

The Person and Work of the Holy Spirit

1: The Big Picture

When we pray the Lord's Prayer (Matt 6:9-13) what are we praying for in v9-10? Where will the Kingdom of God be established? What will that mean?

This is THE great work of God in the Bible – the question is – what is the Holy Spirit's role in this?

Who is the first 'person' of the Trinity that we encounter in the Bible? _____

Genesis 1 is foundational for helping us to understand the ministry of the Holy Spirit.

In Genesis 1:1-2 God has created the heavens and the earth (ie the universe) but – the earth is 'formless' and 'empty', 'darkness' is over the 'surface of the deep'. The Spirit of God is over 'the waters'.

- There is a significant and important difference between 1:1 and 1:2

In Genesis 1:2 – we find chaos, darkness, emptiness and sea/waters– note the first 'God saw that 'X' was good' does not begin until v4 – not at v1 or 2

Revelation 21-22 “**Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth**” (see Isaiah 65:17)

- No longer any sea (refers to the source of earthly rebellion, chaos and danger – the beast emerged from the sea – see chapter 22 'river of life')
- Now God's dwelling is with men
- No more death, mourning, crying or pain
- No Temple (22:22) God – is the Temple
- No darkness (no sun) – God is its light
- V27 nothing impure ever enter

Picture of New Universe that is Perfect.

In Genesis 1:2 we find the Holy Spirit present and about to begin his work-'**hovering**' – in Revelation 21-22 we see his work fully accomplished – the Kingdom of God has come to earth, the will of God is now done on earth as it is in heaven.

The Big Picture of the work of the Holy Spirit is that of bringing God's creation to perfection, from Genesis 1:2 to Revelation 21-22

The place to start is not 'what is the Holy Spirit doing in me?' but rather what is He doing in the great plan and purpose of God and how does He call me to be a part of that?

Word translated 'Spirit' = Hebrew 'ruach' = Wind.

"Dominant idea is that of power or overwhelming energy.... God's 'ruach' is the blast of God's irresistible power that accomplishes his purposes" S Ferguson

"the activity of the divine ruach is precisely that of **extending God's presence into creation in such a way as to order and complete what has been planned in the mind of God**" S Ferguson

Throughout the rest of Genesis 1 – we see God bringing order out of the chaos, bringing perfection, bringing creation into the shape and form God intended it to be.

God does this by speaking/breathing out his Word. There is an inseparable connection between Word and Spirit, - the greek word for Spirit is 'pneuma'= breath. As God speaks he 'breathes' out his Spirit.

(See 2 Timothy 3:16 'All Scripture is God-breathed...')

"By the word of the Lord were the heavens made, their starry host by the breath of his mouth Psalm 33:6

The work of the Holy Spirit is to bring God's desired order into the world – bringing his Kingdom.

However, the way God chose to do this – was in and through human beings.

Compare 1:22 with 1:28.

What is unique about human beings –v26?

Genesis 1:28 has been called the 'cultural mandate' – note the original design and intention of God was that man would spread out from the Garden of Eden to fill the whole earth – that the 'Kingdom of God would come upon the earth'. Man is the divine 'image-bearer' – his agent for establishing his kingdom, establishing his rule.

THE FALL – THE FLOOD Genesis 3-9

After the Flood – there is a new start and so we find in Genesis 9:1-3,7 – the repeat of the command of Genesis 1, God now begins again the work of establishing his Kingdom.

THE CALL OF ABRAHAM Genesis 12

Includes the promise of the 'land' -12:1 and also the promise through Abraham to bring blessing to all peoples on earth – 12:3 ie – the Kingdom of God established upon the whole earth.

God chooses to establish his kingdom through one particular people but the intention is that that chosen nation will be the means of blessing for the whole world.

Richard Pratt argues that the Promised Land (land of Canaan) is the Garden of Eden.

- Location of Eden: Genesis 2:10 - river from the garden fed 4 rivers including the Tigris and the Euphrates and also the Pishon in Havilah and Gihon in Cush, - elsewhere Cush and Havilah are in the region of Egypt (Genesis 25:18)– within this region was the Garden of Eden
- Genesis 15:17-21 the land promised to Abraham and his descendants is the land between the river of Egypt and the Euphrates

So - we see God beginning again to build his Kingdom starting each time from Eden spreading out to the whole earth.

But what of the Holy Spirit's role in that?

“the activity of the divine ruach/Spirit is precisely that of extending God's presence into creation in such a way as to order and complete what has been planned in the mind of God” – therefore we would expect to find the Holy Spirit specifically involved in the fulfilling of God's plans and purposes.

THE EXODUS AND ENTERING THE LAND

We know that God led his people out of slavery through the wilderness for 40 years and then into the land He had promised. (note Genesis 3:24 Adam and Eve driven out of the east side of the garden – Israel enters into the Promised land from the East)

READ Isaiah 63:7-14:

Who was it that led Israel out of Egypt, through the wilderness and into the Promised Land?

V11 -14 – this was all the Holy Spirit's work.

Deuteronomy 32:10-14 describes the work of God in choosing the nation of Israel and bringing them up out of Egypt to the land He had promised them – but the words used are of great significance. “Barren and howling waste”(v10) – word translated by ‘waste’ is Hebrew word ‘**tohu**’

The only other use by Moses of this word is Genesis 1:2 – “the earth was ‘**formless**’ (tohu) and empty” – connecting Deuteronomy 32 with Genesis 1 – but the connection is made even stronger by the use of the word ‘**hover**’ in v11 – God ‘hovers’ over his people as he finds them in a formless and empty wilderness and then leads them out into a land of plenty.

The Hebrew word ‘**rahap**’ = **hover** is the same as in Genesis 1 to describe the activity of the Holy Spirit as he ‘hovers’ over the waters about to begin the work of bringing order and beauty to the formless, barren creation.

Moses deliberately parallels the work of the Holy Spirit ‘hovering’ over the people of God about to begin his work of redemption with that of the work of the Holy Spirit in Genesis 1

GOD'S PRESENCE AMONG HIS PEOPLE = TABERNACLE/TEMPLE

God is 'omnipresent' but yet also true that the Bible speaks of his 'special presence' – of God being present in a special way with an intensity of holiness/glory.

“have them make a sanctuary for me and **I will dwell among them**” Exodus 25:8 (the tabernacle)

“The curtain will separate the Holy Place from the Most Holy Place (Ex 26:33)...Aaron must wear it (the robe) when he ministers. The sound of the bells will be heard when he enters the Holy Place before the Lord and when he comes out, **so that he will not die**” (Ex 28:35)

God is omnipresent but within the 'Holy of Holies' he is present in a special way such that we would die if we came into his presence.

(note also the ark of the covenant within the Tabernacle has over it two cherubim and Ex 26:31 cherubim worked into the curtain – see Genesis 3:24)

Careful reflection on these things tells us – the 'special presence of the Lord' is both glorious and terrifying/problematic – for sinful people.

The Tabernacle went with them through the wilderness and in the Land eventually the Temple was built, replacing the Tabernacle.

The same point remained – **God is present everywhere, but especially located at the temple within the Holy of Holies – here God 'dwelt' with his people:**

“Have them make a sanctuary for me and **I will dwell among them**” Exodus 25:8

The question of how can a Holy God dwell with his people is an important theme through the whole Bible and of special significance in thinking about the person and work of the Holy Spirit.

READ Psalm 42& 43 – where is the writer? (v6) Where does he long to be and why?

The omnipresent God especially locates His presence in a dramatic, intensive, powerful way within the Tabernacle/Temple.

As the Temple is built in Jerusalem, this also gives Jerusalem great importance and significance

EXILE FROM THE LAND

Isaiah 63:10

What was the consequence of 'grieving' the Holy Spirit? (see Genesis 6:6, Ephesians 4:30 & Acts 5:3-4, 9)

Ezekiel 10 – the 'Glory' departs from the Temple (v19 – from the East gate)

But Ezekiel also has a vision of the future – when the glory will return – Ezekiel 43:1-5

But how will the return from Exile be effected – must not underestimate how traumatic/death-like the Exile was:

Ezekiel 37 – A vision of dead bones = Israel

How can Israel be restored, revived, renewed?

“Come from the 4 winds O breath and breathe into these slain, that they may live....I will put my Spirit in you and you will live, and I will settle you in your own land” Ezek 37:9,14

Isaiah introduces us to the Servant of the Lord ‘of the increase of his government there will be no end. He will reign on David’s throne and over his kingdom, establishing and upholding it with justice and righteousness from that time on and for ever” 9:6-7

But what characterises this Servant is:

“Here is my servant whom I uphold, my chosen one in whom I delight; I will put my Spirit on him and he will bring justice to the nations....” 42:1

“The Spirit of the Sovereign Lord is on me because the Lord has anointed me to preach good news to the poor...freedom for captives....proclaim the year of the Lord’s favour” 61:1

The ‘Spirit-filled’ Servant of the Lord will usher in/establish the Kingdom which will fill the earth and endure forever.

So the New Testament begins:

The Glory Returns

“In the beginning was the Word and the Word was with God and the Word was God....the Word became flesh and made his dwelling (tabernacle) among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the One and Only who came from the Father full of grace and truth” John 1

Here comes **THE Spirit-filled Man....**

- The Holy Spirit hovers over creation to bring order, beauty and perfection, beginning in Eden and spreading out to fill the earth
- The Holy Spirit hovers over the people of God – taking them from the wilderness into Eden/Promised Land to bring blessing to the whole earth.
- The Holy Spirit comes to rest on the Servant of the Lord and leads him from the wilderness to begin his ministry beginning in Eden/Promised Land
- Acts 1 Jesus appears to disciples for 40 days teaching them about ‘the Kingdom of God’ and promising the Holy Spirit who will empower them to be witnesses in Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria and to the ends of the earth.
- Revelation – John’s vision of the future completion of God’s plans and purposes “The kingdom of the world has become the kingdom of our Lord and of his Christ and he will reign for ever and ever” Rev 11:15 (see Rev 21-22)

The work of the Holy Spirit is to bring God’s desired order into the world – bringing his Kingdom.