

Systematic Theology - Lesson 15

The Work of the Holy Spirit

I. Review: The Person of the Holy Spirit

- The Holy Spirit is a Person, not an impersonal force.
- He possesses intelligence, will, and emotions.
- He teaches, speaks, comforts, guides, and personally relates to believers.
- The Father is God, the Son is God, and the Holy Spirit is God.
- The three Persons are equal in deity, distinct in person, and united in essence.
- Lesson 14 answered the question, “Who is the Holy Spirit?”
- Lesson 15 asks, “What does the Holy Spirit do?”
- The Holy Spirit is not merely a doctrine to understand. He is God actively accomplishing the Father’s plan through the finished work of Christ.
- The Father plans redemption, the Son accomplishes redemption, and the Holy Spirit applies redemption.

II. The Unified Work of the Triune God

- The Holy Spirit never works independently of the Father or the Son.
- The Father, Son, and Spirit work together in one unified plan.
- John 15:26 shows the Father sending, the Son sending, and the Spirit coming to testify about Christ.
- Everything God does is the work of the one Triune God, although each Person fulfills a distinct role.
- The Spirit’s work is Christological: centered upon Jesus Christ.
- He reveals Christ, glorifies Christ, applies Christ’s work, and unites believers to Christ.
- John 16:14 - “*He will glorify me, because he will take from what is mine and declare it to you.*”
- Any understanding of the Spirit that is detached from Christ dishonors the Spirit rather than exalting Him.

III. The Holy Spirit in the Old Testament

A. The Spirit at Creation

- The Holy Spirit first appears in Genesis 1:1–3.
- The earth was formless and empty, darkness covered the waters, and the Spirit of God hovered over them.
- Two realities are present: the Spirit of God and the Word of God.
- God creates by His Word through His Spirit.

- The Spirit brings order, life, and beauty out of formlessness, emptiness, and darkness.
- This pattern later becomes a picture of regeneration: the Spirit brings life out of death and order out of chaos.

B. The Spirit Throughout the Old Testament

- The Spirit guided Israel through the wilderness.
- The Spirit equipped craftsmen for the construction of the Tabernacle.
- The Spirit inspired the prophets to speak God's Word.
- Generally, the Spirit's Old Testament ministry was enigmatic, sporadic, selective, and external.
- The Spirit's empowering presence came upon particular people for particular tasks.
- His empowering ministry was not yet universally experienced by all of God's covenant people.

C. Moses' Longing and the New Covenant Promise

- Numbers 11:29 records Moses' wish that all the LORD's people would receive His Spirit.
- Old Testament believers were regenerated, empowered, and enabled to believe by the Spirit.
- The Old Testament does not describe permanent, universal, covenant indwelling in every believer.
- Under the Old Covenant, God's dwelling presence was especially associated with the Tabernacle and Temple.
- The Spirit's empowering ministry was often associated with leaders, prophets, priests, and kings.
- Ezekiel 36:25–27 promised cleansing, a new heart, a new spirit, and God's Spirit within His people.
- Joel 2:28–30 promised that God would pour out His Spirit on sons and daughters, old and young, male and female servants.
- Together, these passages promise a new heart, a new spirit, and a New Covenant.
- The fulfillment begins in Jesus Christ and reaches its public fulfillment at Pentecost.

IV. The Holy Spirit in the Person of Christ

A. Christ's Conception

- The New Testament reveals the Spirit's work with greater clarity.
- Luke 1:35 teaches that the Holy Spirit came upon Mary and the power of the Most High overshadowed her.

- The Spirit miraculously conceived Christ, fulfilled God's promise, and marked the beginning of the Incarnation.
- Jesus is the true dwelling place of God among His people.

B. Christ's Baptism and Earthly Ministry

- At Jesus' baptism, the Father spoke, the Son obeyed, and the Spirit descended like a dove.
- The Trinity is revealed working together in perfect unity.
- Luke 4:1 says Jesus was full of the Holy Spirit and led by the Spirit into the wilderness.
- Jesus was tempted by Satan and remained completely victorious over sin.
- Jesus is the Second Adam, the true Israel, and the perfect Son.
- Adam failed. Israel failed. Jesus succeeded.
- He walked in perfect obedience through the power of the Holy Spirit.
- Christ won the victory, so believers fight from victory rather than for victory.
- The same Spirit who strengthened Christ now indwells every believer.

C. Christ's Resurrection and Ascension

- Romans 1:4 connects Christ's resurrection with the Spirit of holiness.
- 1 Peter 3:18 teaches that Christ was put to death in the flesh but made alive by the Spirit.
- The Spirit vindicated, raised, and _____ (1) Jesus.
- The Father raised Jesus, the Son took up His life, and the Spirit participated in the resurrection: one God, three Persons, one work.
- Jesus possessed the Spirit perfectly and _____ (2) measure.
- John 3:34 - God gives the Spirit to the Son without measure.
- Everything Christ accomplished was done through the fullness of the _____ (3).
- The Spirit was active throughout the entire _____ (4) ministry of Christ.
- Christ received the Spirit not for Himself alone, but as the Head of His people.

V. The Holy Spirit at Work in the Christian

A. The Gift of the Spirit at Pentecost

- Jesus promised the _____ (5) of the Holy Spirit to believers.
- Luke 24:49 - Jesus told His disciples to remain in the city until they were empowered from on high.
- That promise was fulfilled at Pentecost in Acts 2.
- Acts 2:1–4 describes a violent rushing wind, tongues like flames of fire, and believers filled with the Holy Spirit.
- God's _____ (6) was revealed through wind, fire, and tongues.
- The disciples were filled with the Holy Spirit and empowered to witness.

- They were enabled to _____ (7) Christ.
- Acts 2:33 says the exalted Jesus received the promised Spirit from the Father and poured Him out.
- Jesus had been exalted, received the promised Spirit, and poured out the Spirit upon His church.
- Pentecost was _____ (8) and anticipated throughout the Old Testament.
- Pentecost is the _____ (9) of the Old Testament promises.
- Ezekiel's promise of the indwelling Spirit, Joel's promise of the outpoured Spirit, and Jeremiah's promise of the law written on the heart now become reality through Christ.

B. Pentecost Reverses Babel

- Genesis 11 describes languages confused and nations scattered in judgment.
- Acts 2 describes languages _____ (10) and nations gathered.
- The gospel unites what sin divided.
- Babel represents judgment; Pentecost represents redemption.
- The Spirit gathers people from every tribe, nation, and _____ (11) into one body.

C. Sinai and Pentecost

- At Sinai there was fire, God's presence, the law on stone, and the Old Covenant.
- At Pentecost there was fire, God's presence, the law written on hearts, and the New Covenant.
- At Sinai God gave His law; at Pentecost God gave His Spirit.
- The law revealed God's standard; the Spirit enables God's people to obey.
- The New Covenant is distinguished by the gift of the Spirit.
- Under the Old Covenant, the Spirit came upon _____ (12) people for temporary empowerment.
- Under the New Covenant, every believer receives the permanent _____ (13) of the Spirit.
- Every believer belongs to Christ and possesses the indwelling Spirit.

D. Pentecost as the Culmination of Christ's Work

- Jesus promised living water and the _____ (14) Spirit.
- Christ had to be crucified, resurrected, and glorified before the Spirit would be poured out in New Covenant fullness.
- The ascended Christ poured out the Spirit after He had been _____ (15) by the Father.
- The gift of the Spirit is Christ's crowning gift to His people.
- Acts records the continuing ministry of the exalted Christ through the Holy Spirit working in and through His church.

E. The Spirit Gives New Life: Regeneration

- Jesus told Nicodemus, “You must be born again” (John 3).
- John 6:63 says, “The Spirit gives life.”
- Regeneration is the supernatural work of the Holy Spirit giving spiritual life to spiritually dead sinners.
- Only God creates life.
- Only God can _____ (16) life.
- The Spirit who breathed life into Adam now gives spiritual life to _____ (17) sinners.
- In regeneration, the Spirit enlightens the mind, liberates the will, cleanses the heart, and makes the sinner alive.
- The Holy Spirit cleanses and renews the _____ (18).
- Ephesians 2:1–5 describes sinners as dead in trespasses until God makes them alive with Christ.
- Titus 3:5 says salvation comes through the washing of regeneration and renewal by the Holy Spirit.
- Regeneration does not merely make someone _____ (19).
- It changes the mind, heart, desires, affections, and will.
- 2 Corinthians 5:17 declares that anyone in Christ is a new creation.
- The Spirit does not merely improve sinners; He makes them new.
- God not only forgives, He _____ (20) the sinner.
- The same Spirit who brought order to the first creation recreates fallen sinners in Christ.

VI. Lesson Summary

- The Holy Spirit created the world.
- He empowered God’s servants in the Old Testament.
- He worked throughout the life and ministry of Christ.
- He came in New Covenant fullness at _____ (21).
- He indwells believers and gives new life.
- The Holy Spirit applies everything Christ accomplished, bringing spiritually dead sinners to life and making them new creations for the glory of God.

Answer Key

1. EXALTED (*Slide 89*)
2. WITHOUT (*Slide 92*)
3. SPIRIT (*Slide 93*)
4. EARTHLY (*Slide 94*)
5. COMING (*Slide 98*)
6. PRESENCE (*Slide 103*)
7. PROCLAIM (*Slide 104*)
8. PROMISED (*Slide 108*)
9. FULFILLMENT (*Slide 109*)
10. UNDERSTOOD (*Slide 111*)
11. TONGUE (*Slide 112*)
12. SOME (*Slide 115*)
13. INDWELLING (*Slide 116*)
14. HOLY (*Slide 121*)
15. SENT (*Slide 122*)
16. RECREATE (*Slide 125*)
17. DEAD (*Slide 126*)
18. HEART (*Slide 127*)
19. RELIGIOUS (*Slide 133*)
20. TRANSFORMS (*Slide 136*)
21. PENTECOST (*Slide 138*)