

The Holy Spirit in Bible Times

The Holy Spirit's work is inseparable from that of the Father and the Son in Old as well as New Testament times. His ministry for God's people is an abiding ministry through human history.

I. The Holy Spirit's Work in Old Testament Times

After the account of creation, the first mention of the Holy Spirit is in connection with God's displeasure at conditions preceding the Flood. °Study Genesis 6:3 and the texts listed below to see what they reveal concerning the work of the Holy Spirit in Old Testament times. There are indications that the Spirit was given for special endowments of skill, prophecy, transformation of character, reproof, instruction, ability to accomplish God's work, and other purposes.¹ Classify each text as to what it reveals concerning the Spirit's work.

*Exodus 31:3	2 Samuel 23:2	Ezekiel 11:5, 24
Numbers 24:2	*2 Chronicles 24:20	Joel 2:28
*Judges 3:10; 6:34	Psalms 139:7	Micah 3:8
*1 Samuel 10:6	*Isaiah 42:1; 61:1; 63:10	Zechariah 4:6

°What conclusions can you draw from the variety of activities ascribed to the Spirit in the Old Testament?

II. The Holy Spirit in the Life of Christ

In Isaiah's Messianic prophecy, Isaiah 61:1-3, the Holy Spirit's power is predicted as coming upon Christ for His ministry. However, this was not the beginning of the Spirit's work for the Saviour when He was on earth. °Note in the following passages the Spirit's presence and influence in events related to the Saviour's life. The texts are arranged in chronological order. °What is significant about each event that makes the mention of the Spirit important?

¹ See *The Acts of the Apostles*, page 53:1.
Education, pages 46:2; 47:2.

*Luke 1:13-15
*Luke 1:35
*Luke 1:41, 67, 68
*Matthew 1:18-20
*Luke 2:25-35

*Mark 1:9-11
*Acts 10:38
*Luke 3:16
*Matthew 4:1
(Mark 1:12)

*Luke 4:14
*Luke 4:18
*Matthew 12:28
*John 20:22
*Acts 1:2

These are instances where the Spirit is particularly mentioned. The Spirit accompanied Christ throughout His life and ministry.²

III. The Promise of the Spirit

In view of the abundant evidence that the Holy Spirit was, in the world from the beginning,—that He strove with the antediluvians, spoke by the prophets, filled John the Baptist, and anointed Jesus,—John 7:37-39 contains what to some is a perplexing statement. Jesus was inviting the Jews to come to Him as the living water. John, under inspiration, inserted an explanatory note: “But this spake He of the Spirit, which they that believe on Him should receive: for the Holy Ghost was not yet given [*given* is a supplied word]; because that Jesus was not yet glorified.”³ How can it be said that the Spirit “was not yet”?

We must remember that John was writing some sixty years after Jesus spoke. He had seen the outpouring of the Spirit on Pentecost as a signal that Jesus had been glorified. Clearly, it was this special bestowal of the Spirit that John had in mind rather than the continual presence of the Spirit in the world. On earlier occasions John had spoken of the presence of the Spirit.³ Use concordance, and find two earlier examples.

Jesus promised that when He left the world the Spirit would come as His representative. We should give attention to prophecies that pointed to the Spirit's manifestation and demonstration of power to an extent before unknown. What things were specifically predicted about the ministry of the Spirit? In what ways would it be better for Christ's followers to have the Spirit than to have Christ's continued personal presence?⁴

*Joel 2:28, 29 (cf. Acts 2:16-18)

Luke 11:13
*Luke 12:11, 12
John 14:16, 17, 26

*John 16:7, 8, 13, 14
Acts 1:4, 5

² See Index in *The Desire of Ages* under “Holy Spirit, manifestation of.”

³ See Index in *The Desire of Ages* under “Holy Spirit, Christ's representative.”

⁴ See *The Acts of the Apostles*, pages 35-46.

IV. The Coming of the Spirit

The story of the Holy Spirit's coming to the believers in the upper room on Pentecost and of the amazing results is recorded in Acts 1 and 2. Describe what the outpouring of the Spirit meant to the early church that day. Of what was the manifestation a sign to them? (See Acts 2:32, 33.) Were any of Jesus' promises regarding the Spirit's work fulfilled on Pentecost?⁵

V. The Spirit and the Early Church

It was the power of the Spirit that launched the early church on Pentecost. Acts 2:41-47. What is said about the Spirit's activity in the remaining chapters of Acts gives a fairly well-rounded view of His work. Consult your concordance under “Spirit,” and “Holy Ghost.” Classify under three or four rather general headings what is said about the Spirit's work in Acts.

TOPICS FOR STUDY AND DISCUSSION

1. What differences, if any, can you see between the work of the Holy Spirit in Old and in New Testament times? How much difference does it make that Christ, to whom the Spirit bears witness, had appeared in person?
2. Discuss the part of the Holy Spirit in launching the early Christian church.
3. What place did the Spirit occupy in guiding the activities of the early church?
4. Show how each step of the missionary activity of the early church was started and guided by the Spirit.

⁵ See *The Acts of the Apostles*, pages 47-56. See also Scripture Index in *The Acts of the Apostles*, *The S.D.A. Bible Commentary*, or *Index to the Writings of Ellen G. White*, for comments on particular passages.

The Holy Spirit's Function Today

Our assurance that the work of the Holy Spirit is for us as well as the early church has its foundation in Jesus' promise: "I will pray the Father, and He shall give you another Comforter, that He may abide with you forever." John 14:16. What Jesus promised His disciples the Spirit would do for them, He will do for us. The Spirit has a work for the whole world, which includes the church and the individual. He performs a particular function for the church; but the ultimate task of the Spirit is accomplished by what He does for each individual.¹

I. The Spirit in the World

The Holy Spirit's work for the world is well summarized in Jesus' words: "And when He is come, He will reprove [better, "convict"] the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment." John 16:8. He deals with the past, the present, and the future—the sins of the past, the present demand for righteousness, and the judgment to come. The Spirit is today revealing and convicting of the truth concerning sin, righteousness, and judgment. It is a daily ministry for the individual, prompting him to avoid sin and enabling him to develop a righteous character. In all this the Spirit's ministry is based on the work of Christ. He has no message but the message concerning the Saviour. John 16:13-15.

There are numerous Bible examples of the Spirit's ministry for men outside of the church. °See the following and find two additional illustrations.

Acts 2:37

*Acts 8:23-39

*Acts 10:44

II. The Spirit and the Church

Much of Paul's first epistle to the Corinthians deals with church order and discipline. It seems especially appropriate that a chapter describing the relation of the Holy Spirit to the church should be in this setting. The subject of "spiritual gifts" is presented in 1 Corinthians 12, and Paul

¹ See *The Desire of Ages*, pages 668:5 to 672:1.

opens the chapter with these words: "Now concerning spiritual gifts, brethren, I would not have you ignorant." Then he explains how the Spirit distributes the gifts through which He guides the church in its work, and the relationships between those who receive the gifts. The chapter forms an excellent center around which to gather other information about the Spirit and the church.

°Study 1 Corinthians 12, and note the following:²

- (1) The place of the Spirit in leading men to recognize Christ as Lord.
- (2) The source of the gifts in the church, and who determines how they shall be distributed.
- (3) The unifying factor in the operation of differing gifts.
- (4) To how many persons gifts are given, and the nature of the gifts.
- (5) The illustration of the unity and completeness of the gifts.
- (6) The importance of each gift in forming the whole.

See further on spiritual gifts, Ephesians 4:8-16. Note especially verses 12-16, which show the objectives to be accomplished by the gifts in the church. °Consult John 14:16, 17; 16:13; Acts 13:1-4, and the texts in the preceding section of this chapter showing how the Spirit directs the church in its missionary and evangelistic activity. °After having studied the suggested passages, formulate in a few sentences a statement that describes what you picture to be the relation between the Holy Spirit and the church.

III. The Spirit and the Individual

All that the Holy Spirit does for the world or through the church must be done for or through individuals, not for the world or the church as a unit. Men are saved or lost as individuals. The Spirit's ministry gives each person an opportunity to accept or reject the light and power that can lead him to full restoration with God. The next chapter will deal more

² "The perfection of the church depends not on each member being fashioned exactly alike. God calls for each one to take his proper place, to stand in his lot to do his appointed work according to the ability which has been given him."—Ellen G. White, quoted in *The S.D.A. Bible Commentary*, vol. 6, p. 1090 (Letter 19, 1901).

"The twelfth and thirteenth chapters of 1 Corinthians should be committed to memory, written in the mind and heart. Through His servant Paul, the Lord has placed before us these subjects for our consideration, and those who have the privilege of being brought together in church capacity will be united, understandingly and intelligently. The figure of the members which compose the body represents the church of God and the relation its members should sustain to one another."—Ellen G. White, quoted in *The S.D.A. Bible Commentary*, vol. 6, pp. 1090, 1091 (Manuscript 82, 1898).

in detail with the Holy Spirit in personal experience. In this chapter we shall view His work for the individual in a general way.

1. He makes effectual what Christ provided. The Holy Spirit is Christ's representative and agent to carry on the work of redemption. Christ made full provision for all to be saved; the Spirit makes this salvation effective in the individual life.³ °See John 3:3, 5-7; 7:37-39; 16:8-14.

2. He dwells in those who accept Christ. The Holy Spirit is "the Spirit of Christ" (1 Peter 1:11), and the indwelling of the Spirit is the equivalent of the indwelling of Christ. °Compare John 14:16-20 and 1 Corinthians 6:19 with Galatians 2:20.

3. He seals the sons and daughters of God. God places His seal of approval on men and women who are established in Christ (2 Corinthians 1:21, 22) and completely dedicated to His service. This work of sealing is a work of the Holy Spirit. See Ephesians 1:13; 4:30.

°Study carefully all the texts in this section and make a summary statement describing the general work of the Holy Spirit for every individual and also for those who respond to the call to accept Christ.

IV. The Sin Against the Holy Spirit

There is joy in heaven over one sinner who repents. Luke 15:7. What would it be if all to whom the Spirit brings conviction (John 16:8) should accept salvation? None are compelled to accept, and the majority of people choose not to do so. °Do all of these commit what Christ called "the blasphemy against the Holy Ghost" (Matthew 12:31), or is that sin some unforgivable cursing or reviling of the Spirit's name and work? Whatever it is, the blasphemy against the Holy Spirit is the one offense that "shall not be forgiven unto men." Matthew 12:31. To help find answers to these questions, study carefully the texts and comments suggested in the next three paragraphs.

The following passages mention offenses against the Holy Spirit. °Would you consider any or all of these to be blasphemy against the Spirit?

*Isaiah 63:10

*Acts 7:51

*1 Thessalonians 5:19

*Acts 5:3, 4

*Ephesians 4:30, 31

*Hebrews 10:29

Blasphemy against the Holy Spirit cannot be forgiven. Yet full provision has been made for the forgiveness of sin. °Under what circumstances will sins be forgiven?

³ *The Desire of Ages*, page 671. See whole page.

*Psalm 32:5

*Matthew 21:22

*1 John 1:6-9

*Proverbs 28:13

*John 15:16

°On the basis of these texts, what sins would you conclude cannot be forgiven?

°Under what circumstances did Jesus make His pronouncement regarding blasphemy against the Holy Spirit? See Matthew 12:22-32. °What evidences had been previously given the Pharisees indicating the real source of Jesus' power to cast out devils? In what danger did these men place themselves by rejecting light and attributing to Satan the work of the Holy Spirit? See *The S.D.A. Bible Commentary*, vol. 5, on Matthew 12:31.⁴

State in the simplest and clearest way you can what is the sin against the Holy Spirit.

TOPICS FOR STUDY AND DISCUSSION

1. What difference does it make whether we recognize or fail to recognize the place and power of the Holy Spirit?
2. Describe the Spirit's administrative work in relation to the government and activity of the church.
3. What insight does the following sentence give into the way the sin against the Holy Spirit may be committed? "Even one wrong trait of character, one sinful desire, persistently cherished, will eventually neutralize all the power of the gospel."—*Steps to Christ*, page 34:1.
4. Compare Paul's three lists of the gifts of the Spirit. 1 Corinthians 12:8-10; 12:28; Ephesians 4:11. Can you see reasons why they differ? What gifts are mentioned in all three lists? Eliminate duplications and make a list combining Paul's three. Show that your combined list does or does not cover the needs of the church.

⁴ See Index in *The Desire of Ages* under "Holy Spirit, the sin against."

See *The S.D.A. Bible Commentary*, vol. 5, pp. 1092, 1093 on Matthew 12:31, 32.

"No one need look upon the sin against the Holy Ghost as something mysterious and undefinable. The sin against the Holy Ghost is the sin of persistent refusal to respond to the invitation to repent."—Ellen G. White, quoted in *The S.D.A. Bible Commentary*, vol. 5, p. 1093 (*Review and Herald*, June 29, 1897).

See *Patriarchs and Prophets*, pages 404:4 to 405:0; 580:2; 635:4.

The Holy Spirit in Personal Experience

Every step in Christian experience is taken with the aid of the Holy Spirit. He brings conviction of sin and a desire for forgiveness and a new life. It is through His power that we are newly born into spiritual life. He leads into further truth and directs Christian growth. He brings the Christian to maturity and seals him for the kingdom of God.¹

All of the steps in Christian experience will be studied in part 7 of this book. Therefore, at present we are not giving detailed attention to any aspect of doctrine pertaining to Christian experience, but are simply noting that the Holy Spirit is involved in every step taken.

Following are some of the Bible references to the Spirit's ministry in connection with winning men and preparing them for eternal life. The texts are listed according to their order in the Bible. °Rearrange the texts within each group to give the most logical sequence of ideas to express the Spirit's work. °In a sentence or two summarize the thoughts of each group. °Find one more text to include under each of five of the headings to give a more complete picture of the Spirit's ministry. Consult all of the texts.

I. Beginning Christian Experience

John 3:5, 6	1 Corinthians 6:11	Romans 8:14
John 16:8	(See <i>The S.D.A. Bible Commentary</i> , volume 6, on this verse.)	1 Corinthians 12:3
Romans 5:5		Titus 3:5

II. Christian Sonship and Growth

Romans 8:9	Ephesians 3:16-19	<i>mentary</i> , volume 6,
Romans 14:17	1 Thessalonians 1:2	on Romans 6:19,
2 Corinthians 3:18	1 Peter 1:2 (On "sanctification," see <i>The S.D.A. Bible Com-</i>	where the same
Galatians 4:6		Greek word is trans-
Galatians 5:25		lated "holiness.")

¹ For comments pertaining to this whole chapter, see *Index to the Writings of Ellen G. White* or *The S.D.A. Bible Commentary* chapter references.

III. Revelation of Truth

John 14:26	John 16:13	1 Corinthians 2:9, 10, 14
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IV. Prayer

Romans 8:26, 27	Romans 15:30	Jude 20
	Ephesians 6:18	

V. Victory Over Sin

Romans 8:2	Romans 8:13
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VI. Assurance and Hope

Romans 8:16	<i>ble Commentary</i> ,	<i>The S.D.A. Bible</i>
Romans 15:13	volume 6, on this	<i>Commentary</i> , vol-
2 Corinthians 1:22	verse.)	ume 6, on this
(See <i>The S.D.A. Bi-</i>	Galatians 5:5 (See	verse.)

VII. Preaching and Evangelism

Acts 1:8	1 Thessalonians 1:5	Revelation 22:17
Romans 15:16	1 Peter 1:12	

VIII. Appoints to Places of Leadership

Acts 13:1-3	Acts 20:28
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IX. Faithfulness

2 Timothy 1:14

X. Fruit of the Spirit

Galatians 5:22, 23

XI. Resurrection

Romans 8:11

TOPICS FOR STUDY AND DISCUSSION

1. What does it mean to be "baptized with the Holy Spirit" (Acts 1:5)? Did this experience take place only on Pentecost?
2. What does it mean to be "filled with the Spirit"? Is the meaning the same in Exodus 31:3; Luke 1:15; Acts 2:4; and Acts 4:8?
3. In what ways are the following appropriate emblems of the Holy Spirit?
 - Fire—Acts 2:3; Matthew 3:11
 - Wind—John 3:8; Acts 2:2
 - Dove—Matthew 3:16
4. Is there any basis for the belief that anointing oil was used in Bible times as an emblem of the Holy Spirit? Discuss, giving references.