

## *The Modern Blasphemy of the Holy Spirit*

*John MacArthur*

Well now that I don't have to preach on anything but what I want to preach on since I finished the New Testament, I find myself all over the place trying to decide what to preach on in sequence... a new kind of experience for me and I'm working on some kind of sequence that makes sense over the future. But I am sort of at the liberty point of my life where whatever is on my heart is where I can go, and this is a wonderful opportunity for me. And there is a subject that has concerned me for a long time and I have wanted to address this subject but it hasn't been a part of preaching through the gospels in the way that it can be now and that is the subject of the Holy Spirit...the Holy Spirit.

After all the emphasis of so many years, 25 years of preaching through the four gospels, and much emphasis, of course, on the person of Christ as it should be, much emphasis on the character of God, and the nature of God as manifest in Christ and is seen elsewhere in Scripture, it is time now to give honor to the third member of the Trinity, namely the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit is the most forgotten, the most misrepresented, the most dishonored, the most grieved, the most abused and I might even say the most blasphemed of the members of the Trinity. That's a sad thing.

When our Lord cleansed the temple in *John 2*, He said that He was, in a sense, fulfilling the attitude of David from *Psalms 69*, "*Zeal for Your house has eaten Me up, the reproaches that fall on you are fallen on Me.*" And what our Lord was saying was when God is dishonored, I feel the pain. "*You have taken My Father's house, which is to be a house of prayer, and turned it into a den of robbers. You've corrupted My Father's house. You've blasphemed My Father's name. You've dishonored My Father.*"

And I can say that I have long felt that same thing with regard to the Holy Spirit. Yes, I grieve when God is dishonored. It is a constant grief to me. I grieve when Christ is dishonored. But in this contemporary sort of Christian evangelical church world, people are a little less reluctant to bring dishonor on the name of God, and the name of Christ, but they think they have a free run at dishonoring and abusing the Holy Spirit apparently, because so much of that goes on. I'm not here to defend the Holy Spirit, He can defend Himself. But I am here to say that reproaches that are falling on His holy name are falling on me as well, and mostly this comes in the professing church from Pentecostals and Charismatics who feel they have free license to abuse the Holy Spirit and even blaspheme His holy name. And they do it constantly.

How do they do it? By attributing to the Holy Spirit words that He didn't say, deeds that He didn't do, and experiences that He didn't produce, attributing to the Holy Spirit that which is not the work of the Holy Spirit. Endless human experiences, emotional experiences, bizarre experiences and demonic experiences are said to come from the Holy Spirit...visions, revelations, voices from heaven, messages from the Spirit through transcendental means, dreams, speaking in tongues, prophecies, out of body experiences, trips to heaven, anointings, miracles. All false, all lies, all deceptions attributed falsely to the Holy Spirit.

You know enough to know that God does not want to be worshiped in illegitimate ways. God wants to be worshiped for who He is, for what He has done in the way He has declared. It is open season on abusing the Holy Spirit, outrageous dishonor of the Holy Spirit claiming He is saying things and doing things and generating things that have nothing to do with the Holy Spirit at all. It is a reckless kind of movement. It is a shameful and dangerous sin to heap such abuse on the Holy Spirit.

In fact, the idea of bringing dishonor on the Holy Spirit ought to make any thinking person tremble. People think, less interested, I think, in claiming that God is doing certain things, or saying certain things, or that Christ is doing things or saying certain things then they are at saying the Holy Spirit did this, the Holy Spirit said this, the Holy Spirit is producing and generating this that there just seems to be no restraint on the things that are blamed on the Holy Spirit.

A way to perceive this would be to see it as a contrast to what we see in *Matthew chapter 12*, for example. The leaders of Israel committed the unpardonable sin and what was that unpardonable sin? It was attributing to Satan the work of the Holy Spirit. You remember that? It was attributing to Satan the work of the Holy Spirit, *Matthew 12:31-32*.

What's going on today is the opposite, attributing to the Holy Spirit the work of Satan. That's what's going on. Attributing to the Holy Spirit the work of Satan. Satan is alive and at work in deception, false miracles, bad theology, lying visions, lying dreams, lying revelations, deceptive teachers who are in it for the money and power and influence. Satan is alive and well and the work of Satan is being attributed to the Holy Spirit, that is a serious blasphemy just as attributing to Satan the work of the Holy Spirit is a serious blasphemy.

I couldn't even begin to give you all the illustrations, you have enough of them in your own mind. You can turn on your television and see any litany of them that you would choose. And in order to give credibility to all these things, all these lies, they attach them to the Holy Spirit as if it's a freebie, as if there's no price to pay for that kind of blasphemy.

The latest wave of this, I'll just give you one illustration, the latest wave of this that is gaining traction and has entered into the sort of national news is a new form of Charismania, bringing reproach on the Holy Spirit called the New Apostolic Reformation, NAR, the New Apostolic Reformation. It is not new, it is not apostolic, and it is not a reformation, by the way. It is like Grape Nuts, it's not grapes and it's not nuts, it's like Christian Science, it's not Christian and it's not scientific. Well the New Apostolic Reformation isn't new, it isn't apostolic and it isn't a reformation. But it is a rapidly expanding movement being generated by some of the same old troubling false teachers and false leaders that have been around in Charismania for decades, always dishonoring the Holy Spirit, always dishonoring the Scripture, always claiming miracle signs, wonders, visions, dreams. Peter Wagner, the Kansas City prophets, Mike Bickle, Cindy Jacobs, Lou Engle (??), and on and on and on it goes. In fact, this is exploding so fast that they have a 50-state network that are now involved in this.

This is a new kind of a Charismania, it's sort of on steroids. One writer said it's Charismania with shots of adrenalin. And here's what their basic claim is, that the Holy Spirit has revealed to them that in the year 2001 we entered into the second apostolic age. What does that mean? It means that the long-lost offices of New Testament prophet and New Testament apostle have been restored, that the Holy Spirit has given the power of prophecy and the power and authority of an apostle to certain people in this generation of the church since 2001.

It seems very odd to me that the Holy Spirit would give that to people whose theology is unbiblical and totally aberrant. I'm pretty sure the Holy Spirit wouldn't authenticate Paul's teachers, so we know it's not the Holy Spirit. But that's what they claim. But the Holy Spirit gets blamed for everything. This is just the newest one.

For example, they have authority equal to the Apostles. They have the same power the Apostles had through the Holy Spirit to do miracles and to exercise that power and they've had it since 2001. Some of them fall into the prophet category, some of them fall into the Apostle category, they speak what the Holy Spirit reveals to them with the same authority the Apostles have. This authority and this power has been demonstrated in the world because one of the Apostles stopped mad cow disease in Germany, so he claims.

The Movement is marked by super excess ecstatic, bizarre behavior. Emotionalism ran amuck, all kinds of crazy revelations, behaviors. Peter Wagner is the father of this, as he has been involved in all kinds of other aberrations through the years, including starting the Church Growth Movement which gave life to the pragmatism movement which as we know is so ubiquitous. Their influence has been growing and recently jumped into the political realm, and I'll tell you how.

There was a couple of weeks ago, a few weeks ago now, a prayer breakfast in the city of Houston that you may have read about. It was an event sponsored by the New Apostolic Reformation and their leaders and the guests and the main speaker there was Rick Perry, who is a candidate for the Republican Party for President. At this event sponsored by the New Apostolic Reformation, two pastors were leading in this event. They are apostles. They have been given apostleship by the Holy Spirit. They called Rick Perry's office, as governor of the state of Texas, and told him that the Lord had revealed to them through the Holy Spirit that Texas is the state that God has chosen to lead the United States into revival and godly government and Rick Perry is to play a key role. And at that event, these two apostles of the New Apostolic Reformation Movement, laid hands on Rick Perry and prayed over him. They claim that God speaks directly to them specific instruction. And if people fail to listen to this divine revelation that comes through them, there will be more earthquakes, more terrorist attacks and worse economic conditions.

However, if we listen, good things will happen because they gave us an illustration of that because they were the ones who gave a little bit of rain to Texas after the draught. I mean, if you didn't know better, you'd think somebody opened the back door of the nut house.

One of these Apostles says the Democratic Party is controlled by Jezebel and three lesser demons. They see demons in public places. They engage in confrontation of these demons and they do it with elaborate rituals, branding irons, stakes and plumb lines. They've gone all over the state of Texas pounding stakes into the ground, branding certain things and claiming every county in Texas for God. One of them says, and I quote, "We are called to world dominion." They have gone to every Masonic Lodge in Texas to cast out the demon Baal because the demon Baal controls free masonry.

They had a meeting in 2009 in Houston. Under the anointing of the Holy Spirit, Jezebel was visible. They saw Jezebel. Actually a woman named Alice Patterson, one of these Apostles who has written a book called Bridging The Racial and Political Divide which sounds like a political book, published in 2010. She said that she saw Jezebel and Jezebel lifted up her skirt and when Jezebel lifted up her skirt, this is a quote, "She exposed little Baal, Asheroth (?), and a few other demons who were small cowering, trembling little spirits only ankle high on Jezebel's skinny legs," end quote.

This is in a book called Bridging the Racial and Political Divide. And this is all attributed to the work of the Holy Spirit who is revealing all these things.

Now you know where this all comes from. This is again attributing to the Holy Spirit the work of Satan. I don't know what Rick Perry knows or doesn't know about all of this, you know, in a campaign year, you take the prayers from anybody especially if you're not sure what this is all about. But this is just one illustration of the aberrations that continue to be placed on the back of the Holy Spirit as if these are things that He is doing. It is such a frightening, frightening form of blasphemy against the Holy Spirit.

There are other forms of it, but that's just the latest one that's in the media. I remember in the early years of ministry when I came out of seminary. For many years I traveled around when I graduated...even when I was in seminary, graduated from college and during my seminary years and for a number of years afterwards, I traveled around and I spoke to young people's groups and college groups and all kinds of different groups and student ministries, and ministries in churches. And inevitably one of the themes that everybody wanted me to talk about was the ministry of the Holy Spirit. It was constant. I was constantly talking about the ministry of the Holy Spirit. Everybody was asking about sanctification, how do I get rid of sin in my life, how do I progress spiritually, how do I grow more to be like Jesus Christ, how do I separate from the world, how do I gain victory over temptation, what is the path? How can I manifest the fruit of the Spirit? How can I walk in the Spirit and not fulfill the lust of the flesh? I mean, they were...that's just plain old New Testament sanctification and young people were asking those questions.

It was constant. I would be in conference after conference on campuses and in various places talking to students and inevitably the subject would be, how can I be sanctified? How can I become more like Christ? How can I beat sin in my life? How can I grow in grace and in the knowledge of Christ? What does it mean to be Spirit filled? What does it mean to be baptized by the Spirit? Sealed by the Spirit? Indwelt by the Spirit? What is the role the Spirit plays in my life?

I'm not asked to do that anymore. That doesn't seem to ever be a topic of conversation. That doesn't seem to be a subject anybody cares about. The Charismatic Movement has stolen the Holy Spirit and created a golden calf and they're dancing around the golden calf as if it were the Holy Spirit. It is a false form of the Holy Spirit. They've exploited the Holy Spirit and demanded to be able to do that in an un-criticized manner. Nobody can say anything against them. That's divisive, unloving, cantankerous. That's why Benny Hinn said about me, "If I had my way, I'd take my Holy Ghost Machine Gun and blow his brains out. You're not allowed to question anything they say about the Holy Spirit. They have co-opted the Holy Spirit and demanded to do that without being criticized, without being confronted, and they go on with their exploitation and so prove testimony concerning the Holy Spirit as pushed and repressed, underground because it's going to be divisive, they're not going to like it. It will offend somebody.

So the Charismatic version of the Holy Spirit is that golden calf who is not God, not God the Holy Spirit, but a false creation, an idol around which they dance in their dishonoring exercises. And here we are in this, you know, interest in Reformed Theology, in this kind of new evangelical wave that's going and there's very little talk about the Holy Spirit, very little discussion about the Holy Spirit. No strong doctrine of sanctification, no consuming desire for holiness, separation from the world. In fact, it seems to me that much of this new evangelical movement looks more worldly all the time. Seems to be indifferent to the work of the Holy Spirit. You know, if you get the gospel right, you get a free pass on everything else. Very little interest in talking about what is the baptism of the Spirit, what is the filling of the Spirit, the sealing of the Spirit? What does it mean to walk in the Spirit

and not fulfill the lust of the flesh? What does biblical separation mean? Personal holiness? Sanctification? There just doesn't seem to be a lot of interest in that.

Wherever the Holy Spirit is, there's humility. Wherever you see the exaltation of a man, that's not the work of the Holy Spirit. When you can look at a movement that claims to be evangelical, and you can see the exploitation, the exaltation of men, that is not the work of the Holy Spirit. Where there is the work of the Holy Spirit, there's the exaltation of Jesus Christ and everybody else fades.

Of all the ages in the history of the church, this is the one most capable of feeding pride. Why? Because there's so many ways to stick yourself in front of people's faces across the planet. This is an easy time for proud people to make the most of themselves. There just doesn't seem to be interest in the work and ministry of the Holy Spirit. There is even a toleration of a view of the Holy Spirit that's downright heretical and that is what, I guess you could call modalism, I know that's a technical term but that's simply to say that there's only one God, He's not three persons, He's one God who appears in three modes not at the same time but separately. Sometimes He's the Father, sometimes He's the Son, sometimes He's the Spirit, He's never three in one. That's the view, for example, of T.D. Jakes, Sabellianism, Modalism. It doesn't seem to bother lots of folks that he has a God who is not the God of the Bible. That his view of the Holy Spirit is a heresy. His view of the Son and the Father equally heretical. We have to get the Trinity right and we have to give due worship to the Holy Spirit, equal to the Son, equal to the Father.

So these things have been on my mind and a lot of things in addition, but I think you get the picture. And we haven't really looked down hard at the ministry of the Holy Spirit to see what it is that we need to worship Him for and what we need to be focused on in terms of giving Him the praise and the honor that He is due.

The disinterest in the Holy Spirit is what gives rise to pragmatism. We have replaced supernaturalism, the ministry of the Holy Spirit, with pragmatism. We've committed the sin of the Galatians, *Galatians 3* Paul says, "*Having begun in the Spirit, are you made perfect by the flesh?*" In other words, there's no way to get saved except by the work of the Holy Spirit. Now that you're saved, have you now taken over with the flesh? You're going to accomplish everything through the flesh. Pride has defeated humility and that's always an affront to the Holy Spirit. Where are the meek? And where are the humble? And where are the lowly? Where the Holy Spirit is, Christ will be exalted. It will be Christ and it will be Christ again who receives all the praise and all the honor and all the glory. The Holy Spirit is grieved if Christ is not exalted. His work is quenched and the flesh is elevated.

So we could have done this perhaps through the years and we have touched on, of course, all the New Testament teaches about the Holy Spirit. Eventually we would have covered it all over the last 40 years or so. But I want to take a look at the ministry of the Holy Spirit in the next few weeks. I don't know how long it's going to take me. I have no idea. And that's okay. But we're going to go to one chapter instead of running all over the place because I don't want to lead you everywhere. We're going to look at *Romans 8*. So you can just kind of keep that in your mind. If you turn there now, you're going to be a little frustrated, but go ahead, it will make you feel more comfortable to have your Bible open. I'm not going to get there, but just have your Bible open, it's good. And I'll make a couple of references to *Romans 8*. But that's going to be our chapter.

And why don't we look at it for just a second and let me just point out why I'm picking this chapter to learn about the Holy Spirit, pretty obvious. Verse 2 talks about the Spirit, you see it there, *Romans 8:2*, referring to the Spirit. And you come, verse 4, refers to the Spirit. Verse 5 refers to the Spirit. Verse 6 refers to the Spirit. Verse 9 refers to the Spirit. Verse 11 refers to the Spirit. Verse 13 and so it goes, verse 14, verse 16, this is the Spirit's chapter, all the way down into verse 26, the Spirit helps our weaknesses mentioned again, interceding for us.

So, the Holy Spirit is the main player in this eighth chapter of *Romans*. And so it gives us the opportunity to sort of build a sound theology of the ministry and the work of the Holy Spirit. We could call this chapter "Life in the Spirit....Life in the Spirit."

We're going to have a great time working through this chapter, as you will see. But before we do that, I just want to kind of give you an overview before we go down to the worms eye view, give you kind of a bird's eye view. The Holy Spirit is not an impersonal force...not an "it." The Holy Spirit is not an influence. The Holy Spirit is not some kind of energy emanating from God. The Holy Spirit is God, a member of the Trinity, a person completely the essence of God with an entity and a personality of His own. Scripture is clear about this. He is equal in nature and attributes...let me say that again... He is equal in nature and attributes to the Father and the Son. He is not diminished in any sense, is fully God in the same way the Father and the Son are.

He has personality. Sometimes people refer to "it", the Holy Spirit, that is inaccurate. He possesses intellect, emotion, and will. And evidences of that in the Scriptures are ample everywhere in Scripture. For instance, He knows the deep things of God, *1 Corinthians 2*. In other words, He's plumbed the full depth of divine knowledge. He has knowledge equal to that of the Father, equal to that of the Son. That's *1 Corinthians 2*. He loves the saints and His love is equal to that love which is characteristic of Christ and God, *Romans 5:5*. He makes choices, divine choices, sovereign choices. *First Corinthians 12:11*, He decides what He will give to what believer with regard to spiritual capacities and spiritual gifts. He speaks...He speaks the truth always. He prays for us, *Romans 8* as we'll find out in verse 26. He teaches us all things. He is the anointing that comes from God, *John 14; 1 John 2*; so that we don't need a human teacher because He teaches us everything. *John 16:13* says He guides us. Here in *Romans 8* it says He leads us, *as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they're the Sons of God*.

He commands. His commands are given, for example, in *Acts 16:6 and 7*. He fellowships with us, *2 Corinthians chapter 13 verse 14* talks about the fellowship of the Spirit. *Ephesians 4:30* says He can be grieved. All these indicate He's a person. He can be grieved. *Acts 5:3*, He can be lied to, as Ananias and Sapphira did, "*Why have you lied to the Holy Spirit?*" He can be tested. That's the same passage. "*Why are you testing the Holy Spirit?*" He can be vexed, angered, you might say, according to *Isaiah 63:10*. He can be resisted, *Acts 7:51*, "*Why do you resist the Holy Spirit?*" And in *Mark 3* as in *Matthew 12* He can be blasphemed. *First Thessalonians 5:19*, He can be quenched, that is His efforts thwarted, hindered. All of these are evidences that this is a person, one who thinks and feels and acts and makes decisions in every capacity as a person does.

There also is no doubt about His deity, that He is absolutely God. And I'll show you just one illustration of that, though there are many. Turn for a minute to *Acts chapter 5* and let's go back to that fascinating account of Ananias and Sapphira who lied to the Holy Spirit saying, you know, that they gave everything they got from the sale of the property when the truth is they kept back some of the money for themselves. So in chapter 5 verse 3, Peter confronts them on the Lord's Day

at the church. “*Why has Satan filled your heart to lie to the Holy Spirit?*” Now just pick that right up there, “*Why has Satan filled your heart to lie to the Holy Spirit?*”

Now go down to verse 4, end of the verse. “*You have not lied to men, but to God.*” God is the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit is God. There you have it, the deity of the Holy Spirit, absolutely clearly indicated.

You have Trinitarian formulas in *Matthew 28:19*, “*Baptize them in the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit.*” All equal members of the Holy Trinity. They cannot be separate members. Modalism is a ridiculous idea, the idea that God is sometimes the Father and then He puts on His Son hat, and then He puts on His Holy Spirit hat. How do you explain the baptism of Christ where Christ is being baptized, the Father is saying He’s My beloved Son, and the Spirit’s descending like a dove? A little problem for the modalist there, as all three show up at the same time. He is God.

How do we know that? He has attributes of God. In *Hebrews 9:14* it says He is the *eternal Spirit*, the eternal Spirit. He is as eternal as God is because He is eternally God. He is omniscient. And again, that goes back to *John 15 and 16*, also *John 14*, He’s the source of all truth. He leads you into all truth. Reveals all truth. *First Corinthians 2*, He knows the deep things of God that are known only to God and only to the Spirit of God. So He is eternal, He is omniscient. And He’s omnipotent... He is omnipotent. How powerful is the Holy Spirit? He’s equally powerful to God. How do we know that? He’s the creator of everything that exists, that’s *Genesis*, right? In the beginning the creation was without form and it was void, it was *tohu* and *bohu*, it was emptiness and nothingness and the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters and creation began.

Even more astounding to see the power of His creation is in the *first chapter of Luke and verse 35*, when the Angel came to Mary and said, “*The Holy Spirit will come upon you...the Holy Spirit will come upon you...listen to this...and with Him the power of the Most High.*” In other words, the power of the Most High God, *El Elyon*, the supreme sovereign God of the universe, the power of the supreme God resides fully in the Holy Spirit.

That’s the power of the Most High God dispensed through the Holy Spirit. He created everything that is created in the same way that God created it and the Son created it, omnipotence, omnipresence. *Psalms 139 verse 7*, “*Where will I go from Your Spirit?*” Remember when the psalmist said that? Where am I going to go from Your Spirit? How can I find a place anywhere in the universe that’s away from Your Spirit, there is no such place. He is everywhere all the time.

In *Romans 1:4* He’s called the *Spirit of holiness*. God is holy, holy, holy. Holy is the Father, holy is the Son, holy is the Spirit, that’s the *trihagion* of *Isaiah 6*. He is the Spirit of holiness. *First Peter 4:14* He’s called the *Spirit of glory*. He’s like the God of glory, like the glory of God shining gloriously in the face of Jesus Christ; He is the Spirit of glory. *Second Corinthians 3:6* He’s called the *life-giving Spirit*. He’s the source of life. These are all attributes that belong to God and the Holy Spirit has them and therefore the Holy Spirit is God. As God, He is to be worshiped as God, He is to be honored as God, He is to be revered as God, He is to be treated as God. In the same way you would treat God the Father and God the Son, you would treat the Holy Spirit.

As I said, people seem to be a little more reluctant to blaspheme the Father and the Son. They don’t seem to have any problem making a joke and a mockery out of the name of the Holy Spirit.

If you talk about the titles which the Holy Spirit bears, that kind of adds to your understanding a little bit. Many times He is called God. I just read you that in *Acts chapter 5 verse 4*. Many times He is called Lord. For example, in *2 Corinthians 3:18*, one of my favorite verses, those of you who know me, know that, it says, *“That as we gaze into the glory of the Lord, being transformed into the same image from glory to glory, just as from the Lord the Spirit...the Lord the Spirit.”* The Spirit is the Lord. He is called God and He is called Lord, titles of deity.

There are other titles that He bears. He is called the *Spirit of God*, *Genesis 1:2*. *“The Spirit of God moves upon the waters,”* *Matthew 3:16*. He’s called the *Spirit of the Lord* in *Luke 4*. He’s called *“His Spirit,”* that is God’s Spirit, *Numbers 11:29*. He’s called *“The Spirit of Yahweh”* in *Judges 3:10*. He’s called *“The Spirit of the Lord God,”* in *Isaiah 61*. *“The Spirit of your Father,”* in *Matthew 10:20*. And *“The Spirit of the Living God in 2 Corinthians 3:3*. He is given all the titles that belong to deity. That’s the point here. He’s called *“The Spirit of Jesus,”* in *Acts 16:7*; *“The Spirit of Christ,* right here in *Romans 8 verse 9*. And in *Galatians 4:6*, *“The Spirit of His Son.”* *Philippians 1:19*, *“The Spirit of Jesus Christ.”* This is clearly indication that He is fully God.

Now the more I think about this and go over this as I was doing the last few days, the more my heart aches over the way that the Holy Spirit is being mistreated. And again I say, “Look, I’m not here to defend the Holy Spirit, He can defend Himself. But I am here to tell you that you do not want to be sucked up into this mockery of the blessed Holy Spirit. You want to worship Him for who He is.

People sometimes say to me, “Can we pray to the Holy Spirit?” Of course...of course, He’s God. “Don’t we have to pray to the Father only?” No, pray to the Father, pray to the Spirit, pray to the Son, pray to all three, pray to any two. “Can we worship the Holy Spirit?” Absolutely, fall down and worship the Holy Spirit, the same way you would Christ and the Father. You wouldn’t say a word against the Father, you wouldn’t say a word against the Son, don’t say a word against the Holy Spirit. Don’t attribute anything to God that isn’t true of Him, don’t attribute anything to Christ that isn’t true of Him, and don’t attribute anything to the Holy Spirit that isn’t true of Him.

Boy, if we just got rid of that, we’d change the face of the church. When you think about the works of the Holy Spirit, you have to start with creation. And then in the Old Testament you see Him convicting people. Remember in *Genesis 6*, *“My Spirit will not always strive with man,”* He’s striving to bring conviction in the same way that I read from *John 16*, when the Spirit comes, *He’ll convict the world of sin and righteousness and judgment.*

In the Old Testament you see Him indwelling certain people for certain service. He regenerated people in the Old Testament cause you couldn’t be regenerated unless it was a divine miracle and He’s the spirit that gives life, the life-giving Spirit. He is that Spirit. So in the Old Testament He’s seen as the Creator, He’s seen as the Regenerator of those who believe. He is seen as the one who convicts men of sin. He is seen as the one who enables men to serve. Read *Exodus 31*, *Judges 3*, *Judges 6*, *“And the Spirit of God comes to enable people to serve.”* That’s why David in his *Psalms 51* about his sin said, *“Take not Your Spirit from me.”* He wasn’t talking about the fact that all of a sudden the Holy Spirit who had regenerated him and empowering him for his spiritual life would be gone. He was speaking in the language of that special work of the Holy spirit in which He came on people for certain ministry, enabling men to do certain things.

But the one thing that stands out in His ministry in the Old Testament, of course, from the New Testament perspective is that He’s the author of Scripture.



*No Scripture is the result of any private interpretation*, Peter says, right? *Second Peter 1:21, no private interpretation but holy men of God were moved by the Spirit of God.* That's how the Old Testament was written; the Spirit of God is the author through human instrumentation. That's how the New Testament is written as well. It's God-breathed, the Word breath is *pneuma*, it's God's Spirit that writes holy Scripture. And you can find places throughout the Scripture that speak about the Holy Spirit saying this and the Holy Spirit saying that. He is the author of Scripture. Scripture is God-breathed. It is the revelation of God through the Holy Spirit.

One illustration, *Acts 1:16, "The Scripture had to be fulfilled which the Holy Spirit foretold."* Whenever the Scripture said something, it was the Holy Spirit saying it. And by the way, we read in *John 15 to 16* that the primary task of the Holy Spirit is to glorify Christ, right? He's the Spirit of truth but He points to Me, He glorifies Me and when you read the Scripture, that's what all Scripture does. Even the Old Testament, that's why *Luke 24* is so important, beginning at Moses, the prophets, and all the holy writings, He spoke to them of the things concerning Himself written in the Old Testament. All through the Old Testament, as well as the New, the Holy Spirit who is the author is pointing to Christ...Christ...Christ. So wherever you see a work that is really the ministry of the Holy Spirit, you will see men humbled and Christ exalted... men humbled and Christ exalted.

And then in the life of Christ you see the ministry of the Holy Spirit. He's there giving Him life. *Luke 1:35*, I just read to you that the Holy Spirit comes upon Mary and creates a God/Man in her womb. He's there at His baptism, the Holy Spirit descending like a dove upon Him. He's there to launch His ministry. The Holy Spirit comes upon Him and He launches His public ministry at the age of 30. The Holy Spirit is there in His temptation. You remember that the Holy Spirit led Him into the wilderness and through that temptation and out the other side. He is the anointing in *Acts 10:38*, they were preaching about Him and they said He was anointed with the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit came upon Him, that's why He said, *"If you deny the works that I do as being of God, you blaspheme the Holy Spirit because it's the Holy Spirit working through Me."*

Do you know actually that it was the Holy Spirit teaching through Christ? That's how much of a self-emptying there was. He yielded up even His teaching to that which the Spirit did through Him, *John 3:34, "He whom the Father has sent speaks the words of God for He gives the Spirit without measure."* He speaks the words of God because He has the Spirit working through Him. The miracles Christ did, and the message that He preached was the ministry of the Spirit through Him. He was in perfect agreement with it but it was the message from the Father through the Spirit. It was the Spirit that was the power behind His miracles, that's why it was a blasphemous thing to say they were from Satan.

Do you know that even His death, even the death of Jesus Christ that we talk about so often was a work of the Holy Spirit? I don't know if you ever thought about that. But you will now. *Hebrews 9 verse 14, "How much more will the blood of Christ, listen to this, the blood of Christ who through the eternal Spirit offered Himself without blemish to God?"* Every miracle He did was through the power of the Spirit. And even His death was through the power of the Spirit. His birth was through the power of the Spirit. His life was through the power of the Spirit. His miracles were through the power of the Spirit. His teaching was through the power of the Spirit. And His death was through the power of the Holy Spirit. And what about His resurrection? You're in *Romans 8* still? Look at verse 11, *"The Spirit of Him who raised Jesus from the dead."*

When you start to get your arms around the ministry of the Holy Spirit, it's so incredible, staggering, far reaching and we haven't even gotten to the part about us. So let's get to that. What does He do in the world? What does the Holy Spirit do in the world?

Well *He convicts of sin, righteousness and judgment. Genesis 6:3*, He strives with sinners, so He's the convicting power. According to *2 Thessalonians 2:13 and 14* He calls sinners, that's an effectual call. He actually calls them. Furthermore, He regenerates, *John 3*, "*You must be born of the Spirit.*" So in the world He convicts, He calls, He gives regenerating life. He also witnesses to the truth of Christ, *Acts chapter 5, verses 30 to 32*. So it is the ministry of the Holy Spirit that comes to the sinner, convicts the sinner, calls the sinner when the sinner understands the glories of Christ and then He regenerates the sinner.

Now what does He do in the believer? Glorifies Christ, exalts Christ through the Word, but beyond that, He indwells the believer. *Verse 9 of Romans 8*, "*The Spirit of God dwells in you.*" Paul says in *1 Corinthians 6*, "*You're the temple of the Holy Spirit.*" He indwells us. Now we're getting personal here. *Ephesians 5:18* says, "*Be being kept filled with the Spirit.*" He fills us which is a power statement, like the wind filling the sails and moving the ship. That's that analogy. He seals us, He secures us, *Ephesians 1* says, for eternity. He imparts fruit to us, *the fruit of the Spirit, love, joy, peace, gentleness, goodness, faith meekness, self-control*. Gives us love, *Romans 5:5*.

He gives us gifts of the Spirit, *Romans 12, 1 Corinthians 12*. Several gifts divided equally among His people. He teaches us. He leads us into all truth. Guides us into the understanding of Scripture, anointing that we have from God so that we know all things. *Romans 8:26*, He prays for us. *Galatians 5:17*, He makes war against our flesh and against sin on our behalf. *John 14:16*, He comforts us. *Romans 8:14*, I mentioned it earlier, He leads and guides us. *Galatians 3*, He sanctifies us. *Acts 1:8*, He empowers us for witness and evangelism. All these things the Holy Spirit does.

We need to understand all these marvelous rich things. There was a time when this was a very important part of Christian ministry, Christian thinking. Try to write a book on the definitive ministry of the Holy Spirit today and find a place for it in a Christian bookstore might be a losing proposition if you really took on all the error that was there. I don't expect, except among us and whoever we can influence to stem the tide of this terrible abuse of the Holy Spirit, but I think we as a church and we as believers need to give honor to the Holy Spirit in the way that He is worthy to be honored and to replace this frivolous superficial abusive approach and more than that, to get Him out of the shadows so that He's not the forgotten member of the Trinity who never receives the worship that He is due. The whole matter of you living your Christian life is a work of the Holy Spirit. All the ministry of spiritual gifts, everything I do, everything you do, everything anybody does in the Kingdom in the body of Christ that has any effect or any impact or any purpose or any goal, or any success is the work of the Holy Spirit. How can we ignore that and replace that with such crazy things that dishonor Him?

Well, that will get us to *Romans 8* and next week we'll go back to that chapter.

Our Father, we thank You for the time this morning to worship You. It's been so refreshing. Thank You for this blessed church, these precious people, love for You and Your Word. Thank You, O Holy Spirit, for just this incomprehensible work that You've done, not just in creation but in regeneration. You gave us life. You gave us salvation, forgiveness and You empowered us, now You sanctify us and You'll bring us to glory. We'll be glorified by Your power. We'll be changed by

Your power. We'll be fit for heaven by Your power. In the meantime You're there producing fruit and energizing our gifts and empowering our witness and fighting against our flesh, and praying for us, and making everything work together for good, securing us and sealing us to the day of redemption. We love You, we honor You, we worship You, we exalt You. And we are deeply grieved, as You must be at the way You are misrepresented. Help us, Lord, to be all that we should be as we worship You, our Trinitarian God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, may we worship You in truth as You truly are and with all our might both in praise itself and in obedience. What can we say, O Holy Spirit, for all that You've done for us and You are doing even as we speak and will do until we see Jesus face-to-face and by Your power are made perfect into His image. We give You our worship today and we ask that You would be honored not only in our lives and in our midst, but in Your church, the church which You regenerated, to which You have given life, the church through which You work, the church in which You can do exceeding, abundantly above all we ask or think according to the power that works in us, even that power that raised Jesus from the dead, even the power of You, O blessed Holy Spirit. Show Your power in Your church and be honored and glorified, we pray. Amen.

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