

Chapter 2

HOLY SPIRIT 1

THE PERSON AND MINISTRY OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

SECTION 1: WHO IS THE HOLY SPIRIT?

- I. The Old Testament shows that God has progressively revealed Himself to man. It helps us understand something of the plurality of God's nature, but doesn't reveal the Trinity or Triunity of the Godhead. It shows that the Spirit of God is the active expression of God in the world. (Genesis 1:2, 26; Genesis 6:3; John 4:24)
 - A. The Old Testament writers made it clear that there is one God, not many gods. This was a major break with the polytheistic (many gods) belief of most other religions. The revelation of God in three persons wasn't fully given until Christ came revealing Himself as the Son conceived and indwelt by the Spirit of God His Father.
 - B. Old Testament scripture reveals a God who is eternal, omnipotent, omnipresent, the creator and sustainer of life. Other religions believed in gods who were spirit beings, but did not have the uniqueness of Jehovah.
 - C. Each aspect of God's progressive revelation of Himself; through His creation, through His acts of power, through His word, gives us more insight into who God is and what He is like. But it is only through Jesus Christ that we receive the full revelation of the Godhead as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. (Matthew 28:19)
- II. The Holy Spirit is perhaps the least understood person of the Godhead or aspect of God's nature. In this section we will look at some very practical things about the Holy Spirit that will help us understand Him better and have a better understanding of His ministry.
 - A. The Bible refers to several spirit-beings or types of spirit-beings: God is a Spirit, Angels are spirits, Satan is a spirit, demons are spirits, and man's essential being is spirit living in a body of flesh.
 - B. The word "*spirit*" means wind, breath, or life. The word "*holy*" means sacred, set apart, or unique. So when we use the term Holy Spirit, we mean a sacred or unique spirit, one of a kind, the Spirit of God.
 - C. The Holy Spirit possesses and manifests the character and nature of God. God's Spirit or the Holy Spirit is a person and not a "thing." We refer to the Holy Spirit as "He" and not as "it." Just as Jehovah is God the Father, and Jesus is God the Son, God's Spirit is God the Holy Spirit.
- III. Under the Old Covenant, the chief manifestations or operation of the "Spirit of God" had to do with God's work of creation and the interaction of God with nature, with empowering individuals with divine strength, skill, or wisdom, and as the source of the revelation of the prophets.

Foundation for Christian Service – Term 3 – Chapter 2 – Holy Spirit 1

- A. The Genesis account shows us that God's Spirit had an active role in the creation of the heavens and the earth. (Genesis 1:1-2, 26)
- B. Under the Old covenant there was the sense that the Spirit of God came upon people to empower them. This was not always related to moral quality or personal integrity or godliness. This is especially true in the case of Samson in Judges 13-16.
- C. David seems to begin to bring the understanding of the "Holy" Spirit. From David's time there is more of the moral sense related to the work of the Holy Spirit. (Psalm 51:10-11)
- D. We could sum up the work of the Holy Spirit under the Old Covenant as follows:
 - 1. An active role in Creation. (Genesis 1:2)
 - 2. To set people apart for a leadership task. (Numbers 11:25; 1 Samuel 16:13)
 - 3. To give divine purpose or calling. (Isaiah 61:1-3)
 - 4. To empower for action. God's Spirit came upon chosen individuals at times, enabling them to do or say things through God's power and wisdom. (Judges 3:10; Judges 6:34; Judges 14:19)
 - 5. To impart special skills or abilities to fulfill divine purposes. (Exodus 35:31)
 - 6. To reveal the Will and Word of God. The Holy Spirit was the writer of the Scriptures. (2 Samuel 23:2; 2 Chronicles 24:20; 2 Peter 1:20-21)
- E. Under the Old Covenant the work or anointing of the Holy Spirit seemed to be confined to only a few people, often to only one person in a generation. In fact, it seems that sometimes generations would pass without significant evidence of the anointing or empowering of the Holy Spirit on God's people. The Old Testament prophecies concerning the future work of the Holy Spirit under the New Covenant indicate a change would come and that after God introduced the New Covenant, the Holy Spirit and His anointing would be available to all people. (Joel 2:28-29; Ezekiel 36:26-27; Ezekiel 39:28-29)

IV. Because God's Spirit is a spirit and therefore does not have a body that can be seen, the Holy Spirit, His nature, and His work are often represented with symbols that show some aspect of His nature or His work. Here are some commonly known symbols of the Holy Spirit:

- A. **Dove:** At the baptism of Jesus, the Holy Spirit is represented in the form of a dove, which shows both His gentleness and His purity. It is a picture of the Dove anointing resting on the Lamb nature. (Matthew 3:16)
- B. **Wind:** When the Holy Spirit was poured out on the waiting believers on the day of Pentecost, they experienced something like the sound and effect of a strong wind. Jesus had said previously that the Holy Spirit was like the wind, unseen but powerful and effective. (John 3:8; Acts 2:2)
- C. **Fire:** Also in the outpouring of the Holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost, something like

Foundation for Christian Service – Term 3 – Chapter 2 – Holy Spirit 1

flames of fire appeared and came to rest on those who were filled or baptized in the Holy Spirit on that occasion. John the Baptist had testified that Jesus would baptize with the Holy Spirit and with fire. (Matthew 3:11; Acts 2:3-4)

- D. **Anointing oil:** The practice of anointing a priest or king with oil was a symbolic act picturing the empowering of the person by God's Holy Spirit. The empowering of believers for ministry through the Holy Spirit continues to be referred to as "anointing." (Luke 4:18; Acts 10:38; 2 Corinthians 1:21-22 KJV; Hebrews 1:9; 1 John 2:20,27)
- E. **Spring or well:** Jesus said that the Holy Spirit would be like a springing well or stream of living water that would flow from within the spirit-filled believer. The Holy Spirit would be a continually renewed source of life and refreshing. (John 7:38-39)

SECTION 2: THE MINISTRY OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

- I. The ministry of the Holy Spirit in the Life of Jesus shows the beginnings of how the Spirit's ministry would change as God brought in His New Covenant. Here are some of the scriptures that show the Holy Spirit's ministry in the life of Jesus Christ:
 - A. Jesus was conceived by the Holy Spirit. (Matthew 1:18)
 - B. Jesus was baptized or filled with the Holy Spirit. (Luke 3:22)
 - C. The Holy Spirit was abiding or remaining on Him. (John 1:33)
 - D. Jesus received the Holy Spirit without measure or limit. (John 3:34)
 - E. Jesus was led into the wilderness temptation by the Holy Spirit. (Mark 1:12)
 - F. Jesus returned from the wilderness in the power of the Holy Spirit. (Luke 4:14)
 - G. Jesus testified, "*The Spirit of the Lord is upon Me.*" (Luke 4:18)
 - H. Jesus was anointed with the Holy Spirit and Power. (Acts 10:38)
 - I. Jesus was resurrected by the Holy Spirit. (Romans 8:11)
 - J. Jesus promised that the Father will send the Holy Spirit on believers. (John 14:26)
 - K. Jesus will baptize with the Holy Spirit. (Matthew 3:11)
- II. The work of the Holy Spirit was essential in the development of the Church as is shown especially in the book of Acts. From the day of Pentecost onward, the Holy Spirit is seen as constantly present and involved in every aspect of church life and the life of the believers. He empowers, reveals, even transports believers. He is involved in the choice of leaders and in the direction of missionary effort. The witness of the Spirit is considered to be the deciding factor in matters of dispute. Here are some scripture accounts of the work of the Holy Spirit in the Church:
 - A. The first deacons were chosen on the basis of their being "*full of the Holy Spirit and wisdom.*" (Acts 6:3)

Foundation for Christian Service – Term 3 – Chapter 2 – Holy Spirit 1

- B. The Holy Spirit directed Philip where to go and then transported him supernaturally when his task was completed. (Acts 8:29,39)
 - C. The Holy Spirit told Peter that men were looking for him and that he should go with them to minister. (Acts 10:19; Acts 11:12)
 - D. The Holy Spirit directed the first steps of sending missionaries from the church at Antioch. (Acts 13:2)
 - E. The Holy Spirit gave direction concerning the ruling about whether Gentile believers were required to keep the Jewish law. (Acts 15:28)
 - F. The Holy Spirit prevented Paul from ministering in Asia. (Acts 16:6)
 - G. The Holy Spirit inspired the prophet Agabus and others to foretell Paul's arrest and imprisonment at Jerusalem. (Acts 21:11; Acts 20:23)
 - H. The Holy Spirit had selected the elders and made them overseers of the church at Ephesus. (Acts 20:28)
- III. In looking at the accounts of the work of the Holy Spirit in both Old and New Testaments, we could say that the general work of the Holy Spirit is:
- A. To impart power to fulfill God's purposes. (Zechariah 4:6)
 - B. To impart power over Satan and his kingdom. (Matthew 12:28)
 - C. To testify that Jesus is the Son of God. (John 15:26)
 - D. To convict of sin. (John 16:8)
 - E. To impart resurrection power and life to believers. (Romans 8:11; 1 Peter 3:18)
 - F. To enable us to pray according to God's will. (Romans 8:26)
 - G. To impart the life of God and to make us competent ministers of the New Covenant. (John 6:63; 2 Corinthians 3:6)
 - H. To inspire prophetic revelation. (2 Peter 1:21)
 - I. To call or draw people to the life that is in Jesus Christ. (Revelation 22:17)
 - J. In John 14-17 we find perhaps the most detailed teaching and insight concerning the nature, character, and work of the Holy Spirit. These teachings can be summed up as follows:
 - 1. He is the Spirit of Truth
 - 2. He guides believers into all truth.

Foundation for Christian Service – Term 3 – Chapter 2 – Holy Spirit 1

3. He brings to memory Christ's teachings.
4. He shows things to come.
5. He glorifies Christ.
6. He speaks not of Himself, but of Christ.
7. He bears witness to Christ.
8. He enables believers to do greater works than those of Christ.
9. He convicts the world of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment.
10. He comes because Christ goes away.
11. He is a comforter.
12. He is to abide with believers forever.

IV. The Bible shows us that under the New Covenant, there is to be a threefold ministry of the Holy Spirit to every Christian believer. God promises that the Holy Spirit will be **WITH US, WITHIN US**, and that he will be **UPON US**. (John 14:17; Acts 1:8)

A. The Holy Spirit will be **WITH US**. The word "with" (Greek word *para*) in John 14:17 means by, beside, near. Even before we become Christian believers the Holy Spirit is **WITH US**. He is with us as a comforter, as a protector, and as a convictor of sin. The way one becomes a believer is that the Holy Spirit draws us to Christ, convicts us of sin, and convinces us of the truth of the Gospel. We are able to believe because of the Holy Spirit's presence **WITH US** and His ministry to us. (Matthew 28:20; John 6:44; John 14:17; Also see Hebrews 1:14 - angels)

B. When we become a Christian believer and are born again the Holy Spirit will be **WITHIN US** (Greek word *en*). When we are born again spiritually God's Spirit and God's life actually begins to live inside us. The Holy Spirit is actually dwelling in believers who have experienced the new birth through faith in Jesus Christ. When the Holy Spirit lives **WITHIN US**, He gives us eternal life, He assures us of our relationship with God, He guides us more clearly, He reveals the truth of scripture, and He brings us into fellowship with other believers. (Ezekiel 36:27; John 14:17; Romans 8:9; 1 Corinthians 3:16; 1 John 2:27)

C. When we are baptized with the Holy Spirit or filled with the Holy Spirit, the Holy spirit comes **UPON US** (Greek word *epi*). This experience may be accompanied by outward manifestations such as trembling, weakness, or speaking in tongues. It may be accompanied by inward feelings of peace or of joy. But the real purpose in the Holy Spirit's ministry of coming **UPON US** is to empower us for service. The Holy Spirit empowers us to serve and equips us with spiritual gifts (Grace Gifts) that we can use in our service to God and the advancement of His Kingdom. (Acts 1:8)

1. When the Holy Spirit was poured out on the disciples on the day of Pentecost, this ushered in a new aspect of the Holy Spirit's ministry to New Covenant believers.
2. Under the Old Covenant, the Holy Spirit had come upon individuals at times and

seasons to empower them. This present ministry now represents God pouring out His Spirit on believers in much the same way the Spirit was upon Jesus. This is an abiding anointing.

- D. We as Christian believers should seek to know the Holy Spirit in all His fullness and to receive and live in the blessing of the Three-fold Ministry of the Holy Spirit. We have been drawn to Jesus by the ministry of the Holy Spirit, we have been born again through the ministry of the Holy Spirit, and we must be empowered for service through the ministry of the Holy Spirit.

QUESTIONS FOR STUDY AND DISCUSSION

Chapter 2 Holy Spirit 1: The Person and Ministry of the Holy Spirit

1. What are the main differences you can see in the ministry of the Holy Spirit under the Old Covenant and the ministry of the Holy Spirit under the New Covenant?
2. How would you explain the person and work of the Holy Spirit to a new believer or to someone who knows about God the Father and about Jesus, but has no real understanding of who the Holy Spirit is or what He does?