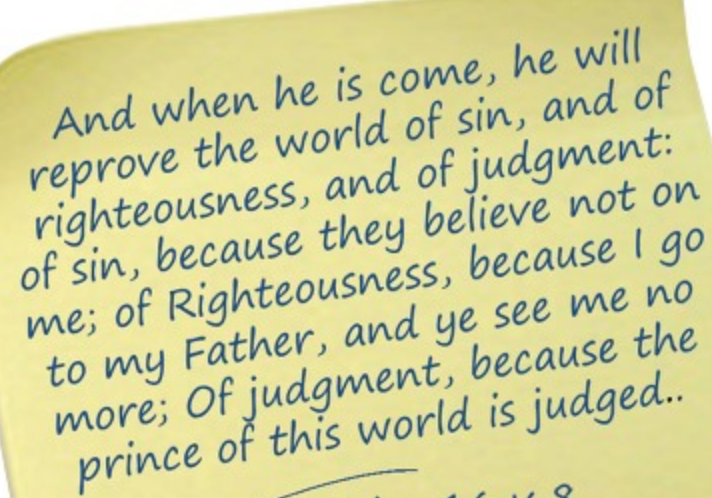


God, the Holy Spirit

by Leslie Craig - Jan 2015.
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The Holy Spirit is a divine person who possesses all of the incommunicable attributes of deity. That He is a person is attested to by the teaching of Jesus Christ (John 14:16) when He spoke of Him as "another comforter". The Lord Jesus was a personal comforter to His disciples and He promised to send another personal comforter of the same kind to them. The grammar of the New Testament addresses Him with a masculine pronoun (He) when the expected pronoun for the word 'spirit' would be 'it'. Peter taught that lying to the Holy Spirit is lying to God (Acts 5:3-4). The fact that the Holy Spirit possesses the attributes of omnipotence (Psalm 104:30) omniscience (Isaiah 40:13) and omnipresence (Psalm 139:7) is attested to by many scriptural references.



And when he is come, he will reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment: of sin, because they believe not on me; of Righteousness, because I go to my Father, and ye see me no more; Of judgment, because the prince of this world is judged..

John 16 v 8

The Holy Spirit relates to the other two members of the Godhead with perfect unity of purpose, yet with a diversity of function. It is the Father who is often presented as the one who plans and purposes. It is the Son who is often presented as the one who performs and perfects, and it is the Holy Spirit who is often presented as giving power and making divine revelation personal to those creatures to whom it is revealed.

It is little surprise then, that the first member of the Trinity to be identified in the Bible is the Holy Spirit (Gen 1:2). The Holy Spirit is seen as the one whose energising power formed an unformed earth with the necessary geographical features to sustain life, and filled an unfilled earth with a vast variety of lifeforms. It is instructive to see from the very first page of scripture, that the result of the work of the Holy Spirit was a structured and ordered world full of life, growth and fruitfulness. This theme is expanded in the spiritual realm throughout scripture.

The Bible is the inspired (God-breathed - 2Timothy 3:16), inerrant communication of God to man. It is accurate in every detail, whether historic or geographical. It is exact to the extent of its grammar whether in the tense of verbs or in the singular/plural number of a noun. Yet, it was written by men. It was the work of the Holy Spirit to accomplish such a miracle of accuracy and intelligibility (2Peter 1:21). The Holy Spirit lifted men up as His instruments, never violated their personalities, yet through them communicated the mind of God in a perfect way. It is also the Holy Spirit who uses the word of God to convince sinners of the need of salvation (as pictured in the parable of Luke 15:8) and to teach believers the will of God (1Corinthians 2:13-14).

The Holy Spirit came upon men (Judges 6:34) and in-dwelt men (Daniel 4:8) of the Old Testament eras. Yet this was a temporary and changeable experience. When Saul defied the command of God, the Spirit left him and came upon David (1Samuel 16:13-14). David never forgot this and when he had grievously sinned, prayed that God would not take His Spirit from him (Psalm 51:11). On the eve of His crucifixion, the Lord Jesus revealed that the Spirit would come in a new capacity. He would permanently dwell in every believer (John 14v17). In fact it would be impossible to be in Christ without having the permanent-in-dwelling of the Holy Spirit (Romans 8:9).

This age of the Holy Spirit began on the day of Pentecost, 50 days after the resurrection of Christ. It had been predicted by John the Baptist (Luke 3:16) and by the Lord Jesus Himself (Acts 1:5). It was on the day of Pentecost that the risen Christ formed a body which has grown to include every believer in this church age. Christ did this by baptising those gathered in the Holy Spirit (Acts 2:1-4, 1Corinthians 12:12-13). Just as only Moses' generation went through the Red Sea and were thereby baptised unto Moses (1Corinthians 10:1-4), so only the 120 or so disciples in the upper room were immersed in the Holy Spirit, an act that was symbolised by a wind-like sound that filled the room. Just as every subsequent generation of Israel was "born under the law" because of the initial baptism unto Moses, so every subsequent person who is born again in this church age is added to the body that was formed on the day of Pentecost.

Every Christian is not only part of the body of Christ by the baptism in the Holy Spirit, but also receives the Holy Spirit within. Both aspects are vital for the blessings of the church age. The presence of the Holy Spirit within a believer brings the assurance of sonship (Romans 8:14-16). He also acts as a two-way guarantor of the inheritance into which these sons are brought. As an earnest or deposit, He secures the inheritance for the believer, and as a seal He secures the believer for the inheritance (Ephesians 1:13-14).

The Holy Spirit sovereignly gifts each Christian as He places them as members in the body of Christ (1Corinthians 12:11). Many of the gifts were given as confirmation of the teaching of the apostles (Hebrews 2:1-4) and therefore ceased with the passing of the apostolic days. Now that the church is beyond the foundational gifts (Ephesians 2:20), there remain spiritual gifts such as evangelising, teaching, serving, caring and showing mercy for the up-building of the body of Christ.

The presence of the Holy Spirit in this world is a convicting fact as He bears witness to the rejection of the Son of God (John 16:8-11). He is also a restraining influence, holding back the inevitable slide into apostasy and the full unveiling of wickedness in the coming Antichrist (2Thessalonians 2:7). On the completion of the church age, He will play His full part in the climax of earth's history and the final unveiling of Jesus Christ as the King of Kings (Revelation 4:5).