

# THE HOLY SPIRIT & THE CHRISTIAN

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*By the Book™* A Chapter by  
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## Let's Begin

*No truth in the New Testament has been more misused or misunderstood than the teaching concerning the Holy Spirit. Equally, it could be stated that no truth in the New Testament has been more ignored than the teaching about the Holy Spirit. We hope to change that as we move through John 16.*

*In the closing verses of chapter 15 and the opening verses of chapter 16, Jesus bluntly tells the disciples that the world will hate them, persecute them, and even kill them. It happened just as Jesus said and continues to happen today. The world still hates God, hates Jesus Christ, and hates the Gospel.*

*But lest the disciples be discouraged at the prospect of facing a hostile world without Him, Jesus reiterates the promise of the Holy Spirit and tells them of the peculiar ministry the Holy Spirit would have in relation to this age. In relation to Christians, the Holy Spirit is the Comforter; in relation to the world, He is the Convictor. Thus, John's rehearsal of Jesus' teaching on the Holy Spirit is balanced and comprehensive.*

*Let's follow the outline below as we consider the ministry of the Holy Spirit:*

- I. The Holy Spirit Gives His Light to Us (vv. 1-11)**
- II. The Holy Spirit Guides Our Lives for Us (vv. 12-16)**
- III. The Holy Spirit Glorifies the Lord in Us (vv. 17-33)**

## I. The Holy Spirit Gives His Light to Us (vv. 1-11)

As we consider the light the Holy Spirit gives to us, *let's first consider the mission of the Holy Spirit.* Jesus said: "And when he is come, he will reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment" (v. 8). Jesus clearly affirms the mission of God's Spirit. Of major significance, the Holy Spirit is the divinely appointed agent of conviction. Note again, Jesus says the Spirit "will reprove." Another way to put it is the Holy Spirit convicts.

Conviction of sin is the work of the Holy Spirit. No preacher should think he stands in God's pulpit to convict people of their wrongdoings. No teacher should assume it is his job to correct people's hearts. Conviction of sin is the special work of the Holy Spirit and the Holy Spirit alone. He works in the human heart, preparing that heart for salvation.

An important truth must be emphasized here. Before a person will ever be saved, he must be convicted of his sinful heart and deep need. In fact, the basic reason so many aren't saved is that they feel no need in their heart to be saved. They do not see or experience their true condition-to their own peril. This sense of conviction is lacking.

Why is conviction lacking? One reason it's lacking is surely because conviction cannot be conjured up or self-created. Instead, it is a specific work of the Holy Spirit. He alone convicts.

The word "conviction" means "to bring to light" or "to expose." When the Holy Spirit works in a person's life, convicting him of his sin, genuine repentance is a part of the experience. It is not so much that the person is feeling guilt and shame. Instead, it is the person actually experiencing guilt that

### Reflection Connection

*Does conviction of sin mean that I feel guilty over what I do? If so, why? If not, explain.*

### Reflection Connection

*How may guilt be distinguished from guilty feelings? Explain.*



weighs heavily upon the person's heart. Only the Holy Spirit can do this work, for it is spiritual work. Mere logic cannot produce conviction of sin. Were that so, people would not smoke tobacco or drive while drinking. Eloquence cannot produce conviction of sin. A person may be manipulated through enticing words but words alone will not convict him of sin (cp. 1 Corinthians 2:4-5). Nor will organization, salesmanship, mass psychology, or emotionalism produce conviction of sin. No man can convict another man of his need to be saved. The Holy Spirit alone serves as the prosecuting attorney for wayward men.

*Second, let's consider the message of the Holy Spirit (vv. 8-11).* The word "convict" always conveys the idea of cross-examining a man, confronting him, and exposing him with facts until he sees and admits his errors. Here we find three charges the Holy Spirit brings.

He brings the charge that we are *sinners*: "And when he is come, he will reprove the world ... of sin, because they believe not on me" (vv. 8-9; cp. also Romans 3:23; Galatians 3:22). Our generation has very little consciousness of sin. In this day of ethical relativism, many are led to believe morals are just a matter of personal convenience. The Holy Spirit comes to convict of sin.

*If you choose  
Jesus Christ,  
eternal life  
and victory are  
yours.*

Note specifically what Jesus says. He says He will convict "of sin" not "of sins." This is very important. It is true the Spirit of God moves in our hearts and creates guilt for the sins we commit. Nevertheless, the sin of which Jesus speaks here is the most grievous sin of all. It is the sin of not believing in Jesus—"because they believe not on me." It does absolutely no good whatsoever to deal with any number of sins and think that alone squares one's self before a Holy God. The sin of unbelief must be dealt with first.

In addition, the Holy Spirit brings the charge that we need to be right. Christ says, "And when he is come, he will reprove the world ... of righteousness ... of righteousness, because I go to my Father, and ye see me no more" (vv. 8, 10). Unfortunately, the average unbeliever is satisfied with himself. He is good to his family; he loves his work; and, compared to others, he seems to live a decent life. The problem is, our standard is neither ourselves nor the behavior of others. Our standard is Jesus Himself (cp. Luke 23:47). The Holy Spirit makes us righteous, for only God can make us righteous. He has taken your sin and placed it on Christ. The Apostle Paul makes this clear (2 Corinthians 5:17-21).

The third charge against the sinner is that as a sinner, you are headed for *judgment*. Recall once again the words of Jesus: "And when he is come, he will reprove the world ... of judgment ... of judgment, because the prince of this world is judged" (vv. 8, 11). You can follow only one of two masters, the Savior or Satan. If you choose Jesus Christ, eternal life and victory are yours. If you

### Reflection Connection

*Do you ever compare your behavior with the behavior of others? Do you think it is legitimate to do so? Why or why not? What is the standard every Christian should employ? What are some ways to ensure that standard is implemented?*



choose Satan as master, you must understand you have chosen the losing side. Satan has already been judged. It is just a matter of time.

Most people who refuse to follow Jesus Christ do not understand the danger they face. Already they live under condemnation. If you are in this camp, in the not so distant future, you will be condemned. For sure, that is true if you fail to follow Christ. But the Bible says you also are presently condemned: “he that believeth not is condemned already” (3:18). Thus, you are now—this very moment --either a follower of Jesus Christ and are saved and secure in Him or you bow down to Satan and are condemned and forever judged with him.

*God is light,  
in Him is no  
darkness.*

Finally, let's observe *the medium of the Holy Spirit* (vv. 12-14). How does the Holy Spirit convict? According to the Lord, the Holy Spirit convicts men by turning on the light. Until He does, it is like the unbeliever walks in complete darkness, feeling his way around; never knowing for sure where he is going or even what he is actually experiencing. How could he? He is in total darkness!

The Holy Spirit flips on the light switch: “God is light”, John says, and “in Him is no darkness at all” (1 John 1:5). Jesus Christ is the light that lights every man (John 1: 4-7). The light has come into the world, but men loved darkness rather than light (John 3:18-21).

In addition to the Savior being light, the Scriptures are light. The Psalmist wrote, “Thy word is a lamp into my feet and a light unto my path (Psalm 119: 105). Sadly, too few of us ever open the Bible, receiving divine light for daily living from the Word of God. Yet God longs to speak to all of us personally. He has! Anyone who dares to read the Holy Scriptures with an open heart will inevitably hear His voice through the pages of the Bible. In short, the light will be turned on.

## II. The Holy Spirit Guides Our Lives for Us (vv. 12-16)

Not only does the Holy Spirit give us light, He goes further. He guides us in that light. As we consider His guidance, let us focus on three facts Jesus gives us about our Guide, the Holy Spirit.

*First, the title of the Holy Spirit is personal* (14:17, 15:26) The Holy Spirit is the third person in the eternal Godhead, as evidence of what the Bible teaches about the nature of God—the Trinity. Though the term “trinity” is not found in Scripture, the teaching is definitively there.

In addition, while we cannot pretend to fully define God, we dare not refuse to believe what God says about Himself (Matthew 28:19, Revelation 1:4-5). Some who have attacked the doctrine of the Trinity have accused Christians of believing in polytheism (the view that there are multiple Gods). This criticism is false. The Trinity teaches that God is one in being but three in person.



### Reflection Connection

*Do you have difficulties when you think about the Trinity? Speak with your pastor and schedule a time for him to lead a short discussion for your group.*

A simple way to “formulate” that statement is “God is one in A (Being) but God is three in B (Person). Alternatively, another way to state it is in multiplication rather than addition. That is, when we think of the Trinity, we think in terms of “ $1 \times 1 \times 1 = 1$ ” rather than the critics who suggest it’s “ $1 + 1 + 1 = 3$ .” Even so, speaking in terms like those above cannot do justice to our awesome God. He is, in the end, personal, not abstract.

Here, Jesus titles The Holy Spirit as the “Spirit of truth.” God always works through truth. Contrast such a description with the devil, whom the Scripture portrays as ever working through lies. There is “no truth in him” according to Jesus (8:44). He denies God’s truth and distorts man’s understanding of it. He is the master brain-washer (cp. Genesis 3:1-6).

God uses truth to free us from bondage (8:32). Truth works on our minds (17:17), our hearts (14:6) and our wills (1 John 5:6). These three ways always work together and are never in conflict.

The second fact is the teaching of the Holy Spirit is *pleasing*. So many ideas and opinions exist that the Holy Spirit fills a void in the believer’s life. “He will guide” us is the promise. Into what kind of truth will the Spirit guide us? Will it be geological, chemical, biological, philosophical, or religious? While all of these are worthwhile pursuits, the Holy Spirit’s primary mission is

*“The Holy Spirit is the One who makes real in me what Jesus did for me.”*

to lead us into truth that is pleasing to the Father. D.L. Moody perhaps said it best in summarizing just what pleases the Father: “The Holy Spirit is the One who makes real *in me* what Jesus did *for me*.”

With that as a background, note the Spirit will teach us of *past truth*. Recall He guided the Apostles to remember all we needed to know about the Gospel (cp. 14:26). The result is the New Testament we have today. All the historical data about Jesus was given by the Holy Spirit and written by men. That is one reason we may fully depend upon its trustworthiness (cp. 2 Peter 1:21, 2 Timothy 3:16). We might call this *historical truth* since it is the past.

He also teaches us about *present truth* (cp. 1 John 2:20, 27). The truth for our lives, our relationship to God and the world are found in Scripture. This we could call *doctrinal truth*.

Furthermore, the Spirit teaches us *future truth*—about “things to come” (v. 13). The greatest minds among us can only guess what the future may hold. But God knows and He tells us. This may be called *prophetic truth*. We are not told all things that will be. Consequently, every believer must guard himself from needless speculation. Yet, those things He has revealed to us we may fully expect to come to pass.

The third fact is the *testimony* of the Holy Spirit. Jesus said the Spirit shall testify of Him (v. 13). The primary purpose of the Holy Spirit as our guide is to glorify the Lord Jesus. He adorns Him with luster and clothes Him with

### Reflection Connection

*What is the one key that defines whether or not a movement may be attributed to the leadership and work of the Holy Spirit? Explain.*





splendor. The test of any movement that claims to be inspired and driven by the Holy Spirit is simple: *What does that movement make of Jesus?* The test of any person claiming that his life is Spirit anointed, Spirit driven is simple: *What does that person make of Jesus?*

### III. The Holy Spirit Glorifies the Lord in Us (vv. 17-33)

Only a Christian is capable of glorifying the Lord with his or her life. We come now to consider this: *“How is the Lord is most glorified in us?”* Jesus responds to that concern with a four-fold answer.

#### Reflection Connection

*In your view, what does it mean for Christians to be separate from the world? Is Christian separation significant? How?*

*First, God is glorified in salvation.* We all must know the sorrow of sin. Sin results in broken homes, helpless alcoholics, trembling narcotics and a guilt-ridden consciousness. Sin brings us to ponder a guilty past, an uncertain future, and a miserable existence between the two. Society cannot create enough technology to overcome sin; politicians cannot make enough polices to annihilate sin; schools cannot educate people enough to avoid sin. The Holy Spirit glorifies the Lord by bringing salvation to us (cp. Matthew 2:10; Luke 2:10).

In addition, this salvation from the penalty of sin creates a joy that has no peer anywhere else. God is glorified when men are saved and the Holy Spirit brings that salvation to men.

*Second, the Holy Spirit glorifies the Lord through separation.* We are called as believers to place all our allegiance to Jesus Christ. That means attachments to this world should be severed. We live in the world but it is clear we are no longer of the world. Too many Christians attempt to live on both sides. They attempt to serve the world and simultaneously surrender to Jesus. This is impossible, as our Lord said. Jesus must be first. This is Biblical separation.

#### Golden Greek Nugget

Jesus said the Holy Spirit would “convict” the world of sin. The term He used was an old word used in the legal system as well as rhetorical debates which meant “convicting by proof.” In other words, the prosecutor would stand with the evidence at hand, using it against the defendant, seeking to find the accused guilty to the fullest extent of the law. The Holy Spirit serves as prosecutor. His role is to reveal to us our guiltiness as sinners before a Holy God, rendering us without excuse. Then He presses home the glory of the Gospel, offering us a free pardon based upon the merits of Christ.

*Third, the Holy Spirit glorifies the Lord through service.* “Serve the Lord in gladness,” the Bible says. In addition, John says that “His commandments are not grievous” (1 John 5:3). Think about that. How often do we entertain the thought that the Christian life is narrow, restrictive, boring, dissatisfying, and even impossible? Not so! His commandments—that is, living a life pleasing to the Lord—are not grievous. Indeed, they are delightful!

*Finally, the Holy Spirit glorifies the Lord through the Second Coming.* There is a joy expressed at Jesus’ second coming: “I will come again” (cp. 14: 3). All sorrow will be turned to joy when Jesus comes again. The Psalmist captured this when he wrote, “weeping may endure for a night, but joy cometh in the morning” (Psalm 30:5).

#### Wrap Up

The greatest affirmation that we are loved and accepted by our Lord is the coming of the Holy Spirit. His ministry to us in lighting our darkness, leading our lives, and lifting up our Lord cannot be over-estimated. I hope your life is blessed as you allow the blessed Holy Spirit to minister in you.

