

THE 5 PILLARS OF THE CHURCH

THE HOLY SPIRIT

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In the Beginning

The Holy Spirit has been present since the very beginning of time (Genesis 1:2). God's spirit hovers over the earth. We see Him at work in the Old Testament as well as the New Testament and He is still with us today. Although many will refer to the spirit as a 'force' or a 'power', the Holy Spirit is actually a person. When we refer to the spirit as 'it' we almost diminish His being. The Holy Spirit is not something that can be controlled or harnessed by us; rather He is a person, an advocate, a helper and an encourager that has a personal relationship not only with believers but also with the Father and the Son (Holy Trinity).

The work of the Holy Spirit is to manifest the active presence of God in the world and especially in the church. He is the primary manifestation of the presence of the trinity among us. He has come to grant power to believers and the church (Acts 10:38, 2:4, 17-18).

The Spirit at Work in the Old Testament

The Old Testament is filled with the Holy Spirit, with many prophets bringing Gods word with authority and power.

Above all, you must realise that no prophecy in scripture ever came from the prophet's own understanding, or from human initiative. No, those prophets were moved by the Holy Spirit, and they spoke from God. (2 Peter 1:20-21, NLT)

The Holy Spirit empowered many in the Old Testament from leaders like Joshua (Numbers 27:18, Deuteronomy 34:9), to the judges such as Othniel (Judges 3:10), Gideon (Judges 6:34) and Samson (Judges 13:25) to Bezalel the artistic designer and architect for the construction of the tabernacle (Exodus 31:3, 35:1) and these are just to mention a few.

Not only do we see many being empowered by the Spirit, but we also hear of Gods promise to anoint the messiah with the Holy Spirit in great power.

And the Spirit of the Lord shall rest upon him, the Spirit of wisdom and understanding, the Spirit of counsel and might, the Spirit of knowledge and the fear of the Lord. And his delight shall be in the fear of the Lord... (Isaiah 11:2-3, ESV)

... I have put my Spirit upon him... (Isaiah 42:1, ESV)

'The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because the Lord has anointed me... (Isaiah 61:1, ESV)

The Spirit at Work in the New Testament

We first witness the Holy Spirit in the New Testament during Jesus' baptism (Matthew 3:16, Mark 1:11, Luke 3:22). John says '*I saw the Spirit descend as a dove from heaven and it remained on him*' (John 1:32).

The disciples were equipped and ready to take on the ministry through the power of the Holy Spirit.

But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you and you shall be my witnesses to Me in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria and to the end of the earth.
(Acts 1:8, NKJV)

In the early church we see many believers being filled with the Holy Spirit proclaiming the word of God with great boldness, speaking in tongues and performing wonderful miracles (Acts 6:6, Acts 4:8, Acts 6:10).

In What Ways Does the Holy Spirit Work?

1. The Holy Spirit Empowers.
 - He gives life to all creatures of the earth (Psalm 104:30) and in regeneration (John 3:6-7).
 - He gives power for service (1 Samuel 16:13, Romans 15:19, 1 Thessalonians 1:5).
 - He gives spiritual gifts (1 Corinthians 12:7-11, Romans 8:26, 1 Corinthians 14:2).
2. The Holy Spirit Purifies (John 16:8-11, Galatians 5:22-23, Romans 8:13, Philippians 1:19).
3. The Holy Spirit Reveals.
 - Gives revelation to prophets and apostles (Numbers 24:2, Ezekiel 11:5, John 16:13, Ephesians 3:5).
 - Reveals evidence of God's presence (Numbers 11:25-26, John 1:32, Acts 2:2-3).
 - He directs us (Romans 8:14, Galatians 5:16-26).
 - He teaches and enlightens (John 14:26, Luke 12:12, Ephesians 1:17-19).
4. The Holy Spirit unifies (Joel 2:28-29, Acts 2:16-18, Acts 2:44-47, Ephesians 4:3, 1 Corinthians 12:21).

God desires to pour His spirit on us. He wants us to be effective Christians, in our church, in our homes, in our workplaces and everywhere on the earth. He wants us to bear fruit, to bear witness to the cross and to fill the earth with His presence. As believers it is important that we depend on the Holy Spirit recognising all work that is done is 'not by might, not by power, but by the Holy Spirit' (Zachariah 4:6).