

Quotable: Question – How does the Holy Spirit help us?

Answer – The Holy Spirit convicts us of our sin, comforts us, guides us, gives us spiritual gifts and the desire to obey God; and he enables us to pray and to understand God's Word (Eph 6:17-18). – The New City Catechism

I. **Introductory Discussion:** How might you describe to a new believer or an unbeliever how each Person of the Trinity is at work in salvation?

II. The Work of the Holy Spirit:

The works attributed more particularly¹ (in certain passages) to the person of the Spirit:

- Creation (Gen 1:2²; Psalm 33:6³; 104:30; Job 33:4; 34:14-15)
- Revelation/Inspiration (Mark 12:36; John 15:26; Acts 1:16; 4:25-26; Eph 3:5; 1 Thess 1:4-5a; 2 Tim 3:16; 2 Pet 1:21; Heb 3:7; 10:15-17)
- Illumination⁴ (John 14:26; 16:13; Acts 15:7-8; 1 Cor 2:12; Eph 1:17-18)

Table Talk: In light of John 16:13 and Jesus' promise that the Spirit of truth will guide his people into all truth, what are we to make of denominational differences? Should we eliminate them? Or are they helpful in any way?

- Regeneration/Salvation (Ezek 36:26-27; John 3:3-8; Acts 10:44-45; Eph 1:13-14; Titus 3:5)
- Resurrection⁵ (Rom 8:11)
 - of Jesus (Rom 1:4; 1 Tim 3:16)
 - of believers⁶ (Rom 8:23)

Table Talk: How does the doctrine of the Spirit's work in Resurrection speak into all that is going on amidst the COVID-19 crisis?

- Sanctification (2 Cor 3:18; 1 Pet 1:2)
 - Godliness (Rom 8:13; 1 Cor 6:19-20; 1 Thess 1:6)
 - Boldness (Acts 4:31)
 - Gifting (1 Cor 12:4-7, 11)
 - Producing Fruit in the believer's life (Gal 5:22)
 - Assurance (Rom 8:16; 15:13)
 - Access to the Father (Eph 2:18)

¹ Although when God relates to His Creation, "his works are never of one person exclusively, but always the working of the Divine Being as a whole, it is [also] true that in the [functional] order of God's works some of his operations are ascribed more particularly to one person." – L. Berkhof

² "Gen 1:2 when originally written may not have been a reference to the Third Person of the Godhead in the human author's mind – how could it have been? – yet such a meaning was in the mind of God." Graham Cole

³ There is some debate as to whether this verse is an anthropomorphism or a reference to the Holy Spirit.

⁴ "We may be moved and induced by the testimony of the Church to a high esteem of the Holy Scripture. And the heavenliness of the matter, the efficacy of the doctrine, the majesty of the style, the consent of all the parts, the scope of the whole (which is, to give all glory to God), the full discovery it makes of the only way of man's salvation, the many other incomparable excellences, and the entire perfection thereof, are arguments whereby it abundantly evidences itself to be the Word of God: yet notwithstanding, **our full persuasion and assurance** of the infallible truth and divine authority thereof, is from the inward work of the Holy Spirit bearing witness by and with the Word in our heart." Westminster Confession (I.5)

⁵ The Spirit is not only the author of the resurrection-act, but likewise the permanent [foundation] of the resurrection-life..." Geerhardus Vos

⁶ "Having indwelt the believer in the present age, the Spirit will take absolute possession of the believer's entire being [in the coming aeon]." Sinclair Ferguson

-Prayer (Rom 8:15; Jude 20)

- What about the miraculous gifts? Baptism in the Holy Spirit? The Filling of the Holy Spirit?

Table Talk: If a brother or sister in Christ who lives in Ottawa and attends Bethel or Woodvale Pentecostal Church asked you what you believe about the continuity of the charismatic or miraculous gifts of the Spirit, how would you respond? What reasons might you give for your response?

Two Views:

- Cessationism – The miracles and charismatic gifts of the Holy Spirit were uniquely the signs that distinguished an apostle. Therefore, the working of the miracles ceased when the apostles and their close associates died. Therefore, they conclude, no further miracles are to be expected today.⁷
- Continuationism⁸ - “Beginning with Pentecost and continuing throughout the book of Acts, whenever the Spirit is poured out on new believers they experience his charismata. There is nothing to indicate these phenomena were restricted to them and then.” Sam Storms

-Tongues

- a) the day of Pentecost (Acts 2:4, 11)
- b) the house of Cornelius (Acts 10:46)
- c) the laying on of hands (Acts 19:6)
- d) the Corinthian church (1 Cor 12, 14)

-Prophecy and Healing (Rom 12:6; 1 Cor 12:7-11; 13:8-10; 14:6)

- Baptism in the Holy Spirit⁹ and the filling of the Holy Spirit

⁷ Grudem. For an article defending this position: <https://www.thegospelcoalition.org/article/cessationist/>

⁸ “I hold that ‘baptism in the Holy Spirit’ is a phrase best applied to conversion, and subsequent experiences are better called ‘being filled with the Holy Spirit’; moreover, that all the gifts of the Holy Spirit mentioned in the New Testament are still valid for today.” Wayne Grudem

“There is no reason to believe that the infant congregation at Corinth was singular in this. The Apostle does not write as if he were describing a marvelous state of affairs peculiar to that church....The hints in the rest of his letters and in the Book of Acts require us, accordingly, to look upon this beautiful picture of Christian worship as one which would be true to life for any of the numerous congregations planted by the Apostles in the length and breadth of the world visited and preached to by them....We are justified in considering it characteristic of the Apostolic churches that such miraculous gifts should be displayed in them. The exception would be, not a church with, but a church without, such gifts. Everywhere, the Apostolic Church was marked out as itself a gift from God, by showing forth the possession of the Spirit in appropriate works of the Spirit—miracles of healing and miracles of power, miracles of knowledge whether in the form of prophecy or of the discerning of spirits, miracles of speech, whether of the gift of tongues or of their interpretation. The Apostolic Church was characteristically a miracle-working church.” BB Warfield
See also: <https://www.thegospelcoalition.org/article/continuationist/>

⁹ “We believe that when the Holy Spirit came upon the whole body of believers on the day of Pentecost it was the fulfillment of the announcement made by John the Baptist and the promises of Christ to His own during His earthly ministry. At Pentecost the disciples were individually endowed with power to witness concerning Christ, and collectively baptized into one body, which was the formation of the Church, which is His Body. We further believe, since the time the Gospel was received in the house of Cornelius, and the believers received the Holy Spirit without delay, praying, laying on of hands, or any other condition save faith, all who believe in Christ are born of the Spirit, sealed by the Spirit, anointed by the Spirit, indwelt by the Spirit, and by (in) the Holy Spirit baptized into the Body of Christ. And we also believe that the New Testament distinguishes between being indwelt by the Spirit, which is true of all believers, and being filled with (controlled by) the Spirit, which is the believers privilege and duty. There is one baptism with (in) the Spirit, and it is into the Body of Christ, but there are many fillings. Pentecost was a one-time historical event.” The Met, Statement of Faith