

Chapter 5: The Holy Spirit (Pneumatology)

I. Introduction to the Doctrine of the Holy Spirit

The doctrine of the Holy Spirit (Pneumatology) is central to the Christian faith and experience. Often referred to as the "Forgotten God," the Holy Spirit plays a vital and active role in the life of the believer and the Church. The Spirit empowers believers for godly living, convicts of sin, and sanctifies the people of God. Furthermore, the Holy Spirit is essential in the economy of salvation, guiding the Church into truth and revealing the grace and power of God in the world.

Understanding the Holy Spirit involves both theological and experiential dimensions, for the Spirit is not merely a doctrine to be understood but also the personal presence of God active within the lives of believers. The early Church understood the Spirit to be integral to the realization of Christ's work, and as the Church grew, the doctrines concerning the Spirit were further clarified and defended.

II. Biblical Foundations for the Holy Spirit

A. The Deity of the Holy Spirit (Acts 5:3-4; 1 Corinthians 3:16; Hebrews 9:14)

The Bible consistently affirms the full divinity of the Holy Spirit, asserting that the Spirit is not merely a force or an abstract influence but a person of the Trinity. In Acts 5:3-4, Peter confronts Ananias and Sapphira for lying to the Holy Spirit, equating lying to the Spirit with lying to God: "You have not lied just to human beings but to God."

1 Corinthians 3:16 underscores the Spirit's divine status: "Don't you know that you yourselves are God's temple and that God's Spirit dwells in your midst?" The presence of the Spirit within believers is the divine presence of God Himself, affirming the Spirit's equality with the Father and the Son.

Hebrews 9:14 further emphasizes the deity of the Spirit, describing Him as the one who "offered Himself unblemished to God" in the context of Christ's atonement. This passage underscores the Holy Spirit's participation in the divine mission of salvation.

B. The Holy Spirit in Creation (Genesis 1:2; Psalm 104:30; Job 33:4)

The Spirit's work is evident from the very beginning of creation. Genesis 1:2 describes the Spirit as "hovering over the waters" at the creation of the world. The Hebrew word for "hovering" suggests a protective or life-giving activity, indicating the Spirit's active role in bringing about order and life.

Psalm 104:30 declares, "When you send your Spirit, they are created, and you renew the face of the ground." The Spirit is the agent of renewal and creation, participating in God's ongoing creative work.

Job 33:4 affirms that "the Spirit of God has made me; the breath of the Almighty gives me life." This passage speaks of the Spirit as the life-giver, whose breath sustains and gives life to all creation.

C. The Role of the Holy Spirit in Salvation (John 3:5-8; Titus 3:5; Romans 8:9-11)

The Holy Spirit is central to the work of salvation, especially in the regeneration and sanctification of the believer. In John 3:5-8, Jesus speaks of the necessity of being "born of the Spirit" to enter the Kingdom of God. This highlights the Spirit's role in the new birth—bringing spiritual life to the believer.

Titus 3:5 declares that God "saved us through the washing of rebirth and renewal by the Holy Spirit." The Spirit's work in salvation is both regenerative and transformative, renewing the believer in the image of Christ.

Romans 8:9-11 speaks of the Spirit's indwelling presence in believers: "If anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, they do not belong to Christ." This passage affirms that the Spirit's presence is what marks a person as belonging to Christ, and it is through the Spirit that believers will be resurrected to eternal life.

III. The Person of the Holy Spirit: A Personal Relationship

A. The Personality of the Holy Spirit (John 14:16-17; Romans 8:16; 1 Corinthians 12:11)

The Holy Spirit is not an impersonal force but a personal being with will, intellect, and emotion. In John 14:16-17, Jesus refers to the Holy Spirit as "another Advocate" (Greek: "**Parakletos**"), which means a *helper, comforter, or intercessor*. This title emphasizes the Spirit's personal and relational role in the life of the believer.

Romans 8:16 speaks of the Holy Spirit as bearing witness with the believer's spirit that they are children of God, suggesting a personal, intimate relationship between the believer and the Spirit. The Spirit's role in the believer's life is not mechanical but relational, confirming the believer's identity as a child of God.

1 Corinthians 12:11 affirms that the Spirit distributes spiritual gifts "just as he determines." This shows the will of the Spirit, who actively chooses how to best equip believers for service in the body of Christ.

B. The Spirit's Role as Comforter and Teacher (John 14:26; 1 John 2:27; Romans 8:26-27)

The Holy Spirit is the Comforter (Paraclete) sent by the Father and the Son to teach, remind, and comfort the disciples of Jesus. In John 14:26, Jesus promises, "But the Advocate, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you all things and will remind you of everything I have said to you."

1 John 2:27 speaks of the anointing believers receive from the Holy Spirit, who teaches them the truth: "As for you, the anointing you received from him remains in you, and you do not need anyone to teach you." The Spirit leads believers into all truth and enables them to understand and apply God's Word.

Romans 8:26-27 affirms the Spirit's intercessory role, helping believers in their weakness and praying on their behalf when they do not know what to pray. This highlights the Spirit's active involvement in the believer's spiritual life and growth.

IV. The Gifts of the Holy Spirit

A. Spiritual Gifts for the Edification of the Church (1 Corinthians 12:4-11; Romans 12:4-8; Ephesians 4:11-13)

The Holy Spirit equips the Church with various spiritual gifts to build up the body of Christ. In 1 Corinthians 12:4-11, Paul lists various gifts of the Spirit, such as wisdom, knowledge, faith, healing, and prophecy. These gifts are given by the Spirit for the common good and for the edification of the Church.

Romans 12:4-8 presents a similar list of gifts, emphasizing that each member of the body of Christ has a unique role to play. These gifts are to be used in service to others, fostering unity and growth within the Church.

Ephesians 4:11-13 highlights the gifts of leadership and teaching, such as apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors, and teachers. These gifts are given to equip believers for ministry and to promote the unity and maturity of the Church.

B. The Fruit of the Spirit (Galatians 5:22-23; John 15:1-8; Philippians 1:11)

In addition to the spiritual gifts, the Holy Spirit produces fruit in the life of the believer. Galatians 5:22-23 lists the fruit of the Spirit: love, joy, peace, forbearance, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control. These qualities reflect the character of Christ and are the evidence of the Spirit's work in the believer's life.

John 15:1-8 teaches that believers must "abide in the vine" (Christ) in order to bear fruit. The Holy Spirit enables believers to live in a way that pleases God and produces fruit for His glory.

Philippians 1:11 speaks of being "filled with the fruit of righteousness that comes through Jesus Christ, to the glory and praise of God." The fruit of the Spirit is not only for the benefit of the believer but also for the glory of God and the advancement of His Kingdom.

V. The Baptism and Filling of the Holy Spirit

A. The Baptism of the Holy Spirit (Acts 2:1-4; Acts 10:44-46; 1 Corinthians 12:13)

The baptism of the Holy Spirit is a pivotal experience in the life of a believer, marking the initiation into the fullness of the Christian life. In Acts 2:1-4, the disciples were filled with the Holy Spirit at Pentecost, speaking in tongues and proclaiming the mighty works of God. This event demonstrates the empowering presence of the Spirit for witness and service.

Acts 10:44-46 records a similar event where the Holy Spirit fell upon Gentile believers, evidencing that the gift of the Spirit is available to all who believe, not just the Jews. This event marked the inclusive nature of God's salvation.

1 Corinthians 12:13 teaches that "we were all baptized by one Spirit so as to form one body." This baptism unites all believers into the body of Christ, enabling them to live as one under the Lordship of Christ.

B. The Filling of the Holy Spirit (Ephesians 5:18; Acts 4:31; Luke 11:13)

The filling of the Holy Spirit is an ongoing experience that empowers the believer for godly living and service. Ephesians 5:18 exhorts believers to "be filled with the Spirit," indicating that this filling is necessary for spiritual vitality and growth.

Acts 4:31 describes how the believers were filled with the Spirit and "spoke the word of God boldly." The filling of the Spirit equips believers for boldness and effective witness.

Luke 11:13 promises that "if you, then, though you are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father in heaven give the Holy Spirit to those who ask him!" The filling of the Spirit is a gift that God desires to give to His children, empowering them to live according to His will.

VI. When the Holy Spirit Comes: Regeneration and the Baptism of the Holy Spirit

1. According to Scripture, when does regeneration take place in the life of a new believer?

Regeneration, or the new birth, is central to the Christian experience of salvation. It refers to the spiritual renewal of the believer's heart, transforming them from death to life (John 3:3-8, Titus 3:5). According to Scripture, regeneration takes place at the moment of faith and repentance, as the Holy Spirit imparts new life to the believer.

- **John 3:3-8:** Jesus speaks to Nicodemus about the necessity of being "born again" to see the Kingdom of God. This birth is of the Spirit, indicating the work of regeneration through the Holy Spirit.
- **Titus 3:5:** "He saved us, not because of righteous things we had done, but because of His mercy. He saved us through the washing of rebirth and renewal by the Holy Spirit." Here, regeneration is specifically tied to the action of the Holy Spirit.
- **1 Peter 1:3:** Peter praises God for "giving us new birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead."

From these passages, it's clear that regeneration occurs when an individual responds in faith to the gospel, acknowledging Christ as Savior and Lord. This response is enabled by the work of the Holy Spirit who regenerates the heart and imparts spiritual life.

2. Calvinism and Reformed Views vs. Wesleyan and Pentecostal Views on Regeneration and Faith

The theological difference between Calvinistic and Wesleyan-Pentecostal views lies in the timing of regeneration relative to faith.

- **Calvinism and Reformed Theology:** According to Reformed theology, especially as articulated by John Calvin, regeneration precedes faith. In this view, God's sovereign act of regenerating the believer occurs before they consciously respond in faith to the gospel.

Regeneration, in this case, is seen as the work of the Holy Spirit that enables the sinner to come to faith (John 6:44; Ephesians 2:1-5).

John Calvin in his *Institutes of the Christian Religion* teaches that regeneration, or the “new birth,” is necessary because of humanity's total depravity. This regenerating work is said to precede the believer’s faith in God, making the person able to believe in the gospel message.

John 6:44: “No one can come to me unless the Father who sent me draws them.” This verse is often cited to support the notion that God's sovereign grace must first act upon the believer to enable them to respond in faith.

- **Wesleyan and Pentecostal Views:** The Wesleyan and Pentecostal traditions, on the other hand, affirm that regeneration follows an initial act of faith. Faith is the key, and it is through faith that a person receives salvation. Regeneration is seen as a subsequent work of grace that occurs when the individual first believes in Jesus Christ.

J. Rodman Williams, a leading Pentecostal scholar, in *Renewal Theology*, argues that regeneration is a work of grace that takes place as the Holy Spirit enters into the believer’s life in response to faith. Williams sees regeneration and justification as occurring at the moment of salvation when one places their faith in Christ.

Craig Keener, in his work *Acts: An Exegetical Commentary*, highlights the continued work of the Spirit in the believer's life, specifically noting that the initial act of faith often leads to a deeper work of transformation in Pentecostal theology.

Frank D. Macchia, in *Baptized in the Spirit*, supports the idea of a second work of grace, specifically the baptism of the Holy Spirit, which he argues is a distinct experience that empowers believers for service and holiness. Macchia's work emphasizes that regeneration and subsequent experiences, such as the baptism in the Holy Spirit, are not separated but are part of God's ongoing work in the believer’s life.

Amos Yong, in *The Spirit Poured Out on All Flesh*, discusses how the Pentecostal understanding of regeneration is always tied to the initial act of personal faith in Christ, and that the Spirit’s coming into the believer's life is a work that follows this decision. Yong also emphasizes the continuity of the Spirit's work from regeneration to sanctification, which is the basis of the Pentecostal experience of the Holy Spirit.

3. The Second Work of Grace: The Baptism of the Holy Spirit

In the Wesleyan and Pentecostal traditions, the concept of the "second work of grace" is crucial. Regeneration and initial salvation occur when one believes in Christ, but the baptism of the Holy Spirit is considered a separate and subsequent experience that empowers the believer for service, spiritual gifts, and holy living. This is often linked to the Pentecostal doctrine of Spirit baptism, which is seen as an empowering experience that is distinct from, but follows, regeneration.

- **Acts 2:4:** “All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues as the Spirit enabled them.” This passage marks the Pentecostal experience of the outpouring of the Spirit on believers after salvation.
- **Acts 1:5, 8:** Jesus speaks of the coming baptism in the Holy Spirit: "For John baptized with water, but in a few days you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit...But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses..." The Pentecostal tradition sees this event as a distinct empowerment after conversion, leading to a more dynamic and effective Christian life.

4. Salvation and the Role of Faith

In both Calvinistic and Wesleyan-Pentecostal systems, salvation is not possible without the initial act of faith in God. However, the Wesleyan-Pentecostal tradition stresses that salvation is more than a one-time event; it is an ongoing process of transformation and empowerment through the Holy Spirit, beginning with regeneration and continuing with the baptism of the Holy Spirit. This baptism is necessary for the believer to experience the fullness of God’s transformative power and to live out the mission of the church in the world.

VII. Conclusion

The Holy Spirit is an essential part of the Christian faith, actively working in creation, salvation, sanctification, and the empowerment of believers. He is fully divine, a person of the Trinity, and intimately involved in the life of the Church. Through the Spirit’s gifts, fruit, and power, the Church is built up, and believers are equipped to live holy lives.

THCCI affirms the doctrine of the Holy Spirit, recognizing the Spirit's role in the life of the believer, the Church, and the world. The Holy Spirit is the active presence of God, bringing about the realization of God's kingdom on earth and empowering the Church to fulfill its mission.