

The Holy Spirit: the Revealer & Giver of Life  
*Pneumatology: A Study of the Life & Work of the Holy Spirit*

## Introduction

*. . . it must be said that the story of the Spirit remains an incomplete one when limited to the pages of the Old Testament. The Gospel of John makes this clear: 'Up to that time the Spirit had not been given, since Jesus had not yet been glorified' (Jn. 7:39). The entire Old Testament revelation has a 'not yet' written over it as it looks forward to its goal in Christ.*

*This was highlighted for those who lived before the coming of Christ by the silencing of the prophetic voice during the centuries prior to the restoration, betokened in the events surrounding the births of John the Baptist and Jesus. The central promises of the new covenant still awaited their fulfillment: 'I will put my Spirit in you . . . ' (Ezk. 36:27). The long-expected day promised through Joel was 'not yet': 'And afterward, I will pour out my Spirit on all people. Your sons and daughters will prophesy . . . ' (Joel 2:28). Thus, in the Old Testament period, the great Day of the future would be the Day of the Spirit. The Day when the Messiah would come, filled with the Spirit (Is. 11:1ff.; 42:1ff.; 61:1ff.), had not yet arrived.*

*It is all the more significant, therefore, that Luke's Gospel begins with the announcement of John the Baptist as one who will be filled with the Spirit from birth (=prophecy restored, Lk. 1:15); with the overshadowing of Mary by the Spirit (=the beginning of the new creation, Lk. 1:35); and with Elizabeth and Zechariah being filled with the Spirit (Lk. 1:41, 67). Simeon, in whose life the Holy Spirit was present though before the time, understood the inner significance of the coming of the Messiah. Salvation had dawned in the Christ-child. The promised Messiah had come, the One on whom the Spirit, at last, would rest (Is. 11:2).*

*In the coming of Jesus, the Day of the Spirit had finally dawned (Sinclair B. Ferguson, *The Holy Spirit*, pp. 32-33).*

The following exemplify the importance in understanding who the Holy Spirit is and His purpose in our lives. To taste, ever so slightly, His purpose and work let's look at some of what we will examine during our study.

1. He indwells everyone who belongs to Jesus.

Rom. 8:9 You, however, are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if in fact the Spirit of God dwells in you. Anyone who does not have the Spirit of Christ does not belong to him.

2. His indwelling presence is the reason why we can/should reveal God in our lives.

1Cor. 6:19 Or do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit within you, whom you have from God? You are not your own, 20 for you were bought with a price. So glorify God in your body.

3. His initial presence in the believer's life brings an experiencing of God's love.

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Rom. 5:5 and hope does not put us to shame, because God's love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit who has been given to us.

4. He alone progressively changes us into the image & likeness of Jesus.

2Cor. 3:18 And we all, with unveiled face, beholding the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from one degree of glory to another. For this comes from the Lord who is the Spirit.

5. Through His power we “kill” the sinful impulses of the flesh.

Rom. 8:12 So then, brothers, we are debtors, not to the flesh, to live according to the flesh. 13 For if you live according to the flesh you will die, but if by the Spirit you put to death the deeds of the body, you will live.

6. He “brings us along”, i.e., gives direction to our lives; this serves as confirmation of our sonship with God the Father.

Rom. 8:14 For all who are led by the Spirit of God are sons of God.

7. He confirms experientially our Father-child relationship with God.

Rom. 8:16 The Spirit himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God, 17 and if children, then heirs—heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ, provided we suffer with him in order that we may also be glorified with him.

8. He creates intimacy between the Father & His sons.

Rom. 8:15 For you did not receive the spirit of slavery to fall back into fear, but you have received the Spirit of adoption as sons, by whom we cry, “Abba! Father!”

9. He creates “community” among the people of God by developing us into an increasingly suitable “home” for God to dwell in.

Eph. 2:22 In him you also are being built together into a dwelling place for God by the Spirit.

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10. He prays for us when our ignorance stymies our praying.

Rom. 8:26 Likewise the Spirit helps us in our weakness. For we do not know what to pray for as we ought, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us with groanings too deep for words. 27 And he who searches hearts knows what is the mind of the Spirit, because the Spirit intercedes for the saints according to the will of God.

11. He gives us spiritual gifts with which we serve & build up Jesus' people.

1Cor. 12:4 Now there are varieties of gifts, but the same Spirit; . . . 7 To each is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good. . . . 11 All these are empowered by one and the same Spirit, who apportions to each one individually as he wills.

12. He grants the ability to influence the lost as we speak of the reality of Jesus & His cross in our lives.

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

**Assignment for next week:**

1. Read through a few times the above examples of the Spirit's work to become generally familiar with them.
2. List two or three from the list that peak your curiosity; these might cause you to say, "I've always wondered what that was about"
3. Then list two or three that strike a personal cord with you; they might express themselves in the words, "I need and/or want more of that in my life."
4. Finally, how do you want your life different as a result of being a part of this class? Think in terms of your character, speech, conduct, relationship with God and your friendships among believers & unbelievers. If you could ask God (which you can, by the way) for anything related to the Holy Spirit, what would it be?

## THE HOLY SPIRIT IS BOTH A PERSON & GOD

*But the name 'Holy Spirit', or worse (at least at the emotional and psychological levels) 'Holy Ghost', tends to convey a cold, even remote image. After all, what is 'Spirit'? Yet, perhaps the older 'Holy Ghost', with its connotations of vagueness, mystery and insubstantiality, did in fact express what many Christians experience: the Holy Spirit is seen to be distant and impersonal by comparison with the Father and the Son. 'We know not what spirits are, nor what our own spirit is,' wrote Abraham Kuyper. How much less capable are we of comprehending the Spirit of God? What, or who, then, is the holy Spirit? (The Holy Spirit, by Sinclair B. Ferguson, pp. 15-16).*

### I. The Bible Teaches that the Holy Spirit Possesses All the Attributes of A Person.

A. He possesses the *key characteristics* of one rightly called a "person."

1. He possesses an intellect by which He thinks.

1Cor. 2:10 These things God has revealed to us through the Spirit. For the Spirit searches everything, even the depths of God. 11 For who knows a person's thoughts except the spirit of that person, which is in him? So also no one comprehends the thoughts of God except the Spirit of God.

Rom. 8:27 And he who searches hearts knows what is the mind of the Spirit, because the Spirit intercedes for the saints according to the will of God.

2. He expresses emotions in response to others.

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

Gal 5:17 For the desires of the flesh are against the Spirit, and the desires of the Spirit are against the flesh, for these are opposed to each other, to keep you from doing the things you want to do.

3. He makes decisions where options exist.

1 Cor. 12:11 All these are empowered by one and the same Spirit, who apportions to each one individually as he wills.

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Heb. 2:4 while God also bore witness by signs and wonders and various miracles and by gifts of the Holy Spirit distributed according to his will.

B. He *performs works* that only a person could do.

1. He speaks commands to people.

Acts 8:29 And the Spirit said to Philip, “Go over and join this chariot.”

Acts 13:2 While they were worshiping the Lord and fasting, the Holy Spirit said, “Set apart for me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them.”

2. He prays for believers when they lack the information to pray properly.

Rom. 8:26 Likewise the Spirit helps us in our weakness. For we do not know what to pray for as we ought, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us with groanings too deep for words.

3. He leads believers in their walk with God.

Rom. 8:14 For all who are led by the Spirit of God are sons of God.

C. He closely *identifies* with other persons & works.

1. He serves as a replacement for Jesus.

John 14:16 And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another [of the same kind] Helper, to be with you forever,

2. He is included in lists with the Father & the Son.

Matt. 28:19 Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit,

2Cor. 13:14 The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ and the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all.

D. He *glorifies* another person, the Lord Jesus.

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John 16:14 He will glorify me, for he will take what is mine and declare it to you.

**II. The Bible Teaches that the Holy Spirit Possesses All the Attributes of God.**

A. He is called “*God*.”

Acts 5:3 But Peter said, “Ananias, why has Satan filled your heart to lie to the Holy Spirit and to keep back for yourself part of the proceeds of the land? 4 While it remained unsold, did it not remain your own? And after it was sold, was it not at your disposal? Why is it that you have contrived this deed in your heart? You have not lied to men but to God.”

B. He is described by terms *only true of God*.

1. The Spirit is eternal.

Heb. 9:13 For if the blood of goats and bulls, and the sprinkling of defiled persons with the ashes of a heifer, sanctify for the purification of the flesh, 14 how much more will the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without blemish to God, purify our conscience from dead works to serve the living God.

2. The Spirit is omnipresent.

Psa. 139:7 Where shall I go from your Spirit?  
Or where shall I flee from your presence?  
Psa. 139:8 If I ascend to heaven, you are there!  
If I make my bed in Sheol, you are there!  
Psa. 139:9 If I take the wings of the morning  
and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea,  
Psa. 139:10 even there your hand shall lead me,  
and your right hand shall hold me.

3. The Spirit is omnipotent.

Luke 1:35 And the angel answered her, “The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; therefore the child to be born will be called holy—the Son of God.

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4. The Spirit is omniscient.

1Cor. 2:10 These things God has revealed to us through the Spirit. For the Spirit searches everything, even the depths of God. 11 For who knows a person's thoughts except the spirit of that person, which is in him? So also no one comprehends the thoughts of God except the Spirit of God.

C. He performs *acts* that only God can perform.

1. He took part in creation.

Gen. 1:1 In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth. 2 The earth was without form and void, and darkness was over the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God was hovering over the face of the waters.

Job 33:4 The Spirit of God has made me,  
and the breath of the Almighty gives me life.

2. He "co-authored" Scripture.

2Pet. 1:21 For no prophecy was ever produced by the will of man, but men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit.

3. He generated Jesus Christ's humanity.

Luke 1:35 And the angel answered her, "The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; therefore the child to be born will be called holy—the Son of God.

4. He regenerates humans; that is, He passes on the life of God.

John 3:5 Jesus answered, "Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God. 6 That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. 7 Do not marvel that I said to you, 'You must be born again.' 8 The wind blows where it wishes, and you hear its sound, but you do not

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know where it comes from or where it goes. So it is with everyone who is born of the Spirit.”

### **THE HOLY SPIRIT’S WORK UNDER THE NEW COVENANT**

*We may define the work of the Holy Spirit as follows: The work of the Holy Spirit is to manifest the active presence of God in the world, and especially in the church. This definition indicates that the Holy Spirit is the member of the Trinity whom the Scripture most often represents as being present to do God’s work in the world. Although this is true to some extent throughout the Bible, it is particularly true in the new covenant age. In the OT, the presence of God was many times manifested in the glory of God and in theophanies, and in the gospels Jesus himself manifested the presence of God among men. But after Jesus ascended into heaven, and continuing through the entire church age, the Holy Spirit is now the primary manifestation of the presence of the Trinity among us. He is the one who is most prominently present with us now. <sup>1</sup> (In this discussion, when I use the word “present” I mean “present to bless,” as discussed in the section on God’s omnipotence in chapter 11. Of course, since he is fully God, the being of the Holy Spirit is always present everywhere (he is omnipresent), but he does not always show his presence in activities that bring blessing (see chapter 11, pp. 173-77) (Systematic Theology by Wayne Grudem, pp. 634-35).*

#### **I. The Holy Spirit’s Role Changed Beginning in Acts 2.**

A. The change came about due to the finished *cross-work* of Jesus.

John 7:37 On the last day of the feast, the great day, Jesus stood up and cried out, “If anyone thirsts, let him come to me and drink. 38 Whoever believes in me, as the Scripture has said, ‘Out of his heart will flow rivers of living water.’” 39 Now this he said about the Spirit, whom those who believed in him were to receive, for as yet the Spirit had not been given, because Jesus was not yet glorified.

B. This change was *prophesied* in the Old Testament.

Ezek. 36:25 I will sprinkle clean water on you, and you shall be clean from all your uncleannesses, and from all your idols I will cleanse you. 26 And I will give you a new heart, and a new Spirit I will put within you. And I will remove the heart of stone from your flesh and give you a heart of flesh. 27 And I will put my Spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes and be careful to obey my rules. 28 You shall dwell in the land that I gave to your fathers, and you shall be my people, and I will be your God.

Rom. 2:28 For no one is a Jew who is merely one outwardly, nor is circumcision outward and physical. 29 But a Jew is one inwardly, and circumcision is a matter of the heart, by the Spirit, not by the letter. His praise is not from man but from God.

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