

The Person & Work of the Holy Spirit

Session #2

All page numbers refer to J.I. Packer, *Keep in Step with the Spirit* (Grand Rapids: Fleming H. Revell, 1984)



“Christianity in North America is 3,000 miles wide and half an inch deep.” (10)



RECAP:

1. **“...the Spirit makes known the personal presence...of the risen, reigning Saviour...”** (47 cf. 55)
 - “...it is to your advantage (συμφέρω: helpful, beneficial, advantageous, profitable, useful¹) that I go away.” Why? “For if I do not go away, the Helper (*allon paraklēton*: “another Helper”; 14:16) will not come to you.” (John 16:7)
 - “A little while, and you will see me no longer (because of the ascension) and again a little while, and you will see me” (because of his sending of the Spirit). (John 16:16)
 - In 14:18 Jesus said, “I will not leave you as orphans [in my ascension]; I will come to you.”
 - Sinclair Ferguson states: “...it is not only *because of Christ* that we come to know the Spirit more fully, but actually *in Christ*. Indeed, it is apparently a principle of the divine Spirit’s working that he declines to disclose himself in any other way (Jn. 16:13–15). **He will not be known as he is in himself apart from Christ.**”²

How did this perspective change or supplement how you view the Holy Spirit?

2. This presence is not spatial but relational

- “Jesus of Nazareth, the Christ of the Scriptures, once crucified, now glorified, is *here*, personally approaching me.” (55)
- “...he is *active*, powerfully enlightening, animating, and transforming me along with others as he stirs our sluggishness, sharpens our insight, soothes our guilty consciences,

¹ *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*, trans. William F. Arndt and F. Wilbur Gingrich (Second edition, 1958; Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 1979), 780.

² Sinclair Ferguson, *The Holy Spirit* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1996), 30.

sweetens our tempers, supports us under pressure and strengthens us for righteousness.” (55)

- “...he is *glorious*, meriting all the worship, adoration, love, and loyalty of which we are capable.” (55)
- 3. **“Mediating Jesus’ presence, therefore, is a matter of the Spirit doing whatever is necessary for the creating, sustaining, deepening, and expressing of this awareness in human lives.” (55–56)**

The terms “Father” and “Son” are inherently relational so how do we have a “relationship” with the Spirit?

THE SPIRIT OF GOD (56–61)

1. The imagery of “Spirit” (Hebrew, *ruach*; Greek, *pneuma*)
 - Breath or wind (onomatopoeic words³)
 - The image is not so much immateriality but of “energy let loose, executive force invading, power in exercise, life demonstrated by activity.” (57)⁴
 - Sinclair Ferguson: “[God] cannot be ‘tamed’ by men. Instead, through his *ruach* he is able to ‘tame’ or subdue all things to fulfill his own purpose.”⁵
 - The image is not mere energy, but “God extending himself in active engagement with his creation in a personal way.”⁶
2. In the OT:
 - Creation
 - Gen. 1:2: “The earth was without *form* [*tohu*] and *void* [*bohu*], and darkness was over the face of the deep. And *the Spirit of God* (*ruach elohim*) was *hovering* [*merehephet*] over the face of the waters.”
 - Deut. 32:10–11: “[The LORD] found [Jacob] in a desert land, and in the howling *waste* [*tohu*] of the wilderness; he encircled him, he cared for him, he kept him as the apple of his eye. Like an eagle that stirs up its nest, that *flutters* [*rahep*] over its young, spreading out its wings, catching them, bearing them on its pinions.”
 - Ps 33:6: “By the word of the LORD the heavens were made, and by the *breath* [*ruah*] of his mouth all their host.”
 - Job 26:13: “By his *wind* [*ruahu*] the heavens were made fair”

³ Ferguson, *The Holy Spirit*, 16.

⁴ Ferguson, *The Holy Spirit*, 16–18.

⁵ Ferguson, *The Holy Spirit*, 18.

⁶ Ferguson, *The Holy Spirit*, 18.

- Job 33:4: “*The Spirit of God [ruach El] has made me, and the breath [nishmat] of the Almighty gives me life*” [tehayyeny].
 - Allusion to Gen. 2:7: “...the LORD God formed the man of dust from the ground and breathed into his nostrils *the breath of life [nishmat hayyim]*, and the man became a living creature.”
- Providence
 - Ps. 104:29–30: “When you hide your *face [paneykah]*, they are dismayed; when you take away their breath [rucham], they die and return to their dust. When you send forth your Spirit [ruach], they are created, and you renew the face of the ground.” [Face/Spirit also used in Ezek. 39:29]
- Revelation
 - Num. 24:2/2 Chron. 15:1: “The Spirit of God **came upon**” [Balaam/Azariah]
 - Isa. 61:1–4: “The Spirit of the LORD God is upon me, because the LORD has anointed me to bring good news to the poor...”
 - 2 Sam. 23:2: “The Spirit of the LORD **speaks by** me [David]”
 - 1 Chron. 12:18: “The Spirit **clothed** Amasai”
 - Neh. 9:30: “Many years you bore with them and **warned them by your Spirit** through your prophets”
 - Ezek. 2:2: “And as he spoke to me, **the Spirit entered into me** and set me on my feet, and I heard him speaking to me”
 - Ezek. 11:24: “And **the Spirit lifted me up and brought me** in the vision **by the Spirit** of God into Chaldea, to the exiles”
 - Mic. 3:8: “But as for me, **I am filled** with power, **with the Spirit of the LORD**”
- Sanctification
 - Neh. 9:20: “You gave your good Spirit to instruct them and did not withhold your manna from their mouth and gave them water for their thirst”
 - Ps. 143:10: “Teach me to do your will, for you are my God! Let your good Spirit lead me on level ground!”
 - Isa. 63:10–14: Spirit among the wilderness wanderers, he guided them, yet they grieved him. “Here we come as near as the Old Testament anywhere does to an explicit hypostatization of the Spirit...to ‘grieve’ is an *inter-personal* activity.”⁷

⁷ Ferguson, *The Holy Spirit*, 23.

- The Spirit is associated with Moses in working miracles as the divine witness-bearer of redemption (vv. 11–12)
 - The Spirit leads the people in the blessing of rest (v. 14)
 - The Spirit is the Executor, the one who executes or effects, the salvation of God (v. 8)
- Elicits human response
 - Ps. 51:10–12: “...take not your Holy Spirit from me” although our unholiness deserves it; without the Spirit, therefore, there is no repentance or forgiveness
 - Ezek. 36:25–27: “*I will sprinkle clean water on you, and you shall be clean from all your uncleannesses, and from all your idols I will cleanse you. 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*”
 - Zech. 12:10: “And I will pour out on the house of David and the inhabitants of Jerusalem a spirit of grace and pleas for mercy, so that, when they look on me, on him whom they have pierced, they shall mourn for him...and weep bitterly over him”
 - Equips with leadership
 - Joseph: Gen. 41:38
 - Moses: Num. 11:17
 - Seventy elders: Num. 11:16–29
 - Joshua: Num. 27:18; Deut. 34:9
 - Judges: Judg. 3:10; 6:34; 11:29; 13:25, 14:19, 15:14
 - Saul: 1 Sam. 10:10, 11:6, 19:20–23
 - David: 1 Sam. 16:13
 - Elijah and Elisha: 2 Kgs. 2:9–15
 - Messiah: Isa. 11:1–5, 42:1–4
 - Equips with skill
 - Bezalel and Oholiab: Ex. 31:1–11, 35:30–35 [beauty and order of tabernacle amidst the people is a “re-creation”]

What is all this showing you about the Spirit? How is it causing you to respond?

3. Reading the OT in light of the NT

- “...the Spirit in the Old Testament is God active...in the dynamic, demanding way in which the Lord Jesus is now made present to Christian believers.” (58)
 - Ferguson: “In the New Testament’s understanding of salvation, certain moral and spiritual characteristics are produced exclusively by the Spirit. But these (*e.g.* the fruit of the Spirit in Galatians 5:22–23) are already exemplified by Old Testament believers.”⁸
 - OT believers are examples of those who were justified by faith (Rom. 4) and lived by faith (Heb. 11; Jas. 2:14–26; 5:17–18)
- “The right way for followers of Jesus Christ to read the Old Testament is in the light of all that was revealed in and through Christ and that now lies before us in the New Testament.” (59)
 - Christ is the reference point of all Scripture (Matt. 5:17; 26:54–56; Luke 18:31; 22:37; 24:25–27, 44–47; John 5:39, 45–47)
 - The apostles taught that the Old Testament was instruction for Christians (Rom. 15:4; 1 Cor. 10:11; 2 Tim. 3:15–17; 2 Peter 1:19–21, 3:16)
- Examples of this:
 - David spoke by the Holy Spirit (Mark 12:36; Acts 1:16, 4:25)
 - Jesus claimed his preaching fulfilled Isaiah 61:1–4 (Luke 4:18–21)
 - Peter identifies the pouring out of the Spirit as fulfilling Joel 2:28–29 (Acts 2:16–18)
- Illustration: “The Old Testament may be likened to a chamber richly furnished but dimly lighted; the introduction of light brings into it nothing which was not in it before; but it brings out into clearer view much of what is in it but was only dimly or even not at all perceived before. The mystery of the Trinity is not revealed in the Old Testament; but the mystery of the Trinity underlies the Old Testament revelation, and here and there almost comes into view. Thus the Old Testament revelation of God is not corrected by the fuller revelation that follows it, but only perfected, extended and enlarged.”⁹

How does this hermeneutic affect how we read/preach/listen to Scripture?

THE PERSONHOOD OF THE SPIRIT (61–63)

⁸ Ferguson, *The Holy Spirit*, 25.

⁹ Benjamin B. Warfield, “The Biblical Doctrine of the Trinity,” in *Biblical Doctrines*, The Works of Benjamin B. Warfield, vol. 2 (1932; repr., Grand Rapids: Baker, 2003), 141–142.

1. “Person” (Latin, *persona*) is not “person” in our modern sense of an individual but is a relational term. As a “person,” the Holy Spirit is a distinct “subsistence” (*subsistentia*) yet of the same substance (*substantia*)/essence (*essentia*)/being (*esse*) as the Father and Son.¹⁰
2. The Spirit as Paraclete
 - John 14:16: “I will ask the Father, and he will give you *another Helper*, to **be with you forever**”
 - John 14:26: “But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, he (*ekeinos*) will teach you all things and bring to your remembrance all that I have said to you”
 - John 15:26: “But when the Helper comes, whom I will send to you from the Father, the Spirit of truth, who proceeds from the Father, **he** (*ekeinos*) **will bear witness about me**”
 - John 16:8: “And when he (*ekeinos*) comes, he will convict the world”
 - John 16:13–14: “When the Spirit of truth comes, he (*ekeinos*) will guide you into all the truth, for he will not speak on his own authority, but whatever he hears he will speak, and he will declare to you the things that are to come. He (*ekeinos*) will glorify me, for he will take what is mine and declare it to you”
 - These verses use the masculine pronoun “he” (*ekeinos*) when grammatically should have been neuter “it” (*ekeino*) to match the neuter “spirit” (*pneuma*). This is “surely expressive of a sense of the Spirit’s personal being.”¹¹
 - In these verses the Spirit is said to be with, teach, bring to remembrance, bear witness, convict, guide, speak, declare, and glorify.
 - **This is not the work of an energy, power, or impersonal force!**

Reflect on this statement: these Scriptures teach us to desire the Spirit as giver of grace and gifts more than his grace and gifts.

3. The Spirit as Deity
 - Being called “holy” as God points to his deity
 - Baptized into the name (singular) of God, which is tri-personal (Matt. 28:19)
 - He blesses with grace and peace (Rev. 1:4–5); he’s named between Father and Son
 - “seven spirits” means his fullness

¹⁰ For a great discussion, see Gerald Bray, *God is Love: A Biblical and Systematic Theology* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2012), 118–130.

¹¹ Ferguson, *The Holy Spirit*, 31.

- Triadic passages link Father, Son, and Spirit in plan of grace (1 Cor. 12:4–6; 2 Cor. 13:14; Eph. 1:3–13; 2:18; 3:14–19; 4:4–6; 2 Thes. 2:13–14; 1 Peter 1:2)

Are there professing Christian groups that deny the deity of the Spirit? How are these verses/ideas helpful in witnessing to them?

THE HOLY SPIRIT AND CHRIST (63–66)

1. The Promise of the Spirit

- Paraclete is the “Spirit of Truth” (14:17; 15:26; 16:13) and “Holy Spirit” (14:26)
- Sent by Father at Jesus’ request (14:16, 26 [“in my name”])
- Sent by the Son as the Father’s agent (15:26; 16:7)
- Stays with disciples “forever” (14:16)
- By his coming Jesus would be with them (14:18–23)
 - “...the Spirit would be self-effacing, directing all attention away from himself to Christ and drawing folk into the faith, hope, love, obedience, adoration, and dedication, which constitute communion with Christ. This, be it said, remains the criterion by which the authenticity of supposedly ‘spiritual’ movements...and of supposedly ‘spiritual,’ experiences, may be gauged.” (64)

2. The Spirit and Christ’s Presence

- “...the Spirit would make the presence of Christ and fellowship with him and his Father realities of experience for those who, by obeying his words, showed that they loved him (John 14:21–23).” (64)

3. The Teaching of God’s Spirit

- Make disciples recall and comprehend Jesus’ teaching (14:26; 16:13)
- “all things” and “all the truth” are about Jesus. “This is the test that will show how much of the Spirit there is in each of the various types of supposedly Christian theology that jostle for our attention these days.” (65)

4. The Witness of the Spirit

- Causing people to know their need of Jesus and to turn to him (15:27; 16:8–11)

How can we think more of Jesus when we think of the Spirit? How can we think more of the Spirit when we think of Jesus?



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