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# *Introduction*

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Today is an ordinary day. I woke up, brushed my teeth, and washed my face. Then I put a load of laundry in the washer, made a cup of coffee, and read my Bible. Later I responded to emails, sent (what I hope was) an encouraging text, and sat down to write this introduction. Later I will eat lunch, take my torn pants to the tailor, and pick up friends from the airport. I'm hoping pest

control comes before I leave the house. Oh, and I need to vacuum and iron some clothes at some point. I don't expect anything extraordinary to happen in these twenty-four hours (although reading Ezekiel in my quiet time was glorious!).

Look at the list of things I'll do today. In which of these is the Holy Spirit involved? No doubt He's active when I'm reading my Bible and, hopefully, writing, and interacting with friends. Those things have a spiritual component. Doesn't the Spirit empower the spiritual? He stirs our hearts when we read the Bible. He enables ministry. He gives us the ability to encourage others. We hope for the Spirit to be involved in the spiritual things we do. And sometimes we expect Him to do amazing things. We look for Him in signs and wonders. We want Him to give peace in our hearts or give us circumstances that clearly guide us when making decisions. We might want miraculous healing or power displays. Or perhaps we just want Him to give us stirring experiences when we go to church or read a devotional. Yes, we expect much of the Holy Spirit. But in all these things, we expect too little.

The Holy Spirit dwells in the heart of every Christian. This means He's involved in the minutia of our daily lives: brushing teeth, ironing shirts, visits from pest control. He is with us every moment in the ordinary of life—doing countless things to direct our paths, comfort us, and make us more like Christ. Too often we separate the secular and the spiritual, but the Holy Spirit is working in it all.

## SHY YET POWERFUL

The Holy Spirit has been called the “shy” person of the Trinity. We see this in Scripture as He's gradually revealed. We might not immediately recognize who He is on the pages of the Old Testament. It's not until Pentecost that He makes Himself personally and dramatically known. Likewise, He works quietly in our hearts. He uses His Word, His church, and even our

suffering to cause us to rejoice in the goodness of the Father and to make us more like the Son. Often we don't even notice that He's the one doing His sanctifying work. This is because He points us not to Himself but to the Son and, through Jesus, leads us to the Father (John 15:26).

So, why a book on the Holy Spirit? Why should women want to think about His person and His work? It's because we were created to know our triune God. Studying the Third Person of the Trinity drives us deeper into the glories of redemption; fills us with thankfulness for the Scriptures; and opens our eyes to the beauty of the church, the dwelling place of the Holy Spirit. The point of this book is knowing God more deeply. It's communion with Him as we discover more about Him.

The Holy Spirit is mysterious, but when we look closely at the Scriptures we'll see Him all over its pages. He's there from Genesis through Revelation. He'll show up as rivers of living water, power from on High, Spirit of Holiness, Spirit of Christ, the glory of the Lord, Truth, like a dove, tongues of fire, a voice from heaven, Spirit of Prophecy, wind, breath, fountain, and life. In the King James Version, He's called the Holy Ghost.

The Spirit is active—He creates, takes offense, gives, comes upon, clothes, stirs, rushes upon, departs, catches up, carries along, warns, pours out, judges, rests upon, gathers, circumcises, grieves, enters in, transports, speaks, lifts, fills, dwells, cleanses, conceives, baptizes, leads, rejoices, teaches, gives birth, brings to remembrance, bears witness, guides, declares, convicts, helps, descends, comforts, indwells, and forbids. He is received and can be resisted, outraged or quenched. He constrains, loves, enables worship, washes, justifies, sanctifies, unifies, glorifies, guarantees, vindicates, guards, renews, and raises the dead!

Who is this “shy” and yet powerful Person? What does He do? And how does He impact our lives today? This book will examine the answers to these questions. In Part One, we'll consider the

person of the Spirit. Chapter 1 presents the story of the Bible and highlights where the Holy Spirit shows up. Then in chapter 2, we'll confirm that the Spirit is indeed the third person of the triune God.

In Part Two of the book (chapters 3-9) we'll look at the work of the Holy Spirit. We'll see that the Spirit creates and applies redemption; He dwells in His people and authors the Word of God; He cultivates spiritual fruit and gathers and gifts the church.

As you read, you'll notice that the First and Second Persons of the Trinity are not left behind in this study of the Third. My prayer is for you to experience the love of the Father and exult in the work of the Son, as well as delight in the Holy Spirit throughout this book. I hope you'll see the abundant goodness of God as you read—that you will commune with the Lover of your soul and know the one who dwells within you in a more intimate way. So, as you study, pray for the Holy Spirit to illuminate the Scriptures to you, open your eyes to the wonder of His work in and through Christ Jesus, and grow your love for the Father in His glorious plan to save sinners and make them into His people.

## THE EXTRAORDINARY ORDINARY

The Holy Spirit is powerful and He's also personal. Working in our world from creation, He renews hearts and makes believers new creations. Empowering Jesus while He walked the earth, the Holy Spirit still works in His church today to make His followers look like Jesus. He's mysterious like the wind, but He's active in every birth. He gives joy and metes out punishment and glorifies the Father and the Son in everything He does. The Holy Spirit is the person who gives new life, shines His light on the beloved Son, and dwells within the Father's treasured people.

The Holy Spirit is at work. He's not waiting for you to dial 911. He's not patrolling the neighborhood watching for you to

slip up. He doesn't hover over you like a helicopter-mom trying to keep you in line. If you are a believer in the Lord Jesus Christ, the Holy Spirit has made a home for Himself in your soul. God has flooded every mundane and ordinary area of your life with Himself by His Spirit.<sup>1</sup> He dwells in us while we are eating and drinking, working and playing, alone or with others, asleep or awake, throughout every day, in every season. He is always right here in our very souls, enjoying Christ and battling sin. He's constantly at work within us. This is the extraordinary ordinary work of the Holy Spirit we'll explore in the pages of this book.

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1 Marshall Segal, 'Our God-Sized Ordinary,' *Desiring God* (2022).

## PART ONE

### *The Person of the Holy Spirit*

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## Chapter 1

# *The Story of the Holy Spirit*

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The best books end with new beginnings. Take Jane Austen's *Pride and Prejudice*. The famous first line is, "It is a truth universally acknowledged, that a single man in possession of a good fortune, must be in want of a wife." The book comes around, after several failures on the part of our heroine and hero—spoiler alert—to a wedding, the most romantic of new beginnings. *The Lord of*

*the Rings* Trilogy, which was meant to be one book, begins in a humble Hobbit hole where a birthday party is being planned. It takes us to the edge of absolute defeat but ends in triumph with the glorious coronation of the King of Gondor and the sending off of dear friends to the Undying Lands. The Fellowship of the Ring, as well as all Hobbits, Elves, and people/humans are ushered into a new beginning.

The Bible is the greatest story of all new beginnings. It starts with creation and takes us through excruciating failures until the coronation of a new king brings hope. The story ends with the king's wedding celebration in the new heavens and earth. The ultimate new beginning! It's a true story that ends with certain hope!

From beginning to end, the Bible—a magnificent library of different genres and texts—reveals God the Father doing a marvelous work of redeeming His people through His Son, the God-man.<sup>1</sup> God creates, rescues, and fits a people for Himself, not as slaves or chattel but as beloved children, to dwell with Him in loving relationship forevermore. Its overarching story is God making a series of covenants with His people. A covenant isn't just a contract between two parties. Like a marriage, it's deeply relational. And the covenants of the Bible are distinct but linked together. They're all part of one plot line folding into another, leading to the "new covenant" and culminating with God sending His Son to become man. In fulfilling the new covenant, Jesus fulfills all God's promises and, as the God-man, upholds both sides of the agreements between God and humanity.

But how does the Holy Spirit fit into the story? The Spirit is the *executor* and the *revealer*. He carries out God's plan and

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1 Jenny Manley's book *The Good Portion: Christ* (Ross-shire, Scotland: Christian Focus Publications, 2020) beautifully lays out the person and work of Christ.



directs our attention to Jesus, the Spirit-filled one who's the center of it all. In this chapter we'll identify where the Holy Spirit shows up in the covenants that make up the biblical story, tracing together a biblical theology of the Spirit from the first pages of Scripture to the last.

## CREATION COVENANT: MEET THE HOLY SPIRIT

The story starts: "In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth" (Gen.1:1). God is about to detail His work of creating a perfect place for His perfect people to live in perfect relationship with Him. We first meet the Holy Spirit in the very next verse: "The earth was without form and void, and darkness was over the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God was hovering over the face of the waters" (v. 2). The Spirit faces empty matter and darkness.

Only God knows what that was like. But these verses tell us at least three crucial things:

*First, God is the Creator.* No fudging. No flinching. No question. He was already there at the beginning, and He created out of nothing. "In the beginning, God."

*Second, the heavens and the earth were the center of God's creation.* I'm not arguing with Galileo here. The earth is not the center of our solar system. It's not the physical center of the universe. But the earth and the heavens surrounding it—not the sun or another planet—are specifically mentioned here. It's not until the end of the chapter that we read of the pinnacle of God's creation, but we're tipped off to something being special about the earth in the first sentence of the Bible. It's special because it's where God's people would dwell with Him.

*Third, the Spirit was active at creation as the agent of God's Word.* The Spirit hovers poised and ready. Deuteronomy 32:11 uses the same word for "hover" to describe an eagle fluttering over her young. It has the sense of nurturing and cherishing. As the Spirit hovers like a mother eagle, God says, "'Let there be light,' and there was light" (Gen. 1:3). Likewise, the rest of the creation account is a pattern of God speaking and His word making it so. John 1:1-3 parallels Genesis 1, telling us "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things were made through him, and without him was not any thing made that was made." Who was this Word? John 1:14 tells us He is "the only Son." The triune God was working at creation. The Spirit was there working through the Word of the Father.

God is the Creator of all things. He created the Earth for His people through His Word by the power of the Holy Spirit.

### *The Breath of Life*

After God creates the perfect world with all its variety of earth and sky, plants and animals, He proceeds to the pinnacle of His creation: humans. In conversation, God says, "Let *us* make man in *our* image, after *our* likeness" (Gen. 1:26 emphasis mine). The triune God creates humankind not like the animals, but in His image and after His likeness, so they would have hearts, minds, and souls enabling them to be in relationship with Him. "Then the LORD God formed the man of dust from the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and the man became a living creature" (Gen. 2:7). Here again, the Bible emphasizes the Spirit's work of putting God's plan into action. In the Old Testament, the word *ruach* is translated as "Spirit," "breath of