

# Holy Spirit

Cedar Springs Baptist Church

## What We Teach

We entirely depend on the Holy Spirit for every good thing. When Jesus ascended to the right hand of the Father, together they sent the Spirit to remain in our world and indwell us who put our faith in Christ (John 15:26). The Spirit sustains the gifts of creation and culture that all people enjoy, and he builds the church of Christ by empowering us to believe and persevere in our faith.

### The Person of the Holy Spirit

**The Holy Spirit is a person.** The Spirit is not an impersonal force or Jesus in spirit form. He is a distinct person of the triune Godhead. The Spirit refers to himself as “I” and “me” (Acts 13:2), is called “he” by Jesus (John 16:8, 13-14), and is distinct from but closely identified with the other divine persons (Matt 3:16-17; 12:28; 28:19; John 14:16; 16:14; 2 Cor 13:14).

The Spirit possesses personal characteristics such as intelligence—he “will teach you all things” (John 14:26; cf. Acts 15:28); will—he gives gifts “to each one, just as he determines” (1 Cor 12:11); and emotions—“do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God” (Eph 4:30). Like other persons, the Spirit ministers (Rom 8:26), convicts (John 16:8) and can be lied to (Acts 5:3-4) and blasphemed (Matt 12:31; Mark 3:29).

**The Holy Spirit is God.** The Spirit is the third person of the Trinity, equal in divine essence and glory to the Father and Son. The Spirit possesses the perfections of God, such as omniscience (1 Cor 2:10-11; John 16:13), omnipotence (Luke 1:35; Rom 15:19), and eternity (Heb 9:14). And he does the works of God, such as inspiring Scripture (2 Tim 3:16; 2 Pet 1:21) and regenerating those who believe in Jesus (John 3:5-8, 16:8-11; Tit 3:5).

Scripture identifies the Holy Spirit as God. Ananias and Sapphira lied against God when they lied against the Spirit (Acts 5:3-4) and we are God’s temple because the Spirit dwells within us (1 Cor 3:16-17). We know the Spirit is God because Jesus commanded us to baptize in the threefold name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, and “as we are baptized, so we believe” (Basil of Caesarea, “Epistle 159.2,” commenting on Matt 28:19; cf. also 2 Cor 13:14; 1 Cor 12:4-6; 1 Pet 1:2).

### The Work of the Holy Spirit

**The Holy Spirit provides the general gifts of creation and culture.** Every act of God comes from the Father, through the Son, and by the Spirit, so the “Spirit of God was hovering

over the waters” to powerfully accomplish the Father’s commands at creation (Gen 1:2; cf. Job 26:13). The Father continues to use the Spirit to sustain his creatures, for “When you send your Spirit, they are created, and you renew the face of the earth” (Ps 104:30; cf. Isa 32:15). The Spirit also empowers people in their cultural tasks. He filled the craftsmen who built the tabernacle (Exod 31:1-6) and the leaders who governed Israel (Judg 6:34; 14:9; 1 Sam 16:13; Ps 51:11). Since “every good and perfect gift” is “from the Father” (Jas 1:17) through the Son, in whom “all things hold together” (Col 1:17), we may assume that such gifts of creation and culture are supplied by the power of the Spirit, who “richly provides us with everything for our enjoyment” (1 Tim 6:17).

The Spirit not only affirms the good that is present, he also “convict(s) the world of guilt in regard to sin and righteousness and judgment” (John 16:8-11). The Spirit opens our eyes so that we understand the gravity of our sin and need for a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ.

**The Holy Spirit directed and empowered Jesus during his earthly ministry.** The risen Christ promised to send the Holy Spirit (John 15:26), yet during his life on earth Jesus willingly submitted to the leadership and authority of the Spirit.

The Spirit conceived the Son in Mary (Matt 1:18; Luke 1:35) and enabled him to grow “in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and men” (Luke 2:52; cf. Isa 11:1-3). The Spirit “descended on him in bodily form like a dove” at his baptism (Luke 3:22) then “sent him out into the desert” to be tempted by Satan (Mark 1:12).

Jesus taught and performed miracles in the power of the Spirit (Luke 4:14-21; Matt 12:25-32), offered himself as a sacrifice to God through the “eternal Spirit” (Heb 9:14), and was raised from the dead by the Holy Spirit (Rom 1:4; 1 Tim 3:16; 1 Pet 3:18).

**The Holy Spirit saves and gifts us for service to the church.** Jesus baptizes us with the Spirit (1 Cor 12:12-13; Matt 3:11; Mark 1:8; Luke 3:16; John 1:33; Acts 1:5; 11:16), who unites us with Christ so that we receive the many benefits of salvation (Rom 5:12-21; 6:3-11; 1 Cor 15:22; 2 Cor 5:17-19; Gal 3:26-28; Eph 1:3-4; Col 2:12). Paul explains that “we were all baptized by one Spirit into one body—whether Jews or Greeks, slave or free—and we were all given the one Spirit to drink” (1 Cor 12:12-13).

The Spirit regenerates us, for we are saved “through the washing of rebirth and renewal by the Holy Spirit” (Tit 3:5). He makes us spiritually alive so that we are able to obey and please God (Eph 2:1-10; 2 Cor 5:17). The Spirit then indwells us, making our bodies “a temple of the Holy Spirit” (1 Cor 6:19). Since God is one, we who have the Spirit are also said to have Jesus living within us. Paul identifies the Son with the Spirit, explaining that “if the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead is living in you,” then “Christ is in you,” and “he who raised Christ from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through his Spirit, who lives in you” (Rom 8:9-11; cf. 2 Cor 13:5; Gal 2:20; Eph 3:17; John 14:20, 23; 17:21, 26; Rev 3:20).

The Spirit sanctifies us, enabling us to produce the fruit of the Spirit rather than “gratify the desires of the sinful nature” (Gal 5:16-26). The Spirit seals our faith so that we stay true to God, for “it is God who makes both us and you stand firm in Christ. He anointed us, set his seal

of ownership on us, and put his Spirit in our hearts as a deposit, guaranteeing what is to come” (2 Cor 1:21-22; cf. 5:5). “Having believed, you were marked in him with a seal, the promised Holy Spirit, who is a deposit guaranteeing our inheritance” (Eph 1:13-14; cf. 4:30).

The Spirit intercedes for us as he “helps us in our weakness. We do not know what to pray for, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us with groans that words cannot express” (Rom 8:26; cf. Eph 6:18). The Spirit illumines Scripture so that “we may understand what God has freely given us” (1 Cor 2:12) and “see the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ” (2 Cor 4:4). Anyone can grasp the meaning of the gospel, but we need the Spirit to appreciate its beauty and be changed by it, for “the man without the Spirit does not accept the things that come from the Spirit of God” (1 Cor 2:14).

The Spirit empowers us by endowing us with spiritual gifts (Rom 12:6-8; 1 Cor 12:4-11, 28; Eph 4:11; 1 Pet 4:10-11) and then filling us so that we joyfully use our talents to serve others. Paul commands us to “be filled with the Spirit” so that we “speak to one another with psalms, hymns and spiritual songs” and “submit to one another out of reverence for Christ” (Eph 6:18-21). We eagerly perform our “works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ” (Eph 4:12-13).

Regarding the more spectacular gifts of the Spirit, we believe that the sign gifts, in particular the gift of tongues and prophecy, have ceased as a general practice where the Scriptures are accessible and the church is established. This is not to say that God could not and does not use them in unusual circumstances. And since miracles in Scripture are clustered around redemptive events, we may see an increase in sign gifts as Jesus’ return draws near. However, we believe their use is not normative at this time (Acts 2:16-21; 1 Cor 12:27-31; 13:8-13; 14:1-39).