

Who Is the Holy Spirit, and Why Does It Matter? Selected Text,

Preached by Michael Gunn @ Harambee Church on May 4th, 2008

“The Old Testament may be likened to a chamber richly furnished but dimly lighted; the introduction of light brings into it nothing which was not there before; but it brings out into clearer view much of what is in it but was only dimly or not at all perceived before. The mystery of the Trinity is not revealed in the Old Testament; but the mystery of the Trinity underlies the Old Testament revelation, and here and there almost comes into view. Thus the Old Testament revelation of God is not corrected by the fuller revelation which follows it, but is only perfected, extended and enlarged.”

B.B. Warfield

“The wind blows where it wishes, and you hear its sound, but you do not know where it comes from or where it goes. So it is with everyone who is born of the Spirit.”

John 3:8

“...but I say walk by the Spirit, and you will not carry out the deeds of the flesh...But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self control, against such there is no law.”

Galatians 5:16, 22-23

Intro

The Holy Spirit may be the most misunderstood in all of scripture! Is He an energy force? Is He a manifestation of power much like Kali is a manifestation of Shiva in Hinduism? Is the Holy Spirit God, and what does He do? God's mysteries are amazing, and I think a reminder of His infinite being and our finite minds. The concept of God as three yet one is mind rattling. It is important to understand what theologians mean by the Trinity. The Trinitarian teaching does not say that God is both one and three since that would be contradictory. The doctrine teaches that as a being (Essence) God is one (**Deuteronomy 6:4**),¹ yet he is also three in person. While this is hard to understand, it is not a contradiction, since he is one of one thing (Essence), but three in another (Person). These are some of the things we will explore in today's study on the Holy Spirit.

From the Head...

Who Is the Spirit?

1. The Spirit is Power

Hebrew = *Ruach* – Breath, Wind

Greek = *Pneuma* – Breath, Wind

“Breath of life” (**Genesis 2:7**)

The usage of these terms are not implying an impersonal wind, not an immaterial being, but that of “Power,” especially as the power of God behind much of what God is said to have accomplished in the world (Creation, redemption, etc.). We see this emphasis in **Isaiah 31:3** is power and not immateriality. The point here is God's power is far above anything that man can muster. Sometime that power is witnessed through physical things like a storm, or the amazing regenerating power bringing forth spiritual life in a spiritually dead person (See **Titus 3:5**).

2. The Spirit is a Person

He can be “Grieved” (**Psalm 78:40; Isaiah 63:10; Ephesians 4:30**), which is an interpersonal activity. You can't grieve a door, or a rock, or an energy force.

3. The Spirit is God (Third person of the godhead)

Trinitarian language in the Old and New Testaments (**Genesis 1:26; 11:7; Psalm 45:6-7; 110:1; Isaiah 6:8; 48:16; 61:1; Matthew 28:19; 1 Corinthians 12:4-6; 2 Corinthians 13:14; Ephesians 4:4-6; 1 Peter 1:1-2**). What we see in these verses is the three persons mentioned as God. **Acts 5:3-4** more specifically refers to the Holy Spirit as God. **Psalm 139:7-8** attributes a divine attribute (Omnipresence) with the Holy Spirit. Also **1 Corinthians 2:10-11** does similarly (Omniscience). We also see works attributed to God (Creation – **Genesis 1:1-2**) and redemption (**John 3:5-7; Titus 3:5**) attributed to the Spirit.

¹ The Hebrew word “One” is (Echad), which is not a monad, but allows for a plurality, such as “One” bunch of bananas.

What Does the Spirit Do?

The basic purpose of the Holy Spirit is to manifest the active presence of God in the world, through and in the church (**Genesis 41:38; Psalm 104:29-30; 139:7; Ezekiel 39:29**)

1. The Holy Spirit Creates
 - a. He Creates Physical Life (**Genesis 1:2, 2:7; Palm 104:30; Job 33:4; 34:14-15**)
 - b. He Creates Order and Beauty (**Genesis 1:2; Exodus 31:1-11; 35:30-35**)
 - c. He Creates Community (**Joel 2:28-32 cf. Acts 2:16-18, 44-47; 1 Corinthians 12:4-7, 13; 2 Corinthians 13:14**)
2. The Holy Spirit Redeems
 - a. He Convicts the World of Sin, Righteousness and Judgment (**John 16:8-11**)
 - b. He helps us confess Christ (**1 John 4:2**)
 - c. He Baptizes Believers Into The Body (**1 Corinthians 12:13**)
 - d. He Regenerates (**Ezekiel 36:26-27; Titus 3:5; John 3:3-8; 6:63; Acts 10:44-47; Romans 1:4, 8:11; 2 Corinthians 3:6**)
 - e. He Sanctifies (**Galatians 5:16-24; 1 Corinthians 6:11; 2 Thessalonians 2:13; 1 Peter 1:2 cf. Romans 8:4, 13**)
 - f. He Seals (**Ephesians 1:12-14; 2 Corinthians 1:22**)
3. The Holy Spirit Reveals
 - a. He Reveals to the Biblical Authors (**Jeremiah 1:2, 8, 9, 15, 19; 2 Samuel 23:2; 2 Timothy 3:16-17; 1 Peter 1:20-21**)
 - b. He Reveals Evidence of God's Presence (**Ezekiel 39:29; Psalm 104:29-30**)
 - c. He Reveals a Godlike Atmosphere
 - He Pours Out Love in Our hearts (**Romans 5:5; Colossians 1:8**)
 - He Brings Forth Peace (**1 Corinthians 14:33; Romans 14:17**)
 - He Brings Joy (**Romans 14:17; Acts 13:52; 1 Thess. 1:6**)
 - He Brings Truth (**John 14:17; 15:26**)
 - He Brings Comfort (**Acts 9:31**)
 - He Brings Freedom (**2 Corinthians 3:17**)
 - He Brings Righteousness (**Romans 14:17**)
 - He Brings Hope (**Romans 15:13; Galatians 5:5**)
 - d. He Reveals Assurance (**Romans 8:16; 1 John 3:24; 1 John 4:13**)
 - e. He Teaches, Guides and Illumines (**John 14:26; John 16:13; Luke 12:12**)
4. The Holy Spirit Empowers
 - a. He Empowers For Service (**Numbers 27:18; Judges 3:10; 6:34; 11:29; 1 Samuel 11:6; 16:13; Acts 1:8; 4:8, 31; 6:5-8, 10; 1 Thessalonians 1:5**).
 - b. He Empowers the Church to Be a Witness To the World (**Acts 1:8**).
 - c. He Empowers People For Ministry (**1 Corinthians 12:7-11**)
 - d. Her Empowers the Elders of the Church For Service (**Acts 20:28**)
5. The Holy Spirit Restrains Evil (**2 Thessalonians 2:6-7**)
6. The Holy Spirit Intercedes In Our Prayers (**Romans 8: 26-27**)
7. The Holy Spirit Is Our "Helper"/Counselor (**John 14:16, 26**)

What is Baptism in the Spirit?

The Pentecostal tradition maintains that there is a second blessing, subsequent to salvation /regeneration.

There are 7 times it's mentioned in the bible:

- Matthew 3:11
- Mark 1:8
- Luke 3:16
- John 1:33
- Acts 1:5
- Acts 11:16
- 1 Corinthians 12:13

Even though all 7 verses have similar construction, our English translations translate the 1 Corinthian verse "*by one Spirit we were all baptized,*" instead of "In" the Spirit like the other

verses. To be baptized “By” someone in the New Testament, the word “hupo” is used in the Greek and not “En,” which is most often translated “in” as it is in the other 6 incidents. Subsequently being baptized in the Holy Spirit is done as an act at the beginning of our faith in Christ, and not subsequent to our conversion (See **Ephesians 4:5**).

Then what about Acts 1:5 and 11:16, which definitely seem to be post conversion? Both of these relate to Pentecost, which was promised in the Old Testament (**Joel 2; Ezekiel 36**). It appears apparent that the Spirit’s role in the Old Testament was different than it is in the new covenant (**Numbers 11:29; Jeremiah 31:31-33**). In the OT the Holy Spirit empowered men and women for service (**Exodus 31:3; 35:31; Deuteronomy 34:9; 1 Samuel 16:13**), but He also took it away as it was in the case of Saul (**1 Samuel 16:14**).

The fact is Ephesians 1:3 says we have been blessed with “...*every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places*.” We can’t get “More” of an infinite being, like He is withholding His blessing from us. Ephesians’ command to “Be filled” (**Ephesians 5:18**) is not a command for more, but a contrast with being “drunk” (Controlled). This is similar to Romans 8:13; Galatians 5:16, where we are called to “Walk” in the Spirit, not get more of Him.

...to the Heart

The Holy Spirit enables us to be transformed from the inside out, so that we can live in the holiness that we are called to (See **Ephesians 4:1**). The Holy Spirit is the power that created this universe and raised Jesus from the dead, and it is that power in us, which is greater than any power in the world (**1 John 4:4**).

Books for further study: *Systematic Theology, Wayne Grudem; The Holy Spirit, Sinclair Ferguson; The Baptism and Fullness of the Holy Spirit, John Stott; The Work of the Spirit in Our Salvation, Thomas Goodwin*

Next Weeks Verses: Selected Text (Mother’s Day)

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