



## THE PERSON OF THE HOLY SPIRIT: WHO HE IS (cont.)

### The Holy Spirit's Humility...

Let's start back in. We've looked at the Holy Spirit's personality and deity. Now, let's look at the Holy Spirit's humility. This is where things get really interesting. We've just established that the Spirit is God. The Spirit is equal in essence. He is fully God. The Spirit is no less God than the Father, no less God than the Son. He is not part-God in any way. If we leave that truth behind, we go into heresy and miss what Scripture teaches. So, He is fully God; He is equal in essence.

Scripture also teaches us that the Spirit is subordinate in function. Here's what I mean. Allow me to use a human analogy that Scripture uses in Ephesians 5:22 about a husband and a wife. "*Wives, submit yourselves to your own husbands...*" Are wives and husbands equal in value? Absolutely! Men and women are equal in value before God. No question. Woman is not inferior to man; man is not superior to woman. This is how Ephesians 5 is often twisted in our culture. It's not what Ephesians 5 is teaching, but there is a submission in role that's going on here that in no way negates the value—the essence—of who a man and a woman are. This is a whole picture, not just in marriage, but also in the church. We submit to one another; that's what Ephesians 5 is talking about in different ways. Children obey their parents. My sons are subordinate in function to me, and we're in the process of making that clear over these years. This doesn't mean each son is any less of a person; it's just a different role.

Now, here's the picture when it comes to the Spirit of God when we talk about Him being subordinate in function. We're not saying that He is less than God. We are saying the Spirit is subordinate in function—the same way Jesus is subordinate. 1 Corinthians 11:3 talks about this with Jesus. "*But I want you to realize that the head of every man is Christ, and the head of the woman is man, and the head of Christ is God.*" So, the picture there is that the Father is the head of Christ. It's not a problem with inferiority and superiority. It's formation and function. So, what we see is the Spirit's humility—a subordinate function.

He assists the Father. Listen to what Scripture teaches in Genesis 1:2. This is at creation: "*Now the earth was formless and empty, darkness was over the surface of the deep, and the Spirit of God was hovering over the waters.*" The Spirit of God was active in creation in a subordinate role to the Father, assisting the Father. "*By the word of the Lord were the heavens made, their starry host by the breath of his mouth*" (Psalm 33:6). We'll pick this up in a minute.

He assists the Father, and He exalts the Son. Jesus said,

*I have much more to say to you, more than you can now bear. But when he, the Spirit of truth, comes, he will guide you into all truth. He will not speak on his own; he will speak only what he hears, and he will tell you what is yet to*

*come. He will bring glory to me by taking from what is mine and making it known to you. (John 16:12-14)*

"He will bring glory to me." This is what we mean by the humility of the Spirit. The Spirit will glorify Christ by taking what He hears and making it known to you. The Spirit is not in us to make much of the Spirit. The Spirit is in us to make much of the Son. That's the Spirit's humility.

We see this in Scripture by the way the Spirit inspires Scripture:

*Concerning this salvation, the prophets, who spoke of the grace that was to come to you, searched intently and with the greatest care, trying to find out the time and circumstances to which the Spirit of Christ in them was pointing when he predicted the sufferings of Christ and the glories that would follow. (1 Peter 1:10-12)*

The whole picture of Scripture, which the Spirit had inspired, is to point us to whom? To Christ.

We also see this in salvation. "*When the Counselor comes, whom I will send to you from the Father, the Spirit of truth who goes out from the Father, he will testify about me*" (John 15:26).

2 Corinthians 3:18 talks about us being transformed into the likeness of Christ by the work of the Spirit. The Spirit enables us to behold the glory of Christ. The word for Spirit in the Greek is "*pneuma*," and there's a reason we are called Christians instead of "pneumians"—because we are not identified, primarily, with the Spirit as much as our lives are identified with Christ, and the Spirit testifies to us about Christ. The Spirit dwells in us but with a humility that exalts Christ.

It's such a beautiful picture, especially in our culture today, that would equate our being equal in essence, meaning the world thinks we all have to have the same roles, and that we don't need to submit to one another, and that wives don't need to submit to husbands. We live in a culture today that tries to debunk this picture of authority, and there's a beautiful picture here in the very Godhead—in the Trinity—of the Spirit equal in essence to the Father, submitting to the Father. Not begrudgingly, but gladly submitting to the Father in a way that is pictured in Ephesians 5. It is intended that a wife will gladly submit to a loving husband who is giving his life for her. That's the picture we see with the Holy Spirit's humility. Now, we can't take this too far and begin to think, "Well, that means the Spirit is totally behind the scenes." In some sense He is because He's glorifying Christ, but at the same time, He is front and center in so many facets, in every facet of our Christian life.

### **The Holy Spirit's Authority**

That leads us to the Holy Spirit's authority. The Holy Spirit is clearly, undoubtedly, evidently at work. He makes this clear. He makes His presence known. Look at a couple of instances when the Spirit rested on these men in Numbers 11, and they prophesied. It was very clear the Spirit was making His presence known.

*Then the Lord came down in the cloud and spoke with him, and he took of the Spirit that was on him and put the Spirit on the seventy elders. When the Spirit rested on them, they prophesied, but they did not do so again. However, two men, whose names were Eldad and Medad, had remained in the camp. They were listed among the elders, but did not go out to the Tent.*

*Yet the Spirit also rested on them, and they prophesied in the camp. (Numbers 11:25-26)*

Picture the scene in Acts 2 at Pentecost.

*When the day of Pentecost came, they were all together in one place. Suddenly a sound like the blowing of a violent wind came from heaven and filled the whole house where they were sitting. They saw what seemed to be tongues of fire that separated and came to rest on each of them. All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues as the Spirit enabled them. (Acts 2:1-4)*

That's what's called a grand entrance. Presence is very clearly known when tongues of fire start resting on people's heads. That's a way to draw people's attention. He made His presence known.

He makes His power known. "God also testified to it by signs, wonders and various miracles, and gifts of the Holy Spirit distributed according to his will" (Hebrews 2:4). "My message and my preaching were not with wise and persuasive words, but with a demonstration of the Spirit's power..." (1 Corinthians 2:4).

*I will not venture to speak of anything except what Christ has accomplished through me in leading the Gentiles to obey God by what I have said and done—by the power of signs and miracles, through the power of the Spirit. So from Jerusalem all the way around to Illyricum, I have fully proclaimed the gospel of Christ. (Romans 15:18-19)*

He makes His purpose known. This is the whole picture in Acts 1:8: "But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth." I love this. We read it earlier. Just picture this: "While they were worshiping the Lord and fasting, the Holy Spirit said, 'Set apart for me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them'" (Acts 13:2). This is what the Spirit is doing in the book of Acts.

Spirit of God, do this in our churches. Do it tonight. Spirit of God, tonight, speak to individual hearts in this room—call them out. Call them out now. Do it, and we'll respond in obedience. Make your purpose known in our lives. So, there's the Person of the Holy Spirit—His personality, His deity, His humility and His authority. Now, that's an overall picture of His Person.

## **THE WORK OF THE HOLY SPIRIT: WHAT HE DOES**

Now, on to the work of the Holy Spirit: what He does. Here's what I want to do here. Up to this point in Secret Church, especially when it comes to the Old Testament and New Testament Secret Church, we have, basically, taken a biblical, theological approach to understanding Scripture. What I mean by that is, in the second half of the Old Testament and the New Testament, we stepped back, and we've said, "Okay, what's the overall story of the Old Testament? What's the overall story of the New Testament? How does it all fit together in redemptive history's story?"

The Spirit's work is so linked with certain facets of redemptive history that I think the best way to understand His work is by understanding the whole redemptive story, not just by coming up with a list, "Okay, here are 15 things the Holy Spirit does." Instead, I want to see what the Holy Spirit does in the context of the story of Scripture, and not just Scripture, but what is being played out in our lives in redemption, too.

### **Four Stages in Redemptive History...**

Remember, redemption is a word that means re-creation, restoration and reconciliation. It is the story about how God is re-creating a people for Himself, how He is restoring a people to Himself and reconciling a people to Himself. So, these four major stages in redemptive history are going to frame our understanding of the work of the Holy Spirit tonight.

Creation. We're going to ask, "What role does the Holy Spirit play in creation?" Fall. How does the Spirit relate to sin in the world in light of sin's entrance in Genesis 3? Redemption. How does the Spirit re-create us into the image of Christ? How does the Spirit redeem us? Consummation. How does the Spirit bring our salvation to completion?

## **THE SPIRIT AND CREATION**

The Spirit and creation. Now, this is where we're going to be camping out—in the Old Testament—for a little bit.

### **One Key Title...**

One key title in the Old Testament for the Holy Spirit is "the Spirit of God." Very rarely will you see the title "Holy Spirit" in the Old Testament. Instead, you will see "the Spirit of God" because this is just how the Hebrew language works. Instead of using an adjective, then a noun, Hebrew will use two nouns. Instead of saying "a righteous man" which is how we would say it, Hebrew would talk about "a man of righteousness." That's kind of the picture there. So, that's why, when you see the Spirit mentioned throughout the Old Testament, you'll see, not so much reference to the Holy Spirit, but you'll see it translated "the Spirit of God" most often.

### **Two Key Truths...**

Two key truths. The Spirit manifests the presence of God in the world. He's involved all throughout Scripture. That's what I mean when I say He has full participation in all of Scripture, but He has particular application in the New Testament. It's not that the Holy Spirit is not working in the Old Testament—He is. We see about a hundred references to Him, but His work becomes especially important in the context of the new covenant—the New Testament. So, we're going to see some in the Old Testament, but it really comes to life in a whole new way in the New Testament. So, the Spirit manifests the presence of God in the world.

Then, the second key truth is the Spirit displays the power of God at work. The basic picture I have in my mind for the understanding of the Spirit is that He is the presence of God in the world, and the power of God at work in the world. The Word of God is described as His Almighty speech, and the Spirit of God is described as His Almighty breath. We're going to see that in some different places where the Spirit of God is talked about in terms of the breath of God.

### **Three Key Themes...**

Three key themes. This is how this plays out in creation. The Spirit creates. Here's what the Spirit does in creation: the Spirit works with the Son to accomplish the will of the Father. We've already looked at Genesis 1:2. Remember, "*in the beginning, God...*" We see what Scripture teaches is that in the creation of the world, the Father, Son and Holy Spirit are all involved in this picture. "*In the beginning God...*" [Father] "...*created the heavens and earth.*" "...*the Spirit of God was hovering over the waters.*" Then, you've got John 1:1-3 and Colossians 1:15-16 that talk about Jesus, and His preeminent role in creation.

*In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was with God in the beginning. Through him all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made. (John 1:1-3)*

*He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation. For by him all things were created: things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or powers or rulers or authorities; all things were created by him and for him. (Colossians 1:15-16)*

So, you see creation attributed to the Father, the Son and the Spirit. The Spirit working with the Son to accomplish the will of the Father.

The Spirit gives life to all creation. "*By his breath the skies became fair; his hand pierced the gliding serpent.*" (Job 26:13) The beauty of the skies would not exist without the Holy Spirit of God. "*When you send your Spirit, they are created, and you renew the face of the earth.*" (Psalm 104:27-30)

The Spirit gives life to all creatures. "*The Lord God formed the man from the dust of the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and the man became a living being.*" (Genesis 2:7) "*The Spirit of God has made me; the breath of the Almighty gives me life.*" (Job 33:4) See how the Spirit is linked with the breath of God, the Almighty?

The Spirit sustains. The Spirit has a sustaining work in creation. He is the divine Orderer. The picture in Genesis 1:2 is, basically, the Spirit of God bringing cosmos out of chaos. It's the picture of bringing order to the world where there was nothing, and now, it's being created and He's bringing order to it. It is the same order that enables us to exist and for our lives to be sustained on this planet. The Spirit is the Orderer. "*Now the earth was formless and empty, darkness was over the surface of the deep, and the Spirit of God was hovering over the waters.*"

He is the divine Preserver. I love this verse in Job 34:14-15: "*If it were his intention and he withdrew his spirit and breath, all mankind would perish together and man would return to the dust.*" The fact that you breathe right now is based on the power of the Holy Spirit of God. We need Him for every single breath we take.

He preserves man's breath. "*Then the Lord said, 'My Spirit will not contend with man forever, for he is mortal; his days will be a hundred and twenty years'*" (Genesis 6:3). "*As long as I have life within me, the breath of God in my nostrils...*" (Job 27:3).

He preserves man's spirit. "*Create in me a pure heart, O God, and renew a steadfast spirit within me. Do not cast me from your presence or take your Holy Spirit from me. Restore to me the joy of your salvation and grant me a willing spirit, to sustain me.*" (Psalm 51:10-12)

*For this is what the high and lofty One says—he who lives forever, whose name is holy: 'I live in a high and holy place, but also with him who is contrite and lowly in spirit, to revive the spirit of the lowly and to revive the heart of the contrite. I will not accuse forever, nor will I always be angry, for then the spirit of man would grow faint before me—the breath of man that I have created.'* (Isaiah 57:15-16)

He is the divine Provider. All kinds of different instances we're going to talk about, more specifically later, but He says in Nehemiah 9:20: "You gave your good Spirit to instruct them. You did not withhold your manna from their mouths, and you gave them water for their thirst." Isaiah 63:11 is when Isaiah is talking about what God had done in leading His people through Moses, and he says, "Then his people recalled the days of old, the days of Moses and his people—where is he who brought them through the sea, with the shepherd of his flock? Where is he who set his Holy Spirit among them?..." The Spirit of God was providing for them on their journey.

The Spirit creates, the Spirit sustains, and then, the Spirit governs. He controls nature. "The grass withers and the flowers fall, because the breath of the Lord blows on them." (Isaiah 40:7) He guides history. Look in the middle of Isaiah 34:16-17:

*Look in the scroll of the Lord and read: None of these will be missing, not one will lack her mate. For it is his mouth that has given the order, and his Spirit will gather them together. He allots their portions; his hand distributes them by measure. They will possess it forever and dwell there from generation to generation.*

"Teach me to do your will, for you are my God; may your good Spirit lead me on level ground." (Psalm 143:10)

These are the two things: the Spirit of God, manifesting the presence of God in the world and displaying the power of God at work. Manifesting God's presence and displaying God's power, and He does that in creation through creating, sustaining and governing. The Spirit is at work in creation.

## **THE SPIRIT AND THE FALL**

Then, we get to the Fall. In Genesis 3, we don't see explicit references to the Spirit in the account of the fall of man. As a result, this section isn't going to be very long, but I want to bring in a picture of the Old Testament and some of the New Testament to consider how the Spirit relates to sin in our lives as a result of the Fall. How does the Spirit relate to sin in our lives?

### **The Spirit convicts of sin...**

First, one of the clearest descriptions we have from Jesus is from John 16. The Spirit convicts of sin. "When he..." the Holy Spirit "...comes, he will convict the world of guilt in regard to sin and righteousness and judgment; in regard to sin, because men do not believe in me; in regard to righteousness, because I am going to the Father, where you can see me no longer."

### **The Spirit responds to sin...**

This is not just a New Testament thing. In the Old Testament, the Spirit responds to sin. These two truths kind of go together. The Spirit responds to sin. He reflects the pleasure of God in obedience. In our obedience, the Spirit, because He is manifest in the presence of God and displaying the power of God at work, reflects the pleasure of God in our obedience. The Spirit comes down like a dove. This is most clear in John 1 and John 3 talking about Jesus who was perfectly obedient to God. You have this picture of the Spirit coming down from heaven and remaining on Him. We're going to talk more about that later.

The picture is in Matthew 3:16-17. The Spirit comes down like a dove, and the Father says, *"This is my Son, whom I love; with him I am well pleased."* Reflect in the pleasure of God and the obedience of the Son. Then, John gave this testimony: *"I saw the Spirit come down from heaven as a dove and remain on him."* (John 1:32) *"For the one whom God has sent speaks the words of God, for God gives the Spirit without limit."* (John 3:34)

He reflects the displeasure of God in disobedience. This is also reflected in Scripture, and I want you to see this in the Old Testament in particular. These verses from Judges are about Samson, and I want you to hear what it says. *"The woman gave birth to a boy and named him Samson. He grew and the Lord blessed him, and the Spirit of the Lord began to stir him..."* So, we see the favor of God on Samson through the Spirit of God.

*"The Spirit of the Lord came upon him in power so that he tore the lion apart with his bare hands as he might have torn a young goat."* (Judges 14:6) That's the Spirit of God on Samson enabling him to do that. *"Then the Spirit of the Lord came upon him in power. He went down to Ashkelon, struck down thirty of their men, stripped them of their belongings and gave their clothes to those who had explained the riddle."* (Judges 14:19)

*"As he approached Lehi, the Philistines came toward him shouting. The Spirit of the Lord came upon him in power. The ropes on his arms became like charred flax, and the bindings dropped from his hands. Finding a fresh jawbone of a donkey, he grabbed it and struck down a thousand men."* (Judges 15:14-15) Something is going right when, number one, you think to grab a fresh jawbone of a donkey, and then it becomes the means by which you take down the people coming after you. This is the picture of Samson, attributed to the Spirit of God on him.

However, we then see in Samson's life is a pattern of persistence in sin and persistence in self-sufficiency. So, there comes a point where God shows displeasure in Samson's life through His Spirit. Listen to the next one: *"Then she called, 'Samson, the Philistines are upon you!' He awoke from his sleep and thought, 'I'll go out as before and shake myself free.' But he did not know that the Lord had left him."* (Judges 16:20) We see the Spirit of God departing here in response to Samson's persistence in sin and self-sufficiency. It's the same picture we see with Saul in 1 Samuel 16:14: *"Now the Spirit of the Lord had departed from Saul, and an evil spirit from the Lord tormented him."*

We're going to talk more later about how the Spirit comes on people in the Old Testament and then does not remain on them in the same way we see in the New Testament. But here's the picture we're seeing: the Spirit of God is reflecting the pleasure of God in obedience and the displeasure of God in disobedience. Think about that in light of the New Testament and what it teaches. When we sin, how does that affect the Spirit?

When we sin, we grieve the Spirit. *"And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, with whom you were sealed for the day of redemption."* (Ephesians 4:30) When we sin, we lie to the Spirit. *"Then Peter said, 'Ananias, how is it that Satan has so filled your heart that you have lied to*

*the Holy Spirit and have kept for yourself some of the money you received for the land?"* (Acts 5:3) This is the seriousness of sin in Scripture. We grieve the Spirit of God with wayward thoughts, by indulging in this thought or saying this or doing this or failing to do this.

With any sin, we grieve the Spirit, we lie to the Spirit and, when we sin, we resist the Spirit. *"You stiff-necked people, with uncircumcised hearts and ears! You are just like your fathers: You always resist the Holy Spirit!"* (Acts 7:51) When we sin, we defile the Spirit. It says this, specifically, in 1 Corinthians 6:19-20 in the context of sexual immorality which defiles your body. *"Do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit, who is in you, whom you have received from God? You are not your own; you were bought at a price. Therefore honor God with your body."*

When we sin, we quench the Spirit. We put out the Spirit's fire. Sin is like pouring water on the flame in us. *"Do not put out the Spirit's fire; do not treat prophecies with contempt."* (1 Thessalonians 5:19-20) When we sin, we insult the Spirit. *"How much more severely do you think a man deserves to be punished who has trampled the Son of God under foot, who has treated as an unholy thing the blood of the covenant that sanctified him, and who has insulted the Spirit of grace?"* (Hebrews 10:29) Our sin, certainly, affects the Spirit, and the Spirit responds to our sin, but here's the good part, lest we get a totally negative picture of the Spirit's relationship to sin in our lives.

### **The Spirit gives victory over sin...**

Secondly, the Spirit gives victory over sin. We live in the Spirit. *"For if you live according to the sinful nature, you will die; but if by the Spirit you put to death the misdeeds of the body, you will live..."* (Romans 8:13) Romans 8 is the triumphant chapter of the Spirit.

Right after Romans 7, where you've got this waging war, Paul says in Roman 7:15-20 and 7:24-25,

*I do not understand what I do. For what I want to do I do not do, but what I hate I do. And if I do what I do not want to do, I agree that the law is good. As it is, it is no longer I myself who do it, but it is sin living in me. For I know that good itself does not dwell in me, that is, in my sinful nature. For I have the desire to do what is good, but I cannot carry it out. For I do not do the good I want to do, but the evil I do not want to do—this I keep on doing. Now if I do what I do not want to do, it is no longer I who do it, but it is sin living in me that does it...What a wretched man I am! Who will rescue me from this body that is subject to death? [He's crying out; there's a war within him.] Thanks be to God, who delivers me through Jesus Christ our Lord!*

He continues in Romans 8:1-2, *"Therefore, there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus, because through Christ Jesus the law of the Spirit who gives life has set you free from the law of sin and death."* He gives victory over sin. Then, according to the rest of this chapter, when you put to death the misdeeds of the body by the Spirit, you will live because those who are led by the Spirit of God are sons of God. This is the picture of the triumph of the Spirit. What grace! What mercy! The One we insult does not condemn us. The One we grieve and resist and lie to gives life. What grace and mercy and victory over sin! That's good news.

We battle in the Spirit.

*For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms. Therefore put on the full armor of God, so that when the day of evil comes, you may be able to stand your ground, and after you have done everything, to stand. Stand firm then, with the belt of truth buckled around your waist, with the breastplate of righteousness in place, and with your feet fitted with the readiness that comes from the gospel of peace. In addition to all this, take up the shield of faith, with which you can extinguish all the flaming arrows of the evil one. Take the helmet of salvation and the sword of the Spirit which is the word of God.” (Ephesians 6:12-17)*

What is the “*sword of the Spirit*”? Look at Jesus in His temptation—the battle when He is tempted in Matthew 4 and Luke 4. What does He battle with? The Word. The sword of the Spirit. He fights against temptation. This is why we hide the Word in our hearts because it’s our weapon in battles with sin. It’s the sword of the Spirit.

We live in the Spirit, we battle in the Spirit and we pray in the Spirit. Ephesians 6:18 is the follow-up to the whole picture of the armor of God. “*And pray in the Spirit on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests. With this in mind, be alert and always keep on praying for all the saints.*”

So, that’s just a brief treatment of how the Spirit responds to sin. Reflecting the pleasure of God in obedience; the displeasure of God in disobedience. How the Spirit responds to our sin when we lie or resist or grieve Him, but then, He gives us victory over sin. This is where we’re really going to camp out.

## **THE SPIRIT AND REDEMPTION**

### **Three Stages...**

We’re going to look at the Spirit and redemption in three different ways—three stages. Redemption anticipated—Genesis through Malachi—the Old Testament. The Spirit with Israel. What we’re going to think about is redemption anticipated in the Old Testament. Redemption accomplished—Matthew through John. We’re going to look at the picture of Christ. We’re going to see the Spirit, not with Israel, but the Spirit on Christ—the relationship between the Spirit and Christ. Redemption applied—Acts through Revelation. The Spirit in the Church.

So, those are the three lenses we’re going to be using. Redemption applied is where we’re going to come in. We’re going to study what the Spirit is doing in our lives, but in order to understand that, we’ve got to understand how this was anticipated and accomplished in Christ, how the Spirit was working with Israel and on Christ, and that informs how the Spirit works in the church.

### **Redemption Anticipated: The Spirit With Israel**

#### **In the Old Testament, the Holy Spirit is a transitory presence.**

The key word here is “with”—the Spirit with Israel. The reason I emphasize this is that, in the Old Testament, the Holy Spirit is a transitory presence. We looked at this earlier. “Now

*the Spirit of the Lord had departed from Saul, and an evil spirit from the Lord tormented him.*" (1 Samuel 16:14) David crying out is a picture of this in the Old Testament. *"Do not cast me from your presence or take your Holy Spirit from me."* (Psalm 51:11)

The Spirit is coming upon people and leaving people. He is a transitory presence. There are a couple times in the Old Testament where the Spirit is mentioned as filling people or being in people, but for the most part, what you have is the picture of the Spirit with people. I didn't include this in your worksheet, but Ezekiel 1 and 10 is a picture where the prophet Ezekiel saw the Spirit of God departing the Temple in Jerusalem. The Spirit of God leaving this place where He had dwelt. So, He is a transitory presence.

### **In the Old Testament, the Holy Spirit is an unfulfilled promise.**

In the Old Testament, the Holy Spirit is an unfulfilled promise. I need you to follow me here. By unfulfilled, basically, I mean incomplete. There was more to come. The fullness, the promise of the Holy Spirit, is not experienced in the Old Testament. There is something yet to come. This is what the prophets all talk about. Listen to Isaiah: *"The fortress will be abandoned, the noisy city deserted; citadel and watchtower will become a wasteland forever, the delight of donkeys, a pasture for flocks, till the Spirit is poured upon us from on high..."* (Isaiah 32:14-16) Something is coming.

*"I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit in you; I will remove from you your heart of stone and give you a heart of flesh. And I will put..."* [something is coming in the future] *"...my Spirit in you and move you to follow my decrees and be careful to keep my laws."* (Ezekiel 36:26-28) *"I will no longer hide my face from them, for I will pour out my Spirit on the house of Israel, declares the Sovereign LORD."* (Ezekiel 39:29) *"And afterward, I will pour out my Spirit on all people. Your sons and daughters will prophesy, your old men will dream dreams, your young men will see visions. Even on my servants, both men and women, I will pour out my Spirit in those days."* (Joel 2:28-29) So, there is something coming. This is anticipated.

Transitory presence. Unfulfilled promise. Incomplete in the Old Testament. Hold on. Put your hat on those, and we're going to come back to them. What is the Spirit doing, then? If He's going to come in greater fullness, what is He doing now?

### **The Spirit enables the work of God.**

The Spirit enables the work of God with Israel in the Old Testament. He's enabling the work of God. This is in a variety of different ways. He empowers God's people to lead. He comes and tells Moses, "I'm going to take the Spirit I've put on you, and I'm going to put it on some others, and they are going to help you carry the burden of leadership among the people of Israel. I'm going to enable them by pouring out my Spirit on other people."

*The Lord said to Moses: 'Bring me seventy of Israel's elders who are known to you as leaders and officials among the people. Have them come to the Tent of Meeting, that they may stand there with you. I will come down and speak with you there, and I will take of the Spirit that is on you and put the Spirit on them. They will help you carry the burden of the people so that you will not have to carry it alone.'* (Numbers 11:16-17)

The same picture is in Numbers 27:18 regarding Joshua, Moses' successor: *"So the Lord said to Moses, 'Take Joshua son of Nun, a man in whom is the spirit, and lay your hand on him.'"*

It's all over Judges. We see this in Judges 3:10: *"The Spirit of the LORD came upon him, so that he became Israel's judge and went to war. The LORD gave Cushan-Rishathaim king of Aram into the hands of Othniel, who overpowered him."* When you get to Judges 6:34, you've got Gideon. The Spirit comes on Gideon, and you've got Judges 11:29: *"Then the Spirit of the LORD came on Jephthah."*

The Spirit is coming on these guys to enable them to lead. Then, you get to Saul. *"When they arrived at Gibeah, a procession of prophets met him; the Spirit of God came upon him in power, and he joined in their prophesying."* (1 Samuel 10:10) Then David: *"So Samuel took the horn of oil and anointed him in the presence of his brothers, and from that day on the Spirit of the Lord came upon David in power. Samuel then went to Ramah."* (1 Samuel 16:13) He's enabling God's work by empowering God's people to lead.

He equips God's people with skills. God was giving explanations about what the priests needed to wear, as well as what the Tabernacle—the Tent of Meeting—and the Ark of the Covenant needed to look like. Look at Exodus 31:1-5:

*Then the Lord said to Moses, 'See, I have chosen Bezalel son of Uri, the son of Hur, of the tribe of Judah, and I have filled him with the Spirit of God, with skill, ability and knowledge in all kinds of crafts—to make artistic designs for work in gold, silver and bronze, to cut and set stones, to work in wood, and to engage in all kinds of craftsmanship.'*

This guy was a good craftsman. Why? Because he was filled with the Spirit of God. He is equipping God's people with skills. *"Tell all the skilled men to whom I have given wisdom in such matters that they are to make garments for Aaron, for his consecration, so he may serve me as priest."* (Exodus 28:3)

*Then Moses said to the Israelites, 'See, the Lord has chosen Bezalel son of Uri, the son of Hur, of the tribe of Judah, and he has filled him with the Spirit of God, with skill, ability and knowledge in all kinds of crafts—to make artistic designs for work in gold, silver and bronze, to cut and set stones, to work in wood and to engage in all kinds of artistic craftsmanship. And he has given both him and Oholiab, son of Ahisamach, of the tribe of Dan, the ability to teach others. He has filled them with skill to do all kinds of work as craftsmen, designers, embroiderers in blue, purple and scarlet yarn and fine linen, and weavers—all of them master craftsmen and designers. (Exodus 35:30-35)*

He enables God's people for victory. Isaiah 63 is talking about how God led His people through the Red Sea by His Spirit.

*Then his people recalled the days of old, the days of Moses and his people—where is he who brought them through the sea, with the shepherd of his flock? Where is he who set his Holy Spirit among them, who sent his glorious arm of power to be at Moses' right hand, who divided the waters before them, to gain for himself everlasting renown, who led them through the depths?*

1 Samuel is really a somewhat humorous story because the whole picture is that Saul wants to kill David. David gets wind of this and flees. He ends up getting to where Samuel is. Saul finds out that David and Samuel are in this particular place, and Saul sends some of his men to take David out. So, his men go, and when they go, listen to what 1 Samuel 19:20 says, *"So he sent men to capture him. But when they saw a group of prophets prophesying,*

*with Samuel standing there as their leader, the Spirit of God came upon Saul's men and they also prophesied.*" Isn't that great? They are supposed to be taking David out, and the Spirit of God instead says, "I'm going to come on you, and you're going to stop what you're doing, and you're going to start prophesying." It's, basically, a picture of a trance-like state where they were prophesying.

Saul gets wind of this and he is like, "Why are these guys prophesying when they're supposed to be killing? I need to go in myself and take things into my own hands." So, Saul goes, and when he gets there, the Spirit of God comes on Saul, and he starts prophesying. Not only does he start prophesying, but 1 Samuel 19 says he stripped his clothes off and started prophesying. So, Saul was thinking he was going to take David out, but instead, finds himself naked and prophesying under the power of the Spirit of God. This was not the way he planned things. Isn't that a great story? The Spirit enables God's people for victory.

He encourages God's people to persevere. We see the Spirit encouraging the people to persevere as we've already read in Psalm 143:9-10, "*Rescue me from my enemies, O Lord, for I hide myself in you. Teach me to do your will, for you are my God; may your good Spirit lead me on level ground.*" Isaiah 44:1-3 says,

*But now listen, O Jacob, my servant, Israel, whom I have chosen. This is what the Lord says—he who made you, who formed you in the womb, and who will help you: Do not be afraid, O Jacob, my servant, Jeshurun, whom I have chosen. For I will pour water on the thirsty land, and streams on the dry ground; I will pour out my Spirit on your offspring, and my blessing on your descendants.*

This is in a difficult time among the people of Israel.

"*So he said to me, 'This is the word of the Lord to Zerubbabel: 'Not by might nor by power, but by my Spirit,' says the Lord Almighty.'"* (Zechariah 4:6) You're going to get through this. Look at Haggai 2:4-5, especially at the very end:

*'But now be strong, O Zerubbabel,' declares the Lord. 'Be strong, O Joshua son of Jehozadak, the high priest. Be strong, all you people of the land,' declares the Lord, 'and work. For I am with you,' declares the Lord Almighty. 'This is what I covenanted with you when you came out of Egypt. And my Spirit remains among you. Do not fear.'*

What encouragement comes there in Haggai from the Spirit? "My Spirit is among you...I am with you...be strong." So, the Spirit is encouraging God's people to persevere.

These are all the ways where He is enabling the work of God. He's empowering people, He's equipping people, He's enabling them for victory, He's encouraging them to persevere—all these different ways throughout the Old Testament. He's enabling the work of God.

### **The Spirit inspires the worship of God.**

The Spirit inspires the worship of God. This is David, the man who wrote so many psalms and worship songs: "*These are the last words of David: The inspired utterance of David son of Jesse, the utterance of the man exalted by the Most High, the man anointed by the God of Jacob, the hero of Israel's songs: 'The Spirit of the LORD spoke through me; his word was on my tongue'"* (2 Samuel 23:1-2). The Spirit in the Old Testament inspired the worship of God.

## **The Spirit reveals the Word of God.**

The Spirit reveals the Word of God. Ezekiel 2:1-8 is an incredible passage—listen to this and put yourself in Ezekiel's shoes:

*He said to me, 'Son of man, stand up on your feet and I will speak to you.' As he spoke, the Spirit came into me and raised me to my feet, and I heard him speaking to me. He said: 'Son of man, I am sending you to the Israelites, to a rebellious nation that has rebelled against me; they and their fathers have been in revolt against me to this very day. The people to whom I am sending you are obstinate and stubborn. Say to them, 'This is what the Sovereign LORD says.' And whether they listen or fail to listen—for they are a rebellious house—they will know that a prophet has been among them. And you, son of man, do not be afraid of them or their word. Do not be afraid, though briars and thorns are all around you and you live among scorpions. Do not be afraid of what they say or terrified by them, though they are a rebellious house. You must speak my words to them, whether they listen or fail to listen, for they are rebellious. But you, son of man, listen to what I say to you. Do not rebel like that rebellious house; open your mouth and eat what I give you.'*

The Spirit spoke to the prophet. "Hear from God...eat what He gives...proclaim His message...say what He says...you will be amidst scorpions and people who will rebel but speak what I've told you to speak." This is what the prophet would do—revealing the Word of God.

Now this is how this process worked. Two steps. Hold your hats here, too, because this is going to help us understand something later. Revelation: The prophet receives the Word. Inspiration: The prophet relays the Word. He proclaims the Word in speech. Thus saith the Lord. This is what the Lord said in 2 Chronicles 24:20: "*Then the Spirit of God came upon Zechariah son of Jehoiada the priest. He stood before the people and said, 'This is what God says: "Why do you disobey the Lord's commands? You will not prosper. Because you have forsaken the Lord, he has forsaken you."*""

*The Spirit of the Sovereign Lord is on me, because the Lord has anointed me to preach good news to the poor. He has sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim freedom for the captives and release from darkness for the prisoners, to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor and the day of vengeance of our God, to comfort all who mourn, and provide for those who grieve in Zion—to bestow on them a crown of beauty instead of ashes, the oil of gladness instead of mourning, and a garment of praise instead of a spirit of despair. (Isaiah 61:1-4)*

*"But as for me, I am filled with power, with the Spirit of the Lord, and with justice and might, to declare to Jacob his transgression, to Israel his sin."* (Micah 3:8) So, the prophet receives the Word and relays the Word. Revelation, inspiration. Keep that in mind.

As we understand these two things, first, He proclaims the Word in Scripture. This is where I've got some passages from the New Testament that tell us what God was doing in the Old Testament. Listen to this:

*In those days Peter stood up among the believers (a group numbering about a hundred and twenty) and said, 'Brothers, the Scripture had to be fulfilled which the Holy Spirit spoke long ago through the mouth of David concerning*

*Judas, who served as guide for those who arrested Jesus—he was one of our number and shared in this ministry. (Acts 1:15-17)*

The Holy Spirit spoke through David's mouth. We also see this in Acts 4:25-26, "You spoke by the Holy Spirit through the mouth of your servant, our father David..." Then, 2 Peter 1:20-21—two very important verses for understanding Scripture—state, "Above all, you must understand that no prophecy of Scripture came about by the prophet's own interpretation. For prophecy never had its origin in the will of man, but men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit." The Spirit was carrying them along and speaking through them.

So, what have we seen with the Spirit with Israel? The Spirit enables the work of God, and He's giving the Word of God, too. There you go. We're clear on that. At the end, you still have this anticipation because there's something not complete. There's a transitory presence, an unfulfilled presence.

### **Redemption Accomplished: The Spirit on Christ**

Then, you get to Matthew, Mark, Luke and John—the Gospels—and the picture of Jesus, and we begin to see the fulfillment, and now, we have to see this in Christ before we jump to our lives and to the church. This is a great quote from Abraham Kuyper:

*The Church has never sufficiently confessed the influence of the Holy Spirit exerted on the work of Christ. The general impression is that the work of the Holy Spirit begins when the work of the mediator on earth is finished, as though until that time the Holy Spirit celebrated His divine day of rest. [Like He was just sitting back, just waiting to get in the game. That's not true.] Yet the Scripture teaches us again and again that Christ performed His mediatorial work controlled and impelled by the Holy Spirit.*

So, what I want us to do is think about how this whole promise was accomplished in Christ, and then think about it as it relates to different facets of the life of Christ and the Person of Christ.

In the Old Testament, the Holy Spirit is a transitory presence. On Christ, the Holy Spirit is a permanent presence. This is the picture in John 1:32-34:

*Then John gave this testimony: 'I saw the Spirit come down from heaven as a dove and remain on him. I would not have known him, except that the one who sent me to baptize with water told me, "The man on whom you see the Spirit come down and remain [permanently] is he who will baptize with the Holy Spirit." I have seen and I testify that this is the Son of God.'*

In the Old Testament, the Holy Spirit is an unfulfilled promise. On Christ, the Holy Spirit is a fulfilled promise. Listen to these prophecies in the Old Testament. Isaiah 11:1-3:

*A shoot will come up from the stump of Jesse; from his roots a Branch will bear fruit. The Spirit of the Lord will rest on him—the Spirit of wisdom and of understanding, the Spirit of counsel and of power, the Spirit of knowledge and*

*of the fear of the Lord—and he will delight in the fear of the Lord. He will not judge by what he sees with his eyes, or decide by what he hears with his ears.*

The Spirit will rest on Him.

Then, you get to Matthew 12:15-21. This is quoting from the prophecy back in Isaiah 42:

*Aware of this, Jesus withdrew from that place. Many followed him, and he healed all their sick, warning them not to tell who he was. This was to fulfill what was spoken through the prophet Isaiah: 'Here is my servant whom I have chosen, the one I love, in whom I delight; I will put my Spirit on him, and he will proclaim justice to the nations. He will not quarrel or cry out; no one will hear his voice in the streets. A bruised reed he will not break, and a smoldering wick he will not snuff out, till he leads justice to victory. In his name the nations will put their hope.'*

Luke 4:17-21 tells of when Jesus stands up in the synagogue and starts reading:

*The scroll of the prophet Isaiah was handed to him. Unrolling it, he found the place where it is written: 'The Spirit of the Lord is on me, because he has anointed me to preach good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners and recovery of sight for the blind, to release the oppressed, to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor.' Then he rolled up the scroll, gave it back to the attendant and sat down. The eyes of everyone in the synagogue were fastened on him, and he began by saying to them, 'Today this scripture is fulfilled in your hearing.'*

What was promised about the Spirit is now fulfilled in this whole picture "on me." How is that played out in different facets of His life?

### **The Spirit and the Incarnation of Christ...**

The Spirit and the Incarnation of Christ. What is the Spirit doing in the life of Christ? In the birth of Christ? The Spirit prepares the way for the Incarnation prophetically. What you've got in Luke 1 and 2 are pictures of the Spirit coming upon people and enabling Elizabeth, and then Zechariah, to prophecy about the coming of Christ: "When Elizabeth heard Mary's greeting, the baby leaped in her womb, and Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit. In a loud voice she exclaimed: 'Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the child you will bear!'" (Luke 1:41-42)

*His father Zechariah was filled with the Holy Spirit and prophesied: 'Praise be to the Lord, the God of Israel, because he has come and has redeemed his people. He has raised up a horn of salvation for us in the house of his servant David (as he said through his holy prophets of long ago), salvation from our enemies and from the hand of all who hate us to show mercy to our fathers and to remember his holy covenant, the oath he swore to our father Abraham: to rescue us from the hand of our enemies, and to enable us to serve him without fear in holiness and righteousness before him all our days.'* (Luke 1:67-75)

Let's read this one real quick—this is such a great story. Listen to this:

*Now there was a man in Jerusalem called Simeon, who was righteous and devout. He was waiting for the consolation of Israel, and the Holy Spirit was upon him. It had been revealed to him by the Holy Spirit that he would not die before he had seen the Lord's Christ. [So this guy is living just to see Christ. It's what gets him up in the morning.] Moved by the Spirit, he went into the temple courts. When the parents brought in the child Jesus to do for him what the custom of the Law required, Simeon took him in his arms and praised God, saying: 'Sovereign Lord, as you have promised, you now dismiss your servant in peace. For my eyes have seen your salvation, which you have prepared in the sight of all people, a light for revelation to the Gentiles and for glory to your people Israel.'* (Luke 2:25-32)

Isn't that a great picture? You live for this day, and you see this child come in, and the Spirit moves in you to realize this is the Lord's salvation. What an incredible picture! Preparing the way for the Incarnation prophetically.

Then, the Spirit makes possible the Incarnation physically. This is the picture at the end of Luke 1 when the angel tells Mary, *"The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you. So the holy one to be born will be called the Son of God."* When the Spirit comes upon you.

This is what the angel tells Joseph in Matthew 1:

*Because Joseph her husband was a righteous man and did not want to expose her to public disgrace, he had in mind to divorce her quietly. But after he had considered this, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream and said, 'Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary home as your wife, because what is conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit. She will give birth to a son, and you are to give him the name Jesus, because he will save his people from their sins.'*

The Holy Spirit is, literally, fashioning the humanity of Christ in Mary. That's the picture here. The Spirit and the Incarnation. So that's His birth.

### **The Spirit and the Baptism of Christ...**

Then, we don't have a lot of biblical pictures between His birth and His baptism. The Spirit and the baptism of Christ. What does the Spirit do? At Jesus' baptism, the Spirit confirms the Old Testament promise, particularly in the John 1 passage that's listed below. *"As soon as Jesus was baptized, he went up out of the water. At that moment heaven was opened, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and lighting on him. And a voice from heaven said, 'This is my Son, whom I love; with him I am well pleased.'"* (Matthew 3:16-18)

*The next day John saw Jesus coming toward him and said, 'Look, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world! This is the one I meant when I said, "A man who comes after me has surpassed me because he was before me." I myself did not know him, but the reason I came baptizing with water was that he might be revealed to Israel.' Then John gave this testimony: 'I saw the Spirit come down from heaven as a dove and remain on him. I would not have known him, except that the one who sent me to baptize with water told me, "The man on whom you see the Spirit come down and remain is he who will baptize with the Holy Spirit." I have seen and I testify that this is the Son of God.'* (John 1:29-34)

The Holy Spirit confirms.

At Jesus' baptism, the Spirit commissions Christ for ministry. Right after He's baptized, the Spirit comes on Him like a dove, which is what we just saw in Matthew 3. Look at Mark 1 at the very end:

*At that time Jesus came from Nazareth in Galilee and was baptized by John in the Jordan. As Jesus was coming up out of the water, he saw heaven being torn open and the Spirit descending on him like a dove. And a voice came from heaven: 'You are my Son, whom I love; with you I am well pleased.' At once the Spirit sent him out into the desert..."*

So, He is sent out immediately by the Spirit, commissioned.

### **The Spirit and the Temptation of Christ...**

Now, He goes into the temptation. The Spirit and the temptation of Christ. "Jesus, full of the Holy Spirit, returned from the Jordan and was led by the Spirit in the desert..." (Luke 4:1) Then, after He's tempted, between verses 1 and 14, "Jesus returned to Galilee in the power of the Spirit, and news about him spread through the whole countryside." (Luke 4:14) When you think about it, this is just an amazing picture. The Spirit led Jesus to the desert. The Spirit of God led Jesus to the place where He would be tempted. Led Him. The Spirit empowered Jesus in the desert. We talked about that—the sword of the Spirit—the Word of God. The Spirit delivered Jesus from the desert. He returned to Galilee in the power of the Spirit. The Spirit is all over this picture of the temptation of Christ.

Don't miss it—Luke is particularly focusing on this because Luke wrote another book. Does anyone remember what the other book is called? Acts, which is the picture of the Spirit, so Luke is very intentional to show us the Spirit is not some new picture in Acts but is all over Jesus. The Spirit of God is all over Jesus in the book of Luke. Keep that in mind.

### **The Spirit and the Works of Christ...**

The Spirit and the works of Christ. His life and ministry. Jesus worked in the power of the Spirit. This is the passage that elicits conversation about blasphemy against the Spirit, but at the very end, he says, "And if I drive out demons by Beelzebub, by whom do your people drive them out? So then, they will be your judges. But if I drive out demons by the Spirit of God, then the kingdom of God has come upon you." (Matthew 12:25-28) This is talking about driving out demons. This is a picture of the Spirit of God confronting the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms and being displayed through the life and ministry of Christ.

Not just work in the power of the Spirit, but Jesus worked in the joy of the Spirit. This is right after Jesus talks about seeing Satan fall like lightning from heaven and spiritual forces of evil submitting, not only to Jesus, but also to His followers. Luke 10:21 says, "At the time Jesus, full of joy through the Holy Spirit, said, 'I praise you, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because you have hidden these things from the wise and learned, and revealed them to little children. Yes, Father, for this was your good pleasure.'" Full of joy through the Holy Spirit. There's power and there's joy here.

### **The Spirit and the Passion of Christ...**

The Spirit and the Passion of Christ. This is where we really have to go outside the Gospel records because, in Matthew, Mark, Luke and John, in the pictures of the cross and resurrection, we don't see explicit references to the Spirit of God. However, look at what the rest of the New Testament teaches. The Spirit empowered Jesus for the cross. "How much

*more, then, will the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself unblemished to God, cleanse our consciences from acts that lead to death, so that we may serve the living God!" (Hebrews 9:14)*

The Spirit empowered Jesus at the cross, and the Spirit vindicated Jesus in the resurrection. Romans 1:1-4 states,

*Paul, a servant of Christ Jesus, called to be an apostle and set apart for the gospel of God—the gospel he promised beforehand through his prophets in the Holy Scriptures regarding his Son, who as to his human nature was a descendant of David, and who through the Spirit of holiness was declared with power to be the Son of God by his resurrection from the dead: Jesus Christ our Lord.*

*"Beyond all question, the mystery of godliness is great: He appeared in a body, was vindicated by the Spirit, was seen by angels, was preached among the nations, was believed on in the world, was taken up in glory." (1 Timothy 3:16)*

*"For Christ died for sins once for all, the righteous for the unrighteous, to bring you to God. He was put to death in the body but made alive by the Spirit..." (1 Peter 3:18)*

### **The Spirit and the Ascension of Christ...**

The Spirit empowers Jesus at the cross and vindicates Him at the resurrection. Then, you get to the Spirit and the Ascension of Christ. The Ascension is the catalyst for the coming of the Spirit's presence. This is huge. The Ascension gets sort of glossed over in the personal work of Christ sometimes, but it's huge. Listen to what Jesus said in John 7:37-39:

*On the last and greatest day of the Feast, Jesus stood and said in a loud voice, 'If anyone is thirsty, let him come to me and drink. Whoever believes in me, as the Scripture has said, streams of living water will flow from within him.' By this he meant the Spirit, whom those who believed in him were later to receive. [So, He's talking about the Spirit.] Up to that time the Spirit had not been given, since Jesus had not yet been glorified.*

Jesus needed to be glorified and ascend to the right hand of the Father in order for the Spirit to be given. That's why, when you get to Acts 1:4-9, we are given this promise (see verse 8):

*On one occasion, while he was eating with them, he gave them this command: 'Do not leave Jerusalem, but wait for the gift my Father promised, which you have heard me speak about. For John baptized with water, but in a few days you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit.' So when they met together, they asked him, 'Lord, are you at this time going to restore the kingdom to Israel?' He said to them: 'It is not for you to know the times or dates the Father has set by his own authority. But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.' After he said this, he was taken up before their very eyes, and a cloud hid him from their sight.*

The Ascension is the catalyst for the coming of the Spirit's presence.

The Ascension is the key for the continuation of the Spirit's work. I want to show this to you. Open with me to Acts 1:1-2. I want to encourage you to circle one of the greatest words in Acts 1 that's easy to miss. Listen to this picture. Listen to how Luke starts this picture. He's writing to Theophilus: *"In my former book, Theophilus, I wrote about all that Jesus began to do and teach until the day he was taken up to heaven..."* I would encourage you to circle that word "began." Think about it. He's just written this whole Gospel, and he says that's only the beginning of what Jesus has done and taught. Then, you get to Acts 1 and by verse 11, Jesus is out of here. So, how is the whole book of Luke just the beginning if Jesus has checked out by Acts 1:11?

We see various references to Christ in the rest of Acts but not near as prevalent. Here's the beauty. The Spirit of God would be the presence of Christ dwelling in the people of God, so the work of Christ and His people was just beginning in the Gospels. It would be scattered among 120 believers in Acts 1; 3,000 by the end of Acts 2, then 5,000, and so on and so on and so on. There are 2,000 people here, tonight, who have the very presence of Christ living in us, because He has ascended to heaven, and He has sent His Spirit to us. The ascension is the key for the continuation of the Spirit's work.

Acts 7 is one of those places where we see Christ. Stephen is about to be stoned, and he looks up, and he sees heaven open and the Son of Man—Jesus—standing at the right hand of God. *"When they heard this, they were furious and gnashed their teeth at him. But Stephen, full of the Holy Spirit, looked up to heaven and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing at the right hand of God. 'Look,' he said, 'I see heaven open and the Son of Man standing at the right hand of God.'"*

*"Who is he that condemns? Christ Jesus, who died—more than that, who was raised to life—is at the right hand of God and is also interceding for us."* (Romans 8:34)

The Ascension is the confirmation that the Spirit will lead the church to Christ's second coming. The promise at the ascension is that Jesus is coming back.

*They were looking intently up into the sky as he was going, when suddenly two men dressed in white stood beside them. 'Men of Galilee,' they said, 'why do you stand here looking into the sky? This same Jesus, who has been taken from you into heaven, will come back in the same way you have seen him go into heaven.'* (Acts 1:10-11)

## **Redemption Applied: The Spirit in The Church**

What we've seen is the Spirit with Israel and the Spirit on Christ. Now, the Spirit in the Church. What I want us to do is read parts of Acts 2. You've got some blank space there in your notes. I want us to turn to a couple different passages together because I want to show you how this all fits together. This is the story of Pentecost. There is not one detail in this story that is not intentional; that is not by the sovereign design of Almighty God.

In Acts, the One who possessed the Spirit now pours out the Spirit. I've included that promise from John 14:12: *"I tell you the truth, anyone who has faith in me will do what I have been doing. He will do even greater things than these, because I am going to the Father."* Even greater things.

Then, a quote from John 7:39 where Jesus said, "Once I'm glorified, I'll send the Spirit to you." "By this he meant the Spirit, whom those who believed in him were later to receive. Up to that time the Spirit had not been given, since Jesus had not yet been glorified."

Let's read what happens when the Spirit comes in Acts 2:1-13. Picture this almost like it's the first time you've ever read it:

*When the day of Pentecost came, they were all together in one place. Suddenly a sound like the blowing of a violent wind came from heaven and filled the whole house where they were sitting. They saw what seemed to be tongues of fire that separated and came to rest on each of them. All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues as the Spirit enabled them.*

*Now there were staying in Jerusalem God-fearing Jews from every nation under heaven. When they heard this sound, a crowd came together in bewilderment, because each one heard their own language being spoken. Utterly amazed, they asked: 'Aren't all these who are speaking Galileans? Then how is it that each of us hears them in our native language? Parthians, Medes and Elamites; residents of Mesopotamia, Judea and Cappadocia, Pontus and Asia, Phrygia and Pamphylia, Egypt and the parts of Libya near Cyrene; visitors from Rome (both Jews and converts to Judaism); Cretans and Arabs—we hear them declaring the wonders of God in our own tongues!' Amazed and perplexed, they asked one another, 'What does this mean?' Some, however, made fun of them and said, 'They have had too much wine.'"*

What a scene! Can you just imagine being gathered together? All of a sudden, a sound like a violent wind—like a tornado—comes in. Tongues of fire are resting on the people around you. Everybody starts speaking in different languages representing the nations. What an amazing scene! What is going on here though?

There are three main truths being inaugurated with the Spirit in the church. We've seen the Spirit with Israel, the Spirit on Christ, now and the Spirit in the church.

First, the Holy Spirit enables the church to experience God's presence. Not actually a wind, but something like the sound of a wind. Hold your place here and go back to Ezekiel 37. We've already seen throughout the Old Testament that wind is imagery that represents the Spirit of God. I want you to remember what had been prophesied regarding the Spirit with Israel in Ezekiel 37. Remember Ezekiel 36 is when the promise was given to put "my Spirit in you"? Then, Ezekiel 37... look with me at verses 9 to 14. This is the prophesy in Ezekiel:

*Then he said to me, 'Prophesy to the breath; prophesy, son of man, and say to it, "This is what the Sovereign LORD says: Come, breath, from the four winds and breathe into these slain, that they may live.'" So I prophesied as he commanded me, and breath entered them; they came to life and stood up on their feet—a vast army. Then he said to me: 'Son of man, these bones are the people of Israel. They say, "Our bones are dried up and our hope is gone; we are cut off." Therefore prophesy and say to them: "This is what the Sovereign LORD says: My people, I am going to open your graves and bring you up from them; I will bring you back to the land of Israel. Then you, my people, will know that I am the LORD, when I open your graves and bring you up from them. I will put my Spirit in you and you will live, and I will settle you*

*in your own land. Then you will know that I the LORD have spoken, and I have done it, declares the LORD.”””*

Verse 14 is the Spirit with Israel, but listen to the preposition there: “*I will put my Spirit [not with] you...*” but “*I will put my Spirit in you and you will live.*” Then, in Acts 2 at Pentecost the presence of God with the people of God from the Old Testament is now coming to live in people. He is no longer dwelling with His people but in His people. He enables the church to experience God’s presence.

Second, the Holy Spirit enables the church to obey God’s commands. Now, at this point, we need to realize Pentecost was a Jewish feast. Jews from all over the world came to it as is described here, and it was celebrated 50 days after the Passover. It was, traditionally, a celebration for when God gave His people the Ten Commandments. So, 50 days after the Passover, they celebrated when God gave His people the law, the Ten Commandments. So, you’ve got people gathering together 50 days after the Passover for the Feast of Pentecost. Remember that the Passover in Luke 22-24 was when Jesus was crucified, and that happened during the time of the Passover. So, now you’ve got 50 days later, the people of God are coming together for a celebration of the giving of the law in the Old Testament.

Now, hold your place here in Acts 2 and go back with me to Exodus 19. This is when God gave His people the law. This is some of what we were talking about earlier. Moses meets with God on the mountain, but not everybody gets to be on the mountain—just Moses meeting with God, and He is giving His law. Listen to this picture starting at Exodus 19:16:

*On the morning of the third day there was thunder and lightning, with a thick cloud over the mountain, and a very loud trumpet blast. Everyone in the camp trembled. Then Moses led the people out of the camp to meet with God, and they stood at the foot of the mountain. Mount Sinai was covered with smoke, because the LORD descended on it in fire. The smoke billowed up from it like smoke from a furnace, and the whole mountain trembled violently. As the sound of the trumpet grew louder and louder, Moses spoke and the voice of God answered him. The LORD descended to the top of Mount Sinai and called Moses to the top of the mountain. So Moses went up and the LORD said to him, ‘Go down and warn the people so they do not force their way through to see the LORD and many of them perish. Even the priests, who approach the LORD, must consecrate themselves, or the LORD will break out against them.’*

So, what you’ve got is this picture of what happened when God gave the law. God descends on the mountain covered with fire. The people of God are told not to come, not to force their way to the mountain and die in the process. Then, you get to Exodus 20 and that’s exactly what happens. Exodus 20 is the giving of the Ten Commandments. Keep going though. Exodus 20-31 is the giving of the law, and then you come to Exodus 32, which is where we started tonight. Moses comes down, sees them worshipping this golden calf and intercedes for them. He hasn’t even gotten down the mountain with the law, and they are already breaking law. Right? So what happens? Exodus 32:27-28: “*Then he said to them, ‘This is what the LORD, the God of Israel, says: “Each man strap a sword to his side. Go back and forth through the camp from one end to the other, each killing his brother and friend and neighbor.” The Levites did as Moses commanded, and that day about three thousand of the people died.*”

So, in the Old Testament—Exodus 19—God reveals His glory through the giving of the law at a mountain through fire. The people’s disobedience to the law results in 3,000 men

dying. It just so happens that, on this day called Pentecost—the celebration of the giving of the law—that the Spirit of God descends upon His people, tongues of fire on each of these people, and they preach the gospel.

You get to Acts 2:36-41. Do you remember how many people turned to Christ? 3,000 people trust Christ there in Acts 2 when they were celebrating the day the law was given. That is one cool coincidence. No. This is the Sovereign God showing His people a new day has dawned. They were unable to obey this law and 3,000 men died. Now, the Spirit is in them to enable them to obey the law and 3,000 come to life.

The Spirit is in us to experience God's presence, to obey God's commands and then to fulfill God's purpose. What they do is start preaching in all these different languages. Go back to Genesis 11. Remember the nations? Remember the Tower of Babel? They were erecting this tower for themselves to make a name for themselves, and they were scattered with all their different languages. Then, in Genesis 12:1-3, God says to Abraham, "You're going to be my people, and you're going to take my blessing to all the peoples of the earth, all the languages and all the nations of the earth."

Then, you come to Acts 2, and the Spirit of God comes upon His people, and you see them proclaiming the gospel in all these different languages, a foretaste of Revelation 7:9-10 people from every nation, tribe, people and language will gather around the throne and sing, "*Salvation belongs to our God, who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb.*" Who will be at the center of the throne? This is the purpose of God in Genesis 12—that He would bless His people so that all nations would know He is good—coming to life here in Acts 2 with a foretaste of what is to come in Revelation 7. This is an incredible picture. We cannot in any way overestimate the picture of what is going on when the Spirit comes at Pentecost.

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