





a study of the *Holy Spirit*

Lesson 4: The Holy Spirit in the New Testament

1. The Holy Spirit is mentioned three times more in the New Testament than in the Old Testament ("Spirit" used 82 times in the Old Testament (ASV) and 236 times in the New Testament (ASV)). This indicates that the New Testament is the section of Scripture which reveals most about the Spirit's person, coming, and relationship with Christ and Christians.

"The dispensation of the Spirit is clearly revealed in the New Testament; hence, the New Testament may be called 'the book of the Holy Spirit'." (Boles, 59)

2. The emphasis of the New Testament upon the Holy Spirit is evident with a simple survey.
 - a.  We are given a full list of names which help explain the Holy Spirit.
 - 1) The Spirit (Romans 8:13)
 - 2) Spirit of God (Romans 8:14)
 - 3) Spirit of Christ (Romans 8:9)
 - 4) The Spirit Himself (Romans 8:16)
 - 5) Spirit of God's Son (Galatians 4:6)
 - 6) Spirit of the Father (Matthew 10:20)
 - 7) Spirit of Truth (John 14:14-17)
 - 8) Holy Spirit (Acts 28:25)
 - 9) Comforter (John 14:26)
 - b.  Every writer of the New Testament makes a reference to the Holy Spirit.¹
 - c.  Twenty-four books mention the Holy Spirit (Philemon, 2, and 3 John do not).
 - d.  More references to the Holy Spirit are found in Romans than any other book! (27 verses).

¹ The reference made in James 4:5 could be interpreted to be our personal spirit or the Holy Spirit.

3. 📖 The Holy Spirit is presented in the New Testament by a number of different metaphors. This is necessary because there is not just one word which is able to convey a correct image of Him to us regarding His true nature. Note some of the more prominent pictures used to describe Him.
- a. **Dove** (Matthew 3:16; Mark 1:10, 11; Luke 3:21,22; John 1:32-34). The "dove" suggests purity, gentleness, and peace. The Holy Spirit WAS NOT a dove but had the "form" of a dove. Some suggest there was a luminous shape that descended that resembled the form of a dove. The dove is seen as a "messenger" and hence shows that the Holy Spirit is God's unique Messenger. The symbolism of "purity" seems to be the greatest emphasis. The Holy Spirit produces purity in the lives of all whom He impacts.
 - b. 📖 **Oil** (1 John 2:20) is used in Scripture three ways:
 - 1) "Anointing" (Psalms 92:10; 104:15). The anointing oil was a compound of fragrant spices which were crushed and added to pure olive oil. Such reflected the richness of the Holy Spirit. This oil was used to anoint priests, prophets, and kings who had been set aside for a task. It impressed those anointed with the fact that they had been authorized to execute God's mission on earth.
 - 2) "Light" – the oil in the lamps provided the light, the lamps were merely the instrument through which the oil could work. The Holy Spirit as the Spirit of Truth (John 14:17; 16:13) is also the Spirit of Light. To Christians the Holy Spirit is the source of spiritual light (knowledge). This light is dispensed through the Church (Matthew 5:6).
 - 3) "Healing" – The anointing of the sick with oil allowed the medicinal qualities of the oil to heal the sick. Such was a fitting symbol of the healing powers of the Holy Spirit in the spiritual realm to all who are obedient.
 - c. **Seal** (Ephesians 1:13) – The "seal" was a symbol for many important things, all of which are found as suitable symbols for the Holy Spirit's work in the New Testament. These functions are:
 - 1) The identifying mark/symbol (Genesis 38:18,25).
 - 2) The setting of a mark upon correspondence for security (Isaiah 8:16).
 - 3) That signifying ownership (Job 9:7; Malachi 3:16-18; 4:2).
 - 4) That signifying a pledge (Romans 4:11).
 - 5) Evidence of a contract (Jeremiah 32:6-15).

6) That supporting a person's character (1 Corinthians 9:2).

7) That which answers questions about the authority behind something (1 Kings 21:8-10; Esther 3:12).

8) *Note:* Believers are "sealed" when they obey God's commands of immersion (Galatians 3:27). Having been baptized INTO Christ and having thereby PUT ON Christ, they are sealed in virtue to their being IN Christ (2 Corinthians 1:21, 22). This sealing signifies two things for saints: (1) Ownership by God; (2) Holiness on man's part.

d. 📖 **Earnest** (Ephesians 1:14) – This is a pledge of security; guarantee of a promise from God regarding salvation (1 Peter 1:4; Romans 2:7).

e. 📖 **Water** (John 4:10, 11; 7:37-39). This is water that sustains and generates life. It is life-giving and life-sustaining. Hence the Holy Spirit offers life (John 4:13, 14). Water also is symbolic of joy and satisfaction. One of the most remarkable prophecies of the Holy Spirit as "water" is Ezekiel 47. There "Healing Water" flows from the Temple on Mt. Moriah and eventually flows into the Dead Sea giving life (verses 1, 2). Thus, the light of the gospel would go into the world, healing and making glad. Some will refuse (verse 11). Water is life oriented, growth producing, cleansing, refreshing, and satisfying. In such ways the Holy Spirit uses God's Word to bring these same results to mankind.

Thus, the Holy Spirit is presented as being able to do or offer anything which mortals need. Recount each of these symbols and show how the Holy Spirit meets our deepest needs.

4. The Holy Spirit becomes prominent as the Incarnation occurs. In fact, the Holy Spirit is the One who makes the life of Christ knowable. If we are to understand the mission of Christ, we must understand the work of the Holy Spirit in the Lord's mission (1 Corinthians 12:3).

📖 Notice the critical role which the Holy Spirit played in Christ's life.

a. The Holy Spirit revealed the Lord's mission via prophets. Over 300 prophecies in the Old Testament were revealed by the Holy Spirit which discussed the Lord's birth, ministry, death, and resurrection.

b. 📖 The Holy Spirit impregnated the Virgin Mary with the Incarnate Son (Matthew 1:18-20). This is inexplicable. We must accept it as it is written.

c. 📖 The Holy Spirit was prominent in the personal life of Jesus Christ.

1) The Lord was given the Holy Spirit without measure at His baptism (John 3:34; Matthew 3:16, 17).

- 2) The Holy Spirit was with Jesus during the Temptation (Matthew 4:1; Mark 1:12).
 - 3) The Holy Spirit empowered Christ as He returned to Galilee (Luke 4:14).
 - 4) The Lord recognized the Holy Spirit's power with in Him (Luke 4:18).
 - 5) The Lord offered Himself through the Holy Spirit (Hebrews 9:14).
- d. 📖 The Holy Spirit was prominent in the public ministry of Jesus.
- 1) He cast out demons (Matthew 10:28; 12:28).
 - 2) He preached by the Holy Spirit (Luke 4:18-21).
 - 3) He rejoiced in the Holy Spirit (Luke 10:21).
 - 4) He gave commands by the Holy Spirit (Acts 1:2).
- e. 📖 The Holy Spirit was with Christ in His death and resurrection. As the Lord offered Himself "through" the Spirit, the Holy Spirit was aiding Jesus on the cross (Hebrews 9:14). The Holy Spirit also helped Jesus in the resurrection (Romans 1:4; 1 Peter 3:18; Acts 2:33-36). *Note:* The Holy Spirit was always with Jesus on earth. In every aspect of His birth, life, and death our Lord was aided by the Holy Spirit.
5. 📖 As the Holy Spirit is mentioned in the gospel narratives we notice these points about the Holy Spirit.
- a. In Matthew's narrative we find more than twelve references.
 - b. Mark is the shortest and so fewer references are found, only six.
 - c. Luke mentions the Holy Spirit eighteen times. Luke includes events regarding the Holy Spirit with John's birth and the Lord's incarnation that the other three do not mention.
 - d. John's narrative has more about the Holy Spirit than any of the other accounts – about twenty-four. John represents the Holy Spirit as a Person of the Godhead and brings out the personality of the Holy Spirit clearer than any other gospel author.
- 📖 John's discussion about the Holy Spirit (Comforter) focused around three points.
- 1) The Holy Spirit would *convict* the world of sin.
 - 2) 📖 The Holy Spirit would *unfold* the Truth to the Apostles.

- 3) 🕊️ The Holy Spirit would *build up* the Church.
6. The gospel of John contains three key chapters which summarize the Spirit's role in the New Testament (John 14-16). In the context Jesus had completed His public ministry (John 12:36b) and is secluded with His Apostles (Matthew 26:20) and is preparing them for His death and ascension. The emphasis in these chapters is the Lord's concern to give His disciples words of comfort.

🕊️ There are six "key" texts from John 14-16 which explains the work of the Holy Spirit in the New Testament dispensation.

a. **John 14:16,17**

- 1) The disciples are not told to pray for the Spirit!
- 2) 🕊️ "Another"—shows this is not Christ.
- 3) 🕊️ "Comforter"—From a Greek word which literally is "one called alongside to give help." 🕊️ Sometimes it is translated as "Advocate" and this metaor is used for one who goes to court to make a plea for a friend; to gain sympathy for him. The Latin form comes from terms meaning "to fortify; strengthen with aid." This term does not mean the Holy Spirit will lessen grief/sorrow but that He will give strength and help.
- 4) "Spirit of Truth"—the Holy Spirit teaches Truth via the Word.

b. 🕊️ **John 14:26**

- 1) "In My name" indicates the Holy Spirit's connection with Christ. The Holy Spirit is NOT to establish an independent influence/experience that emphasizes the Holy Spirit over Christ.
- 2) "Teach you all things" indicates the Holy Spirit's purpose. The Holy Spirit will teach/remind the Apostles what Christ had said and they would need the understanding to teach those things (Ephesians 3:1-6). The Holy Spirit would be their "Helper" in these things.
- 3) "All that I said" – the "I" is emphatic.
- 4) *Note:* This is not a promise made to all – it applies only to the Apostles! It was made only to those who heard Jesus teach. It is error to take this promise and say we are going to teach/preach/write a book and call upon the Holy Spirit to give us the facts,

insight, and organization of the material. We receive the benefits of this promise as we study the Scriptures (Ephesians 3:1-5).

c. 📖 **John 15:26,27**

- 1) "To bear witness" does not mean a relating of a warm, moving experience. It refers to testimony given in court that will lead to a verdict. It describes the presentation of objective facts. The Holy Spirit enabled the Apostles to do this when He reminded them of basic facts which led to an undisputed verdict (Acts 2:36). This does not refer to great, thrilling experiences that one has had.
- 2) How did the Holy Spirit accomplish this? The Holy Spirit inspired the Scriptures so that facts are found which will support the teaching. These facts uphold the teaching of Christ. An illustration is provided in the Scripture (Mark 12:36; Acts 4:25). The Holy Spirit guided by inspiration so when these wrote or spoke it was the Holy Spirit ("through the mouth"). In later years the Apostles bore "witness" of Christ (Acts 15:28) by citing the support from Scripture for their teaching.

d. 📖 **John 16:8-11**

- 1) In regard to the world the Holy Spirit would "convict."
- 2) In providing the "evidence" (witness) the Holy Spirit would show sinners the righteousness of Christ and the judgment of God. This would convince the lost that they needed to obey God.
- 3) Thus, the Holy Spirit would show the lost the danger of sin, necessity of righteousness, and the fearfulness of judgment.

e. 📖 **John 16:12-13**

- 1) The Holy Spirit enabled the Apostles to understand what mortal minds could not grasp. The Holy Spirit will lead in a consistent pattern of God's will. There will not be a new doctrine injected!
- 2) "Things to come" refers to unknowable events of the future (1 Timothy 4:1-5).

f. 📖 **John 16:14,15**

The summary of the Holy Spirit's work—"He shall glorify Me." The emphasis is upon "Me" and is stressed two ways: (1) the object (Me) is placed before the verb in the Greek, "It is I whom the Spirit is to glorify"; (2) the emphatic form of the pronoun "Me" is used. Note: The false spirit will emphasize emotions/experience. But God's Spirit will emphasize Christ!

- g. 🕊 From these texts we can summarize the Holy Spirit's work in the New Testament under these activities.
1. He will act as our Comforter.
 2. 🕊 He will lead to the Truth.
 3. 🕊 He will dwell within saints.
 4. 🕊 He will teach about Christ.
 5. 🕊 He will provide substantiation about Christ.
 6. 🕊 He will convict sinners.
 7. 🕊 He will unfold future events.
- h. 🕊 The manner of the Holy Spirit's operation in the New Testament is clearly illustrated in Acts 2. Notice how He operated:
1. Peter and the Apostles preached (Acts 2:22-23).
 2. 🕊 Their teaching was witnessed (supported) by the Holy Spirit (Acts 2:24-32).
 3. 🕊 This evidence led to a conclusion that Christ was indeed exalted (Acts 2:33-35).
 4. 🕊 This conclusion resulted in a conviction of sin, righteousness, and the judgment (Acts 2:36, 37).
 5. This illustration helps us understand basic facts about how the Holy Spirit operates in the New Testament.
 - 1) Did Peter testify of Christ?
 - 2) Did Peter convict men of sin, righteousness, and judgment?
 - 3) Did Peter bring men to faith in Christ?
 - 4) Did Peter glorify Christ?
 - 5) But note – it was the Holy Spirit that enabled Peter to do these things. The Holy Spirit still works via Scripture to convict men of sin, righteousness, and judgment. Thus the Holy Spirit works through Scripture to bring men to faith in Christ

(Hebrews 3:7; 10:15; 2 Thessalonians 2:14). Without the Word the Holy Spirit would be unable to do this!