

Pneumatology: What the Bible Says about the Holy Spirit

If we assume three ideas to be facts – that Jesus Christ may be coming back soon; that our purpose in life is to bring other human beings to him before it's too late; and that we depend fully on the Holy Spirit to help us do that – then we may conclude that Satan is bent on coming between us and the power of the Holy Spirit.

We live in an age of the Church when almost every group of Christians is talking about the Holy Spirit. But between groups of Christians there is such a wide difference of opinions about the Holy Spirit and his methods that many new believers feel hopelessly confused and despair of ever knowing the truth about the third Person of the Trinity. And if young Christians are confused and disheartened, you can be certain that somewhere out there in the shadows Satan and his demons are laughing and thinking that they have defeated us.

God is very patient with Christians who haven't yet heard all of his truth. He's very kind to us when we neglect some Bible concept out of pure ignorance. But when God brings additional truth into our lives, he watches closely to see how we will respond. If we see it as truth and act upon it he counts that as obedience. If we ignore the truth and go on as before, God has no choice but to mark us down as "disobedient."

Knowing what the Bible really says about the Holy Spirit is extremely important to the mature Christian life. Because there are so many bizarre ideas about the Holy Spirit, and because one's attachment to the Holy Spirit is the only way to achieve power and blessing in one's personal life and in the life of the church.

The Personhood of the Holy Spirit

1. He has all the marks of personality.

- Life

- John 7:37-39

- Romans 8:2

- Intelligence

- 1st Corinthians 2:11

- Romans 8:26-27

- Purpose
 - 1st Corinthians 12:11
- Sentience
 - 1st Corinthians 2:11
- Emotion
 - Isaiah 63:10 with Ephesians 4:30
 - Romans 15:30

2. Christ spoke of the Holy Spirit as a person.

- He called him the “Comforter,” “Helper” (Greek *parakletos*, “one called alongside to help.”
 - John 14:16-17

Notes: “Another helper...” Not heteron, “another completely different,” but allon, “another of the same kind.”¹

“Our Lord had been the Paraclete. Certainly no mere power or influence could take the place of the Son of God – only a Person (could do that)!²

- He used masculine personal pronouns when speaking of the Spirit.
 - John 16: 7, 8, 13, 14

*“He...” Ordinarily in Greek grammar a pronoun must agree in gender with its antecedent. The word *pneuma* (“spirit” or “wind”) is neutral in gender and would normally take a neutral pronoun, “it.”*

3. The Spirit is associated with the Father and the Son in such a way as to indicate personhood.

¹ See Robertson, A. T., *Word Pictures in the New Testament, Vol. V, The Fourth Gospel and the Epistle to the Hebrews*, (Nashville: Broadman Press, 1932), p. 252.

² McClain, Alva J. (revisions by John C. Whitcomb and Ivan H. French), “Christian Theology: Christ and the Spirit,” unpublished class notes (Winona Lake, IN: Grace Theological Seminary, 1972), p. 76.

- Matthew 28:19
- 2nd Corinthians 13:14

Try substituting “power” or “influence” for “Spirit” in either of these passages, and notice how unbalanced and absurd the statements read.

The Deity of the Holy Spirit

1. He is called “God.”
 - Acts 5:3-4
2. He exhibits divine attributes.
 - Hebrews 9:14 – eternity
 - Psalm 139:7-10 – omnipresence
 - 1st Corinthians 2:10-11 – omniscience
 - Luke 1:35 – omnipotence
3. He performs divine works.
 - Psalm 104:30 – providence
 - John 3:7-8 – regeneration
 - Romans 8:11 – resurrection

The Work of the Holy Spirit

1. In relation to the material universe
 - The Holy Spirit shared in the creation of the universe.
 - Job 26:13
 - The Holy Spirit is the Source of energy and order in nature.
 - Genesis 1:1-2 (see Deuteronomy 32:11)

- The Holy Spirit is active in the processes of nature
 - Job 33:4
 - Psalm 104:29-30
 - Isaiah 32:15
- The Holy Spirit is the divine artist in nature
 - Job 26:13

2. In relation to the Scriptures

- He is the Author of Scripture.
 - 2nd Samuel 23:1-2
 - 2nd Peter 1:21
 - 1st Corinthians 2:13
 - John 16:12-13
 - Revelation 2:7, 11, 17
- He is the interpreter of Scripture
 - 1st Corinthians 2:10-12
 - 1st John 2:27

3. In relation to Jesus Christ

- His miraculous conception
 - Luke 1:34-35
- His remarkable wisdom
 - Isaiah 11:1-4 with John 7:15
- His powerful preaching

- Luke 4:18, 22, 32
 - John 7:15
 - His mighty works
 - Matthew 12:28
 - Acts 10:38
 - His victorious life
 - Luke 4:1-2
 - His atoning death
 - Hebrews 9:14
4. The work of the Spirit in Old Testament days
- He strove with the hearts of men against sin
 - Genesis 6:3
 - Nehemiah 9:30
 - Acts 7:51
 - He fitted certain individuals for special service
 - For governing nations
 - Numbers 27:15-23
 - For military leadership
 - Judges 3:10; 6:34-36
 - For special feat of physical strength
 - Judges 14:5-6; 15:4-15
 - For skill in art, music, and literature

- Exodus 31:4-5
 - 2nd Samuel 23:1-2
 - For moral and spiritual courage
 - 2nd Chronicles 24:20-22
 - For prophetic ministry and the composition of the Scriptures
 - Numbers 24:2 (see verses 10-13)
 - Ezekiel 11:5, 24-25; 8:3 (see 1st Peter 1:1)
 - 2nd Peter 1:20-21
5. The work of the Spirit in the Church
- He created the Church
 - Acts 2:1-4
 - 1st Corinthians 12:13
 - He indwells the Church
 - 1st Corinthians 3:16-17
 - Ephesians 2:22
 - He presides over the Church
 - Acts 20:28 – governance
 - Acts 4:8-12; 1st Thessalonians 1:5 – preaching
 - Romans 8:26; Ephesians 6:18 – prayer
 - Ephesians 5:18-19 – song
 - He unifies the Church
 - Ephesians 4:3

- He completes the Church
 - Acts 13:2-4 – selecting and sending missionaries
 - Acts 16:6-7 – selecting the mission field
 - Acts 13:50-52 – sustaining missionaries in time of persecution
 - Acts 15:28 – provides solution to missionary problems

6. The Spirit's work in the individual believer

- He regenerates (John 3:5; Titus 3:5)
- He seals (Ephesians 1:13; 4:30)
- He indwells (1st Corinthians 6:19; Romans 8:9) – see below
- He baptizes (1st Corinthians 12:13)
- He fills (Ephesians 5:18)
- He imparts gifts (1st Corinthians 12:4-11)
- He leads (Romans 8:14)
- He teaches (1st John 2:20, 27)
- He sanctifies (1st Peter 1:2; 2nd Thessalonians 2:13)
- He witnesses (Romans 8:15; 1st John 5:7)
- He intercedes (Romans 8:26)
- He produces fruit (Galatians 5:22-23)
- He raises and changes the body (Romans 8:11)

The Indwelling of the Holy Spirit

1. The meaning of the Spirit's "indwelling"

- The Spirit indwells the entire Church collectively

- 1st Corinthians 3:16-17
- 2nd Corinthians 6:16
- Ephesians 2:21-22
- The Spirit indwells each Christian individually
 - John 14:16-17
 - 1st Corinthians 6:19-20
- Are all Christians indwelt by the Spirit?
 - The Pentecostal theory: No! The Spirit comes to dwell only in a special class of Christians, who give evidence of the Spirit's presence by specific signs: tongues, interpretation of tongues, prophecy.
 - The Biblical evidence: YES!
 - 1st Corinthians 1:1-2 with Romans 10:13 and 1st Corinthians 6:19
 - Romans 8:9
 - Galatians 4:6
 - Ephesians 1:13-14
 - 2nd Corinthians 1:22
 - 2nd Corinthians 5:5
 - Inference from the unity of the Godhead (see John 14:23)
 - Not true of every professing Christian (see Jude 18-20)
- Why didn't the first disciples receive the indwelling Spirit when they believed in Christ during his public ministry?
 - Jesus stated that indwelling, in a technical sense, was yet future (John 14:17)
 - The reason: he had not yet ascended (John 7:37-39 with Acts 2:33)

“It is foolish and dangerous to try to reproduce in present Christian experience the history of the Gospels and Acts.... We cannot duplicate every experience in the Gospels or Acts.”³

- What must a person do to have the indwelling of the Spirit?
 - Do whatever is necessary to become a Christ-follower: *believe* (John 7:37-39; Acts 11:17)
- Problem passages
 - Mark 16:16
 - Acts 2:38
 - See Acts 3:19, where baptism is omitted
 - See Acts 10:44-48, where the Spirit came upon them *before* baptism
 - Acts 5:32
 - Acts 6:7 – It is “obedience to the faith” that is required.
 - Romans 1:5; 16:26; 1st Peter 1:2 – Faith *is* obedience.
- Does the Holy Spirit ever cease to indwell the believer?
 - John 14:16-17
 - Philippians 1:6
- Practical values
 - Our duty: to believe this truth!
 - Our present duty: to keep the “temple” clean (1st Corinthians 6:19-20)
 - Our future experience: to be resurrected by the one who indwells us (Romans 8:11)

The Baptism of the Holy Spirit

³ McClain, “Christ and the Spirit,” p 84.

1. The Scriptures where this terminology is presented

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

Other texts where only “baptize” occurs, and context determines whether it is a reference to “Spirit” or “water” baptism

- Romans 6:1-4
- Galatians 3:27
- Ephesians 4:5
- Colossians 2:11-12
- 1st Peter 3:21

2. Six factors in every water baptism

- A baptizer⁴
- The element: water
- The baptized person: a professing Christian
- The condition: profession of faith in Christ
- The mode: immersion⁵
- The result: entrance into the visible local church⁶

3. Six factors in every occurrence of the baptism of the Holy Spirit

- The baptizer: Christ (Matthew 3:11; Mark 1:8; Luke 3:16; John 1:33; Acts 2:33)
- The element: the Holy Spirit (Acts 1:5; 11:16; 1st Corinthians 12:13)
- The baptized person: a genuine Christian (Acts 2:1-4; 1st Corinthians 12:13 w/ 1:1-2)
- The condition: genuine faith in Christ (Acts 1:5; 11:17)
- The mode: “baptize” is from the Greek verb that means “immerse.”

⁴ While the tradition among evangelicals has been that ordained elders shall perform baptisms, it should be noted that this restriction was unlikely at Pentecost; and many churches today encourage the husband to baptize the wife, and the father to baptize the child.

⁵ The issue of “triune” or “trine” immersion will be discussed more fully in the segment on the Statement of Faith of the Fellowship of Grace Brethren Churches.

⁶ The issue of local church membership requirements will be discussed more fully in the segment on the Doctrine of the Church.

- The results:
 - The believer is placed into the Body of Christ (1st Corinthians 12:13)
 - The believer is brought into Christ himself (Galatians 3:27)
 - The believer is identified with Christ's death and resurrection (Romans 6:2-4)

4. Questions

- Is the baptism of the Spirit ever repeated?
- What about Acts 8:14-17?
 - The Samaritans had to be taught to respect the Hebrew-Christian apostles
- What about Acts 19:1-6?
 - These were "Old Testament saints. As a significant group of John's disciples, it was appropriate that an apostle should usher them into the Body of Christ.

The Filling of the Holy Spirit

1. The Scriptural statements

- Exodus 31:1-5
- Luke 1:13-17
- Luke 1:39-43
- Luke 1:67
- Luke 4:1-2
- Acts 2:1-4
- Acts 4:7-12
- Acts 4:31
- Acts 6:1-6
- Acts 7:54
- Acts 9:17
- Acts 13:8-9
- Acts 13:49-52
- Ephesians 5:18
- Ephesians 3:14-19

2. The Biblical command – Ephesians 5:18

- This proves it is different from indwelling or baptism
- The Ephesian Christians had been blessed with every spiritual blessing (1:3), but

apparently still lacked the filling of the Spirit.

- The present imperative “be filled!” shows that God wants us to be filled continuously.
- The command proves that the responsibility for the filling is ours.
- To be “unfilled” is to be disobedient to the Lord’s command.
- To be filled is to be controlled (see Luke 6:11).

2. Results when filled with the Spirit

- Power for spiritual ministry (John the Baptist, Luke 1:13-17)
- Strength in time of temptation (Christ, Luke 4:1-2)
- Illumination of the Scripture (Pentecost, Accts 2:1-4)
- Testimony to Christ (Acts 4:5-9)
- Boldness in the face of opposition (Acts 4:23, 31)
- Fitness for work in the church (Acts 6:1-3)
- Courage in the hour of death (Acts 7:54-58)
- Urgency to proclaim Jesus as the Son of God (Acts 9:17-20)
- Exhortation (Acts 11:23-24)
- Joy in the midst of suffering (Acts 3:49-52)
- Singing in the heart and thankfulness (Ephesians 5:18-21)

3. Conditions for being filled with the Spirit

- Have a thirst for his fullness (John 7:37-39)
- Yield yourself to God (Romans 6:13; 12:1-2)
- Should we pray to be filled with the Spirit? There is no biblical command to do this. We should understand that God is ready to fill us when we meet the conditions, so there is probably no need to ask God for this.

4. Questions

- Do all Christians start out with this fullness? (See Acts 2:1-4)
- Can it be lost? (See Acts 4:29)

Sins Against the Holy Spirit

1. Committed by unbelievers

- Resisting the Spirit (Acts 7:51)

- Insulting the Spirit (Hebrews 10:29)
- Blaspheming the Spirit (Luke 12:10)

2. Committed by believers

- Quenching the Spirit (1st Thessalonians 5:19)
- Grieving the Spirit (Ephesians 4:20)
- Lying to the Spirit (Acts 5:3)

“A saved person is properly adjusted to Jesus Christ. A spiritual person is properly adjusted to the Holy Spirit.”⁷⁷

The Gifts of the Holy Spirit

1. Introductory considerations

- The work of the Holy Spirit: With regard to the individual believer, the work of the Holy Spirit is to place that believer into the Body of Christ, and to equip that believer to function within the Body.
- Warnings regarding spiritual gifts
 - These gifts are not the same as natural talents
 - These gifts are never to be a source of personal pride (Romans 12:2-3)
 - These gifts were never meant to be used apart from the ministry and oversight of the local church (1st Corinthians 12:7)
- Key passages
 - 1st Corinthians chapters 12-14
 - Romans 12:4-8
 - Ephesians 4:4-13
 - 1st Peter 4:10-11

2. Support gifts

- Purposes

⁷⁷ McClain, “Christ and the Spirit,” p. 94.

- To be “up front”: handling the Word of God
- To equip: stimulating others to action
- To support: serving as the “skeleton” of the Body
- Functions
 - Apostle
 - General meaning: “one sent”; a missionary
 - Specific meaning: The “Apostles of the Lord Jesus Christ” (i.e. the Twelve); if this definition is correct, then:
 - The gift is no longer given
 - The general duties of the apostle are now performed by others
 - Prophet
 - General
 - Announces God’s message with courage
 - Stimulates repentance or action
 - Specific: relays new information from God; implies:
 - The gift is no longer given
 - The general duties are now performed by others
 - Evangelist
 - General: a traveling preacher
 - Specific: shares the Gospel successfully
 - Pastor-teacher
 - Most likely a combination because:
 - The unique grammar of the phrase in Ephesians 3:11

- The unique function of the gift
 - Does some evangelistic work, but remains in one location
 - Equivalent to “elder” and “bishop” (see Acts 20:17, 28)
- Teacher
 - If a separate gift, only because it is implied in 1st Timothy 3:2
 - Evidence of the gift: If, when this gift is exercised, people are learning and growing
- 3. Service gifts
 - Purposes
 - If support gifts supply the skeleton to the Body, service gifts supply muscle
 - These gifts function more one-on-one
 - The goal is not so much to equip but to encourage, strengthen, or build up
 - “Up-front” service gifts
 - Administration (1st Corinthians 12:28)
 - The ability to lead tactfully
 - The ability to produce order
 - Exhortation (Romans 12:8)
 - The ability to make truth practical
 - The ability to motivate change
 - Faith (1st Corinthians 12:9)
 - The ability to believe God actively
 - The ability to move out confidently

- “Behind-the-scenes” service gifts
 - Giving (Romans 12:8)
 - The ability to sense the needs of others
 - The ability to provide what is needed
 - Helps (Romans 12:7; 1st Corinthians 12:18; 1st Peter 4:11)
 - The ability to identify a weak area in the Body’s function
 - The ability to support behind the scenes
 - Mercy (Roman 12:8)
 - The ability to empathize/sympathize
 - The ability to comfort

4. Miracle gifts

- Introduction
 - The miracle gifts are considerably more spectacular than the other gifts
 - Some are miracle of performance
 - The general gift of miracles: The superhuman ability to alter natural laws and processes
 - The specific gift of healing: The supernatural ability to restore someone’s health or life
 - Some are miracles of communication
 - The gift of prophecy, including:
 - 1) Ability to foretell the future
 - 2) Ability to know information not learned through normal means
 - 3) Ability to know the right course
 - The gift of tongue-speech, including:
 - 1) Ability to speak an unlearned language

2) Ability to interpret and translate the tongue-speech of another

- The miracle gifts are very limited in their purpose
 - They were designed to verify the message of the gospel (especially to skeptical Jewish people)
 - They were designed to assist in the founding of the Church
- The miracle gifts have not appeared (in a legitimately sense) since the first century after Christ
 - The shock value of Christ's miracles has never been matched
 - Christ declared that physical miracles would be replaced by greater works
 - Paul lived to see the fading of miracles
 - The closing warning of Revelation declares the end of communication miracles
 - The early Church Fathers testified that the sign gifts ceased after the Apostles
 - After the Apostles, the only Christians claiming miracles were false teachers
 - The modern groups (since the late 1800's) which profess to have miracles are unable to prove it to the satisfaction of other believers

4. A detailed critique of tongues

- The use of tongues is wrong
 - Those who speak in tongues today are mistaken about the purpose of tongues
 - Tongues were never designed to regularly edify Christians (1st Corinthians 14:4, 18-19)
 - Tongues were never designed to regularly convince non-Christians (14:23)
 - Tongues were designed to temporarily validate the Apostles' message (13:8-10; 14:22)
 - Those who speak in tongues today are mistaken about the implication of tongues

- Tongue-speech doesn't prove that one is baptized in the Spirit (1st Corinthians 12:13)
- Tongue-speech doesn't prove that one is filled with the Spirit (Ephesians 5:18f.)
- Tongue-speech doesn't prove that one is a spiritual person (1st Corinthians 1:11; 3:1; 5:1-2; 6:5-6; 11:22; 14:18-19)
- Tongue-speech doesn't prove that one is a Christian at all
 - It was done by ancient religions
 - It is done by modern religions
 - It is done by cults
 - It is done by drug users
 - It is done by the mentally ill
 - It is done by the demon-possessed
- The abuse of tongues indicates that it is wrong
 - Those who promote tongue-speech as evidence of a higher degree of spirituality display an unloving, proud attitude toward those who don't have the "gift" (1st Corinthians 13:1-4)
 - Those who promote tongue-speech as the ideal for every Christian, ignore the fact that the gifts vary for each person (1st Corinthians 12:4-7, 11, 30)
 - Those who promote tongue-speech as the central focus of worship, disregard the fact that it is the least important gift (1st Corinthians 12:98-10, 28-31; 14:1-3)
 - Those who promote tongue-speech regularly violate the Bible's guidelines for the exercise of the gift:
 - No more than two or three per gathering (1st Corinthians 14:27)
 - One at a time (14:27)
 - Always have an interpreter (14:27-28)
 - No women permitted to speak publicly in tongues (14:34)
 - All things done properly and orderly (14:40)

Recommended Reading

Pache, René. *The Person and Work of the Holy Spirit*. Chicago: Moody Press, 1954.

Robertson, A. T. *Word Pictures in the New Testament. Vol. V. The Fourth Gospel and the Epistle to the Hebrews*. Nashville: Broadman Press, 1932.

Assignments for Next Segment (“God’s Decrees”)

1. Read Grudem’s *Systematic Theology*, chapters 15-17.
2. Answer one or more of the “Questions for Personal Application” at the end of each chapter, and be prepared to share and discuss your answers in class. Or compose a question of your own (which relates to the subject matter in those chapters), research the topic, and be prepared to share your answer with the class.