

## **Survey of Pneumatology**

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## Introduction

The first time the Holy Spirit is referenced in scripture is in Genesis 1:2, where He is found quietly hovering over the chaotic condition of the formless earth<sup>1</sup>. This is not surprising whatsoever, because even in our current context, the Holy Spirit continues to quietly influence the hearts and minds of people who live in a world still in chaos. It is true that many thousands of years have transpired since the events of Genesis Chapter 1; however, time has not eradicated the spiritually devastating effects of sin upon humanity. Consequently, the presence of God in the person of the Holy Spirit is needed as much now as He was in the beginning.

The external impact of humanity in the world, has changed over time in many positive ways, but humanity itself continues to struggle with its internal growth and spiritual evolution. This can be demonstrated in the fact that the medical sciences have developed medications and cures which are sold at a premium and are beyond the financial capability for those in need to secure. Additionally, physical sciences are working to develop means to colonize other planets, while on earth we continue to be faced with homelessness, hunger, and moral depravity. There are numerous ways in which humanity brandishes scientific and technological advancements but cannot seem to master the basic task of loving one another.

The humanity needs the person, presence, and power of the Holy Spirit to effectively address the chaos that persists in our world. This paper will primarily discuss who the Holy Spirit is (person), where He is (presence), and how He works to bring about the will of God on earth (power). Each of these alliterated topics will contain various related aspects of the third

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<sup>1</sup> Unless otherwise noted, all biblical passages referenced employ the “The Companion Bible - The Authorized Version of 1611 (KJV), Notes and Appendixes by E. W. Bullinger (Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel Publications, 1922)

person of the Trinity, and will, hopefully, provide a clear and biblically factual understanding of who He is.

This paper is entitled: *Survey of Pneumatology*, and the contents of this document will remain true to that subject. Pneumatology, according to the Merriam-Webster Online Dictionary, means: “The study of spiritual beings, or phenomena”<sup>2</sup>. While the secular definition is clear, it does not provide adequate support for the subject of this paper – The Holy Spirit. I feel it is important at this point to specifically state that when I refer to Pneumatology in this paper, it is in direct reference to the Holy Spirit. With that point made, we can now progress to the heart of the matter, a *Survey of Pneumatology*.

### **Who Is the Holy Spirit?**

The identity of the Holy Spirit has been a subject of intense debate since the birth of Christianity. Throughout Old Testament history, He is seen and referenced as an unmistakable member of the divine Godhead, yet theological minds from the more contemporary eras seems to find many areas of dispute regarding the third person of the Trinity. I will attempt to address the subject of who the Holy Spirit is in this part of my brief survey of the Spirit.

#### **The Person of the Holy Spirit**

Many people incorrectly refer to the Holy Spirit as a *thing*, instead of referencing Him as a *person* who has all the characteristics of personality. This gross misunderstanding of how one should refer to the Holy Spirit is the primary reason people struggle with knowing Him, and how He operates in our lives to facilitate our spiritual conformation into the image of Christ (Romans 8:29). In his book, *The Person and Work of the Holy Spirit*, R. A. Torrey says, “Before one can

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<sup>2</sup> Merriam-Webster. *Merriam-Webster Online Dictionary*. n.d. <https://www.merriam-webster.com/>. – (<https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/pneumatology>) (Merriam-Webster n.d.)

correctly understand the work of the Holy Spirit, he must first of all know the Spirit Himself. A frequent source of error and fanaticism about the work of the Holy Spirit is the attempt to study and understand His work without first coming to know Him as a person.”<sup>3</sup>. I was brought up with regular church attendance as a major part of my life. I learned quite a bit in Sunday School and in the Wednesday night Bible Studies, but I also distinctly remember not being taught specifics and details about the Holy Spirit. The Spirit was always talked about in ways that made Him a somewhat mysterious thing we commonly referred to as *it*. Later in life as I developed a sincere and personal relationship with God through faith in Jesus Christ as Lord, I also discovered that the Holy Spirit is not some mysterious thing used like a tool in the hand of God; I discovered that He is a person. In terms of His person, the Bible clearly indicates that the Holy Spirit possesses all the characteristics associated with being a person. First, He has knowledge, meaning He has a *mind* and the ability to think and reason (1 Corinthians 2:10-11). Next, because of having the ability to reason, the Holy Spirit also has a *will*, which means He can exercise divine authority (1 Corinthians 12:11). Lastly, the Spirit also has *emotion*, and can be affected thereby even because of human behavior (Ephesians 4:30). This profound revelation regarding the person of the Holy Spirit provides a perfect segue into the next section of this discussion where I address the His place in the Godhead.

### The Deity of the Holy Spirit

The Holy Spirit is God. For many years during my infancy in the faith, I did not understand who the Holy Spirit is, and only after years of study, prayer, and revelation from the Spirit Himself, am I able to make such a bold proclamation. In 1 John 5:7, the veracity of the

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<sup>3</sup> Torrey, R. A. *The Person and Work of the Holy Spirit*. Revised. Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan, 1974. (Torrey 1974)

Spirit's deity is clear, "For there are three that bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost: and these three are one." I would like to say this verse should make it obvious to everyone that the Holy Spirit is indeed God, but as one who also struggled with the doctrine of the Trinity, I understand how confusing this topic can be, especially when so many people have differing views. Once one comes to the realization that only the biblical view matters, navigating the truth of the deity of the Holy Spirit becomes a less arduous task for the student of the Bible.

I happen to agree with the biblical, evangelical view of the Spirit's deity. Robert P. Lightner wrote in his book, *Handbook of Evangelical Theology, A Historical, Biblical, and Contemporary Survey and Review*, "By ascribing deity to the Holy Spirit evangelicals mean he is as fully God as the Father and Son are God."<sup>4</sup> There are many passages of scripture which identify the Holy Spirit as God, one of which was part of the introduction of this paper, Genesis 1:2, and another is Psalms 104:30 where the Spirit is directly referenced as a participant in creation and renewal of the earth. In the New Testament story of Ananias and his wife Sapphira, it is clearly indicated that lying to the Holy Spirit is, in fact, lying to God (Acts 5:1-4). This scripture provides a clear and concise illustration of the deity of the Holy Spirit, and if I may assert a respectful pun, *seals* the proverbial deal regarding the matter.

### **Where Is the Holy Spirit?**

Where can the Holy Spirit be found? Is He patrolling the heavens? Is He meandering throughout the earth? Is He occupying people who believe in God? These questions may seem a bit facetious in the asking, but there are answers to them which are found in the Bible. This

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<sup>4</sup> Lightner, Robert P. *Handbook of Evangelical Theology: A Historical, Biblical, and Contemporary Survey and Review*. Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel Classics, 1995. (Lightner 1995)

section of my survey will discuss two primary topics pertaining to the location of the Holy Spirit at any given time. In general, we know that because the Spirit is God, He exists in the heavenly realm by default as a member of the triune Godhead, so this section will omit discussion in that regard, and focus on His presence as it pertains to humanity and believers.

Our discussion will cover the *filling* and the *indwelling* of the Holy Spirit. There is speculative, and somewhat subjective evidence based on scripture to support a distinction between the two, and the following paragraphs will attempt to explore them individually. With that said, I am personally on the proverbial fence as to the veracity of a distinction. Let us go a little deeper into the discussion and see what else we can learn.

### The Filling of the Holy Spirit

The first biblical reference to a person being filled with the spirit is found in Exodus 31:3 regarding Bezalel who was a craftsman<sup>5</sup>, “And I have filled him with the spirit of God, in wisdom, and in understanding, and in knowledge, and in all manner of workmanship”. The Hebrew word for *filled* in this verse is *mâlê*, which has several connotations, but the majority of those lean squarely toward the idea of one being completely full, filled, and wholly under the control of something. It is not a leap of any kind to deduce that if a person is filled so completely, that person has also been indwelt by that spiritual influence. The topic of the indwelling of the Holy Spirit is discussed in the next section, but I would be remiss if I did not take the opportunity to state my current position now. Though it appears God filled people in a tactical way, meaning, He did so to accomplish a specific task or mission to support the fulfillment of His will, during the time of the filling the person was apparently also indwelt. My

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<sup>5</sup> McArthur, Dr. John, and Richard Mayhue. *Biblical Doctrine: A Systematic Summary of Bible Truth*. Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2017. Chapter 5: God the Holy Spirit – Pneumatology. (McArthur and Mayhue 2017)

position is based on the idea that if a person is filled with the Spirit, that same Spirit also indwells them to accomplish the will of God. For example, if I buy a new house, I will not only fill that house with my possessions, but I would also personally move in to make that house my new dwelling – I think the same applies here. I tend to hold a more simplistic view of this topic because I think it has been over-complicated theologically.

There are at least two instances in the Old Testament where the Holy Spirit was taken away from someone, first Samson in Judges 16:20, and then Saul in 1 Samuel 16:14. In both cases, these men were not only filled, but obviously indwelt, as evidence by the fact that the Spirit was removed from them as a punishment for disobedience to God's will. King David was aware that having the Spirit of God removed was indeed a possibility, and he prayed that God would not punish him in the same way in Psalms 51:11, "Cast me not away from thy presence; and take not thy holy spirit from me.". I am not suggesting that God will take His Spirit away from believers in Jesus Christ, but I don't want to draw attention to the fact that when a person is filled, I believe they are also indwelt. To be filled with the Holy Spirit is the indication that the Holy Spirit has been given. It is the statement of the fact that the Spirit now resides inside you. Now, we move on to the indwelling of the Holy Spirit Himself, and what that means to the person to whom this blessed gift has been given.

### The Indwelling of the Holy Spirit

The blessed consequence of having been filled with the Holy Spirit is the ongoing state of being indwelt by the Holy Spirit. The distinction between the two is clear in my estimation, in that being filled is a qualifying act, and being indwelt is a quantitative state of being. I will use myself and my home as an analogy of the distinction between the two. When I moved into my house and filled it with my possessions, I established my commitment to residing there and using



the full compliment of who I am to make that house my dwelling place. I poured myself into the maintenance, upkeep, and continual improvements necessary to demonstrate pride and ownership of that house to transform it into my home – because now I live there. The Holy Spirit likewise indwells the believer in Jesus Christ, He takes up residence inside us, and exposes us to the full compliment of who He is to aid in our continual improvement as children of God. In short, God fills us with His Spirit in the act of moving in, but He indwells us by His Spirit for the process of moving on!

In his book, *All the Doctrines of the Bible*, Dr. Herbert Lockyear asserts, “As the Spirit indwelt our Lord’s human body, so the Father gives the Spirit to us in order that He might indwell us as those forming the Lord’s mystical Body, exhibiting in and through each believer those spiritual gifts necessary for “the perfecting of the saint, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ (Ephesians 4:12)”<sup>6</sup>. God indwells His believers for the purpose of effecting His will on the earth through the power of the Holy Spirit. While being filled with the Spirit makes the statement that God is in me, the indwelling the Spirit lives out through demonstration that God is me. The indwelling of the Holy Spirit renders us available to be used by God in any way the Holy Spirit deems fit according to His will, and He equips us appropriately for the Kingdom assignments we are given, “But all these worketh that one and the selfsame Spirit, dividing to every man severally as he will. (1 Corinthians 12:11)”.

The main title of this section of the paper poses the question, “Where is The Holy Spirit?”, and the answer is unmistakably, in us. Yes, the Holy Spirit is God, and by virtue of His deity He exists in the heavenlies as a divine part of the Godhead, but by extension, He resides

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<sup>6</sup> Lockyear, Dr. Herbert. *All the Doctrines of the Bible*. Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan, 1964. (Lockyear 1964)

inside the believers in Jesus Christ, inspiring us to do the will of God on earth. In conclusion of this section, the Apostle Paul reminds us of the glorious gift we have been given, and admonishes us to respectfully and behaviorally be mindful of it at all times, “What? know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own? For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's.” (1 Corinthians 6:19-20).

### **What the Holy Spirit Does**

The earthly ministry of Jesus Christ unleashed the power of God upon the earth. This is because Jesus is indeed God, and His earthly incarnation brought the person, presence, and power of God within the physical reach of mankind. The efficacy of Jesus’ work on earth was universal, to the extent that even today the name of Jesus has impact around the world. Jesus knew that no one, not even His disciples would be able to continue the work of the ministry without direct influence from God, so He prepared to continue the God-presence on earth through the person, presence, and power of the Holy Ghost. In Luke 24:49, Jesus made an amazing promise, “And, behold, I send the promise of my Father upon you: but tarry ye in the city of Jerusalem, until ye be endued with power from on high.”. Later, in Acts 1:4-5, Jesus gives the disciples detailed information and instructions about when, where, and how they would receive this promise, “And, being assembled together with them, commanded them that they should not depart from Jerusalem, but wait for the promise of the Father, which, saith he, ye have heard of me. For John truly baptized with water; but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost not many days hence.”. In verse 8 of the same chapter, Jesus informs the disciples that they would receive power, *dynamis* in the Greek, which means inherent, divine power that resides within. This internal power they would be *filled* with is the *indwelling* power of the Holy Spirit Himself,

a continuation of the Immanuel characteristic of Jesus meaning, God with us. Let us now transition into some of the specifics of what this means to the believer, as we further discuss just what it is that the Holy Spirit does in and through us.

### Baptism In the Holy Spirit

Believers who believe in Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior are subsequently immersed in the Holy Spirit. I chose my language carefully in the thesis of this paragraph because I want to make a distinction between the baptism “of” the Spirit, and baptism “with” the Spirit. Both are equally effective in the sense that they refer to a divine act, but they differ in their individual meanings. The baptism “of” (*ek*, Greek) the Holy Spirit defines the origin of the act, or, in other words, it tells us what kind of baptism it is. The baptism “with” (*en*, Greek) the Holy Spirit indicates the process by which the act will occur. The word “of” categorizes the baptism as divine, while the word “with” details the how the baptism takes place. The distinction I am drawing may seem to elevate a point of minutia, but I think it is an important distinction nonetheless. I say this because we should not only know that Spirit baptism is divine – the “of”, but that it also means we are immersed in the Spirit Himself – the “with”.

Spirit baptism is not simply an isolate act, but it is also the beginning of an ongoing process which conforms believers into the image of Christ. The word *baptize* in the Greek is *Baptizo*, and it means to immerse, to submerge, and to make fully wet. The understanding of Spirit baptism should be clear, one is completely and wholly engulfed with, and in the Holy Spirit Himself. Just as we are totally drenched with water in water baptism, we are likewise drenched with the Holy Ghost in Spirit baptism. It is important to note that the baptism of the Holy Spirit is simultaneously a baptism with fire, a metonymy which indicates the additional work of cleansing and purification. In the *Expositor's Bible Commentary: Abridged Edition*, the

authors agree with this concept in their exegesis of Matthew 3:11, “John's water baptism relates to repentance; but the one whose way he is preparing will administer a Spirit-fire baptism that will purify and refine.”<sup>7</sup>. To summarize and accentuate my positions, the baptism *of* the Holy Spirit means this act of immersion is of divine origin and attributed to the Holy Spirit, and the baptism *with* the Holy Spirit means believers are completely immersed in the Holy Spirit Himself in terms of process. Next, I will attempt to discuss some of the results of one being Spirit baptized.

### Sealed by the Holy Spirit

Believers in Jesus Christ are stamped with the seal of God, the Holy Spirit. The word *sealed* as is used in the New Testament is *sphragizō* in the Greek and means to stamp or to mark for identification and safety. It is a sign or banner a person wears which identify themselves with someone or something. According to Ephesians 1:13, God is the one who stamps us with the person, presence, and power of the Holy Spirit, “In whom ye also trusted, after that ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation: in whom also after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that holy Spirit of promise...”. This is clear evidence that once a person hears the Word of God, and responds in faith by believing its’ salvation message, that person officially belongs to God and is stamped with the mark of His presence – the Holy Spirit. This mark of stamp of God also serves to preserve us unto the day our redemption is complete (Ephesians 4:30). What a blessed reality to live our lives with, that because we receive Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior, we in no uncertain terms belong to God, and are marked with His Spirit as evidence of our relationship with Him.

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<sup>7</sup> Kohlenberger III, John R., and Kenneth Barker. *Expositor's Bible Commentary*. Abridged. Zondervan, 1973. (Kohlenberger III and Barker 1973)

### Gifted by the Holy Spirit

Believers are filled with, indwelt by, baptized with, and sealed by God's Holy Spirit, all which serve as prerequisites to the honor of the Spirit working in and through us to accomplish the will of God on earth. To be certain, the work of the ministry and living a life of service to God is not something we can do on our own. We must first be containers of the Spirit by virtue of our faith in Christ, and we must be equipped adequately to perform and persevere as representatives of the Kingdom of God. It is of the equipping of the saints, those believers in Jesus Christ who are called to do mighty works in the name of Jesus Christ whom we will discuss in this section.

In his book, *Handbook of Evangelical Theology, A Historical, Biblical, and Contemporary Survey and Review*, Robert P. Lightner writes about how the gifts of the Holy Spirit are viewed in the church today, "All members of the orthodox community believe gifts of the Spirit were operative in the early days of the church. Most believe at least some of those gifts are operative today."<sup>8</sup> I do not shy away from taking exception with the idea that the gifts of the Spirit *were operative* and only *some* being still operative. In my opinion, the idea that certain gifts have ceased while others persist, has more to do with denominational and institutional doctrine than it does with biblical truth. I am always amazed at how dogmatic some of the theologically astute can be in support of their personal interpretation of scripture. In all fairness, the same could be said about the views I espouse as well, so, until the day we all cease from looking through a glass darkly, we must be satisfied with agreeing to disagree.

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<sup>8</sup> Lightner, Robert P. *Handbook of Evangelical Theology: A Historical, Biblical, and Contemporary Survey and Review*. Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel Classics, 1995. Page 117 (Lightner 1995)

There are three (3) books in the New Testament which detail the gifts of the Holy Spirit that have been revealed to us in the Word of God. Those are, Romans 12:3-8, 1 Corinthians 12:8-10, 28-30, and Ephesians 4:11. In each of these passages of text, the revealed gifts of the Spirit are discussed in the writings of the Apostle Paul. Once again, I will impose my opinion upon the readers of this paper and assert that the most powerful of Paul's writings for me regarding the gifts of the Spirit is the one found in Ephesians. It reads, "And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ: Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ:". I am most fond of this passage because it details the teaching and ministry gifts, and ultimately provides the reasons these exist, become people of God who measure up to the fulness of Christ. I believe that all the gifts of the Holy Spirit are active today, though in many cases, some are abused and sometimes faked, but I do not believe this renders those gifts inactive. Having said that, I agree with the Apostle Paul who stresses the importance of desiring the best gifts, those which lead to the edifying of the body of Christ.

### **Conclusion**

This paper is more to me than an academic requirement to pass a class, it also, and more importantly, an opportunity to survey the doctrine of Pneumatology to further equip myself for the ministry of teaching as a seminary professor. In summary of this discussion, we covered three (3) main points related to understanding the Holy Spirit, 1) Who is the Holy Spirit, 2) Where is the Holy Spirit, and 3) What the Holy Spirit Does. It is my hope and prayer that out of these topics, godly discussions and friendly debates will ensue. After all, as theological students

and theology thinkers in general, we should be committed to loving one another through the sometimes-difficult process of learning from one another.

In conclusion, I would like to end this paper with a reference to the most excellent gift available to the church, the one gift that consists of the nature of God Himself, and the one gift every believer in Jesus Christ is sure to have – the gift of love. Take repose with me now as I finish this paper with a powerful scripture from the Word of God, “And now abideth faith, hope, charity, these three; but the greatest of these is charity.”.

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