



God, Gift, and Guide: Knowing the Holy Spirit

The Spirit's Works in Revelation & Salvation¹

Introduction

- In the first lesson, we saw from the Scriptures that the Holy Spirit is not an impersonal force or mystical influence. Instead, He is the third person of the Trinity, fully God and deserving of worship and obedience.
- While there is one God in three persons (the Trinity), the three persons are distinguished by their relations within the Godhead and in their roles with respect to creation, providence, salvation, and divine works.
- Today's lesson will focus on the works of the Holy Spirit in revelation and salvation. In the next lesson, we'll focus on the Spirit's works in the church and as we walk with him. The last lesson will focus on working with the Spirit, especially through the gifts he distributes to the church.

The Holy Spirit's Work of Speaking

- A consistent pattern we see in Scripture is when the Spirit falls upon people, they engage in speech.
- In the Old Testament:
 - Moses and the 70 elders (Numbers 11:25-26)
 - King Saul at Gibeah (1 Samuel 10:10-13)
- In the New Testament:
 - Elizabeth's exclamation of joy at the news of Mary's pregnancy (Luke 1:41-42)
 - Zechariah's praise (Luke 1:67-68)
 - The disciples speaking in tongues (Acts 2:4, 11)
 - The persecuted church speaking with boldness (Acts 4:31)

¹ This lesson is a summary of Allison, Gregg R. 2023. *God, Gift, and Guide: Knowing the Holy Spirit*. Brentwood, Tennessee: B & H Publishing Group, chapters 5 through 9.

- Cornelius and his family/friends praising God (Acts 10:44-46)
- Paul rebuking Elymas the sorcerer (Acts 13:9-11)
- John's writing to the seven churches (Revelation 1:10)
- The Scriptures themselves are inspired by the Holy Spirit, the communicative product of the creative breath of God.
 - **2 Timothy 3:16-17** *All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, ¹⁷ that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work.*
 - The writers of Scripture were "carried along by the Spirit."
 - **2 Peter 1:20-21** *...knowing this first of all, that no prophecy of Scripture comes from someone's own interpretation. ²¹ For no prophecy was ever produced by the will of man, but men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit.*
 - The Scriptures are humanly written but divine in origin, with the Spirit superintending the authors as they wrote.
 - This was in answer to Jesus's promise:
 - **John 14:26** *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 that I have said to you.*

The Holy Spirit's Work of Conviction

- The Holy Spirit is at work even before someone believes to bring **conviction**.
 - **John 16:8** *And when he comes, he will convict the world concerning sin and righteousness and judgment...*
 - Convict: To expose guilt due to sin and the condemnation that results from it.
 - The World: The world system comprised of people who are presently hostile toward God.
 - Before anyone can embrace the "good news", it's the Spirit that convicts them of the "bad news" that moves them to desire the Savior.
- The Three Areas of Conviction
 - Sin
 - **John 16:9** *...concerning sin, because they do not believe in me.*
 - John's goal in writing his gospel is that you may believe. The

ultimate sin, therefore, is to reject the evidence of who Christ is in disbelief.

- It's the Spirit's role to shake people from indifference to understand their state before God in their sin.

- Righteousness

- **John 16:10** ...concerning righteousness, because I go to the Father, and you will see me no longer...
- Righteousness is a desirable quality in Scripture. However, *self-righteousness* is not; it is a futile, incorrect approach to earning favor with God. In context, remember:
 - The Jews trusted their ancestry (John 8:33)
 - The Jews trusted their sabbath observance (John 5:10)
 - The Jews trusted their temple attendance (John 2:20)
 - The Jews trusted their possession of the Law (John 5:45)
- In each case, it was Jesus's presence and teaching that exposed the futility of relying on such things. Now that he is going away, his work would not end; it would be carried on by the ministry of the Holy Spirit who tears down the scaffolding of self-reliance.

- Judgement

- **John 16:11** ...concerning judgment, because the ruler of this world is judged.
 - Good judgement involves wisdom and right evaluation of people and situations; this kind of judgement is applauded in Scripture.
 - However, bad judgement, or worldly judgement, is that which evaluates people and situations by carnal, superficial standards.
 - **John 7:24** Do not judge by appearances, but judge with right judgment.
 - Worldly judgement stems from Satan, the "ruler of this world."
- The Spirit's convicting work doesn't end when we become followers of Christ; he takes the commands and exhortations of Scripture and exposes our weakness that we may receive the grace of Christ to grow in sanctification.

The Holy Spirit's Work in Salvation

- The Spirit readies the hearts of unbelievers to embrace the gospel, and the Spirit is also powerfully involved in the act of salvation.
- We will consider five **initial** works, and then we'll consider three **ongoing** works.
- **Initial Works of Salvation**
 - **Regeneration**
 - In concert with the Word of God being preached, the Spirit effects regeneration.
 - Regeneration is the act of God whereby the old, sinful nature is removed and a new nature is implanted.
 - Old self: typified by selfishness & rebellion
 - New self: typified by Christ-centeredness, love for God and holiness, love for others
 - **John 3:5** *Jesus answered, "Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God."*
 - This is not referring to two separate works, and being born of water is not referring to baptism or being born physically (amniotic fluid).
 - Jesus is referring to one powerful work of God, drawing from Ezekiel 36:25-27:
 - **Ezekiel 36:25-27** *I will sprinkle clean water on you, and you shall be clean from all your uncleanness, and from all your idols I will cleanse you. ²⁶ And I will give you a new heart, and a new spirit I will put within you. And I will remove the heart of stone from your flesh and give you a heart of flesh. ²⁷ And I will put my Spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes and be careful to obey my rules.*
 - God's work of salvation will both cleanse us and give us a new heart, both the product of the Spirit indwelling us at conversion.
 - This same idea is picked up by Paul in Titus 3:5-7.
 - **Conversion**
 - Regeneration is totally the work of God, and involves no human activity.
 - At the same time, the Holy Spirit's work of regeneration is met with a corresponding human response: conversion, which

involves repentance of sin and faith in Jesus Christ.

- Repentance: Turning from sin based on the conviction of the Spirit.
- Faith: Personal trust in Jesus Christ, which is a gift of the Spirit (Ephesians 2:8-9).
- Confession: New believers confess that Jesus is Lord, something that can only be done by the power of the Spirit (1 Corinthians 12:2-3).
- Conversion and confession are enabled and aided by the work of the Spirit, but are willful, human acts.
- **Union with Christ**
 - The aforementioned evidences signal that believers are united with Christ upon confession of faith.
 - **Romans 8:9-10** *You, however, are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if in fact the Spirit of God dwells in you. Anyone who does not have the Spirit of Christ does not belong to him. ¹⁰ But if Christ is in you, although the body is dead because of sin, the Spirit is life because of righteousness.*
 - Through the indwelling Spirit, Christ Himself dwells in believers.
 - Through this union, believers are identified with Christ's death, burial, resurrection, and ascension (Romans 6:1-11), meaning that when God looks upon us, he sees us as having died to sin, released from its power, raised to new life, and seated with Christ in heaven!
 - Through this union, believers receive all the benefits of salvation (Ephesians 1:3-14): election, adoption, grace, redemption, inheritance, and sealing by the Spirit.
- **Justification**
 - Justification is the work of God by which He declares sinful people "not guilty" but "righteous" instead.
 - Regeneration is a transformative process; justification is a legal pronouncement.
 - Justification is *accomplished* by the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, and it is *received by faith* that comes from the Holy Spirit. In other words, it's applied by the Spirit.
 - **1 Corinthians 6:11** *And such were some of you. But you were washed, you were sanctified, you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of our God.*

- **Adoption**
 - Adoption is the work of God by which He chooses sinful people to be incorporated into his family forever.
 - Their former status of “enemies” is changed to “children.”
 - While adoption involves Jesus’s work of redemption, the Spirit is active as well:
 - **Romans 8:15** *For you did not receive the spirit of slavery to fall back into fear, but you have received the Spirit of adoption as sons, by whom we cry, “Abba! Father!”*
 - **Galatians 4:4-6** *But when the fullness of time had come, God sent forth his Son, born of woman, born under the law, ⁵to redeem those who were under the law, so that we might receive adoption as sons. ⁶And because you are sons, God has sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, crying, “Abba! Father!”*
 - We become God’s adopted heirs to receive divine favor and His gracious blessing.
- **Ongoing Works of Salvation**
 - **Sealing**
 - The Holy Spirit seals believers, guaranteeing their salvation.
 - **Ephesians 1:13-14** *In him you also, when you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation, and believed in him, were sealed with the promised Holy Spirit, ¹⁴who is the guarantee of our inheritance until we acquire possession of it, to the praise of his glory.*
 - This is God’s divine promise that He will keep his children such that they *will* receive their divine inheritance; the Spirit is like a downpayment, earnest money, and first fruits to show that God will complete what He began.
 - **Philippians 1:6** *And I am sure of this, that he who began a good work in you will bring it to completion at the day of Jesus Christ.*
 - Two effects of the sealing:
 - Avoid sinning (Ephesians 4:30)
 - Longing for Christ’s return (Romans 8:23)

○ Sanctification

- Sanctification is the progressive growth into Christlikeness, a process of maturation and transformation.
- Sanctification is a cooperative effort, God and believers contributing to growth into the image of Christ.
 - **Philippians 2:12-13** *Therefore, my beloved, as you have always obeyed, so now, not only as in my presence but much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling, ¹³for it is God who works in you, both to will and to work for his good pleasure.*
- The sanctifying work of the Holy Spirit (1 Peter 1:2) convicts of sin, prompts repentance, ignites faith, comforts in distress, rebukes in rebellion, empowers overcoming temptation, and develops willingness to please God.
- Believers are both actively and passively involved in sanctification, but the Spirit is involved in both:
 - Active – Spiritual disciplines, putting sin to death, reading Scripture, serving the church, etc.
 - Passive – Yielding to the Spirit, depending on Him in prayer, keeping in step with the Spirit, etc.

○ Assurance of Salvation

- Assurance is the subjective confidence that they belong to God forever and that they will remain Christians throughout their lifetime because of the Spirit's sealing and His work of sanctification.
- This persuasion is not self-generated, but rather comes from the Spirit.
 - **Romans 8:15-17** *For you did not receive the spirit of slavery to fall back into fear, but you have received the Spirit of adoption as sons, by whom we cry, "Abba! Father!" ¹⁶**The Spirit himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God,** ¹⁷and if children, then heirs—heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ, provided we suffer with him in order that we may also be glorified with him.*
- Satan loves to attack our assurance, because it paralyzes us with fear.
- Because God is holding us, it's his power that will cause us to persevere (1 Peter 1:5) and it's His Spirit that will bear inner witness and cast out fear of sin overcoming us again.