

*The Holy Spirit: Who is He and How do I Experience Him?*  
**Part One**

**The Person and Personality of the Holy Spirit**

*"The Holy Spirit has long been the Cinderella of the Trinity. The other two sisters may have gone to the theological ball; the Holy Spirit got left behind every time. But not now. The rise of the charismatic movement within virtually every mainstream church has ensured that the Holy Spirit figures prominently on the theological agenda. A new experience of the reality and power of the Spirit has had a major impact upon the theological discussion of the person and work of the Holy Spirit" (Alister McGrath).*

*The Holy Spirit in the Old Testament*

The Hebrew term *ruah* = breath, wind, spirit, appears @ 377 times in the OT (only 264 of which are translated by the Greek *pneuma* in the LXX). 94 of these 377 instances refer to the Spirit of God. God's Spirit is called "your Holy Spirit" three times in the OT (Ps. 51:11; Isa. 63:10-11). The Hebrew *ruach* often denotes the human spirit as a disposition or evidence of life – see Hos. 4:12; 5:4; Isa. 54:6. See Prov. 11:13; 15:13; 16:18; 18:14; 29:23; Eccles. 1:14,17; 2:11,17; 3:21; 4:4,6; 10:4; Job 7:11; 10:12. No significance should be placed on the fact that *ruach* is feminine. Says Anthony Thiselton: "It is an accident of convention that 'spirit' (*ruach*) in Hebrew is feminine, and 'spirit' (*pneuma*) in Greek is neuter. It does not suggest that Greeks viewed children as subpersonal merely because *teknon*, 'child,' is neuter" (Thiselton, 121). The following is a brief summary of the activity of the Spirit in the OT.

**1. The Spirit as Divine Creative Power**

The Spirit is responsible for creation and the eschatological renewal of the earth:

"When you send forth your Spirit, they are created, and you renew the face of the ground" (Psalm 104:30; cf. Gen. 1:2)

"For the palace is forsaken, the populous city deserted; the hill and the watchtower will become dens forever, a joy of wild donkeys, a pasture of flocks; until the Spirit is poured upon us from on high, and the wilderness becomes a fruitful field, and the fruitful field is deemed a forest" (Isaiah 32:14-15).

"Then he remembered the days of old, of Moses and his people. Where is he who brought them up out of the sea with the shepherds of his flock? Where is he who put in the midst of them his Holy Spirit, who caused his glorious arm to go at the right hand of Moses, who divided the waters before them to make for himself an everlasting name, who led them through the depths? Like a horse in the desert, they did not stumble. Like livestock that go down into the valley, the Spirit of the LORD gave them rest. So you led your people, to make for yourself a glorious name" (Isaiah 63:11-14).

"The Spirit of God has made me, and the breath of the Almighty gives me life" (Job 33:4).

**2. The Spirit and Leadership (civil and military administrators)**

"Then the Lord said to Moses, 'Gather for me seventy men of the elders of Israel, whom you know to be the elders of the people and officers over them, and bring them to the tent of meeting, and let them take their stand there with you. And I will come down and talk with you there. **And I will take some of the Spirit that is on you and put it on them**, and they shall bear the burden of the people with you, so that you may not bear it yourself alone" (Numbers 11:16-17).

In Judges, with the exception of Abimelech, at least seven judges receive the enabling of the Spirit to perform ministries on behalf of the whole community of Israel.

***“The Spirit of the Lord was upon him, and he judged Israel”*** (Judges 3:10; see also 6:34).

***“The Spirit of the Lord was upon him, and he judged Israel.*** He went out to war, and the Lord gave Cushan-rishathaim king of Mesopotamia into his hand. And his hand prevailed over Cushan-rishathaim” (Judges 3:10).

***“But the Spirit of the Lord clothed Gideon,*** and he sounded the trumpet, and the Abiezrites were called out to follow him” (Judges 6:34).

Military commanders, such as Joshua, were empowered and enabled by the Spirit:

“So the Lord said to Moses, ‘Take Joshua the son of Nun, ***a man in whom is the Spirit,*** and lay your hand on him’” (Num. 27:18).

We see this especially in the case of Samson:

“Then Samson went down with his father and mother to Timnah, and they came to the vineyards of Timnah. And behold, a young lion came toward him roaring. Then ***the Spirit of the LORD rushed upon him, and although he had nothing in his hand, he tore the lion in pieces as one tears a young goat.*** But he did not tell his father or his mother what he had done” (Judges 14:5-6).

“When he came to Lehi, the Philistines came shouting to meet him. ***Then the Spirit of the LORD rushed upon him, and the ropes that were on his arms became as flax that has caught fire, and his bonds melted off his hands. And he found a fresh jawbone of a donkey, and put out his hand and took it, and with it he struck 1,000 men***” (Judges 15:14-15).

“And she said, ‘The Philistines are upon you, Samson!’ And he awoke from his sleep and said, ‘I will go out as at other times and shake myself free.’ But he did not know that the LORD had left him” [which is to say, the Spirit of the Lord had left him] (Judges 16:20).

Kings in Israel were anointed with the Spirit to enable them to fulfill their calling:

Saul: “Then Samuel took a flask of oil and poured it on his head and kissed him and said, ***‘Has not the LORD anointed you to be prince over his people Israel? And you shall reign over the people of the LORD and you will save them from the hand of their surrounding enemies. And this shall be the sign to you that the LORD has anointed you to be prince over his heritage. When you depart from me today, you will meet two men by Rachel’s tomb in the territory of Benjamin at Zelzah, and they will say to you, ‘The donkeys that you went to seek are found, and now your father has ceased to care about the donkeys and is anxious about you, saying, ‘What shall I do about my son?’’ Then you shall go on from there farther and come to the oak of Tabor. Three men going up to God at Bethel will meet you there, one carrying three young goats, another carrying three loaves of bread, and another carrying a skin of wine. And they will greet you and give you two loaves of bread, which you shall accept from their hand. After that you shall come to Gibeath-elohim, where there is a garrison of the Philistines. And there, as soon as you come to the city, you will meet a group of prophets coming down from the high place with harp, tambourine, flute, and lyre before them, prophesying. Then the Spirit of the LORD will rush upon you, and you will prophesy with them and be turned into another man. Now when these signs meet you, do what your hand finds to do, for God is with you. Then go down before me to Gilgal. And behold, I am coming down to you to offer burnt offerings and to sacrifice peace offerings. Seven days you shall wait, until I come to you and show you what you shall do.’*** When he turned his back to leave Samuel, God gave him another heart. And all these signs came to pass that day. When they came to Gibeah, behold, a group of prophets met him, ***and the Spirit of God rushed upon him, and he prophesied among them***” (1 Samuel 10:1-10).

***“Now the Spirit of the LORD departed from Saul, and a harmful spirit from the LORD tormented him”*** (1 Samuel 16:14).

David: “And he sent and brought him in. Now he was ruddy and had beautiful eyes and was handsome. And the LORD said, ‘Arise, anoint him, for this is he.’ Then Samuel took the horn of oil and anointed him in the midst of his brothers. **And the Spirit of the LORD rushed upon David from that day forward.** And Samuel rose up and went to Ramah” (1 Samuel 16:12-13).

### 3. The Spirit Empowered/Enabled Unique Skills for the sake of the people of Israel

“The Lord said to Moses, ‘See, I have called by name Bezalel the son of Uri, son of Hur, of the tribe of Judah, and **I have filled him with the Spirit of God, with ability and intelligence, with knowledge and all craftsmanship, to devise artistic designs, to work in gold, silver, and bronze . . .**’” (Exod. 31:1-4).

Is this analogous to NT charismata?

### 4. The Spirit and Prophecy

“So Moses went out and told the people the words of the LORD. And he gathered seventy men of the elders of the people and placed them around the tent. Then the LORD came down in the cloud and spoke to him, and **took some of the Spirit that was on him and put it on the seventy elders. And as soon as the Spirit rested on them, they prophesied.** But they did not continue doing it. Now two men remained in the camp, one named Eldad, and the other named Medad, and **the Spirit rested on them.** They were among those registered, but they had not gone out to the tent, and so they prophesied in the camp. And a young man ran and told Moses, ‘Eldad and Medad are prophesying in the camp.’ And Joshua the son of Nun, the assistant of Moses from his youth, said, ‘My lord Moses, stop them.’ But Moses said to him, ‘Are you jealous for my sake? Would that all the LORD's people were prophets, **that the LORD would put his Spirit on them!**’ And Moses and the elders of Israel returned to the camp” (Numbers 11:24-30).

“Now these are the last words of David: The oracle of David, the son of Jesse, the oracle of the man who was raised on high, the anointed of the God of Jacob, the sweet psalmist of Israel: **‘The Spirit of the LORD speaks by me; his word is on my tongue’**” (2 Samuel 23:1-2).

“**Then the Spirit clothed Amasai,** chief of the thirty, and he said, ‘We are yours, O David, and with you, O son of Jesse! Peace, peace to you, and peace to your helpers! For your God helps you.’ Then David received them and made them officers of his troops” (1 Chronicles 12:18; see 2 Chron. 15:1-2; 20:14).

“**But as for me, I am filled with power, with the Spirit of the LORD, and with justice and might, to declare to Jacob his transgression and to Israel his sin**” (Micah 3:8).

### 5. The Spirit and Revelation/Interpretation

“At last Daniel came in before me—he who was named Belteshazzar after the name of my god, and in whom is the spirit of the holy gods—and I told him the dream, saying, ‘O Belteshazzar, chief of the magicians, because I know that the spirit of the holy gods is in you and that no mystery is too difficult for you, tell me the visions of my dream that I saw and their interpretation’” (Daniel 4:8-9; cf. 4:18; 5:11,14).

### 6. The Spirit as God's Presence

“Where shall I go from **your Spirit?** Or where shall I flee from **your presence?**” (Psalm 139:7)

### 7. The Spirit and Eschatology

In numerous texts the Spirit of God is responsible for the future salvation and renewal of God's people. The presence and power of the Spirit will characterize the ministry of the Messiah and will be central in the fulfillment of the new and eternal covenant.

“There shall come forth a shoot from the stump of Jesse, and a branch from his roots shall bear fruit. And the Spirit of the LORD shall rest upon him, the Spirit of wisdom and understanding, the Spirit of counsel and might, the Spirit of knowledge and the fear of the LORD” (Isaiah 11:1-2).

“Behold my servant, whom I uphold, my chosen, in whom my soul delights; I have put my Spirit upon him; he will bring forth justice to the nations” (Isaiah 42:1).

“And as for me, this is my covenant with them,” says the LORD: “My Spirit that is upon you, and my words that I have put in your mouth, shall not depart out of your mouth, or out of the mouth of your offspring, or out of the mouth of your children's offspring,” says the LORD, “from this time forth and forevermore” (Isaiah 59:21).

“The Spirit of the Lord GOD is upon me, because the LORD has anointed me to bring good news to the poor; he has sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to those who are bound” (Isaiah 61:1).

“And I will give them one heart, and a new spirit I will put within them. I will remove the heart of stone from their flesh and give them a heart of flesh” (Ezekiel 11:19; cf. 18:31).

“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. And I will put my Spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes and be careful to obey my rules” (Ezekiel 36:26-27; see 37:14).

“And it shall come to pass afterward, that I will pour out my Spirit on all flesh; your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your old men shall dream dreams, and your young men shall see visions. Even on the male and female servants in those days I will pour out my Spirit” (Joel 2:28-29).

These many texts shed considerable light on what David had in mind in Psalm 51:11 when he prayed: “take not your Holy Spirit from me.” This does not mean he envisions the loss of salvation or the withdrawal of divine grace. As we have noted above, aside from the saving activity of the Holy Spirit in the OT and the empowering ministry by which believers are sanctified and enabled to live holy lives, the Holy Spirit was poured out on select individuals to equip them to perform important tasks in the covenant community of Israel.

These many texts indicate that there was a ministry of the Holy Spirit in the OT, unrelated to personal salvation or character, *designed solely to empower, enable and equip someone for a task to which God had appointed him/her*. Such, I believe, is what David has in mind in Psalm 51:11. His prayer is that God would not withdraw the enabling *anointing* of the Spirit that empowers and equips him to lead Israel as King. Indeed, he may well have had in mind that disturbing scene where “the Spirit of the Lord departed from Saul” (1 Sam. 16:14) and prays that such would never befall him.

## **8. The Spirit is God**

If anyone should doubt whether the Spirit is divine, in a number of texts the Spirit is in synonymous parallelism with God:

“Cast me not away from your presence, and take not your Holy Spirit from me” (Psalm 51:11).

“When you hide your face, they are dismayed; when you take away their breath, they die and return to their dust. When you send forth your Spirit, they are created, and you renew the face of the ground” (Psalm 104:29-30).

“Where shall I go from your Spirit? Or where shall I flee from your presence?” (Psalm 139:7).

“Yet now be strong, O Zerubbabel, declares the LORD. Be strong, O Joshua, son of Jehozadak, the high priest. Be strong, all you people of the land, declares the LORD. Work, for I am with you, declares the LORD

of hosts, according to the covenant that I made with you when you came out of Egypt. My Spirit remains in your midst. Fear not” (Haggai 2:4-5).

### *Observations on the Person and Personality of the Holy Spirit*

#### A. *The Holy Spirit is a Person*

1. The Holy Spirit is referred to in the Bible as “he” and “who”, not “it”. Although the noun *pneuma* (“spirit”) is neuter, Jesus uses masculine pronouns to describe *him*. John 14:17 (neuter pronouns *ho* and *auto*); but the masculine is used in John 14:26; 15:26; 16:8,13,14. See also Acts 13:2.

2. The Holy Spirit has all the *qualities* of a personal being.

- **Mind** (knowledge) - Isa. 11:2 (“the Spirit of wisdom and understanding, the Spirit of counsel and might, the Spirit of knowledge and the fear of the Lord”); John 14:26 (the Spirit “will teach you all things”); Rom 8:27 (“he who searches the hearts knows what is *the mind of the Spirit*”); 1 Cor. 2:10-11 (“no one comprehends the thoughts of God except the Spirit of God”).
- **Emotions** (feelings) - Rom. 8:26 (“with groanings”); 15:30 (“the love of the Spirit”); Eph. 4:30 (“do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God”; cf. Isa. 63:10); Acts 15:28 (“it has seemed good to the Holy Spirit”); and possibly James 4:5.
- **Will** (choices/plans) - Acts 16:7 (“the Spirit of Jesus did not allow them”); 1 Cor. 12:11 (the Spirit “apportions [gifts] to each one individually *as he wills*”).

3. The Holy Spirit performs all the *functions* of a personal being.

- He talks (Mark 13:11; Acts 1:16; 8:29; 10:19; 11:12; 13:2; 21:11; 1 Tim. 4:1; Heb. 3:7; Rev. 2:7 [“what the Spirit says to the churches”; see also 2:11, 17, 29; 3:6, 13, 22])
- He testifies (John 15:26; 16:23)
- He can be sinned against (Matt. 12:31)
- He can be lied to (Acts 5:3)
- He can be tested/tempted (Acts 5:9)
- He can be insulted (Heb. 10:29)
- He enters into relationship with other persons (2 Cor. 13:14)
- He encourages (Acts 9:31)
- He strengthens (Eph. 3:16)
- He teaches (Luke 12:12; John 14:26; 1 Cor. 2:13)

#### B. *The Holy Spirit is a Divine Person*

We must remember that “the Spirit is not just something divine or something akin to God emanating from him, not some sort of action at a distance or some kind of gift detachable from himself, for in the Holy Spirit God acts directly upon us himself, and in giving us his Holy Spirit God gives us nothing less than himself” (Thomas F. Torrance, *The Trinitarian Faith*, T & T Clark, 191).

1. What is said of God is said of the Spirit (Acts 5:3-4).

“But Peter said, ‘Ananias, why has Satan filled your heart to lie to *the Holy Spirit* . . . ? You have not lied to man but to **God**’ (Acts 5:3-4).

2. The Holy Spirit is identified with Yahweh (Acts 7:51, quoting Ps. 78:17, 21; Heb. 10:15-17, quoting Jer. 31:33-34).

3. The activity of God = the activity of the Holy Spirit (e.g., in creation, conversion, etc.).

4. “God said” = “the Spirit said” (Isa. 6:9 / Acts 28:25).

5. We are the “temple of God because the Holy Spirit dwells in us” (Eph. 2:22; 1 Cor. 6:19). If the Holy Spirit is not God, how could we properly be called the temple of God simply because the Spirit indwells us?

6. Blasphemy against the Holy Spirit is the only unforgiveable sin (Mt. 12:31; Mk. 3:28).

Some argue that the Spirit is but an impersonal power, emanation, or attribute of God, which lacks personality. Octavius Winslow responds: "It is . . . incredible, and certainly inexplicable . . . that all manner of blasphemy against the whole character of God, particularly against his moral character, should be forgiven; and yet that blasphemy against a single natural attribute should never be forgiven. And what shall be thought of a doctrine that teaches that blasphemy committed against the Divine attribute of power is more heinous and unpardonable than blasphemy committed against God Himself?" (15)

7. Attributes/Actions of deity are ascribed to the Spirit.

- a. *Omniscience* (Isa. 40:13-14; 1 Cor. 2:10-11)
- b. *Omnipresence* (Ps. 139:7-8)
- c. *Omnipotence* (as seen in the Spirit’s role in creation [Gen. 1], providence [Ps. 104:30], regeneration, etc.; see especially Zech. 4:6)
- d. *Eternality* (Heb. 9:14)
- e. *Holiness* (used of the Spirit only twice in OT: Ps. 51:11 and Isa. 63:10)

8. The names of the Spirit suggest (require?) his deity.

- a. Spirit of glory (1 Pt. 4:14)
- b. Spirit of grace (Heb. 10:29)
- c. Spirit of life (Rom. 8:2)
- d. Spirit of truth (John 14:16; 15:26; 16:13)
- e. Spirit of wisdom and revelation (Eph. 1:17)

9. The linking of the Spirit with the Father and Son (Matt. 28:19; 2 Cor. 13:14; 1 Cor. 12:4)

Take special note of several texts in Paul’s letters where the work of saving sinners is formulated in *Trinitarian* terms: Rom. 5:1-8; 2 Cor. 3:1-4:6; Gal. 4:4-6; Eph. 1:3-14. See also 1 Thess. 1:4-5; 2 Thess. 2:13; 1 Cor. 1:4-7; 2:4-5; 2:12; 6:11; 6:19-20; 2 Cor. 1:21-22; Gal. 3:1-5; Rom. 8:3-4; 8:15-17; Col. 3:16; Eph. 1:17; 2:18; 2:20-22; Phil. 3:3.

Special note on **Romans 8:9** – “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.” Here the Holy Spirit is referred to in three ways: (1) as the Spirit; (2) as the Spirit of God (the Father); and (3) as the Spirit of Christ. There are not, however, three Spirits, but one Spirit who simultaneously sustains the same relationship to both Father and Son. Note also: the presence of the Holy Spirit is the *key* criterion in determining if someone is a Christian. To have the Holy Spirit is to be a Christian. To be devoid of the Spirit is to be devoid of Christ.

We should avoid drawing unbiblical conclusions from our tendency to speak of the Holy Spirit as the “third” person of the Godhead. The Bible nowhere speaks of him in such numerical terms. Neither are we to think of this as pointing to rank, as if the Spirit, being “third,” is somehow below the Father (who is “first”) and the Son (who is “second”). Rather “the Spirit is consubstantial with Father and Son, of one essence with the Father and Son. There is unity of being between the three, from eternity” (Christopher Holmes, 24).

This means the Holy Spirit is not the “grandson” of the Father. Some have thought that since the Son is the second of the three and the Spirit third that we should call the Spirit the son of the Son and the grandson of the Father. No. Recall that “what distinguishes the three from each other are . . . not degrees of divinity. Rather what distinguishes them is their originating relations” (Holmes, 28-29).

That is to say, the Father is not the Son or the Spirit because as God he begets and is he from whom the Son and Spirit proceed. And the Son is not the Father or the Spirit because he neither begets nor proceeds but is begotten. And the Spirit is not the Father or the Son because he neither begets nor is begotten but rather proceeds.

C. *The Holy Spirit is a Divine Person with a Purpose*

(See J.I. Packer's *Keep in Step with the Spirit*, pp. 17-54)

1. *Power* - the God-given ability to do what God wants us to do and what, apart from the Spirit, we otherwise could not do.

- Power for hope (Rom. 15:13)
- Power for miracles (Lk. 24:49; Acts 1:8; Rom. 15:18-19)
- Power for prayer (Eph. 6:18-19; Rom. 8:26-27)
- Power for praise (Eph. 5:18-19; Phil. 3:3)
- Power for preaching (Acts 4:33)

2. *Performance* - the impartation and energizing of spiritual gifts (1 Cor. 12:7).

3. *Purity* - the Spirit sanctifies our motives and actions and delivers us from the power and pollution of sin; the Spirit cultivates His fruit in our lives (Gal. 5).

4. *Presentation* - of the truth, in the sense of making us aware of spiritual things: revelation, interpretation, illumination (Eph. 1:17; 1 John 2:20,27).

5. *Presence* - the Holy Spirit makes known to us and in us the person of Jesus; He mediates the presence and power of Christ in our hearts; His role is to throw a floodlight, as it were, on the person of Christ (John 16:14).

6. *Prevention* – of sin, through common grace.

The *purpose* of the Holy Spirit is also seen in three *metaphors* used by the apostle Paul.

1. *The Holy Spirit is portrayed as a down payment* (2 Cor. 1:21-22; 5:5; Eph. 1:14).

The term (*arrabon*) was used in commercial transactions to refer to the first installment of the total amount due. The down payment effectively guaranteed the fulfillment of whatever contractual obligations were assumed. "The Spirit, therefore," says Fee, "serves as God's down payment in our present lives, the certain evidence that the future has come into the present, the sure guarantee that the future will be realized in full measure" (807). In giving the Holy Spirit to us "God is not simply promising us our final inheritance but actually providing us with a foretaste of it, even if it 'is only a *small fraction* of the future endowment'" (O'Brien, 121).

2. *The Holy Spirit is portrayed as the firstfruits* (Rom. 8:23).

This metaphor is also used of Christ's resurrection as the guarantee of ours (1 Cor. 15:20,23). Similar to the idea behind *down payment*, the Holy Spirit as "the first sheaf is God's pledge to us of the final harvest. Thus . . . the Spirit plays the essential role in our present existence, as both evidence and guarantee that the future is now and yet to be" (807).

3. *The Holy Spirit is portrayed as a seal* (2 Cor. 1:21-22; Eph. 1:13; 4:30).

- Its *meaning* – (1) to authenticate (John 3:33; 6:27; 1 Cor. 9:2) or confirm as genuine and true, including the idea that what is sealed is stamped with the character of its owner; (2) to designate or mark out as

one's property; to declare and signify ownership (see Rev. 7:3-8; 9:4); (3) to render secure or to establish (i.e., protect; cf. Eph. 4:30; Mt. 27:66; Rev. 20:3)

- Its *instrument* – With what are we sealed? The Holy Spirit. It isn't so much that the Spirit does the sealing as the Spirit *is* the seal. Hence, sealing = the reception and consequent indwelling of the Holy Spirit.
- Its *sphere* – In regard to whom are we sealed? Christ ("in whom")
- Its *time* – When were we sealed? The *Reformed Sealers* (e.g., Richard Sibbes, Thomas Goodwin, John Owen, and in our day, Martyn Lloyd-Jones) sought to identify spirit-baptism with the "sealing" of the Holy Spirit described in Eph. 1:13. I have no major problem with that, but they believed it to be an *experiential* event **subsequent** to regeneration (and therefore to be sought) that brings a profound, inner, *direct*, assurance of salvation (as over against a *sylogistic* assurance which one *deduces* from the fact that one believes). It also produces power for ministry and witness, joy, and a sense of God's glorious presence. These men make no connection between baptism in the Spirit and the charismatic gifts. Indeed, aside from Lloyd-Jones, the Reformed Sealers were all cessationists (i.e., they believed that the miraculous gifts of the Spirit *ceased* when the original apostles died; see Martyn Lloyd-Jones' book *Joy Unspeakable: Power & Renewal in the Holy Spirit* [Wheaton: Harold Shaw Publishers, 1984]).

The dispute, then, is over how we are to understand the relationship between "believing" (lit., "having believed" [an aorist participle]) and "sealing" (lit., "you were sealed" [the main verb]). Should we translate it, "*after* believing (or "since you believed"), you were sealed," in which case sealing is indeed separate from and subsequent to saving faith (conversion)? Or should we translate it, "*when* you believed, you were sealed," in which case sealing and believing are simultaneous? Grammatically speaking, one can find evidence for both usages in the NT (although "when you believed" is more probable; see esp. Acts 19:2). Fee is inclined to think that believing is indeed antecedent to sealing, but, he says, "the two verbs have nothing to do with separate and distinct experiences of faith. Rather, the one ('having believed [in Christ]' logically precedes the other ('you were sealed')); but from Paul's perspective these are two sides of the same coin" (670). So, whereas there may be a basis for equating the "sealing" of the Spirit with the "baptism" in the Spirit, there is no basis for making the latter a separate and subsequent event that brings an extraordinary anointing or experiential empowering.

### Discussion Questions

- (1) Does it make sense to you to think of the Holy Spirit as a person? What are the primary obstacles that might keep you from thinking of him in this way? How might you overcome these?
- (2) What would it mean for you to have a "personal relationship" with the Holy Spirit? What would this entail? Would it be any different from the way you have a relationship with the Father and the Son? If so, how? Should it?
- (3) What are the best and most persuasive arguments and biblical texts in defense of the notion that the Holy Spirit is God, no less so than are the Father and the Son?
- (4) Is it permissible to pray directly to the Holy Spirit? If not, why not? If it is, how would you do this, and under what circumstances?