

The Person and Work of God the Holy Spirit

A Study

Introduction

Note: There will be no attempt in this Study at trying to “fit in” with any already developed theological systems. The goal of this Study will be to honestly and thoroughly examine from both the Old and New Testaments exactly what the Bible says and what the Bible does *not* say about the third person of the Trinity so that we may worship Him aright and glorify God through a biblical understanding of both His person and work.

Any discomfort the student may experience about this subject is regrettable but necessary as we seek to systematically remove all vestiges of man-made and false doctrine and replace them with divine truth. The Bible is not silent about God the Holy Spirit and we sincerely want to understand what He put into the scriptures about Himself.

The Acts 1:4-8

4 Gathering them together, He commanded them not to leave Jerusalem, but to wait for what the Father had promised, "**Which,**" *He said,* "**you heard of from Me;**

5 for John baptized with water, but you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days from now."

6 So when they had come together, they were asking Him, saying, "Lord, is it at this time You are restoring the kingdom to Israel?"

7 He said to them, "**It is not for you to know times or epochs which the Father has fixed by His own authority;**

8 but you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be My witnesses both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and even to the remotest part of the earth."

I love God the Holy Spirit. He is truly sweet and precious to my soul. I am in awe of Him, respect Him, and admire Him and therefore I love and worship Him and find genuine joy in Him. He enables me to love and serve Jesus, delight myself in God, understand divine truth, and resist temptation. Without Him I would not be saved and cannot be sanctified. He drew me to Jesus when I was determined to run away. He is the one who birthed me again and brought conviction into my life to convince me that I was lost. He sovereignly went inside me before I was saved and before I asked for it or even wanted it, and He opened my blind eyes, unstopped my deaf ears, took out of me a dark and stony hard heart, and gave me a heart of flesh so that I would believe the Gospel, repent of my sins, and be justified through the finished work of the Lord Jesus Christ.

God the Holy Spirit has gifted me and empowers me to preach the Word of God in a way that others are able to see the Glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ and be changed from one realm of glory to another to the point that they too will enjoy God more than all the treasures of this fading earth. He is fully divine but unlike God the Son, God the Holy Spirit has no human attributes at all. He is equally God with the Father and Son and exists in perfect love and

harmony with Them, yet He possesses a unique personality and does a unique work that neither the Father nor the Son carries out.

I am saved today because, along with God the Father and God the Son, God the Holy Spirit has labored unendingly on my behalf to assure that what the Father determined to do in me before the foundation of the world has been done and will continue to be done until I stand in Glory and see Him. And that is why I desire to study Him and know Him rightly.

There has been more written about God the Holy Spirit over the last 100 years of Church history than in all the preceding 1900 years combined. What is interesting is that the majority of those newer books focus almost exclusively on the Work of the Holy Spirit, and the majority of those, deal with the “gifts” of the Holy Spirit primarily physical healing, tongues, miracles, and words of wisdom/knowledge. However, the majority of the earlier books focused on the person of the Holy Spirit and His deity. I don’t think that is simply a coincidence but is reflective of the trite shallowness and emotionalism (effeminate) that dominates our modern culture where we “feel” things today rather than “think” things.

But part of the reason is because of the advent of the Pentecostal/Charismatic/Full Gospel Movement that has gone on now for over a century. This movement has placed greater emphasis on the Spirit (albeit mostly in error) that partly is the inherent nature of God the Holy Spirit. And after the larger part of two millennia where normal worship and service in the Church was inconceivable without a knowledge of the Spirit, it came to be taken for granted.

Other reasons include the almost four century struggle in the early Church to understand and articulate the deity and humanity of our Lord Jesus properly and to defend the faith against a whole host of aberrant teachings and heresies that attacked the person and work of Christ culminating with the *Pelagian Controversy* (early in the 5th Century) that emphasized the glory and goodness and free will of man to the detriment of the glory and goodness and free will of God. With all these important battles to fight, many in the Church simply left off studying, teaching, and, sadly, worshipping God the Holy Spirit.

Interestingly, it was the re-discovery of the sufficiency of scripture during the Protestant Reformation of the 16th Century, along with the lifting up of powerful biblical truths such as the sovereignty of God, the radical ruination of man in the fall, original sin, God’s grace, saving faith, and the glory of God by the men whom God used to bring the church back into alignment with the Bible. These truths also re-ignited a passion and zeal for the person and work of God the Holy Spirit.

For example, far from being a staid and dull academic who proposed dry and useless doctrine, John Calvin dove into this issue to such a degree that he has been rightly called, “the great theologian of the Holy Spirit”¹. Perhaps the most biblical and most thorough study of the Spirit ever engaged in the history of the Church was ordained by God through the pen of the Puritans. Most notably, John Owen (1616-1683) and Thomas Goodwin (1600-1680) wrote deep, thoughtful, and scriptural expositions on Him.

There is much to say about the Biblical knowledge of God the Holy Spirit- a theological discipline called, “Pneumatology”. **Enough to spend the rest of our lives on.** So, no one should take this brief examination as anything other than what it is- a sincere effort to develop within the student, a working knowledge of what the Bible teaches about this vital subject.

Perhaps the best way to introduce God the Holy Spirit is to notice the names or the descriptive titles that are given to this blessed person in the scriptures that relate Him to the other two persons:

¹ Martin Lloyd- Jones, *Great Doctrines of the Bible; Book 2; God the Holy Spirit* (Crossway Books, Wheaton Ill, 2003) page 5

1. There are many names assigned to God the Holy Spirit which relate Him to the Father. For example, God the Spirit is called:

- ✓ *The Spirit of God (Genesis 1:2)*
- ✓ *The Spirit of the Lord (Luke 4:18)*
- ✓ *The Spirit of our God (1Corinthians 6:11)*
- ✓ *The Spirit of the Lord God (Isaiah 61:1)*
- ✓ *The Spirit of Your Father (Matthew 10:20)*
- ✓ *The Spirit of the living God (2Corinthians 3:3)*

God says in **Genesis 6:3**, “*My Spirit*”. The psalmist wrote in **Psalm 139:7**, “*Where shall I go from Your Spirit*”. He is referred to as “*His Spirit*”, God’s Spirit, in **Numbers 11:29** and in **Romans 8:11** the apostle Paul uses the phrase,

But if the Spirit of Him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, He who raised Christ Jesus from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through His Spirit who dwells in you.

All of these names and titles refer to the Holy Spirit in terms of His eternal relationship with the Father

2. In the second group are the titles that relate God the Holy Spirit with God the Son:

Romans 8:9

... if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he does not belong to Him.

Philippians 1:19

I know that this will turn out for my deliverance through your prayers and the provision of the Spirit of Jesus Christ,

Galatians 4:6

Because you are sons, God has sent forth the Spirit of His Son into our hearts, crying, "Abba! Father!"

The Acts 5:9

Then Peter *said* to her, "Why is it that you have agreed together to put the Spirit of the Lord to the test? Behold, the feet of those who have buried your husband are at the door, and they will carry you out *as well*."

3. And then there are names and titles assigned by scripture to the Holy Spirit which are direct or personal to Him alone:

First in line is His most common name “The Holy Spirit” or “The Holy Ghost”. And even this sacred title is not without controversy as there are some who teach and believe that there is a *distinction* between God the Holy Spirit and God the Holy Ghost as though

they were two separate beings. These dear souls do not seem to realize that this is simply the result of the King James translators dividing up the *Latin Vulgate* and the *Textus Receptus* into two groups of men who took the very same Greek word and translated it into English. One group translated that word into the Anglo Saxon word, “ghost” while the other group chose to use the Latin word, “spiritus”.

Other titles within this third group are:

- *The Spirit of Holiness* (**Romans 1:4**)
- *The Holy One* (**1John 2:20**)
- *The Eternal Spirit* (**Hebrews 9:14**)
- *The Spirit of Life* (**Romans 8:2**)
- *The Spirit of Truth* (**John 14:17**)
- *The Comforter* (**John 14, 15, &16**)

But the most common name by which this person of the Trinity is known is “Holy Spirit”. Now why is that? Primarily it is because of three very vital reasons:

- A. As God, He Himself is perfectly and continuously holy
- B. His main Work is to produce holiness in us
- C. To distinguish Him from other “spirits” which are *not* holy

Now as you might be able to tell from the title, this study will be broken down into two main parts:

- I. The Person of God the Holy Spirit
- II. The Work of God the Holy Spirit

In analyzing what the Bible teaches about the person of God the Holy Spirit, we will examine the full deity and full participation of this person of the Triune Godhead and how we should respond to that. And in looking at the work of God the Holy Spirit, we will examine what the Bible teaches about:

- ✓ The Work of God the Holy Spirit in Creation
- ✓ The Work of God the Holy Spirit in Salvation
- ✓ The Work of God the Holy Spirit in the production of Scripture
- ✓ The Work of God the Holy Spirit in Sanctification
- ✓ The Work of God the Holy Spirit in Preaching and Evangelism

Part of looking at the work of God the Holy Spirit in both salvation and sanctification will involve looking honestly and biblically at what the Holy Scriptures actually teach about two very controversial subjects:

- The Gifts of God the Holy Spirit
- The Fruit of God the Holy Spirit

And because it is an issue in our day, we will closely examine what the Bible teaches about the phenomenon that is variously called, “Baptism of the Holy Spirit” or being “Baptized with the Holy Spirit” or “Spirit Baptism”.

As a side issue, we will also look at other terms like:

- *Walking in the Spirit*
- *Praying in the Spirit*
- *Being led by the Spirit*

... and we will discover what the scriptures mean by using those terms. We will also examine the debate within the modern church concerning the three main views of the “spiritual gifts” (primarily tongues; prophecy; and miraculous healings):

Cessationist The view that some of the spiritual gifts have ceased because they accomplished the very narrow purpose for which God ordained them

Continuationist The view that the very same spiritual gifts that operated in the early church are operational today and will continue to be operational until Jesus returns

Optimistic but Cautious The view that while it is *theoretically possible* that the spiritual gifts may still be operational, there is no known example on earth where this is occurring in accord with scripture.

And we will examine how what happened on the day of Pentecost as recorded in **The Acts 2** relates to the Pentecostal Movement, if at all. And we will do this, not to condemn anyone, but to simply try to evaluate what God said against what man says.

And finally, we will investigate genuine biblical empowerment and enabling by God the Holy Spirit in contrast to human emotionalism and mysticism that has captured people’s imagination for many centuries.

I pray that God will be glorified and honored by this study and that you will be enriched and encouraged in your knowledge of the person and work of God the Holy Spirit. Amen.

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The Covenant of Peace Church 13600 John Clark Road Gulfport, Mississippi 39503 228.832.7729 www.covenantofpeace.net

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The Grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit. Amen. Be watchful and quicken your pace. Soli Deo Gloria. For the Glory of God alone.