

Foundation Study 4: The Holy Spirit

What do the following verses say about the Holy Spirit?

1. Acts 5:3,4

The Holy Spirit is God. He is called the Holy Spirit in verse 3 and God in verse 4. By deduction, the Holy Spirit is God. He is a person, not a force or influence. He possesses the attributes of God: Omnipotence (Job 33:4), Omniscience (1 Corinthians 2:10–11), and Omnipresence (Psalm 139:7).

2. 2 Thessalonians 2:13

The Holy Spirit saves us and makes us holy. The Holy Spirit performs two important functions. First, He saves us. He brings about our salvation. This is His work alone. Our only part is belief. Second, He sanctifies us (1 Peter 1:2). He makes us holy. He spiritually matures us. This is His work in partnership with the behavior of the believer. It is accomplished through obedience to the empowering presence of the Holy Spirit (Galatians 5:16). How mature we become is up to us. As Rick Warren says, “We are as spiritually mature as we choose to be.”

The Holy Spirit saves us by doing the following:

Convicting us (John 16:7–11). He convicts people of the sin of unbelief; that only Christ puts us in a right relationship with God, and that eternal punishment awaits those who refuse to believe these things.

Converting us (Titus 3:5). The Holy Spirit washes us by cleansing us from our guilt and wrongdoing. He regenerates us by giving us new life. He renews us by giving us a new nature; making us new people. He refreshes by giving us the desire to live for the glory of God.

Baptizing us (1 Corinthians 12:13). The Holy Spirit places us in the body of Christ. He unites us with Christ. The (aorist) tense of the term *baptize* indicates that this is a

onetime event with lasting results. It occurs at the moment of salvation. It is not a secondary after salvation or a repeated event.

Indwelling us (1 Corinthians 6:19). Upon salvation, the Holy Spirit takes up permanent (John 14:16) residence in our bodies (Romans 8:11). He does not need to be invited into our lives. He is present at the point of salvation. He lives in us.

Securing us (2 Corinthians 1:22; Ephesians 1:13–14, 4:30). The Holy Spirit is God's promise that He will complete His redemptive work in our lives upon glorification. The Spirit of God is His guarantee that we will inherit eternal life. This is also called the "sealing" of the Holy Spirit. The sealing of the Spirit communicates the ideas of ownership, authority, and security: Enns states; "Branding cattle would be a parallel; the rancher puts his brand on the steer as a sign that the steer belongs to him. God has put His seal, the Holy Spirit, in the believer to verify that the believer belongs to Him."¹ The indwelling presence of the Holy Spirit is God's pledge that He will complete the work of salvation in a person's life. "The word 'pledge' (1 Corinthians 1:22) means a first installment, deposit, down payment...the Holy Spirit as a pledge is a reminder of the believer's security in Christ."²

The Holy Spirit makes us holy (matures us) by doing the following:

Gifting us (1 Corinthians 12:7). The Holy Spirit gives each believer a special ability to help build up the church. The Holy Spirit's role is to give each believer this talent. The believer's role is to discover and develop this talent (2 Timothy 1:6). Sometimes, it's related to vocational abilities or talents before belief. Often, it has nothing to do with either, but is a new desire and ability that emerges after salvation. The description of the gifts is found at Ephesians 4; I Peter 4, Romans 12 and 1 Corinthians 12.

¹ Enns, *Moody Handbook*, 269.

² Enns, *Moody Handbook*, 254.

Some of the gifts were temporary in nature; others are permanent. Those that were temporary were to help start the church. Those that are permanent are to sustain the church. The temporary gifts became unnecessary with the canonization of the New Testament around the 4th century. The sign gifts (tongues, healing, and prophecy) are not normative for the church in America today.

Filling us (Ephesians 5:18). The Holy Spirit desires to influence the way believers think and behave. He accomplishes this as we allow Him to fill our minds with the truths of Scripture, which in turn shape our actions (Romans 8:5–6). The outworking of the filling of the Holy Spirit is the fruit of the Spirit (Read Galatians 5:19–23).

Guiding us (Romans 8:14). The Holy Spirit leads us to accomplish the will of God. He directs believers through relationships, circumstances (Acts 16:6), counsel (Acts 15:28) and the Scriptures (John 16:13).

Assuring us (Romans 8:15–17). The Holy Spirit uses the Scriptures to remind us of our identity, security, and destiny as children of God.

Comforting us (Romans 8:26). He helps us when we need it most, when we feel overwhelmed and are spiritually weak.

Illuminating Scripture and teaching us (1 Corinthians 2:10–13; John 14:26; 1 John 2:27). The Holy Spirit enables us to believe that the words of Scripture are divinely authored. As He illuminates the Scriptures, the Holy Spirit also teaches us the meaning of God's word. He causes us to understand the Bible.

Praying for us (Romans 8:26–27). The Holy Spirit intercedes for us in harmony with God's will. This is especially true when we need it most (verse 26a).

Which verse was the most important one for you?