

The Holy Spirit

The Holy Spirit is the Spirit of God, fully divine. He inspired holy men of old to write the Scriptures. Through illumination He enables men to understand truth. He exalts Christ. He convicts men of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment. He calls men to the Saviour, and effects regeneration. At the moment of regeneration He baptizes every believer into the Body of Christ. He cultivates Christian character, comforts believers, and bestows the spiritual gifts by which they serve God through His church. He seals the believer unto the day of final redemption. His presence in the Christian is the guarantee that God will bring the believer into the fullness of the stature of Christ. He enlightens and empowers the believer and the church in worship, evangelism, and service.

With regard to the Holy Spirit, I was raised in what seems to be by some an anti-Holy Spirit type of church. Now we would have never said that, but essentially that was the perception I had. I grew up in a church where they called the Holy Spirit the Holy Ghost, and think they did so that we would be afraid of Him.

Shortly after I graduated from high school I briefly dated a great Christian girl who one day related to me about an experience she had with the presence of the Holy Spirit working in power in and through her life. As she related the experience to me, I think she could tell that I thought she was a little bit off her rocker. Probably the same expression I would have if she told me she was taken up in a flying saucer and had medical experiments performed upon her by little green men. But she said to me, "Troy, maybe you need to investigate the Holy Spirit."

Well, a few days went by, and I was laying prostrate on top of my bed praying in my room by myself. I was not necessarily praying for God to fill me with His Spirit or move upon me in any particular way, I was simply telling God that I wanted all of Him there was to have, and I wanted Him to have all of me. When all of a sudden a rush of emotion overcame me, at one moment I would be crying and another moment I would be laughing and this incredible sense of the presence of God was there and I knew at that point that God was calling me to be used by Him to take the Gospel to the world. The first time in my life I had ever experienced anything like that, and the first time in my life I truly began to consider the infilling, power, manifestation and work of the Holy Spirit.

And so tonight we're going to investigate the Holy Spirit. I don't know what your spiritual context is or your religious background, and in a group like this we have a potpourri of backgrounds. But as we investigate, we're not going to base our understanding of the third Person of the Trinity on my experience, or anyone else's experience. To do that would be, at best, lacking, and at worst, dangerous and misleading. We're going to see what the Word of God says about the Holy Spirit. We'll do this by answering a few common questions.

I. Who is the Holy Spirit?

A. He Is a person. By that I don't mean that he is human, he's not. But rather, he has a personality. The Holy Spirit is not an "it." Some false teachers refer to the Holy Spirit as if he is some type of electric force, but I find it interesting that when Jesus spoke about him, such as in **John 14:16**, he never talks about an it, he always refers to the Holy Spirit as HE. In Acts Peter tells Ananias and Saphyra that they have lied to the Holy Spirit. You can't lie to a force, you can only lie to a person.

Now what difference does that make, other than to nerdy theologians, that the Holy Spirit is not a force. So what? If the HS is just an impersonable force, what difference does it make to him if you sin or not? But if he is a personal being, then he is grieved. That's the reason for verses like **Ephesians 4:30**, "Do not grieve the Holy Spirit by whom you were sealed." Realizing the personhood of the Holy Spirit is so much more effective as a motivation for us to overcome sin than to simply believe that the Holy Spirit is a vague force.

And if the Holy Spirit is some vague, frightening force, the scary Holy GHOST, then that's not very comforting. But if you believe that the Holy Spirit is a personal being that wants to comfort you and wrap you

in His heavenly blanket and rock you to sleep when you're going through difficult times, then that's a true comfort.

B. The Holy Spirit is God. Luke 1:35

Well if the Holy Spirit is God, and the shema of the old testament tells us that there is only one God, then that means he is one of the three persons of the Trinity.

Fascinating verse in Matthew 28:19 Singular name. One name, three persons. One essence, three members of the Trinity. So in brief, who is the Holy Spirit? He's God, a personal God.

II. What does the Holy Spirit Do?

I mean, come on, we have Jesus, why do we need the Holy Spirit? What does He do? Jesus Himself said we need the Holy Spirit. Why is that?

The Holy Spirit does specific work in our lives as individuals, and he also works in us collectively through what is known as the church.

A. He convicts us of sin

Jesus said in **John 16:8**, "When He comes, the Holy spirit, he will convict the world of sin." The HS convicts people of sin.

In Cambridge, England, in the last century, 19 year old Charles Andrews had been going through an intense inner conflict. Coming from a strict religious family he realized that what he had called an "evil form of impurity" was dragging him down. One night while I was kneeling at my bedside the understanding of the extreme evil of what I was doing came unexpectedly on me. It was as if it was a consuming fire making a house call. Then out of my utter need and helplessness came a marvelous sense of pardon and release. And His grace and love flooded my whole being.

The Holy Spirit convicted him of his sin, and then brought him to faith in Christ.

B. He Transforms our Lives Titus 3:5

John 3:5-8 *Jesus answered, "Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit he cannot enter into the kingdom of God. "That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. "Do not be amazed that I said to you, 'You must be born again.' "The wind blows where it wishes and you hear the sound of it, but do not know where it comes from and where it is going; so is everyone who is born of the Spirit."*

C. He Teaches Us. John 14:26, John 16:13

When the man of God anointed by the Spirit, preaches the Word of God inspired by the Spirit to the people of God who are indwelt by the Spirit, a supernatural transference takes place. That's why I believe preaching is a central part of Christian worship.

D. He Comforts and Counsels us. John 14:16-17

Somehow, we don't understand it, but in heavenly physics if Jesus would not have left the Holy Spirit would not have come. And the reason, Jesus says, that the Holy Spirit has come is to comfort and counsel.

Illustration: Counseling individuals in times of grief, loss, heartbreak, etc. Going to the hospital to talk with individuals. Time after time the HS has preceded my visit or my time with that person and has made Himself known to them as the great comforter and counselor.

Illustration: During the Nazi regime. Count von Moltke. Executed February 10, 1945. Not too long before the end of the war. He knew the allies were advancing, he wished to be free, but he was executed by the Nazis for his role in helping Jews escape to freedom. But count von Moltke was a committed Christian, and on the eve of his execution he wrote his wife a letter, and this is what he said: “The Holy spirit is allowing me to ponder my last 24 hours, not in terror, but with a sense of blessedness. It is just as it is written in Isaiah, ‘When thou passest through the waters, I am with thee.’ I am so full of thanks, so full of the Spirit that there is actually no room for anything else.” Let’s not forget that important part of His ministry.

**Not only does the Holy Spirit work in our lives as individuals,
He also works through us collectively**

All of us who are believers in Jesus Christ are a part of what is known as the church, or the Body of Christ. Christ initiated the church in Holy Spirit power on the day of Pentecost, and He continues to work in and through the church by the power of His spirit.

We are all part of the church because we have been baptized by the spirit into that church. 1 Cor 12:13 – Remember who the apostle Paul is writing to here – the church in Corinth. Now this church was quite a motley crew. This church was filled with a bunch of messups and had a bunch of hangups. There was disunity in the church, all kinds of forms of immorality, some were using communion as an opportunity to get drunk, some members in the church were suing one another, taking each other to court. And to all of them Paul says “For by one Spirit we were all baptized into one body.” He is using it as a point of unity among such a diverse group. , Eph 4:4-5; Ephesians 1:13

E. He Gifts Us For Service 1 Corinthians 12:11

F. He empowers Us Acts 1:8,

The surpassing greatness (*megathos*) of His power (*dunamis*) toward us who believe. These are in accordance with the working (*energia*) of the strength (*kratos*) of His might (*ischus*) which He brought about in Christ when He raised Him from the dead.

Eph 1:19-20; Romans 8:11

What does he empower us for? Warm fuzzies? To have some emotional experience? To experience joy? To have perfect peace? Those may be side effects to being empowered and filled by the spirit, but that is not the primary reason for that divine empowerment.

If you want to do an interesting study, go through the book of Acts and find where the scripture specifically says that this person or this group was filled with the Spirit. Do you know what you will find? Sometimes they speak in tongues. Sometimes they prophesy. Sometimes they’re overwhelmed with joy. But always they share the gospel with boldness.

So the Holy Spirit empowers you with that resurrection power for a specific purpose, that you might be an influence in the world where he has placed you.

One last Thought: It’s not about you having more of the Spirit, it’s about the Spirit having more of you.

It was the Greek philosopher and mathematician Archimedes who said, “If I had a big enough Lever, and a place to stand, I could move the world.”

The Lever of God is the Holy Spirit.