

The Work Of The Holy Spirit

Introduction. Perhaps one of the most confusing aspects of the Godhead today is the work of the Holy Spirit. If someone has ever asked you about the work of the Holy Spirit, you may have been able to barely stammer out an answer that really did not deal with the issue. If you have, you can take heart because many Christians cannot rightly answer these questions.

The work of the Godhead is both unified and diversified. The work of each member can be called the work of God, yet there is diversity in the work which each one does. The Father planned. The Son executed the divine plan. The Holy Spirit assisted and revealed to man this divine plan. Why were miracles necessary in the first century but not now? How does the Holy Spirit work in the lives of people today?

All these are relevant questions which we can hopefully understand as we examine five works of the Holy Spirit in God's redemptive plan.

- I. ***The Work Of Revelation -- Communication Through Inspiration***
 - A. The Old Testament was revealed by the Holy Spirit.
 1. Holy men spoke as they were moved by the Holy Spirit (2 Peter 1:19-21).
 2. God used prophets who were inspired (Hebrews 1:1; 1 Peter 1:9-12).
 - B. The New Testament was revealed by the Holy Spirit.
 1. Christ promised the Holy Spirit to His apostles (John 14:26; 15:26; 16:13-14).
 2. Power was received when the Holy Spirit came on them (Acts 1:8; 2:4).
 - C. Inspired revelation was supernatural, verbal, and final.
 1. All scripture is inspired by God (2 Timothy 3:16-17; Ephesians 3:3-5).
 2. They used the words given by the Spirit (1 Corinthians 2:9-13; 1 Thessalonians 2:13).
 3. This final revelation cannot be altered (Jude 3; Galatians 1:6-8; Revelation 22:18-19).
- II. ***The Work Of Confirmation -- Verification Through Signification***
 - A. Miracles bore witness of true revelation.
 1. Miracles proved these men were sent by God.
 - a. This was true of Christ (Acts 2:22; John 3:2; 20:30-31).
 - b. This was true of Christ's disciples (Mark 16:20; Hebrews 2:3-4; 2 Corinthians 12:12).

2. In the first century miracles were necessary because revelation and confirmation were both necessary. Today neither are necessary, for this work is completed.
 - a. Can any new truth be revealed today?
 - b. What existing truth needs more confirmation from God?
- B. Miracles have ceased because no need exists for either revelation or confirmation.
 1. This period of time was predicted (1 Corinthians 13:8-10).
 2. Miracles ceased soon after the apostles died. Power to impart miraculous spiritual gifts to believers was given only to the apostles (Acts 8:12-23; 1 Corinthians 12:8-10). When they all died, the full revelation and confirmation of the New Testament was complete, therefore this special work of the Holy Spirit came to an end.
 3. To say miracles have ceased does not mean to say the Holy Spirit is no longer active. Although we say Christ has completed His personal ministry on the earth, we understand He continues to be actively involved in man's salvation. Even so, the Holy Spirit continues to work in converting the lost and giving power to the saved.

III. ***The Work Of Conviction -- Argumentation Through Revelation***

- A. The world needs convicting of sin, righteousness, and judgment.
 1. The Holy Spirit was the advocate, or one who argued in favor of Christ. He would convict the world of sin (John 16:7-8).
 2. As the advocate of Christ, He would be furnished with sufficient evidence and competent arguments to accomplish this task (John 16:13).
 3. He would argue the case from three vantage points:
 - a. The world stands condemned because of unbelief in Jesus Christ as God's Son.
 - b. Righteousness or justification may be obtained through faith because Jesus as Christ has gone to heaven.
 - c. Judgment is sure because the prince of this world has been judged.
- B. The work continues through the revealed word of truth.
 1. The testimony to establish these points and convince the world was revealed and confirmed by the Holy Spirit, recorded by inspired writers, and stands today with the same force and power.
 2. If mankind is convinced today, it will be by the gospel.
 - a. Sin (John 8:24; Romans 3:23-26).

- b. Righteousness (Romans 1:16-17; Titus 2:11-12).
- c. Judgment (Acts 17:30-31; John 12:48).

IV. ***The Work Of Conversion -- Restoration Through Motivation***

- A. Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.
 - 1. Jesus described the new birth as "of the Spirit" (John 3:3-8).
 - 2. This new birth is also described as "by the word of God" (1 Peter 1:23).
- B. We are born of the Spirit as we respond to the word.
 - 1. The Holy Spirit converts men, but He can only do it through the use of His sword, which is the word of God (Ephesians 6:17).
 - 2. The word is therefore able to save and purify us (James 1:21; 1 Peter 1:22).
 - a. We are begotten by the gospel (James 1:18; 1 Corinthians 4:15).
 - b. The begetting is necessary to physical birth. Although only the woman is present at actual birth, the new baby is of both man and woman.
 - c. Likewise, a spiritual birth is not of water only, but is of both water and Spirit.
- C. Conversion is accomplished by the power of the gospel.
 - 1. There is not a need the sinner has in being saved but that his need is supplied by the gospel.
 - 2. There is not an influence wielded by the Spirit in conversion but that the same influence is attributed to the word of the gospel.
 - a. What can the Holy Spirit do that is not accomplished by the word of God?
 - b. Note some examples of what both accomplishes in our lives:
 - i. Gives us wisdom (Psalm 19:7).
 - ii. Converts us (Psalm 19:7).
 - iii. Gives us light (Psalm 119:130).
 - iv. Gives understanding (Psalm 119:104).
 - v. Spiritually makes us alive (Psalm 119:50).
 - vi. Bears witness and testifies (John 5:39; 1 John 5:6).
 - vii. Gives life to us (John 6:63).
 - viii. Cleanses us (John 15:3).
 - ix. Sanctifies us (John 17:17).
 - x. Builds us up (Acts 20:32).
 - xi. Justifies us (Romans 5:1).
 - xii. Makes us free from sin (Romans 6:17-18).
 - xiii. Gives us faith (Romans 10:17).
 - xiv. Begets us (1 Corinthians 4:15).
 - xv. Reconciles us to God (2 Corinthians 5:19).

- xvi. Washes us (Ephesians 5:26).
 - xvii. Establishes or strengthens us (Colossians 2:7).
 - xviii. Works in us (1 Thessalonians 2:13).
 - xix. Comforts us (1 Thessalonians 4:18).
 - xx. Calls us (2 Thessalonians 2:14).
 - xxi. Saves us (James 1:21).
 - xxii. Purifies us (1 Peter 1:22).
 - xxiii. Gives us the new birth (1 Peter 1:23).
 - xxiv. Causes us to grow (1 Peter 2:2).
3. There is not a case of conversion recorded but that it was accomplished through the preaching of the gospel.
 4. Everything necessary to move people to accept Christ and be saved is set forth in the gospel: love of God, sacrifice of Christ, forgiveness of sins, hope of heaven, eternal inheritance, fear of hell, and certainty of judgment.

V. ***The Work Of Sanctification -- Consecration Through Edification***

- A. God's people are called to a pure life.
 1. If we are led by the Spirit, then commitment to Christ is obvious (1 Corinthians 6:9-11; 1 Peter 2:9; Romans 8:12-17).
 - a. Christ is seen in us (Romans 8:9-11; Colossians 1:27; Galatians 2:20).
 - b. The Father is seen in us (2 Corinthians 6:16; 1 John 4:12-15).
 2. We are under the control and influence of God revealed in the word, thus it can be said that God, Christ, and the Spirit are "in" us. No mystical "better felt than told" dwelling is taught in the scriptures. If you can understand how God and Christ can be in us, you should also understand how the Holy Spirit can "dwell in you richly" and how we can be "filled with the Spirit" (Ephesians 5:19; Colossians 3:16).
- B. Sanctification is made possible today through the word.
 1. We are called by the gospel (2 Thessalonians 2:13-14).
 2. We know we are saved when we obey (1 John 2:3-4).
 - a. Thereby we are "sealed" or given assurance (Ephesians 1:13-14; 2 Corinthians 1:22).
 - b. Our guarantee of salvation is the faithfulness of God's word (1 Peter 1:23-25).
 3. Being filled with the Spirit is comparable to being filled with the word (Ephesians 5:18; Colossians 3:16).

Conclusion. The Holy Spirit continues to work through a confirmed revelation to produce conviction, conversion, and sanctification. The Holy

Spirit does the work, but He does it through the means of teaching and the medium of the gospel, not through miraculous intervention.