

The Holy Spirit: Divine Friend and Advocate

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It is the Holy Spirit who enables us to have a spiritual life. Yet there are sometimes misconceptions about the Holy Spirit. Who is the Holy Spirit and what is His work?

I. Images of the Holy Spirit

Just as the Father and the Son are described with images, so also is the Holy Spirit. These images include fire (Acts 2:3), water (John 7:37-39), rain (Isa 44:3), wind (John 3:8), oil (Isa 61:1), a dove (John 1:32), a seal (Eph 4:30), and a pledge (2 Cor 5:5).

II. The Holy Spirit in Salvation History

1. The Holy Spirit in the Old Testament

In the Old Testament the Holy Spirit was active at Creation (Gen 1:2). He came upon prophets and kings (Num 24:2; 1 Sam 16:13) and gave special abilities to the craftsmen who worked at the temple (Exod 31:3-6; 35:30-33). He would renew the hearts of human beings (Eze 11:19; 36:26-27) and be poured out on them (Joel 2:28-32). The Messiah would be filled with the Holy Spirit (Isa 11:1-5; 42:1-2).

2. Jesus and the Holy Spirit

Luke 1:35; Matt 1:18-20	The Spirit was active in Jesus' incarnation.
Luke 3:21-22	The Spirit came upon Jesus at His baptism.
Luke 4:1	The Spirit led Jesus into the wilderness to be tempted.
Luke 4:14-15, 17-21	The Spirit was active in Jesus' preaching and teaching ministry.
Matt 12:28; Acts 10:38	The Spirit empowered Jesus' healing ministry.
John 20:22	The Spirit was Jesus' gift after His resurrection.

3. The Holy Spirit and Pentecost

At Pentecost, Jesus' promise to give the Spirit to the church was fulfilled. Since then the third person of the divine Trinity is present within the Christian church (Acts 2:38).

What is new about Pentecost?

- Since Pentecost, the Holy Spirit is clearly revealed as a divine person separate from the Father and the Son.
- Since Pentecost, the Holy Spirit is given abundantly to all believers and not just to a limited group.
- Since Pentecost, the role of the Holy Spirit consists of being the representative of Jesus. Also, because the Holy Spirit is sent by the Father and the Son, He is also a representative of the Father.

Peter explained that, in the outpouring of the Spirit at Pentecost, the prophecy found in Joel 2:28-32 was being fulfilled (Acts 2:14-36). However, if one reads Joel 2:30-31, there is also a clear end-time dimension to the prophecy.

III. The Holy Spirit is God

Acts 5:3-4	The Spirit is called "God."
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1 Cor 3:16; 6:19	The Spirit fills the Church just as God filled the temple.
2 Tim 3:16; 2 Pet 1:20-21	The Spirit is the Author of Scripture.
Matt 12:31-32; 28:19	The Spirit is worshiped as God.
Heb 9:14	The Spirit is eternal.
Matt 1:20	The Spirit is holy.
1 Cor 2:10-11	The Spirit is omniscient.
Rom 8:2; Gen 1:2	The Spirit gives life and was present at Creation.
Matt 28:19; 2 Cor 13:14	The Spirit is equal with the Father and the Son, together comprising the Trinity.

IV. The Person and Work of the Holy Spirit

John 14:16, 26; 15:26; 16:7, 13	Human roles describe the Holy Spirit (helper, counselor, advocate).
1 Cor 12:7-11; Eph 4:30; Acts 13:1-4; 16:6-7	Human characteristics are attributed to the Holy Spirit (mind, will, feelings, actions). He is not a mere power.
John 14:16-17; 16:7	The Holy Spirit is sent by Jesus and the Father and will remain with us.
John 16:7-11, Matt 12:31-32	The Spirit brings conviction into the world.
John 3:5-6; Titus 3:5	Believers have rebirth and baptism by the Spirit.
Eph 1:13-14; 4:30	The Spirit dwells in believers.
John 14:26; 16:13	The Spirit illuminates believers.
1 John 3:24; 1 Pet 1:2; Gal 5:22-23; 6:8	The Spirit enables obedience and sanctification.
Rom 8:26; Acts 9:31	The Spirit intercedes, comforts, and helps.
Acts 1:8; 4:31	The Spirit enables witnessing.
1 Cor 12:8-10, 28-30; Rom 12:6-8; Eph 4:11	With the Spirit come spiritual gifts.
Matt 10:19-20	The Spirit assists persecuted believers.

V. Conclusion

Jesus is the model Spirit-filled person. He has shown us what it means to live a life under the Spirit's control—an abundant, fulfilling, and goal-oriented life. Because He has saved us and has sent us the Spirit, we also can be people of the Spirit and enjoy uninterrupted fellowship with the Holy Spirit.

The Holy Spirit is the great Giver: He points us to Jesus; He brings about our rebirth; He produces His fruit in us and provides us spiritual gifts. But the Giver is more important than His gifts. The gifts are to be used; the Giver is to be worshiped. We are His dwelling place, a temple of the Holy Spirit (1 Cor 6:19), through Whom we are most intimately connected with God. We are dependent on Him. Without the Holy Spirit there is no spiritual interest and no spiritual life. Once the Spirit has been poured out on the church, He is not taken back. Therefore, we can rejoice and we can be confident. We can even pray for a more intense infilling of the Holy Spirit and accept it by faith (Eph 4:30; 5:18; Luke 11:13). It is not only we who will benefit, but also those with whom we associate and for whom we labor.