

Power in the Holy Spirit

2. MADE IN THE IMAGE OF GOD

The Holy Spirit and Creation



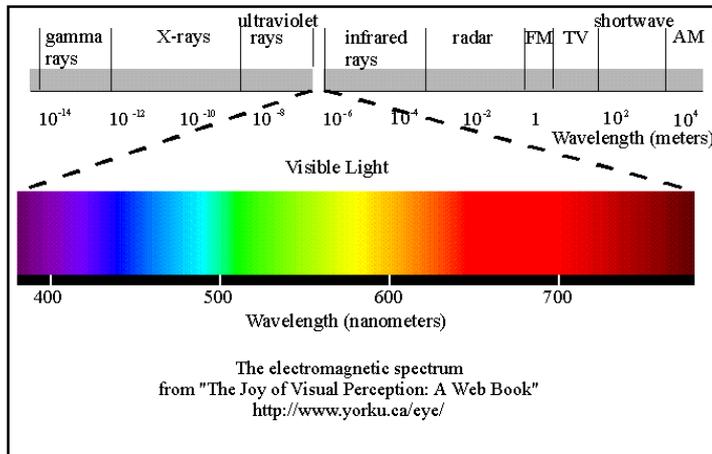
“the Spirit of God was hovering over the face of the waters” Genesis 1:2

The natural and spiritual realms

When we look around us, it is very easy to take for granted a created and material universe. Anybody who contemplates the existence of God, even the atheists, must ask himself or herself, where did the material universe come from? The material world is temporary and physical, while the spiritual world is eternal and invisible to the material. In the beginning, when God created the universe, the Spirit of God was present, over the formless matter of the physical world (Genesis 1:2). The physical world, according to scripture, derives its being from the invisible spiritual realms of God presence (Hebrews 11:3).

The concept of a spiritual realm is denied by the philosophy of *Naturalism*, which is the basis of today's science. Encyclopedia Britannica defines Naturalism as,

a theory that relates scientific method to philosophy by affirming that all beings and events in the universe (whatever their inherent character may be) are natural. Consequently, all knowledge of the universe falls within the pale of scientific investigation.¹



For those focused on a physical and material world, the concept of spiritual world is alien. However, even the visual and physical world, which we comprehend, is only partially visible, limited by the capacity our senses, our eyes, only see a portion of the electromagnetic spectrum. For example, we cannot see ultraviolet light, infrared light or even radio waves, yet they all exist in the physical world. Though we can detect them through equipment, our physical senses *design* does not comprehend them.

In the same way, we cannot comprehend aspects of the physical world; we are not able to comprehend the spiritual world. The spiritual realms are alien to the physical and carnal (Hosea 9:7).

14 But the natural man does not receive the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him; nor can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned. I Corinthians 2:14

Why then is this physical world, so alien to the spiritual realms? Did something go wrong?

The Holy Spirit in Creation

The role of the Holy Spirit is first seen in Genesis 1:2, where the *Spirit of God* hovers over the vast formless creation of matter in the universe.

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

¹ Encyclopedia Britannica 2004, Naturalism

The Spirit of God gave vital life to the vast creation, the term waters, signifies the vast expanse of creation, illustrated by the boundless expanse of the “waters”.

6 By the word of the Lord the heavens were made, And all the host of them by the breath of His mouth.
Psalm 33:6

In Psalm 33:6, the word used for breath is *ruwach*, also translated spirit. Here we see the dynamic between the *Word of the Lord* (Jesus) and the *Spirit* in the creation. John 1:1-3, says he, Jesus (the Word), made all things. Here the Spirit and the Word are unified in creation.

30 You send forth Your Spirit, they are created; And You renew the face of the earth.
Psalm 104:30

The Spirit, whose omniscience (all present) and omnipotence (all-powerful) maintains life and order in the universe. This point is further made in Isaiah 40:12-14, where His eternal nature is affirmed.

12 Who has measured the waters in the hollow of His hand, Measured heaven with a span And calculated the dust of the earth in a measure? Weighed the mountains in scales And the hills in a balance?

13 Who has directed the Spirit of the Lord, Or as His counselor has taught Him?

14 With whom did He take counsel, and who instructed Him, And taught Him in the path of justice? Who taught Him knowledge, And showed Him the way of understanding?
Isaiah 40:12-14

At the incarnation of the of *The Son*, the Holy Spirit formed His earthly body, again demonstrating the role of the Spirit in creation.

20 But while he thought about these things, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream, saying, "Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take to you Mary your wife, for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Spirit. Matthew 1:20



Made in the Image of God

Who are we? Where did we come from? Naturalist philosophy and today's current science tells us we evolved. From the explosion of matter at the “*Big Bang*”, matter came into existence from nothing². Then formed by “chance” into our Galaxy, then into a solar system and then into our planet. This paved the way for our existence, all by random chance when just the right chemicals formed, linked up, eventually causing the first cell, our original ancestor.

The Bible says, not so! We were formed in the image of the Creator of the Universe. We are in His image, not the image of random life, the result of accidental mutations.

We resemble God, because we are in His image, we are models of God, with Adam being the first model. Adam is called a “Son of God” (Luke 3:38), because He, unlike the rest of us, was formed by God directly from the dust, molded in God's image. Does this mean we resemble God physically, spiritually or both?

First, we can clearly, see humanity is different from the animal world, though we have bones, flesh, eyes and hair, like the animal world, our nature separates us. God like a master builder, might have used similar materials construct humans and animals, we however are made in His image, after His likeness resemble the creator.

Man unlike animals, can imagine and then build to fulfill his vision. We have the ability to create our vision, like our Creator. We love, hate and are jealous, emotions used to describe God.

² The theory of the Big Bang is that at one point in time past, matter came into existence from nothing, since clearly demonstrates a time when the universe as we now know did not exist and had a beginning. Therefore, when we trace the beginning, or the “First Cause” we end up in a quandary, an intelligent designer was the cause, or everything came from nothing.

We have an eternal spirit (Revelation 21:4,14:11), which will spend an eternity in heaven or hell. Our Creator is also eternal, because we are made in his image we are eternal. We have the ability to choose good from evil because we have freewill like our Creator.

In regards to our physical image, God is spirit, yet in the Bible God has taken on human form, after all we are told Adam heard God walking in the garden (Genesis 3:8). God appeared in human form throughout the Bible, (Genesis 18:1-3,22; 32:24-30, Joshua 5:13-14, Ezekiel 1:26). Angels, created before man, are also described in human form, not blobs of ethereal matter (Daniel 9:21; 10:16).

Finally, Jesus took on human flesh, not just form at the incarnation, since he was the source of creation, it could actually be said, we were made in *His image* and likeness. So an argument could be made, that when we were made in the image of God, it was not just a "spiritual image" but also a physical. We were made to have fellowship with our creator, because we were made like him.

There are five steps in our spiritual journey that we need to be aware once we begin our journey in the Spirit.

1. We were designed for God

In Genesis, at Adam and Eve's creation, God walked in the Garden of Eden with them, God had a relationship, and humanity had fellowship with their Creator (Genesis 3:8). Man was created perfect, when God had completed creation, He saw it was "very good" (Genesis 1:31). We were made in our Creators likeness and image.

26 Then God said, "Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness; let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, over the birds of the air, and over the cattle, over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth."

27 So God created man in His own image; in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them. Genesis 1:26-27

This however changed, after the fall, Adam and Eve hid from God's presence, ashamed of their nakedness. The fellowship was broken man was expelled from the Garden, and forbidden to return. Man, created in the very image of God, was now distant from his creator, who he was modeled after.

When man fell, all of creation was afflicted in the fall. Creation to this day groans under the fall of man, awaiting the day of redemption. Creation in the physical world awaits humanities redemption, when God created the earth, he made it subject to man, who was given dominion over it (Genesis 1:28).



A statue of Lenin, the subject of worship in a atheist state

20 For the creation was subjected to futility, not willingly, but because of Him who subjected it in hope;

21 because the creation itself also will be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God.

22 For we know that the whole creation groans and labors with birth pangs together until now. Romans 8: 14-22

2. We were fallen

The fall of Adam and Eve resulted in our "fallen" or "depraved" nature, since we are children of Adam and Eve. We were made in the image of God, but the fall has corrupted us. We have lost the capacity to communicate with the one who made us.

Even though we have lost our communion with God, we have His traits along with our fallen nature. For this reason, we see in history humanities desire to worship and be worshipped in our fallen nature.

Great leaders in human history have tried to assume god-like titles, people who started out small, proclaim their deity as their pride rises. Alexander the Great, Julius Caesar, Hitler, Mao and Lenin are few examples of people throughout history, who attempted to become god-like.

Man's is built for fellowship with his creator for this reason humanity looks for things to worship, we seek idols. This is the draw or religion and fame; they become "God substitutes". In our fallen nature, we are looking for a way to fill the emptiness of a lost relationship with our Creator. Blaise Pascal captures this thought in his statement,

"There is a God shaped vacuum in the heart of every man which cannot be filled by any created thing, but only by God, the Creator, made known through Jesus"³

Even in the formally official atheist communist country of the Soviet Union, the body of Lenin exists in a preserved and mummified state, because they cannot let his image die.

Some have fashioned idols from trees, Isaiah describes the fallen and blind state of man, who uses part of the wood of a tree to cook with, the other part he uses to make an idol, calling it his god.

17 And the rest of it he makes into a god, His carved image. He falls down before it and worships it, Prays to it and says, "Deliver me, for you are my god!"

18 They do not know nor understand; For He has shut their eyes, so that they cannot see, And their hearts, so that they cannot understand. Isaiah 44:17-18

For others, the idol may be fame, success or beauty, striving to fill the missing part. Looking at the world of fame, people model themselves after famous people, trying to accomplish what they achieved hoping the empty feeling fill. Programs such as American Idol even include the word Idol, because that is exactly what they stand for we want idols, its part of our fallen nature.

Alexander the Great was the model for Julius Caesar. When Caesar was about thirty-seven (63 B.C), he saw a statue of Alexander the Great in Cadiz Spain, he fell down and cried because at thirty-seven he was only an aristocrat, while Alexander was conquering the world. From that point, Julius strived to be like the image of Alexander, he modeled himself after him⁴. Moreover, like his model, he became the subject of worship.

3. We are restored for fellowship

This is why Jesus Christ died for our sins, to restore us from our "fallen" state. Only through redemption could we again have the fellowship we lost. Jesus' death paid the price for our sins, He restored us to God, through the Spirit.

14 how much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered Himself without spot to God, cleanse your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?

15 And for this reason He is the Mediator of the new covenant, by means of death, for the redemption of the transgressions under the first covenant, that those who are called may receive the promise of the eternal inheritance. Hebrews 9:14-15

Once our sins were paid, we were redeemed. We could be *born again*, because salvation was offered as a gift of grace (Ephesians 2:8-9), to those who choose to accept. Once we accepted this gift, the Holy Spirit was deposited in us as down payment or guarantee of our coming redemption (Ephesians 1:14). Notice belief precedes the Holy Spirit, we receive the deposit of the Spirit after we believe.

13b. having believed, you were sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise,

14 who is the guarantee of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, to the praise of His glory. Ephesians 1:13b-14

The Holy Spirit, promised by Jesus, is the *Helper* or *Parakletos*, who would proceed from the Father and Jesus. Through the indwelling Holy Spirit, we are restored to our creator, despite the fact; we remain in these earthly bodies. The Holy Spirit testifies to the identity and purpose of Jesus.

³ Blaise Pascal (French Mathematician, Philosopher and Physicist, 1623-1662)

⁴ <http://www.roman-empire.net/republic/caesar.html>

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

4. We have the capacity to overcome.

When we accepted Jesus Christ, an amazing event happens, God Himself, in the person of the Holy Spirit, takes residence in our body. We became the *Temple of God* (I Cor. 3:16-17, I Cor. 6:19, 2 Cor. 6:16), because the Holy Spirit is God. This is what means to be *Born Again*, to be born of the Spirit, when God's Holy Spirit dwells in us, through the work of Jesus Christ (John 3:3,5).

Paul refers to our restored relationship in Romans 8, notice we cannot be children of God, without the Spirit of God, this is how we are restored. Paul is trying to help the Romans and us understand our position with God, as a result of the Holy Spirit.

14 For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, these are sons of God.

15 For you did not receive the spirit of bondage again to fear, but you received the Spirit of adoption by whom we cry out, "Abba, Father." 16 The Spirit Himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God, 17 and if children, then heirs-heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ, if indeed we suffer with Him, that we may also be glorified together. 18 For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us.

19 For the earnest expectation of the creation eagerly waits for the revealing of the sons of God.

Romans 8:14-19

God's indwelling Spirit testifies to our spirit about the restored relationship. For now in the present age, this relationship is concealed. Those who have the Spirit of God, might seem like the rest of humanity, but our position with God has changed. We are now His children, through the Spirit (I John 3:10). We have the power of God Almighty, who is dwelling in us.

I once heard the story of a man who spent his whole life, begging on the streets for money, so he could buy food to eat. After he died though, it was discovered under his house was gold, enough to make him a prince. All the while, he was begging for survival, he had in his capacity to be a prince, he however, through choice or ignorance had to beg.

In many ways, the Christian who is saved and does not know the power of their salvation, is in the same the predicament as that man. We like him, have the resources and power through the Spirit to overcome our poverty, but many times, we choose to go to the world and beg for food. We look for things in this world to satisfy our hunger, rather than let the wealth of God fill us.

5. We are being transformed

In Christ, we have a purpose, beyond anything this world could ever hope to offer. What we appear to be is not what we will be. As *children of God*, one day we will resemble God. We are in the process of transformation. We no longer need to be subject to this world.

2 Beloved, now we are children of God; and it has not yet been revealed what we shall be, but we know that when He is revealed, we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is. I John 3:2

The Spirit of God, the Holy Spirit, dwelling inside us is transforming us, day by day into the image of the Son. This will be completed at the resurrection when the mortal will put on immortality. But for now, we are being transformed, the process of transformation is where we have a role.

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

In his book, *Life in the Spirit*, Robertson McQuilkin relates the story of a graduate student who hearing about the Spirit-empowered life, wrote a note to the professor with the words "How,

How can I ever live that kind of life?"⁵ Many who come to Christ face that question; left in the "ok now what?" camp, Christians stagnate in their walk.

We have to choose, to be led by the Spirit, we have the capacity and we have the power, but we need the will. The Spirit of God guides us in the direction of Christ, but we have to choose to follow. Jesus makes this point clear, when he says about the Holy Spirit, "*He will guide you*".

13 "However, when He, the Spirit of truth, has come, He will guide you into all truth; for He will not speak on His own authority, but whatever He hears He will speak; and He will tell you things to come.

14 "He will glorify Me, for He will take of what is Mine and declare it to you. John 16:13-14

Ask yourself these questions;

- Are we willing to be transformed by the Spirit of God or do wrestle and grieve God's Spirit?
- Do we want to know how to stop resisting the Spirit?
- Are we willing to make changes, to remove obstacles for the Spirit?
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Notice, Jesus says the Spirit will guide us, the Greek word is *odhgew Hodegeo* and means lead on one's way, to guide, to teach. We however, have the choice, God is not forcing us, He is leading us.

⁵ Life in the Spirit, Roberston McQuilkin, Broadman & Holman Publishers, Pg. 32, 2000, Nashville