

THE SPIRIT IN MARK AND MATTHEW

The strong influence of and impact of the Spirit in the New Testament like the Old Testament (Tanak) moves prophetic vision and speech among people. According to John Carroll, elements of the Spirit include being creative, life-giving presence; the source of human wisdom and talents; saving community from danger; and a force for the restoration of both life and moral capacity. (62).

THE SPIRIT IN MARK

“Jesus’s Spirit-powered mission” establishes among community the reign of God and the defeat of unclean evil spirits that oppress human beings. My reading of the texts gives that sense that the contrast of Jesus empowered mission affects the totality of life experience in creation. There is urgency and intensity in this struggle of Holy Spirit versus destructive spirits.

The Spirit comes within the Jordan River baptizing prophet John who points to Jesus (read Mark 1: 7-11).

Is this a private or public revelation? Why is this so?

What is the dove descending symbolizing of the coming of Jesus? (Gen 8:8-12?)

Jesus is forced into the wilderness in Mark 1:12ff. Contrast the time in wilderness with Mark 14:38 (read). Jesus body and spirit will prove prepared for the test of faithfulness.

Jesus is able to command unclean spirits to obey him (1:27).

All forces against God will be liberated in the Spirit powered Jesus (Mark 3:22-27).

In this assault on these unclean spirits there is a troubling and puzzling statement – “...insulting the Holy Spirit” will never be forgiven. Read Mark 3:28-29.

What does this statement say about openness to the Holy Spirit and human flourishing?

Mark 11: 9- 10 identifies the Messiah as David’s son is questioned by Jesus (12:35). The Messiah is to be identified by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit.

Importantly, the Holy Spirit holds in balance the future mission “to all nations” as witnesses to the good news. (Read Mark 13:9-13).

What do we observe that the Spirit will do?

Why is the reign of God’s rule/kingdom inviting hostility to the disciples?

THE SPIRIT ACCORDING TO MATTHEW

Matthew according to John Carroll takes the references of the Holy Spirit in Mark's Gospel making interpretations to them. Matthew Gospel is organized around six major discourses with Jesus being the master teacher. Let us examine some examples of the impact of the Spirit in Matthew.

1. The influence of the Spirit at the beginning and end as God with us.
Read Matthew 1:18-23. Read Matthew 28:18-20.
What do we observe about God who is with the disciples?
2. John indicate a baptism of fire of the Holy Spirit – Matthew 3:7-12. See Matt. 7:15-23.
What has the theme of judgement to associate with the separation of good and bad?
3. Jesus' baptism is to "fulfill all righteousness." Matthew 3:15-17.
4. Testing of Jesus – Matthew 4:2-13.
5. Healing activity and testimony of disciple is Spirit led – Matthew 10:1, 17-20.
How meaningful to you is God present of Spirit for your witness?
6. Jesus accused of supporting anti-God powers. Matthew 12:22-32.
What are some anti-God powers in our times?
How do we respond when challenged about supporting anti-God powers today.
7. Jesus ministry as Servant filled with the Spirit (Spirited Servant)
Read Matthew 12: 15-21. See Isaiah 42:1-4.
What is the connection between Jesus speaking and healing?
Who are the beneficiaries of the Spirit healing power in Jesus?
How is the work of the Holy Spirit with Jesus related to justice (*krisis*)? –
(see Matthew 8: 10-13 for example).

Matthew's Spirit driven ministry in Jesus began in the creative activity of the Spirit. The Spirit brought judgement/justice and healing to unlikely recipients Gentiles along with Judeans. The Spirit will drive baptism in the (Father, Son) for welcoming disciples of all people as continual effective task.