

# The Holy Spirit (Ghost)

**For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God.**

Romans 8:14.

The triune God we serve includes the Holy Spirit, sometimes referred to as the Holy Ghost.

The Bible proffers the Holy Spirit as God, and the third person of the Holy Trinity. As part of the Trinity, the Holy Spirit is co-equal and co-eternal with God the Father and God the Son. The Holy Spirit teaches and comforts God's children while on their earthly journey, helping them to understand spiritual aspects of the Word. Many are the functions and offices of this mighty Spirit, some of which we will hope to touch briefly upon today.

**Present at Creation:** We are introduced to this divine character almost immediately in the Bible: **In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth. And the earth was without form, and void; and darkness was upon the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters.** (Genesis 1:1, 2). Poole says of this Spirit: *[T]he Third Person of the glorious Trinity, called the Holy Ghost, to whom the work of creation is attributed. By his spirit he hath garnished the heavens; his hand hath formed the crooked serpent.* (Job 26:13).

Jewish scholars say this was a mighty wind of God. God is said to walk **upon the wings of the wind: who maketh his angels spirits; his ministers a flaming fire: who laid the foundations of the earth, that it should not be removed for ever.** (Psalm 104:3-5).

**Sustainer:** It seems from Scripture that this Holy Spirit is what preserves the human race. **If he set his heart upon man, if he gather unto himself his spirit and his breath; all flesh shall perish together, and man shall turn again unto dust.** (Job 34:14, 15). A similar passage is found at Isaiah 40:6, 7: **The voice said, Cry, and he**

said, what shall I cry? All flesh is grass, and all the goodliness thereof is as the flower of the field: the grass withereth, the flower fadeth: because the spirit of the Lord bloweth upon it: surely the people is grass.

**Aid to Prophets:** Furthermore, the Holy Spirit has a special role in giving strength and insight into God's prophets. **But truly I am full of power by the spirit of the Lord, and of judgment, and of might, to declare unto Jacob his transgression, and to Israel his sin.** (Micah 3:8). A glorious discussion of this attribute of the Holy Ghost is found in Acts Chapter 1, verses 1-9, as follows:

**1 The former treatise have I made, O Theophilus, of all that Jesus began both to do and teach,**

**<sup>2</sup> Until the day in which he was taken up, after that he through the Holy Ghost had given commandments unto the apostles whom he had chosen:**

**<sup>3</sup> To whom also he shewed himself alive after his passion by many infallible proofs, being seen of them forty days, and speaking of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God:**

**<sup>4</sup> And, being assembled together with them, commanded them that they should not depart from Jerusalem, but wait for the promise of the Father, which, saith he, ye have heard of me.**

**<sup>5</sup> For John truly baptized with water; but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost not many days hence.**

**<sup>6</sup> When they therefore were come together, they asked of him, saying, Lord, wilt thou at this time restore again the kingdom to Israel?**

**<sup>7</sup> And he said unto them, It is not for you to know the times or the seasons, which the Father hath put in his own power.**

**<sup>8</sup> But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth.**

**<sup>9</sup> And when he had spoken these things, while they beheld, he was taken up; and a cloud received him out of their sight.**

**Inculcating talents and skills: The Holy Spirit comes upon specific individuals implanting a particular talent or ability. Here are some examples:**

**And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying,**

**<sup>2</sup> See, I have called by name Bezaleel the son of Uri, the son of Hur, of the tribe of Judah:**

**<sup>3</sup> And I have filled him with the spirit of God, in wisdom, and in understanding, and in knowledge, and in all manner of workmanship,**

**<sup>4</sup> To devise cunning works, to work in gold, and in silver, and in brass,**

**<sup>5</sup> And in cutting of stones, to set them, and in carving of timber, to work in all manner of workmanship.**

**<sup>6</sup> And I, behold, I have given with him Aholiab, the son of Ahisamach, of the tribe of Dan: and in the hearts of all that are wise hearted I have put wisdom, that they may make all that I have commanded thee[.] (Exodus 31:1-6).**

And this:

**<sup>7</sup> And the children of Israel did evil in the sight of the LORD, and forgat the LORD their God, and served Baalim and the groves.**

**<sup>8</sup> Therefore the anger of the LORD was hot against Israel, and he sold them into the hand of Chushanrishathaim king of**

**Mesopotamia: and the children of Israel served  
Chushanrishathaim eight years.**

**<sup>9</sup> And when the children of Israel cried unto the LORD,  
the LORD raised up a deliverer to the children of Israel, who  
delivered them, even Othniel the son of Kenaz, Caleb's younger  
brother.**

**<sup>10</sup> And the Spirit of the LORD came upon him, and he judged  
Israel, and went out to war: and the LORD delivered  
Chushanrishathaim king of Mesopotamia into his hand; and his  
hand prevailed against Chushanrishathaim.**

**<sup>11</sup> And the land had rest forty years. And Othniel the son of  
Kenaz died. (Judges 3:7-11).**

**Comforter, Encourager and Provider of Truth:** The Holy Spirit is referred to as “another Comforter” and the “Spirit of truth.” He provides comfort to the Lord’s people (and only them) in just the right way at just the right times. He does so often by leading them to solid truth.

**And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you forever; even the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him: but ye know him; for he dwelleth with you, and shall be in you. (John 14:16, 17). But when the Comforter is come, whom I will send unto you from the Father, even the Spirit of truth, which proceedeth from the Father, he shall testify of me[.] (John 15:26). Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth: and he will show you things to come. (John 16:13). The Spirit is truth. (1 John 5:6).**

*The Spirit of truth - He is thus called here because he would teach them the truth, or would guide them into all truth, he would keep them from all error, and teach them the truth[.] (Barnes). The Holy Spirit teaches us truth, guides us into all truth, confirms and seals truth to the soul and opposes the lying spirit of Satan. **But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall***

**teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you. (John 14:26).**

**Advocate and Paraclete:** Most of what the Bible has to say on this attribute is found in John chapters 13-17, generally known as the Savior's farewell discourse, given just before he was arrested and taken away to be killed. Last words are lasting words. Jesus then and there promises this advocate and paraclete to assure his people they will not be left alone in darkness and confusion. **I will not leave you comfortless,** the Savior promises. (John 14:18).

**Nevertheless I tell you the truth; it is expedient for you that I go away: for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send him unto you. And when he is come, he will reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment[.] (John 16:7, 8).** The Greek word translated "Comforter" is *parakletos* and it translates to terms such as advocate, comforter, helper, intercessor, encourager, lawyer or counselor; someone called to one's side to provide aid.

Please note (as the passage just quoted reveals) the withdrawal of the bodily presence of Christ was essential to this advocate/paraclete arriving on the scene. **(But this spake he of the Spirit, which they that believe on him should receive: for the Holy Ghost was not yet given; because that Jesus was not yet glorified.) (John 7:39).**

**Fruit:** When the Holy Spirit is on the scene, fruit exists. **But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance: against such there is no law.** (Galatians 5:22, 23). This fruit belongs to the Spirit and is produced by the Spirit. They are a natural outflow of the Spirit working in a sheep's life. **I am the vine, ye are the branches: he that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without me ye can do nothing.** (John 15:5).

**Peace/Dove:** The dove is the primary symbol of the Holy Spirit, who descended upon the baptism of Jesus. **And Jesus, when he was baptized, went up straightway out of the water: and, lo, the heavens were opened unto him, and he saw the Spirit of God**

**descending like a dove, and lighting upon him[.]** (Matthew 3:16). This was not a literal bird, but the Holy Spirit manifesting as a dove, signifying peace and purity. Luke's account gives a bit more light on this scene: **And the Holy Ghost descended in a bodily shape like a dove upon him, and a voice came from heaven, which said, Thou art my beloved Son; in thee I am well pleased.** (Luke 3:22).

The Holy Spirit in this bodily form *taught the Baptist, as it teaches us, that the gift of supernatural power and wisdom brought with it also the perfection of the tenderness, the purity, the gentleness of which the dove was the acknowledged symbol.* (Ellicott). Dr. Gill tells us this dove-like entity *was a very fit emblem of the Spirit of God who descended, and the fruits thereof, such as simplicity, meekness, love, &c. and also of the dove-like innocence, humility, and affection of Christ, on whom he lighted[.]*

The appearance of this dove at another critical moment in history taught God's reconciliation and peace with mankind. After the great flood, Noah released a dove, which returned with a freshly plucked leaf, representing the end of the flood, the return of life and God's promise of peace to his children. The story is told in Genesis Chapter 8. Noah's first release of the dove was unsuccessful as the dove found **no rest for the sole of her foot[.]** (Genesis 8:9). After a second release of the dove, the **dove came in to (Noah) in the evening; and, lo, in her mouth was an olive leaf pluckt off: so Noah knew that the waters were abated from off the earth.** (Genesis 8:11).

The great symbolism of this event, with the dove symbolizing the Holy Spirit, is well-described by Dr. Gill this way: *this dove sent out the second time, and returning, may be considered as an emblem of a Gospel minister, comparable to a dove, for the dove like gifts of the Spirit of God, by which he is qualified for his work, and for his simplicity, harmlessness, meekness, and humility; and the olive leaf in its mouth may be an emblem of the Gospel, which is from Christ, the good olive; is the Gospel of peace, which an olive branch is a symbol of, proclaiming and publishing peace and reconciliation by Christ; and as that is ever green, the Gospel always continues, and is the everlasting Gospel, and which was brought, and more fully and clearly dispensed in the evening of the world; and by it, it is known that the waters of divine wrath are assuaged, and the people of God may be assured they will never return to come upon them.* The dove

is frequently referenced in Scripture, for its beauty (Psalm 68:13 – **the wings of a dove covered with silver, and her feathers with yellow gold**), its plaintive tones (Isaiah 38:14 – **I did mourn as a dove**), its power of flight (Psalm 55:6 – **Oh that I had wings like a dove! For then would I fly away, and be at rest**), its gentleness (Matthew 10:16 – **harmless as doves**) and its beautiful eyes (Song of Solomon 1:15 – **behold thou art fair; thou hast doves' eyes**). Indeed, throughout the Song of Solomon, doves are utilized as a term of endearment. (Song of Solomon 5:2, 12; 6:9).

On the heels of Jesus describing in great detail the Holy Spirit that would come upon his departure, he announced: **Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid.** (John 14:27).

**GOAT Teacher:** Now consider this: **But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you.** (John 14:26).

We have all had teachers; some good, some not so much. The teaching process includes the capacity and styles of the learner, as well as the teacher's idiosyncrasies. But the Holy Spirit is the GOAT teacher, acting as God's personal and active presence in this world, and he sets all those nuances and encumbrances aside in getting the job done. And what he teaches the sheep-student is not trivia or meaningless, vain nonsense, but all things that are needed. Nothing is left out. And the black letter law of the subject matter being taught is Jesus Christ, the Divine truth in its fullness, and things to come. So we read that when the Comforter is come, **he shall testify of the Savior.** (John 15:26). And elsewhere we learn the Holy Spirit will **guide you into all truth** and he will show us **things to come.** (John 16:13).

Poole opines the matters taught to us by the Holy Spirit are those things that are necessary for us to know *in order (for our) eternal happiness.* And Dr. Gill adds this: *he shall teach you all things: this is the proper work and business of the Spirit, to teach, interpret, and explain all things which Christ had said to them; to make them more plain and*

*easy to their understandings; to instruct them in all things necessary to salvation, and to be known by them, that they might teach them to others.*

**Capable of Feelings:** The Holy Spirit is subject to feelings of pain and rejection. Get this: The Lord's people **vexed his holy Spirit: therefore he was turned to be their enemy, and he fought against them.** (Isaiah 63:10). That is a bad place to be. So Paul, in his letter to the Ephesians, pleaded with his audience: **And grieve not the holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption.** (Ephesians 4:30). Remember, Paul was writing to **the saints which are at Ephesus, and to the faithful in Christ Jesus[.]** (Ephesians 1:1) So it's possible for the very elect of God to grieve the Holy Spirit, which is to say render the Holy Spirit sorrowful and in heaviness, grief-stricken and in pain. This is done by their **corrupt communication** (Ephesians 4:29), improper behavior such as lying, excessive anger, stealing, and so on (Ephesians 4:25-28), vain thoughts, disregard of the Lord's commandments, and improper carriage one to another, to name a few. We must strive to avoid finding ourselves in that posture.

Closing sentiments (from Jon song): *Blest Spirit of Truth, eternal God, thou meek and lowly Dove; who fills the soul, through Jesus' blood, with faith, and hope and love. Thy sweet communion charms the soul, and gives true peace and joy, which Satan's power cannot control, nor all his wiles destroy. Come from the blissful realms above, our longing breasts inspire, with thy soft flames of heavenly love, and fan the sacred fire. The Father sent the Son to die, the willing Son obeyed; the witness thou, to ratify the purchase Christ has made.*

**Quench not the Spirit.** (1 Thessalonians 5:19).

**And whosoever speaketh a word against the Son of man, it shall be forgiven him: but whosoever speaketh against the Holy Ghost, it shall not be forgiven him, neither in this world, neither in the world to come.** (Matthew 12:32).