

THE HOLY SPIRIT



1. WHO HE IS

Whenever the subject of God is mentioned, we may think of God the Father or God the Son (Jesus) but seldom do we think of God the Holy Spirit. However, Scripture says a great deal about the Holy Spirit as part of God, just as the Father and Son are part of God. Together, the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit comprise one God, even though they are each separate and distinct persons. But their individual work is so unified in purpose that they are rightly called “one.”

Similarly, a human family comprised of the father, mother and four children could be described as one family, although of six separate persons. There is an interesting Scripture that indicates the oneness of God while also indicating the presence of more than one person within that oneness. God the Father issued this directive just prior to creating mankind: “Then God said, ‘Let us make man in our image, according to our likeness.’” (Genesis 1:26 NKJV)

2. SOME OF HIS ASSIGNMENTS

A. The Holy Spirit (Spirit of God) is mentioned in Genesis 1:2 (HCSB) as “hovering over the surface of the waters” of earth after its creation (Genesis 1:1) but before it was fully developed as we now know it. Perhaps this was an assignment of guardianship over the earth prior to the six days of creation upon earth culminating in the creation of mankind.

B. One of the Holy Spirit’s greatest assignments was to be the Author of Scripture. 2 Peter 1:19-21 (NKJV) says this: “And so we have the prophetic word confirmed, which you do well to heed as a light that shines in a dark place, until the day dawns and the morning star rises in your hearts; knowing this first, that no prophecy of Scripture is of any private interpretation, for prophecy never came by the will of man, but holy men of God spoke as they were moved by the Holy Spirit.”

C. The Holy Spirit assisted Moses at Taberah by preparing seventy men of the congregation to help him bear the burden of the people. God placed the Spirit upon these men to accomplish their preparation. When the Holy Spirit rested upon them, an evidence of their readiness to serve was that they prophesied (Numbers 11:16-17; 24-25).

D. Another of the Holy Spirit’s greatest assignments was to be the earthly Father of Jesus. “Now the birth of Jesus Christ was as follows: after His mother Mary was betrothed to Joseph, before they came together, she was found with child of the Holy Spirit.” (Matthew 1:18 NKJV) Two other gospel accounts of Jesus’ conception by the Holy Spirit may be found in Matthew 1:20 and Luke 1:35).

E. The Holy Spirit can be seen as having successfully completed many different assignments given to Him by God the Father. The range of these assignments demonstrate His ability and desire to facilitate the accomplishment of the will of God. But His assignment to come to earth for an extended stay as the substitute for the ascended Jesus is another of His greatest assignments. More information about this historic event is forthcoming in Section 3 (Prophecies Concerning the Holy Spirit) and Section 4 (Fulfillment of the Holy Spirit’s Arrival).

3. PROPHECIES CONCERNING THE HOLY SPIRIT

A. His Coming:

The book of Joel speaks clearly of God's Old Testament promise to give the Holy Spirit to humanity. (This promise is also referred to as the Promise of My Father in Luke 24:49 and as the Promise of the Father in Acts 1:4). This original promise is recorded in Joel 2:28-32 and specifically prophesies that "I will pour out My Spirit on all humanity..." (Joel 2:28 NCSB) Other details in this prophecy indicated that the arrival of the Holy Spirit to all humankind would be a supernatural event.

B. His Likeness to Jesus

Jesus told His disciples that the Holy Spirit would come to earth after His own ascension to the Father in heaven. He added that it was for their benefit that He return to the Father because if He didn't go away, the Helper (another name for the Holy Spirit) would not come to them. (John 16:7) Jesus also explained to them that the Holy Spirit would live with them (as He had lived with them). (John 14:16) And further, He told them that the Spirit would guide them into all truth (John 16:13) and teach them all things and bring all things to remembrance that He had told them. (John 14:26) Jesus also mentioned that the world (unbelievers) cannot receive the Holy Spirit because it simply does not know Him. (John 14:17) The message is quite clear. We must be believers on the Lord Jesus Christ and baptized in His Name for the forgiveness of our sins in order to be able to be filled with the Holy Spirit, the Spirit of Truth. This was also the answer that Peter gave to the unbelievers who asked what to do to receive the Holy Spirit (Acts 2:37-38)

4. FULFILLMENT OF THE HOLY SPIRIT'S ARRIVAL

The Book of Acts, chapter 2, verses 1-41, gives the full account of the arrival of the Holy Spirit as promised in the book of Joel and by the words of Jesus to His disciples (and to us). On the day of the Pentecost following Jesus' crucifixion 50 days earlier, there were 120 disciples of Jesus assembled in an upper room. The Bible describes what happened: "Suddenly a sound like that of a violent rushing wind came from heaven, and it filled the whole house where they were staying. And tongues, like flames of fire that were divided, appeared to them and rested on each one of them. Then they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in different languages, as the Spirit gave them ability for speech." (Acts 2:1-4 HCSB) Most of the rest of the day found Peter preaching under the power of the Holy Spirit as well as exhorting and baptizing about three thousand new converts.

Not only was this a day in which the long awaited advent of the Holy Spirit began with His arrival in great power, it was also the beginning of an assembly of believers on the Lord Jesus Christ called "The Church." Most of the rest of this article deals with the different ways in which the Holy Spirit now offers His help and ministry to "the church" and its individuals.

5. HOW THE HOLY SPIRIT HELPS US

A. Jesus refers to the Holy Spirit as the Helper (Comforter) in John 14:16, 26; 15:26; 16:7. Knowing that Jesus would not mislead us but would always refer us to the help we need, it is time to learn about the nature of the Holy Spirit's help that is available to us.

B. Practical Help of the Holy Spirit

1. "...He will convict the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment..." (John 16:8) The Holy Spirit brings about this conviction because the world does not believe in Christ and needs to know that Christ has gone to His Father to be seen no more. The Spirit also convicts the world "...of judgment, because the ruler of this world is judged." (John 16:11 NKJV)

2. Romans 7 and 8 – Valuable Insights

a. The Holy Spirit is able to make us free from the law of sin and death by the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus. (Romans 7:24-25 and 8:2)

b. He is also there for us to receive as the “Spirit of adoption by whom we cry out, ‘Abba Father.’ The Spirit Himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God, 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.” (Romans 8:15-17 NKJV)

The Holy Spirit facilitates our adoption as sons and daughters into the family of God and He bears witness with our spirits that the adoption is complete and we are children of God.

c. The Holy Spirit “....makes intercession for the saints according to the will of God.” (Romans 8:27 NKJV) Because of our weaknesses and inabilities to know what we should pray for as we should, “...the Spirit Himself makes intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered (are not spoken).” (Romans 8:26 NKJV) Imagine, the Holy Spirit actually groans for me with groaning that can be understood by the Father even though no language is spoken. It is an intercessory groaning to address my weakness so that I can actually know what to pray for as I should. Everything the Holy Spirit does is unselfish. But His intercession for the saints seems to exceed what we know of unselfishness.

C. Major Ministries of the Holy Spirit

1. Facilitating the Baptism of the Holy Spirit

We have seen the record of the first Baptism of the Holy Spirit in Section 4: “Fulfillment of the Holy Spirit’s Arrival.” But it might be equally helpful to take note of two subsequent experiences of the Baptism of the Holy Spirit that are recorded in the Book of Acts.

a. Acts 10:43-48: Peter preached at Cornelius’ home before Cornelius, his relatives and close friends (all Gentiles). Peter preached Jesus to them, concluding by saying: “To Him all the prophets witness that, through His name, whoever believes in Him will receive remission (forgiveness) of sins. While Peter was still speaking these words, the Holy Spirit fell upon all those who “heard the word.” (Acts 10:43-44 NKJV) The Jews of Peter’s company were amazed that these Gentiles could also have the gift of the Holy Spirit given to them. These new Gentile believers, in receiving the Holy Spirit, spoke with tongues and magnified God. Peter said: “Can anyone forbid water that these should not be baptized who have received the Holy Spirit just as we have?” (Acts 10:47 NKJV) Peter then proceeded with the baptism, “in the Name of the Lord.” (Acts 10:48 NKJV)

b. Acts 19:1-7: Peter stopped at Ephesus and found about 12 believers, whom he asked if they had received the Holy Spirit since their conversion. They replied that they had no knowledge of the Holy Spirit, so Paul found out that they had not been baptized in the Name of the Lord Jesus. They then had Paul baptize them in the Name of the Lord Jesus, after which Paul laid hands on them. Then “the Holy Spirit came upon them, and they spoke with tongues and prophesied.” (Acts 19:6 NKJV) When we do it right, the result is right!

c. When we repent and are baptized in the Name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of sins, we shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. (Approximate wording of Acts 2:38 NKJV)

d. The purpose of the Baptism of the Holy Spirit (being filled with the Holy Spirit) is to receive the power of the Spirit to witness of Jesus locally, regionally and globally.

2. Empowering the Church with the Gifts of the Spirit

This is special empowerments that are given to individuals in the church to benefit the entire church. The gifts are listed as follows in 1 Corinthians 12:8-10

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| * Word of Wisdom | * Prophecy |
| * Word of Knowledge | * Discerning of spirits |
| * Faith | * Tongues |
| * Healings | * Interpretation of Tongues |
| * Miracles | |

3. Developing Individuals in the Characteristics (fruit) of the Spirit

These characteristics are the opposite of the works of the flesh listed in Galatians 5:19-21. The fruit of the Spirit are listed in Galatians 5:22-23 as follows: love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self control.

6. WHY DO WE NEED THE HOLY SPIRIT CONTINUALLY?

A. Every community (or society) needs an enforcer or more than one enforcer. So it is that the community of believers on Christ also need an enforcer – the Holy Spirit as its ultimate enforcer. He is needed at all times:

1. As when He governed the assembly of the children of Israel in the desert Isaiah 63:10 NKJV: “But they (Israelites) rebelled and grieved His Holy Spirit; so He turned Himself against them as an enemy, and He fought against them.”

2. As when He governed the New Testament Church

Acts 5:1-11: Ananias and Sapphira (husband and wife) sold land (verse 3) keeping for themselves a part of the proceeds of the sale and giving the remainder to the church in Jerusalem. They wanted the church apostles to think that their contribution to the church was equal to the total proceeds of sale although it was only a part of those proceeds. However, Peter quickly discerned that Satan had caused them to lie to the Holy Spirit in the matter by holding back some of the price of the land while pretending to have given the church the entire sale price of the land. Their penalty for lying to the Holy Spirit was to be stricken to death by the Spirit about three hours apart in separate incidents. This punishment was all because they had “agreed together to test the Spirit of the Lord.” (Acts 5:9 NKJV) The enforcement for this blatant dishonesty before the Holy Spirit brought about fear upon the church and upon everyone who heard about it (probably including unbelievers).

3. As when He governs those who quench or grieve the Holy Spirit

1 Thessalonians 5:19 – “Do not quench the Spirit.” The word “quench” in this verse is extinguishing the Spirit “by hindering His operations in oral testimony in the church gatherings of believers” – SEC 4570 (Greek)

Ephesians 4:30 – “And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God...” Grieve: to cause pain or grief, to distress, to grieve – SEC 3076 (Greek)

B. The church needs the Holy Spirit as its enforcer and governor equally as much as for His practical help, giftings and ministries. The church that does not recognize or welcome the Holy Spirit in His fullness is sure to suffer profound loss. No church should suffer that kind of loss!