

SESSION 7: THE HOLY SPIRIT IN FIRST PETER, HEBREWS, AND REVELATION

We will do a short overview on these books as each has extensive description of the Spirit of God.

1 Peter shares understanding of the Spirit that redefines the values of identity and honor, and the meaning of life in light of life and death, according to John Carroll.

Hebrews shows the Spirit of God as an authoritative voice in scripture. The voice connects covenant with Christ. The Spirit is an eternal and gracious reality. The Spirit cannot be owned or manipulated towards human intentions or needs.

Revelation shows struggle of how Christians should interact with the Roman Empire. How should the people faithful to God operate within the Roman Empire? Should they retreat or engage from the system of the empire? The Spirit inspires the prophetic witness of John. The divine origin and authority of the Spirit is underscored. This is contrast to counterfeit spirits with their claim to power and sovereignty. The spirit harbors hope for the readers.

First Peter

First Peter is address to who? See 1 Peter 1:1

The people who are recipients of the Spirit, are strangers in the world of the diaspora.”

Holy Spirit lead the crafting of the Authority of the Scripture – 1 Peter 1: 10-12.

Loyalty to Christ make the connection between suffering and honor (glory/doxa).

The struggles of the developing faith should reflect walk in faith. (1:11-14)

Readers should note the quality and qualifier for the Spirit (1:15-16). What is the process here?

Human Spirit is aligned the divine Spirit –

- Gentleness of Spirit – 1 Peter 3:4
- Unity, compassion, and humility – 1 Peter 3:8

Experience of “suffering framed in terms of the assurance of the future honor and life with God.” 1 Peter 3: 18-22. Note the connections with the death of Jesus, spirits beyond life, and how “spirits” or spirit-beings who were disobedient to Christ.

Who are the “Spirits in Prison”? 1 Peter 3:18

- all are dead (cf. 4:6)
- the wicked contemporaries of Noah who perished in the flood (Genesis 6-8)
- the rebellious angels of Genesis 6:1-6. See 1 Enoch (chs. 6-16) and Jubilee (5.6; 7.21; 10.1-9) – spiritual beings

1 Peter 4:6 that dead in the Lord have a share in the Spirit Life.

1 Peter 4:14 transposes the “Spirit of God” image into the honor/glory key. What does this mean for followers of Jesus?

HEBREWS

The letter to the Hebrews is presented as “word of encouragement” (13:22). This is an anonymous “letter” or composition “with several intriguing references to the Holy Spirit.” The Christian community appear not to be keeping up on their faithfulness and enthusiasm of their initial commitment to Christ. The appeal is to be faithful to way of Christ and direction of the Spirit. The Authority of the Spirit is voiced in the present tense in this writing. (“says,” “testifies”; 3:7; 10:15).

The Spirit inspires the power of the word (scripture) [3:7-11; 10:15-17] and its interpreter (9:8-9). Somehow the influence of the Spirit is connected to the creative and reflective nature of the writings. The understanding of the work of Christ and the way for practical living in community by the faith (moral-parenetic implications).

There are some concepts about living for God that are worth noting.

Read Hebrews 3: 5-12 and compare with interpretation of Psalm 95:7-11. What are some words/concepts that are emphasized?

Read Hebrews 9: 1-28 and the understanding of the wilderness tent/tabernacle to the heavenly sanctuary. (Background Exodus 25:1-31:11; 36:1-40:38; Lev.16:1-34). What are some understandings/words that we come to your attention?

Read Hebrews 10: 12-14, quoting Psalm 110:1 is supporting reflection in Chapter 10 about the Christological picture of God by focusing on the Spirit’s witness. See also Hebrews 10:15-18 (Jeremiah 31:33-34 and Ezekiel 36:26-29; 37:14).

References to the work of the Holy Spirit – as working for the faithful.

1. Eternal Spirit - Hebrews 9:14
2. Spirit of grace – Hebrews 10:29, (30-31).

What does those similar references say about living within God’s grace?

3. Spirit as an experienced reality that surrounds believers living. There are signs or indicators of the Spirit special activity (or gifts from the Spirit) – Read Chapter 2:1-4. Where these signs/gifts named?
4. Participation in the divine Spirit is of high importance – Read 6:4-6. What is the implication of these verses about faithful Christian living?
5. What is the significance to relationships is the term “Father of spirits?” [Read 12:9-11].

BOOK OF REVELATION

The prophet witness to the rule of God and Jesus Christ is provocative in a world where Rome is the superpower. Here the term *en pneumati* ("in the Spirit") is spread across the visions in this book. [See 1:10; 4:2; 17:3; 21:10]. Perhaps this book was written in a time of crisis or when crisis was recently experienced. This crisis is said to be due to persecution from Rome itself.

Who is the *kyrios* (Lord) of the social settings seem to be important in this prophesy. There are two world systems and competing loyalties at stake: imperial Rome and the one true God. Read 1:5, 5:1-14.

Was the incident in chapter 2:13 a sign of things to come?

The Prophetic Testimony in the Spirit:

1. Vision as suspension of normal to engage the Spirit (1:10; 4:2; 17:3; 21:10).
2. The importance to listen well (2:7, 11, 17, 29; 3:6, 13, 22). Is John the divine source or is Jesus-and-Spirit is?
3. Significance of the Spirit transporting John to receive revelation has OT motifs. Read (4:2; 17:3; 21:10). Bible examples are in Acts 8:39-40; 1 Kings 18:12; Ezekiel 3:12, 14; 37:1).
4. Relationship between Jesus and the Spirit emphasized (3:1-6; see Zechariah 4:10). What is being said about the Spirit?
5. Public testimony of the Two Witnesses – Rev. 11:3-13. Read also Zechariah 4:1-6. What does it say about the church's prophetic witness?

JOHN CAN "SEE" THE FUTURE COMING

1. The Spirit is an eschatological power, a picture of the future God intends, that is connecting and reshaping present realities. [For a greater understanding read chapter 18 about the fall of Rome; chapters 19-20 on final defeat of evil; chapter 21 to 22:5 about the New Jerusalem.
2. Read Revelations 22:6, 22:7, and 22:8, 20. Is there hope in these texts? What is it and why is hope needed?
3. Listen to the reassuring message of the Spirit, to those who witness to God-and-Christ as Lord: Read 22:17. What did you hear? [Read 14:12-13]
4. John's prophetic message to the church is directed also to the world. Read Revelations 11:3-13.
5. Authentic witness of/to Jesus within prophesy ends up about worship (19:10). See also Chapters 4 and 5 as reference. What can this say about present day approach to worship? How does the Spirit encourage (or assure) and challenge (warn) through our worship together?

Conclusion:

What are some keys and ideas that we can take away from this Bible Study?

- How is the church encountering the enlivening and powerful Spirit?

- What is the place of the Holy Spirit as divine presence? (Matthew 28:19; Acts 2:33; John 1:1; 20:22; 1 Corinthians 12:4-6)
- How connected is praise worship and cultural relevant worship today to the Christian witness of God-and-Christ today?
- The debate of the Spirit and the Trinity controversy continued for a long time. The insertion of term filioque=Latin for “and [from] the Son” has been debated by the West (Roman Catholic) and the Eastern Theologians. There has been a convergence of thought since the late 20th century.
- “How can the experience of the divine Spirit, and reflection on the meaning of that experience of God’s holy presence, inform readers of the New Testament and energize communities of faith, but in a manner that also fosters unity, a unity that embraces difference?” [The Holy Spirit in the New Testament. John Carroll. Abingdon Press, p.130]