

# The Holy Spirit

## Who He Is and What He Does

In our presentation of the Gospel, we previously mentioned that throughout history people have been aware of the supernatural world and the nature of evil spirits around them. The good news of Jesus, however, is that there is a Spirit who is on our side, who has come to help us, and He is the Spirit of God Himself. He is the Holy Spirit.

The night before Jesus died, He said to His disciples,

“If you love Me, you will obey what I command. And I will ask the Father, and He will give you another Counselor to be with you forever – the Spirit of Truth. The world cannot accept Him because it neither sees Him nor knows Him. But you know Him, for He lives with you and will be in you. I will not leave you as orphans. I will come to you.” *(Jn 14:15-18 NIV)*

Here we see clearly that the Holy Spirit is not only the Spirit of Truth, but He is the Spirit of Jesus Himself. When we become his disciples, He comes to live in us in the form of the Holy Spirit, and indeed, the Holy Spirit is directly called the Spirit of Jesus in Acts 16:7.

But there’s more: Jesus went on to say,

“On that day you will realize that I am in My Father and my Father is in Me. ..If anyone loves Me, he will obey my teaching. My Father will love him and We will come to him and make our home with him.” *(Jn 14:20-23 NIV)*

Now it becomes clear that the Holy Spirit is not just the presence of Jesus, but He is the combined presence of both the Father and the Son. This gives us great understanding and great peace. The Holy Spirit is God Himself, coming to be with us to live in us as our Lord and friend. He comes to speak to us, to show us how to pray, to give us guidance in decisions, to lead us to Jesus Christ for salvation, and to give us understanding about Him and His heart. He can also give us miraculous gifts and abilities that equip us to share the Gospel with others and to minister to other people as they walk with the Lord.

It was the Holy Spirit that resurrected our human spirit when we first believed in Jesus and it was the Holy Spirit who gave us the ability to know God. And He comes to glorify Jesus, not seeking glory for Himself, but working in different ways to glorify Jesus Christ as the savior of Mankind.

Jesus said,

“But the Counselor, the Holy Spirit, whom I will send in My name, will teach you all things and will remind you of all that I have said,” *(Jn 14:26)*

and

“When the Counselor comes... even the Spirit of Truth who proceeds from the Father, He will testify about Me.” *(Jn 15:26)*

and again Jesus said,

“He will bring glory to Me by taking what is mine and making it known to you.”  
*(Jn 16:14 NIV)*

Another thing the Holy Spirit does, is to make us whole. As the Apostle Paul said,

“You have not received the spirit of the world, but the Spirit which is from God so that you may understand the things freely given by God. *(1 Cor 2:12)*

“For you have not received a spirit that makes you a slave again to fear, but you have received the Spirit of Sonship and by him we cry, ‘Abba’, Father.” *(Rom 8:15 NIV)*

“For God did not give us a spirit of fear, but of power, of love, and of a sound mind.”  
*(2 Tim 1:7)*

Man was created in God’s image and since the beginning of the world the devil has been trying to mar that image and make us look and act like animals and demons instead. But the Holy Spirit comes to restore us to God’s image by making us whole, restoring our minds, and showing us the heart of God so that we again begin to look and act like Him.

The Holy Spirit is the Spirit of Holiness and holiness means set apart unto God. The life of a Spirit-led person will be different from that of unbelievers around them. *(Eph 4:17-24)*

When yielding to the Holy Spirit, we no longer pursue the fulfillment of the flesh with its lust, hatred, greed, anger, jealousy, drunkenness and witchcraft, but we begin to live lives of peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control. Against such things there is no law. *(Gal 5:16-26)*

People like this are indeed a taste of Heaven on earth. “But where there is envy and selfish ambition, there you find disorder and every evil practice. *(James 3:16 NIV)* So let us indeed endeavor to walk in the Spirit.

### **How He Speaks**

So how exactly does the Holy Spirit actually speak to us to show us God’s heart and will? There are several ways:

First, He gives us understanding of the Bible. We have already said that the Bible is a spiritual book and it can only be understood by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit. God Himself opens our minds and heart to understand and obey this holy message. And when we give our hearts to Christ, there are some times when reading the Word of God that a verse or passage will just suddenly “come to life” or “jump off the page” as we say in English. And by this we mean

that its meaning and application will suddenly become very clear and complete in an instant. This is called “revelation” or “quickenings” and is simply the Holy Spirit using the written word to speak to our hearts.

Second, there can be a direct word from the Holy Spirit to our spirit. This is like a thought that suddenly interrupts our natural thoughts with a specific message. He might direct you to go to a certain place or speak to a specific person. He may directly answer a question you are asking God as you pray. The “word of the Lord” came to many people in the Bible (*Eg. Gen 15:4, I Sam 15:10, I Kings 6:11*) and God still speaks this way today.

He can speak through a dream or a vision as well. Ordinarily, dreams mean nothing and we do not even remember them when we wake up. But a dream from God is different. It has been my experience that a dream from God is usually very real and has a spiritual meaning. The person wakes up as soon as it ends and can remember it with great clarity even years later. Biblical instances of this are found in Genesis 20:3, Daniel 4:5, and Matthew 2:13-15 for example. Visions, on the other hand, happen when we are wide awake. God will show us a scene of something that seems very real, but in actuality is seen only by us. Again, it has a spiritual meaning, and examples in the Bible are found in places like Acts 11:4-6 and the whole book of Revelation.

Then, too, the presence of Holy Spirit can come upon someone in power and use their mouth to speak words that He wants to say, especially when in a group setting. This is called prophecy and the Bible tells us that in the last days God will pour out His Spirit on all flesh and our sons and daughters will prophesy. This can be very powerful as God can direct us plainly and specifically as to what He has to say or what He would like us to do. Biblical examples are found in many places like Acts 13:1-3, Acts 11:27-29 and Acts 21:9-11.

But like any other word supposedly from God, the Bible instructs us to test the prophecy to see whether it is really from God or not. (*I Jn 4:1, I Cor 14:29, I Thess 5:21*) This is why the written word of God is so important. Since God does not change, Jesus does not change, and the Gospel does not change, it is impossible that God would be saying something today that contradicts what He has said in the past. The Bible says the Spirit of the prophets is subject to the control of the prophets (*I Cor 14:32*) and that means that when the Word of the Lord comes to a prophet, it is within their control to speak it out or not, or for them to wait until the right moment to speak. But it also means that it’s possible for someone to influence what is spoken or even to just speak out of their own imagination. But a person with a pure heart will not do this.

It is important to understand that prophecy is something that God does. We can not make it happen or attempt to speak for God. Either God has given us a word to speak or He hasn’t. If He hasn’t, and we need to hear from Him, we need to simply wait on Him, continue to pray, and let the method of God’s answer be up to Him. For indeed one of the foremost signs of the last days will be the rise of many false prophets and no true Christian would want to be part of that. (*Mt 7: 15; Mt 24:4, 11, 24*)

The Bible also talks about God speaking to us through the gift of languages (or “tongues” as it is commonly called). In this miraculous occurrence, the Holy Spirit will come upon

someone with power and enable them to speak a message in a language they do not know. It can even be the language of angels. If someone who speaks that particular language is present when this happens, it can be a very effective method of communicating to them with proof that the message came from God, but the rest of the people present will not understand unless God also gives the power to someone to interpret the message. The Bible says that those who speak in tongues should pray for the power to interpret. Then the message can be an encouragement to everyone and this too is a gift from God. (*1 Cor 12:7-10, 1 Cor 14:1-19*)

Finally, God can also speak through other people, especially pastors, teachers, and church leaders whom He has called to shepherd his flock and minister to his people. Godly men who have studied God's word and learned many things through experience can help us greatly in walking in the footsteps of Jesus, and this is God's purpose in calling them to these ministries. (*1 Cor 12:27-29, Eph 4:11-13*)

### **Receiving the Holy Spirit**

So how do we walk in this supernatural element of the Holy Spirit's leading in our lives?

The Bible teaches that the Spirit of the Lord comes into our hearts when we submit to Jesus Christ to make Him Lord of our lives. However, it is also possible for the presence of the Holy Spirit to come upon us in power as we have just been describing. This initial experience of the Holy Spirit coming on us in power is called the Baptism of the Holy Spirit. The difference between receiving the Holy Spirit and being baptized in the Holy Spirit is that in one case the Holy Spirit is in you, while in the other case you are in the Holy Spirit. It is like drinking water compared to being baptized in water. In one case the water is in you. In the other case you are in the water.

On the evening following His resurrection, Jesus appeared to the disciples and said, "Peace be with you," and with that He breathed on them and said, "Receive the Holy Spirit." (*Jn 20:21-22 NIV*) And why did He breathe on them? Well, in Hebrew the word for "breath" and the word for "spirit" are one and the same. Truly He breathed on them because He was imparting His Spirit to them. But later, as He was about to ascend into heaven, He told them, "Do not leave Jerusalem, but wait for the gift my Father promised, which you have heard me speak about. For John baptized with water but in a few days you will be baptized in the Holy Spirit," (*Acts 1:4-5 NIV*) So this "baptism" in the Holy Spirit would be something different than "receiving" the Holy Spirit, which had already been done.

Then when the day of Pentecost came, they were all together in one place and,

"Suddenly a sound like the blowing of a violent wind came from heaven and filled the whole house where they were sitting. They saw what seemed to be tongues of fire that separated and came to rest on each of them. All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues as the Spirit enabled them." (*Acts 2:1-4 NIV*)

Immediately a crowd gathered and the same Apostle Peter who had denied the Lord just a few weeks earlier, was now filled with incredible boldness and began to preach to the people that Jesus was the Christ. The people in response were so convicted of their sin that 3,000 became believers and were baptized that very day. (*Acts 2:14-41*) The apostles began to do incredible miracles and even the dead were raised as a result. (*Acts 5:12-16, 9:36-43*) Thus the Gospel began to be spread throughout the world.

This is the effect of walking in the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit is not some private power that we can use for our own benefit, rather He is the presence, life, and power of God bringing His kingdom to this world through us. Through the Holy Spirit we too can reverse the curse and break the powers of Satan that bind so many. Through the power of the Holy Spirit we can bring the Kingdom of God to earth and preach Jesus boldly to those who need to hear about Him. And through the Holy Spirit we can be God's instruments to heal and minister to those around us. This is worth praying for.

For too long people have misunderstood who the Holy Spirit is, what He does, and why He came. He isn't some mysterious unknown member of the Trinity. He does not come to make people weird or strange. Rather, He is God Himself giving us the power to live the life that Jesus said to live, and to serve others with the power of God rather than our own strength.

How do we obtain this? Very simple. Pray and ask God for His Holy Spirit. His presence is a gift that God wants you to have. If you have committed your life to Christ, if you have put to death your own desires in order to learn from Jesus, and have renounced any hidden sin or selfish motives, then go to God and ask Him for the baptism of the Holy Spirit. Like with any prayer, keep asking until the answer comes. For it will come. God wants to equip you to do His work in the world.

### **The Balance**

One final point, as predicted in the Bible, many false prophets have gone out into the world. The true Holy Spirit is the Spirit of Jesus and will cause us to become like Him. He will produce the Godly fruit of the Spirit described in Galatians 5, whereas prophets who are arrogant, abusive, lustful, and greedy are not walking in Jesus Christ. (*Jude 1:3-22*)

The Holy Spirit testifies to the things written in the Word of God and glorifies Jesus Christ. He does not replace or contradict the written word of God because Jesus is the word of God. (*Jn 1:1-14*) Those who want to operate in the Spirit without any restriction by the Word of God will soon be led into severe error. They will be like a ship that has refused all navigation or control. They will either be lost at sea or dashed on the rocks.

So be a person of the Word and of the Spirit both. This is the balance that allows God to work through you with power to advance His kingdom on the earth.