

Explaining The Role Of The Holy Spirit In Our Lives

'The earth was shapeless and empty. Darkness was on the surface of the deep sea. The Spirit of God was hovering over the surface of the waters' (Genesis 1:2). That is the very first reference to the Holy Spirit in the Bible. The Holy Spirit is a Person and is one of the Godhead or Trinity (Matthew 28:19; 2 Corinthians 13:14). He was with Jesus and God the Father during creation. 'You send forth Your Holy Spirit. They (everything) are created. You renew the face of the ground. Let the glory of the Lord endure forever. Let the Lord rejoice in His works' (Psalm 104:30 & 31).

The first thing we need to know about the Holy Spirit, is He is a Person not an 'It'. He is one of the Godhead and Jesus referred to Him as 'He' and 'Him', never 'It'. The Holy Spirit has many and varied roles in our lives. Jesus called the Holy Spirit 'Father'. 'Jesus rejoiced in the Holy Spirit and said, "I thank You Father, Lord of heaven and earth, You have hidden these things from the wise and understanding and revealed them to new believers. Yes Father, it was well pleasing in Your sight" (Luke 10:21). "I will ask the Father and He will give you another Comforter Who will remain with you forever. The Spirit of Truth, Whom the world cannot receive because it does not see Him or know Him but you know Him, for He lives with you and will be in you" (John 14:16 & 17). Notice in this verse, unsaved people (the world) cannot receive the Holy Spirit.

The Holy Spirit is sensitive and we are not to grieve Him, quench Him, resist Him, insult Him or lie to Him. 'Do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, in Whom you were sealed for the day of redemption' (Ephesians 4:30). 'Do not quench (subdue or suppress) the Holy Spirit' (1 Thessalonians 5:19). 'You stiff-necked and unfaithful in heart and ears, you always resist the Holy Spirit!' (Acts 7:51). 'How much worse punishment do you think the backslider will be judged worthy of, who has trodden underfoot the Son of God, has counted the blood of the covenant with which he was sanctified as an unholy thing, and who has insulted the Spirit of Grace?' (Hebrews 10:29). 'Why has Satan filled your heart to lie to the Holy Spirit? ... You have not lied to men, but to God ... How is it you have agreed to tempt the Holy Spirit of the Lord? (Acts 5:3, 4 & 9).

The one and only sin that will never ever be forgiven is deliberate blasphemy against the Holy Spirit. 'Blasphemy against the Holy Spirit will not be forgiven ... Whoever deliberately speaks against the Holy Spirit will not be forgiven, either in this world or in the world to come' (Matthew 12:31 & 32). 'Whoever blasphemes the Holy Spirit will never be forgiven but is guilty of an eternal sin' (Mark 3:29). 'Everyone who speaks against the Son of Man will be forgiven but those who blaspheme the Holy Spirit will not be forgiven' (Luke 12:10). The blasphemy Jesus was talking about here, was when the scribes said the holy work Jesus was doing was the work of the devil. They also said Jesus was possessed by the devil and that was where He received the power He had to do the work. According to the words of Jesus, the scribes who said those things will never, ever be forgiven for speaking such blasphemy against the Holy Spirit.

The Holy Spirit gives us understanding of the scriptures, He helps us to understand God, His character, His purposes, His ways and He helps us develop a close, intimate relationship with God the Father through Jesus the Son. It takes a Spirit-filled mind to comprehend the things of the Holy Spirit and they seem very foolish to unsaved people. 'God reveals His secrets through the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit searches all things, yes, the deep things of God ... No one knows the things of God except the Spirit of God ... These things we also speak, not in words the wisdom of man teaches, but what the Holy Spirit teaches, comparing spiritual things with spiritual things. The natural mind does not receive the things of God's Spirit, for they are foolishness to the carnal mind and it cannot understand the things of the Holy Spirit, because they are spiritually discerned. They who are spiritual, discern all things' (1 Corinthians 2:10 to 15). 'The Spirit of God spoke through me. His word was on my tongue' (2 Samuel 23:2).

The Holy Spirit is a different Person to the Spirit of Messiah. 'You receive the result of your faith, the salvation of your souls. The prophets who prophesied of the grace intended for you, earnestly searched and inquired about this salvation. They sought to find out to whom or when this was to come, with the Spirit of the Messiah working within them, predicting the sufferings of Jesus and the glory that would follow. It was revealed to them, the prophecies were not meant for themselves and their time, but for you. These things have been proclaimed to you by those who have preached the Gospel to you by the Holy Spirit sent from heaven. Into these things the very angels desire to look' (1 Peter 1:9 to 12). The Spirit of the Messiah was working with the prophets long before He was born on earth, then the Holy Spirit came to mankind after Jesus was resurrected and ascended to heaven. Jesus the Messiah said, "I will send Him to you" (John 16:7). There is a clear distinction between the Spirit of Messiah and the Holy Spirit. 'You are not in the flesh but in the Spirit if the Holy Spirit of God dwells in you, and if anyone does not have the Spirit of Messiah, they are not His' (Romans 8:9).

The Old Testament prophets spoke in the first person of events that never happened to them. King David wrote, "They pierced My hands and My feet," and "They parted My garments among them" (Psalm 22:16 & 18). David even quoted the exact last words Jesus spoke on the cross. "My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me? ... It is finished!" (Psalm 22:1 & 31). 'I gave My back to the smiters and My cheeks to those who plucked off My hair. I hid not My face from shame and spitting' (Isaiah 50:6). Those things never happened to David or Isaiah. It would be very hard to understand if God prompted us to write things like that down, when those events never happened to us. We would wonder what we were actually asked to write about, just as the prophets wondered what they were talking about. It was revealed to them, they were not speaking about themselves, but they were speaking to those who would follow later. It was the Spirit of Messiah Who was speaking in the first Person through them. They were writing about things that were to happen to Jesus. Their faith must have been incredible. Think of Moses and the people who constructed the tabernacle and carried out all the ordinances of worship and sacrifice, year after year, never knowing what it was all about. That is a real example of obedience and faith. The prophet's writings from the past are actually focussed on us. The prophets looked forward to what we now have, and the angels desired to look into it. That makes the salvation we have in Jesus somewhat startling. It is part of the huge overall eternal plan God has for mankind. Now we have seen the distinction between the Spirit of Messiah and the Holy Spirit, we can look at the distinction between baptism in water and baptism in the Holy Spirit. When we are baptised in water we are baptised to symbolise the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus. Our old life of sin is put to death and buried then we are raised to a new life in Him. Baptism in the Holy Spirit puts us under the invisible Shekinah cloud of protection and if our lives are right with God, according to the scriptures, we should speak in tongues. The children of Israel were very privileged. They saw the cloud and lived with it for forty years.

The Holy Spirit uses the scriptures as a weapon of Spiritual warfare (Ephesians 6:17), He empowers us to proclaim the Gospel (1 Thessalonians 1:5), He teaches us (John 14:26), He guides us (John 16:13), He glorifies Jesus (John 16:14), He speaks through us (Mark 13:11), He intercedes for us (Romans 8:26 & 27), He loves us (Romans 15:30), He gives us life and is called the Spirit of Life (Job 33:4; Romans 8:2), when it is in our best interests, He sometimes forbids us to do something (Acts 16:6). The Holy Spirit distributes Spiritual gifts to us according to His will (1 Corinthians 12:4 to 11). He is good (Psalm 143:10), He is wise and understanding (Isaiah 11:2), He is the Spirit of Truth (1 John 5:6), He is everywhere (Psalm 139:7), He is eternal (Hebrews 9:14), He is the breath of God (John 20:22), He was called Living Water (John 7:38 & 39). The Holy Spirit is the 'finger' of God (Matthew 12:28; Luke 11:20), and He wrote the Ten Commandments in stone (Exodus 31:18; Deuteronomy 9:10). The Holy Spirit gives us liberty (2 Corinthians 3:17).

There are a few symbols representing the Holy Spirit, the most well known is pure olive oil (Exodus 27:20), a dove, tongues of fire and an invisible seal on our foreheads. 'The foolish said to the wise, "Give us some of your oil for our lamps are going out"' (Matthew 25:8). 'The Holy Spirit descended on Jesus in the form of a dove' (Luke 3:22). 'Suddenly there came from the sky a sound like the rushing of a mighty wind and it filled the house where they were sitting. Tongues like fire appeared and were given to them; one tongue of fire sat on each of them. They were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak with other languages as the Holy Spirit gave them the ability to speak in their tongue' (Acts 2:3). 'You were sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise ... Do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God in whom you were sealed for the day of redemption' (Ephesians 1:13; 4:30). 'I saw another angel ascend from the sunrise having the seal of the living God ... Do not harm the earth, the sea or the trees until we have sealed the servants of our God on their foreheads" (Revelation 7:2 & 3).

In the Old Testament, the Holy Spirit gave his prophets special power to carry out His tasks. 'I (the Father) have filled him (Bezalel) with the Spirit of God, giving him wisdom, understanding, knowledge and ability to do all manner of workmanship' (Exodus 31:3). He inspired the prophets. 'As for me, I am full of power by the Spirit of the Lord' (Micah 3:8). The Holy Spirit was promised for the age of grace, from the time Jesus sent Him 2,000 years ago, right up to this present day. 'I will pour out My Holy Spirit on all flesh ... In those days I will pour out my Spirit' (Joel 2:28 & 29). 'I will put my Holy Spirit within you and cause you to walk in my statutes. You will keep my ordinances and do them' (Ezekiel 36:27).

By the power of the Holy Spirit, Jesus was conceived in Mary's womb (Luke 1:35), He was filled with the Holy Spirit, was led by Him and returned from the wilderness in the power of the Holy Spirit (Luke 4:1 & 14). Jesus was anointed by the Holy Spirit (Luke 4:18; Acts 10:38). By the Holy Spirit, Jesus offered up Himself. 'Jesus offered Himself without blemish to God, so how much more will the blood of Jesus Who through the Eternal Spirit, cleanse your conscience from dead works to serve the Living God?' (Hebrews 9:14). He was

raised from the dead by the power of the Holy Spirit. 'If the Spirit of God, Who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, He who raised Jesus from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through His Holy Spirit Who dwells in you' (Romans 8:11). Jesus sent the Holy Spirit to us. 'When the Counsellor has come Whom I will send to you from the Father, the Spirit of Truth Who proceeds from the Father, He will testify about Me' (John 15:26). Jesus baptises us in the Holy Spirit. 'John the Baptist said, "I baptise you with water, but He Who is mightier than I ... He will baptise you in the Holy Spirit and fire"' (Luke 3:16).

The Holy Spirit continued the work Jesus started. He began by bringing the church to birth on the day He poured out tongues of fire on the disciples and many other people according to the promise Jesus made to the disciples, "Behold, I (Jesus) send forth the promise of my Father on you. Wait in the city of Jerusalem until you are clothed with power from on high" (Luke 24:49; Acts 2:4). He brought new people into the new church joining them together as one Body (1 Corinthians 12:13). They were taught by the Holy Spirit (John 16:13), He gave them Spiritual gifts (1 Corinthians 12:4 to 11) to empower individuals in the new church to witness, preach and do miracles (Acts 1:8; 1 Corinthians 2:4; 1 Thessalonians 1:5; Romans 15:19), and the Holy Spirit gave them joy (1 Thessalonians 1:6). The Holy Spirit controlled and guided the early church by instructing individuals what to do (Acts 8:29; 15:28) and the church grew in large numbers (Acts 5:14; 16:5). He removed evil from the new church (Acts 5:1 to 10), controlled missionary work (Luke 24:45 to 49; Acts 13:2), He created unity (Acts 5:12), inspired worship (John 4:24) and encouraged fellowship with the Holy Spirit (2 Corinthians 13:14) and with one another (Philippians 2:1). He formed the church into a dwelling place for God (Ephesians 2:19 to 22) with each person being a temple of the Holy Spirit (1 Corinthians 6:19).

Before we turn to God He first draws people to Himself (John 6:44), then when we turn to God the Holy Spirit convicts us of sin (John 16:8), brings us to our new birth (John 3:5 & 6), we are adopted into God's family by the Spirit of Adoption (Romans 8:15), we are sealed with the Holy Spirit Who is a 'deposit' or down payment in our hearts (2 Corinthians 1:22) as a pledge of our eternal inheritance (Ephesians 1:14), we are baptised into the Body of believers (1 Corinthians 12:13), we receive the Holy Spirit (John 20:22), we are filled with the Holy Spirit (Acts 2:4) and are indwelt (Romans 8:9; 2 Timothy 1:14), He is given to us (Romans 5:5), He is a gift (Acts 2:38), He gives us direct access to God (Ephesians 2:18), He reassures us we are children of God (Romans 8:16), He gives our mortal bodies spiritual life (Romans 8:11), He comforts us (Acts 9:31), He helps us produce Spiritual fruit (Galatians 5:22 & 23), He gives us hope (Romans 15:13), He transforms and sanctifies us (2 Corinthians 3:18; 2 Thessalonians 2:13), He helps us honour Jesus as our Lord (1 Corinthians 12:3), He helps us if we are before a hostile courtroom (Matthew 10:20). We are advised to listen to the Holy Spirit (Revelation 2:7), we walk and live in the Holy Spirit (Galatians 5:25), we put sin to death (Romans 8:13) and we pray in the Holy Spirit (Ephesians 6:18).

The Holy Spirit offers us supernatural protection as long as we walk closely with the Lord. One startling example of Holy Spirit protection happened a few years ago when three members of a well-known international criminal motorcycle gang accepted Jesus as their Saviour. Their conversion was miraculous. The three men who were close friends known as the 'Three Amigos' spent a Saturday night drinking, smoking dope, gambling and womanising. When they decided to go home one of them crashed his motorcycle into a building. He was not badly hurt but the three men decided to spend the night where they were. They broke into the building, lay down on some long seats and fell asleep. The men did not know, the building happened by chance to be a Pentecostal church. When the pastor arrived early the next morning, he could see what had taken place the night before but instead of calling the police he asked the other church leaders to lay hands on the three amigos as they slept and prayed for them, then the church service continued as normal.

The three amigos woke to the sound of singing and in their still half-drunk state, joined in and sang the songs of praise with gusto. The three men sat through the whole service and at the end the pastor gave a casual altar call. All three men who were now completely sober, responded and gave their lives to Jesus, still wearing their usual motorcycle leathers. Within a short period of time the three men knew they had to make a choice – leave the gang 'family' or leave their newfound Christian family. They all chose to leave the criminal gang. They went to the farm where the gang would hang out and piled up their motorcycles, jackets, gloves, boots, drugs and all their pornographic material and set the lot on fire. The gang became furious at what they saw as an act of 'treason' and attacked the three amigos.

The three men stood up against a brick or concrete wall waiting for what they knew was coming. They had done the same thing to others before they were Christians. As the three amigos stood against the wall they began to pray in tongues. That was all they did – pray. They made no effort to defend themselves but put their trust in God. The gang rained blows on them, stabbed at them, shot at them and kicked at them for a

period of about forty-five minutes. The gang had punched the wall, each other or the air but not one punch had touched the three amigos. Some of them had broken their fingers and hands when their blows hit the wall. The gang had badly bruised feet from attempting to kick them and they missed, kicking the wall instead but not one of the three amigos received a kick. The gang had accidentally stabbed each other in their attempt to stab the three amigos and some of the knives had snapped against the wall, but not one of the three amigos received a stab wound. The gang tried to shoot them but every bullet ricocheted off the wall and hit other gang members or fell harmlessly to the ground but not one bullet even grazed the three amigos. The gang fell back exhausted. The three amigos tried to tell the gang about Jesus but were met with loud derisive comments and abuse, but even then the gang knew the three amigos had a power they had never encountered before. The three amigos went on to become pastors and good citizens, preaching the Gospel and telling people what God had done for them. That is the power of protection offered by the Holy Spirit. If we draw near to God, He will come near to us (James 4:8).

When we study the scriptures and see how much the Holy Spirit does for us, it should make us very humble and grateful. The Lord is watching over us far more than we are aware of. He does much more for us than we could ever hope to repay. What the Lord wants from us is a close relationship with Him, a grateful heart, praise, worship and obedience. As the Psalmist wrote, "Lord, what is mankind that you care for us or the son of man that you think of him?" (Psalm 144:3).

Amen and God bless you.

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