In the same vain, we limit the power of the Holy Spirit in our lives, once we rely on our own righteousness.

Therefore when we rely on God's righteousness and mercy, we are led to redemption, this occurs when the Holy Spirit dwells in us.

4. Indwelling

Once we realize we are lost, and need redemption, the Holy Spirit leads us to repentance, and salvation. Then the Holy Spirit takes up residence in our bodies, because we now have the righteousness of Christ. We are "Born Again" of the Spirit (John 3:3,6,8), our bodies are now the Temple of God, because God's Holy Spirit dwells in us (I Cor. 3:17).

Now with God dwelling inside our earthly bodies, we have the power of the Holy Spirit, we no longer need to rely on our own power. We can now have victory over the flesh, because of the Holy Spirit dwelling in us.

8 So then, those who are in the flesh cannot please God.

9 But you are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if indeed the Spirit of God dwells in you. Now if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he is not His. Romans 8:8-9

Without the Holy Spirit dwelling in us, we are outside of Christ, we do not have His redemption, we have only our works. With the Spirit, God gives us the ability to have our lives transformed.

5. Transforming

When the Holy Spirit dwells in us, why are there different results with different people? After all isn't God's Spirit one? How can some people have remarkable transformations, while others struggle? For one, God does not force Himself on us, he requires us to respond with obedience, we need to yield ourselves to His Spirit. Without our yielding, we get in the way of the Spirit, we prevent God's Spirit to work in our life.

18 But we all, with unveiled face, beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory, just as by the Spirit of the Lord. 2 Cor. 3:18

Our goal is to reflect Christ, we can only accomplish this when we yield to the transforming power of the Holy Spirit.

6. Filling

The result of the transformed life, which is yielded to the Holy Spirit is a "Spirit filled" life. We have the choice to live a transformed life, filled by the Spirit or a life spiritual stagnation. God gives us the choice to yield to His Spirit or our spirit.

18 But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under the law.

22 But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, 23 gentleness, self-control. Against such there is no law.

24 And those who are Christ's have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires. Ephesians 5:18,22-24

When we are led by the Spirit, our circumstances do not matter, the fruit of the Spirit is manifest in our lives. For example, Paul in Acts chapter 16, was beaten and put in prison, you might think Paul would feel sorry for himself, and ask God how could He allow this to happen. Paul on the contrary is rejoicing in the prison, before he is set free.

23 And when they had laid many stripes on them, they threw them into prison, commanding the jailer to keep them securely.

24 Having received such a charge, he put them into the inner prison and fastened their feet in the stocks.

25 But at midnight Paul and Silas were praying and singing hymns to God, and the prisoners were listening to them. Acts 16:23-25

The other prisoners listened and the jailer was saved, because the Spirit led Paul.

7. Overcoming

So if we are filled with Spirit, why do we still struggle? We are being perfected, not that we are perfect. We are in the process of transformation, day to day into the image of the glory of the Lord (2 Cor. 3:1). Those times we sin, because of anger, lust, pride, covetousness, hate, etc. etc., are times we choose to not yield to the Holy Spirit.

The Spirit gives us the ability to conquer the giants of sin in our life, just like Israel entering the Promised Land, ten spies saw the giants in the land and feared them, two spies, Caleb and Joshua saw the same giants, but knew the Lord was able. They walked in faith, and they alone from all those who left Egypt, 20-years and older were allowed to enter the Promised Land (Numbers 14:29-30). We are at war with the flesh, we have the choice yield to the Flesh or the Spirit.

17 For the flesh lusts against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; and these are contrary to one another, so that you do not do the things that you wish.

18 But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under the law.

19 Now the works of the flesh are evident, which are: adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lewdness,

20 idolatry, sorcery, hatred, contentions, jealousies, outbursts of wrath, selfish ambitions, dissensions, heresies,

21 envy, murders, drunkenness, revelries, and the like; of which I tell you beforehand, just as I also told you in time past, that those who practice such things will not inherit the kingdom of God.

Galatians 5:17-21

After forty-years of wondering in wilderness, Israel was allowed to enter the Promised Land, led by Joshua. After defeating the city of Jericho, Israel was defeated at Ai, why? Because the disobedience of one man, Achan who willfully disobeyed God's command Israel could not stand. Joshua mourned the defeat. God however, told Joshua to get up and deal with the sin committed by Israel. In the same way, like Joshua, the Holy Spirit gives us the ability to find our sins, and remove them. We cannot just mourn our sin, we need to act, we have the power. (Joshua 7)

Through prayer, and spiritual weapons, we have the power of the Spirit to overcome those areas in our life, which prevent us from "Fullness" of God's Spirit. By developing a spiritual "Battle Plan" we can overcome the strongholds in our life, through the power of the Holy Spirit.

Outward Focus of the Spirit

Since we reflect the glory of the Lord, we are being made into His image, the Holy Spirit gives us the ability to reach out, to the lost world. Jesus came from Heaven to earth to save the lost, like Christ, we are to reach the lost and hurting of this world. The Holy Spirit will give us the power to accomplish the Lord's work, beyond our abilities, if we yield to His power.

8. Gifting

We are all unique individual souls, each one us has a purpose and a part of God's eternal plan. When we come to Christ, the Holy Spirit is the down payment or guarantee of our Redemption (Eph. 1:14). The Holy Spirit also equips the believer, giving each of us our own gifts, so we can accomplish the Lord's work.

3 Therefore I make known to you that no one speaking by the Spirit of God calls Jesus accursed, and no one can say that Jesus is Lord except by the Holy Spirit.

4 There are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit.

5 There are differences of ministries, but the same Lord.

I Corinthians 12:3-5

The power and the gifts of the Holy Spirit, allow to accomplish more then we would ever be able in the flesh. While the world looks at titles and pedigree, the Spirit looks at the heart, searching our real intents. When we are sincere, and pure before the Lord, we can walk in the power of the Lord.

9. Sending

Before Jesus was taken into Heaven, he told His disciples to wait in Jerusalem until they receive the Holy Spirit. What would the Holy Spirit allow them to do? Jesus said they would have power. Power for

what? The Holy Spirit would give them power to "witness" about Jesus. Jesus is the focus of not only the New Testament, but the Old as well.

8 "But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be witnesses to Me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth." Acts 1:8

After we come to Christ, we have power, because God's Holy Spirit is dwelling in us. God empowers us to take the Gospel (Good News) of Jesus to the ends of the world. All we need to do is yield to the power of the Holy Spirit.

We are all commissioned to deliver the Good News, we are in fact, commanded. The closer we are to the image of Christ, through the transforming power of the Spirit, the more clear the command is. The Spirit searches our hearts, and makes intercession according to the will of God (Romans 8:27), now the will of God is for us to reach the lost.

19 "Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit,

20 "teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age." Amen. Matthew 28:19-20

The Holy Spirit gives us the power to accomplish, His will.

10. Glorifying

We are in the process of transformation, we are not there yet, the Holy Spirit is the guarantee of the redemption to come (Eph. 1:14). We will one day be perfect and glorified in the image of Christ, restored from our fallen state. In the book of Revelation, we see the completed work of the Holy Spirit, when the New Jerusalem, the eternal home of the saved descends from the New Heaven and New Earth.

1 Now I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away. Also there was no more sea.

2 Then I, John, saw the holy city, New Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband.

3 And I heard a loud voice from heaven saying, "Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and He will dwell with them, and they shall be His people. God Himself will be with them and be their God.

4 "And God will wipe away every tear from their eyes; there shall be no more death, nor sorrow, nor crying. There shall be no more pain, for the former things have passed away."

5 Then He who sat on the throne said, "Behold, I make all things new." And He said to me, "Write, for these words are true and faithful."

6 And He said to me, "It is done! I am the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End. I will give of the fountain of the water of life freely to him who thirsts.

7 "He who overcomes shall inherit all things, and I will be his God and he shall be My son.

Revelation 21:1-7

For the rest of eternity, we will enjoy the presence and blessing of God, today, we are only a shadow of what we will be. Through the power of the Holy Spirit, we can choose to have a victorious Christian life, looking forward to the day of our redemption. We have God's promise. Our fellowship lost at the fall will be restored.