

- Rev. Grant Mangold, [www.RiversideChurchIowa.com](http://www.RiversideChurchIowa.com)

## PERSON OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

The ancient creeds of the Christian church confess the existence of only one true God, the God of the Bible. We've seen in past columns how the Bible reveals the one true God consists of three distinct divine persons: Father, Son, Holy Spirit. One God, in three persons, the Triune God.

But talk about the Holy Spirit to many Christians, and their response runs the gamut from white-hot to ho-hum to ice-cold enthusiasm. Many are nervous about the Holy Spirit. But if you embrace what the Bible teaches, you will change your perceptions, and welcome the reality of the ministry of the Holy Spirit.

**1- The Holy Spirit is a DIVINE PERSON.** - Scripture reveals the Spirit to have all the attributes of God. He is not a "force" or "mode" or "appearance" of God, but God Himself. Psalm 139, He is omni-present. Hebrews 9, He is eternal. Acts 5, to lie to the Holy Spirit is to lie to God. Mark 13, He can be blasphemed. 1 Corinthians 3 and 6, interchangeably refer to "God's temple" and "temple of the Holy Spirit."

The Holy Spirit possesses attributes of personhood. Ephesians 4, He grieves. Romans 8, He intercedes. Mark 13, He speaks. Matthew and Luke 1, He overshadows Mary to conceive Jesus. Matthew 12, Jesus casts out demons by the Holy Spirit. Hebrews 9, Jesus offers Himself as the sacrifice for sins "*through the eternal Spirit.*" Romans 1, the Spirit of holiness declares Jesus as the Son of God, by His resurrection.

Scripture presents the Holy Spirit as active in creation, as in Genesis 1, Psalm 33 and 139. He is active in redemption in ways complementary but distinct from the Father and the Son, as in Romans 8, Ephesians 1, 2 Thessalonians 2 and 1 Peter 1. All three persons of the Trinity are involved with the baptism of Jesus in Matthew 3. In Matthew 4 the Holy Spirit empowers Jesus in temptation, and in Luke 4 returns Him to be announced as Messiah. He is called the Spirit of God and the Spirit of Christ. He is a divine person.

**2- The Holy Spirit is PROMISED TO BELIEVERS.** - Many Old Testament passages point to the coming Holy Spirit, including Joel 2:28-32 and Isaiah 11:1-5. In Ezekiel 36:22-37:4 God says, "***I will put My Spirit within you.***" The gospel of John presents Jesus as "***He who baptizes with the Holy Spirit.***"

Jesus promised the Holy Spirit to His disciples several times, including John 14-16, Acts 1. At Pentecost in Acts 2:33, Peter preached, "***this Jesus, having received from the Father the promise of the Holy Spirit, He has poured out this that you yourselves are seeing and hearing***" in fulfillment of Joel 2.

As the "Spirit of Truth" the Holy Spirit bears witness to Christ who bears witness to God the Father. The Holy Spirit comes as a "paraclete" or counselor, advocate, helper. He continues the ministry of Christ by indwelling and empowering His disciples, as the very power and presence of Christ within them.

**3- The Holy Spirit is the believer's PERSONAL POSSESSION.** - Jesus said, "***you must be born again from above by the Holy Spirit.***" Believers receive the Holy Spirit the moment they are born again, regenerated by the Holy Spirit. 1 Corinthians 12:13 says "***for in one Spirit we were all baptized into one body - Jews or Greeks, slaves or free - and all were made to drink of one Spirit.***" All Christians have the Holy Spirit. You cannot be a Christian apart from the personal work of the Holy Spirit.

Then the Holy Spirit changes you. 2 Corinthians 3:3 puts it like this, "***You show that you are a letter from Christ, written not with ink but with the Spirit of the living God, not on tablets of stone but on tablets of human hearts.***" Verse 18 goes on to talk about being "***transformed into the same image***" of Christ, by the power of the Holy Spirit applying the truth of God's word to your mind, heart, and will.

Pastor and author Kevin DeYoung observes how the Old Testament is like an old photo album featuring someone you don't really know. But in the New Testament, the Holy Spirit comes to life. And when you become a believer in Jesus, His life now lives in you. He is now a person you not only know, but who dwells inside you. Romans 8 describes the Holy Spirit as the very presence of Christ in you.

DeYoung says, "No other possession is as precious, helpful, dynamic, strong, and loving as the Spirit who dwells in those who belong to God through Christ." In coming columns we'll explore the Holy Spirit's work in the life of the believer. As Romans 15:13 prays, "***May the God of hope fill YOU with all joy and peace in believing, so that by the power of the Holy Spirit YOU may abound in hope.***" Amen!