

Article 2, Part 3 - God the Holy Spirit
Back to the Basics

Intro – Survey on the Holy Spirit

- 10 years ago, The Barna Group surveyed a large number of professing American Christians and asked about their beliefs regarding the Holy Spirit. Sadly, most so-called Christians do not believe that the Holy Spirit is a living being.
- Overall, 38% strongly agreed and 20% agreed somewhat that the Holy Spirit is “a symbol of God’s power or presence but is not a living entity.”
- Just one-third of Christians disagreed that the Holy Spirit is not a living force (9% disagreed somewhat, 25% disagreed strongly) while 9% were not sure.
- And lest we think that public opinion has changed over time, Ligonier Ministries released the results of a similar study in 2018. They found that “a majority of US adults (59%) say that the Holy Spirit is a force, not a personal being.”
- The Holy Spirit is vitally important to all that we do as followers of Jesus, and yet He might be the most misunderstood of the three members of the Godhead. It’s time to fix that problem!

The Holy Spirit is the Spirit of God, fully divine. He inspired holy men of old to write the Scriptures. Through illumination He enables men to understand truth. He exalts Christ. He convicts men of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment. He calls men to the Saviour, and effects regeneration. At the moment of regeneration He baptizes every believer into the Body of Christ. He cultivates

Christian character, comforts believers, and bestows the spiritual gifts by which they serve God through His church. He seals the believer unto the day of final redemption. His presence in the Christian is the guarantee that God will bring the believer into the fullness of the stature of Christ. He enlightens and empowers the believer and the church in worship, evangelism, and service.

The Holy Spirit is the Spirit of God, fully divine.

- First and foremost, the Holy Spirit is “the Spirit of God, fully divine.” That being the case, we know Him as the third Person of the Trinity. Like our Savior Jesus, He is completely and fully God.
- The Scripture is clear about the deity of the Holy Spirit. Acts 5 is a great example. In that passage, Peter told Ananias that he has lied to the Holy Spirit about the sell price of some land, and later that he had lied to God (Acts 5:3-4).
- Why would Peter use “Holy Spirit” and “God” as interchangeable terms? There’s one only explanation – because the Holy Spirit is completely and fully God.
- The Bible also tells us that the Holy Spirit is:
 - Omnipresent – “*Where can I go from Your Spirit? Or where can I flee from Your presence? 8 If I ascend into heaven, You are there; If I make my bed in hell, behold, You are there.*” (Psalm 139:7-8)
 - Omnipotent – “*The Spirit of God has made me, And the breath of the Almighty gives me life.*” (Job 33:4) The work of the Lord is applied to the Holy Spirit.

- Omniscience – “*God has revealed them to us through His Spirit. For the Spirit searches all things, yes, the deep things of God.*” (1 Cor. 2:10)
- And because the Holy Spirit is God He is a real Person – the third Person of the Trinity – He is not just some type of life force, like you might expect to find in Star Wars.
- Rather He is a personal being who has revealed himself as “He” and “Him.” And like humans, he can also be “grieved” (Eph. 4:30) and he can also be “quenched” (1 Thess. 5:19).
- Our worship should reflect the personhood of the Holy Spirit. It shouldn’t be, “every time I feel the Spirit and IT’s moving in my heart I will pray.” NO – the Holy Spirit is no IT – He is HE.

He inspired holy men of old to write the Scriptures. Through illumination He enables men to understand the truth.

- Now we move to the work of the Holy Spirit. Listed first in the article is that “He inspired holy men of old to write the Scriptures.” We call this illumination, and we explained the process when we talked about the Scriptures (Article 1).
- We call the Holy Spirit’s work “verbal plenary inspiration.” The Holy Spirit so moved on the writers of Scripture that every word they wrote was the Word of God, though it came through each of their own unique personalities.
- Peter was very clear – “*no prophecy of Scripture is of any private interpretation, 21 for prophecy never came by the will of man, but holy men of God*

spoke as they were moved by the Holy Spirit” (2 Peter 1:20-21).

- Not only did He inspire the writers of Scripture to give us the Word of God, but “through illumination He enables men to understand the truth.” The Holy Spirit provides both inspiration & illumination.
- Jesus said it like this – “*However, when He, the Spirit of truth, has come, He will guide you into all truth; for He will not speak on His own authority, but whatever He hears He will speak; and He will tell you things to come. 14 He will glorify Me, for He will take of what is Mine and declare it to you.*” (John 16:13-14)
- The Holy Spirit gave us the Word of God and the same Spirit helps us understand the Word of God. If there is a lack of understanding among God’s people, the problem is not with God – it’s with those of us who allow our own bias, ignorance, and laziness get in the way.

He exalts Christ. He convicts of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment.

- The Holy Spirit exalts our Savior Jesus – He brings attention to Christ. That is His highest work within the Godhead – drawing the attention of mankind to Jesus Christ.
- Jesus said, “*He will glorify Me*” (John 16:14). Why would the Spirit do that? Because Jesus is God’s only Way of salvation. The Spirit exalts Jesus because He’s the only hope for mankind and God desires all men to be saved (1 Tim. 2:4). And of course, we know the Spirit exalts Jesus because He’s the King of Kings and Lord of Lords.

- How does the Holy Spirit go about exalting Christ? Jesus gave us the process – *“And when He has come, He will convict the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment: 9 of sin, because they do not believe in Me; 10 of righteousness, because I go to My Father and you see Me no more; 11 of judgment, because the ruler of this world is judged.”* (John 16:8-11)
- First, the Holy Spirit convicts the world of sin, *“because they do not believe in Me.”* In order for a person to be saved, they must first come to know that they’re lost. In order for someone to believe in Jesus, they must first come to understand that they desperately need Him. The Holy Spirit creates that desperation through conviction.
- The Holy Spirit convicts EVERY person of sin because EVERY person falls short of God’s mark of perfection (Rom. 3:23). Each person knows he/she is a sinner in need of God’s grace – many refuse to act on that conviction.
- Furthermore, the Holy Spirit convicts the world of righteousness, *“because I (Jesus) go to My Father and you see Me no more.”* As long as He was on this planet, Jesus was the embodiment of the righteousness and holiness of God.
- Upon his ascension to heaven and the giving on the Holy Spirit at Pentecost, the Holy Spirit now provides that knowledge of the righteousness of God. He reveals to us the holiness of God!
- Finally, the Spirit convicts the world of judgment because *“the ruler of this world is judged.”* The Spirit reminds us that Satan has been judged and all of us will stand in judgment as well.

He calls men to the Saviour, and effects regeneration. At the moment of regeneration He baptizes every believer into the Body of Christ.

- The Holy Spirit *“calls men to the Savior.”* Jesus said it like this – *“No one can come to Me unless the Father who sent Me draws him; and I will raise him up at the last day”* (John 6:44).
- Through conviction and illumination, the Holy Spirit draws us into a relationship with Jesus. Regeneration (new life) occurs when someone places his/her faith in Jesus.
- Titus 3:4-5 – *“But when the kindness and the love of God our Savior toward man appeared, 5 not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His mercy He saved us, through the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Spirit.”*
- At the moment that a person places his/her faith in Jesus, not only does the Holy Spirit regenerate that person (born again), but the Spirit also *“baptizes every believer into the Body of Christ.”*
- Paul talked about this in Romans – *“Or do you not know that as many of us as were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into His death? 4 Therefore we were buried with Him through baptism into death, that just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life.”* (Romans 6:3-4)
- Through the regeneration of the Holy Spirit, every believer takes his/her place in the Body of Christ – *“For by one Spirit we were all baptized into one body...into one Spirit”* (1 Cor. 12:13).

- The Holy Spirit not only makes you a child of God, but He also makes you a member of the Body of Christ. As a member of Christ's body, you are expected to take your place and do your part!

He cultivates Christian character, comforts believers, and bestows the spiritual gifts by which they serve God through His church.

- The work of the Holy Spirit is really too numerous to mention, but this section of the article gives us several things to consider. First, "He cultivates Christian character."
- Paul said, "*For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, these are sons of God*" (Romans 8:14). The Spirit leads us to live our lives in a manner that is worthy of the name of Jesus.
- As such, the Scripture commands us, "*do not be drunk with wine, in which is dissipation; but be filled with the Spirit*" (Eph. 5:18). We're inhabited by the Holy Spirit upon our conversion to Christ, but we're filled with the Spirit when we deny ourselves and follow His leadership.
- Scripture tells us that the Spirit also "comforts believers." Jesus said it so well – "*But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My name, He will teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all things that I said to you*" (John 14:26).
- The word translated "Helper" is *parakletos*, and the KJV translates it as "Comforter." The word literally means "to call alongside." Daily, the Spirit comes alongside us through His presence and His Word to give us the comfort we need!

- The Holy Spirit also "bestows the spiritual gifts by which they serve God through His church." Paul said, "*the manifestation of the Spirit is given to each one for the profit of all*" (1 Cor. 12:7).
- That means every person has been blessed with at least one gift by the Holy Spirit. It is a "grace gift" that is to be used for the edification of the church. No believer can say, "I have no gift." Rather, each person needs to discover their gift and put it to use in the Body of Christ!

He seals the believer unto the day of final redemption. His presence in the Christian is the guarantee that God will bring the believer into the fullness of the stature of Christ.

- Upon indwelling every follower of Jesus, the Holy Spirit "seals the believer until the day of final redemption." Paul said, "*do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, by whom you were sealed for the day of redemption*" (Eph. 4:30).
- The seal of the Holy Spirit is a believer's guarantee of salvation. In another place, Paul said, "*Now He who has prepared us for this very thing is God, who also has given us the Spirit as a guarantee*" (2 Cor. 5:5).
- He echoed the same refrain in Eph. 1 – "*you were sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise, 14 who is the guarantee of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, to the praise of His glory*" (Eph. 1:13-14). God guarantees salvation to every person that has been sealed by the Spirit. That's why we believe in the eternal security of the believer.

- The presence of the Holy Spirit also serves as a guarantee that every believer will be brought into the “fullness of the stature of Christ.” In other words, God doesn’t give up on us!
- Phil. 1:6 – *“being confident of this very thing, that He who has begun a good work in you will complete it until the day of Jesus Christ.”* God will finish what He started in you by the power and presence of the Holy Spirit.

He enlightens and empowers the believer and the church in worship, evangelism, and service.

- We’ve already explained the illuminating, guiding power of the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit even enlightens believers through promptings that can be hard to explain, such as the Holy Spirit directing Paul to Macedonia (Acts 16).
- Jesus explained that the work of the Spirit is amazing even unpredictable at times – *“The wind blows where it wishes, and you hear the sound of it, but cannot tell where it comes from and where it goes. So is everyone who is born of the Spirit.”* (John 3:8)
- Believers are empowered to serve the church and the world by the power of the Holy Spirit. Paul explained – *“my speech and my preaching were not with persuasive words of human wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power”* (1 Cor. 2:4).
- Through the Spirit’s power, we worship, we attempt to reach others for Christ, and we serve one another and the world. With the Holy Spirit’s power, none of this is possible.