

The Holy Spirit in the Gospel of John

by Arno Clemens Gaebelein

Arno Clemens Gaebelein preaches about the progressive revelation of the Holy Spirit in the Gospel of John, emphasizing how Jesus revealed the truth of His identity as the Son of God and the role of the Holy Spirit in the believer's life. The Gospel of John serves as a bridge from Judaism to Christianity, unveiling the teachings of Jesus regarding eternal life and the work of the Holy Spirit. Through various passages, the importance of the new birth by the Spirit, the indwelling of the Spirit, and the Spirit's role in worship, teaching, and guiding believers is highlighted, culminating in the promise of the Holy Spirit as the Comforter and the Spirit of Truth.

Description

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Transcript

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Role of the Holy Spirit in Teaching and Remembrance" - "The Holy Spirit's Assurance to Believers" - heading: "V" points: - "The Convicting Work of the Holy Spirit (John 16:7-14)" - "Demonstration of Sin, Righteousness, and Judgment" - "Guidance into All Truth" - heading: "VI" points: - "The Holy Spirit's Role After the Resurrection (John 20:22)" - "Symbolism of Breathing on the Disciples" - "Authority of the Church and the Holy Spirit" faq: - q: "What is the significance of the Holy Spirit in the Gospel of John?" a: "The Holy Spirit is central to understanding the new birth, eternal life, and the believer's relationship with God, as emphasized throughout the Gospel." - q: "How does John's teaching on the Holy Spirit differ from the Synoptic Gospels?" a: "John provides a more comprehensive revelation of the Holy Spirit's role, focusing on His indwelling presence and transformative power in believers." - q: "What does 'living water' symbolize in John's Gospel?" a: "Living water symbolizes the Holy Spirit, representing the eternal life and spiritual sustenance that He provides to believers." - q: "What does the term 'Comforter' mean in relation to the Holy Spirit?" a: "The term 'Comforter' refers to the Holy Spirit as the Paraclete, who stands alongside believers to guide, teach, and support them." - q: "How does the Holy Spirit convict the world according to John 16?" a: "The Holy Spirit convicts the world by demonstrating the reality of sin, righteousness, and the coming judgment through His presence and testimony." quotes: - "Except a man be born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God." - "God is a Spirit and they that worship Him must worship Him in Spirit and in truth." - "The Spirit that quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing." applicationPoints: - "Embrace the Holy Spirit's role in your life as a source of guidance and strength." - "Cultivate a deeper understanding of worshiping God in Spirit and truth." - "Recognize the transformative power of the Holy Spirit in your journey of faith." keywords: - "Holy Spirit" - "Gospel of John" - "new birth" - "living water" - "Comforter" - "indwelling Spirit" - "eternal life" - "worship in Spirit" ---

WE have seen that the Holy Spirit is comparatively little mentioned in the Synoptics. Besides the promise made by John the Baptist, there is but one other promise by our Lord that His Father would give the Spirit to them that ask Him.

It is different in the fourth Gospel, the Gospel of John. In this Gospel is revealed the truth that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God and that believing we have life through His name (20:31). John bears witness to the full glory of the Lord Jesus and makes known the teaching He gave concerning the Holy Spirit and His work in and for the believer. The Holy Spirit held back from the pens of the Synoptics all these teachings which the Lord gave concerning eternal life and the work of His Spirit, as well as the more definite promises of the Spirit as the Paraclete, because it was outside of the scope and purpose of the first three Gospels. We may well call the Gospel of John, written several decades after the Synoptics, the bridge which leads from Judaism into Christianity. The Gospel of John is the portal through which we enter into the highest revelation as to redemption and the Holy Spirit's part. This highest revelation is found in the Pauline epistles.

We have already mentioned in connection with the testimony of John the Baptist, John 1:32 and 33, also 3:34, so that we do not need to quote these verses again.

John 3:5

Chapter 3:5 is the first passage in which our Lord speaks of the Spirit in this Gospel. "Jesus answered, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God." Our Lord had told Nicodemus the absolute necessity of the new birth in order to see the kingdom of God and when Nicodemus expressed a desire to know how a man can be born a second time, the Lord answered him in the above words. The new birth is brought about by "water and the Spirit."

Ritualists claim that the water is baptism. Others claim that the right kind of water baptism is necessary to salvation. The water our Lord mentions in connection with the Spirit is not baptism at all. Water is the symbolical figure of the Word of God. Ephesians 5:26 employs the same figure. Then I Peter 1:23 and James 1:18 show that it is the Word of God out of which we receive our new birth. In the Word the Holy Spirit is active. Faith cometh by hearing and hearing by the Word of God. When man hears the Word of God, the Holy Spirit in the Word and through the Word, acts upon the dead condition of the human soul, and when the Word is believed the Holy Spirit imparts to the believing sinner the new nature and he receives eternal life.

John 3:6

In the next verse John 3:6 the Lord tells Nicodemus that "that which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit." By the natural generation man has a nature which is flesh, the sin nature. It never can be anything else. In the new birth the believer receives the divine nature; he is born of God and he possesses a Spirit-nature, which enables him to be in the presence of God and also to live and walk in the Spirit. Then again in Verse 8 He mentions the Spirit. "The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth, so is every one that is born of the Spirit." This means the mysterious action of the Holy Spirit.

John 4

In John 4 in speaking to the Samaritan woman the Lord gives also teaching about the Spirit, though He does not mention Him by name. He said to her "Whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into ever- lasting life." The fountain of water in the believer is the indwelling Spirit. In chapter 7:37-39 our Lord speaks again of living water and there we learn that He spake under this term of the Holy Spirit whom they that believe on Him should receive.

John 4:23-24

John 4:23-24. These words addressed to the Samaritan woman, tell us of the new worship which would come with the gift of the Holy Spirit. "God is a Spirit and they that worship Him must worship Him in Spirit and in truth." Such worshippers the Father seeketh. Only true believers can be such worshippers for it needs the Holy Spirit (Phil. 3:3).

John 6:63

John 6:63. "It is the Spirit that quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing. The words that I speak unto you, they are Spirit, and they are life." After feeding the multitudes miraculously He spoke of Himself as the living bread come down from heaven. He taught again concerning eternal life and how it is obtained. "I am the living bread which came down from heaven; if any man eat of this bread, he shall live forever; and the bread that I will give is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world." Eating of Him means to believe on Him and become identified with Him. Those who hear His words and believe on Him are quickened by the Spirit. The word "quicken" means imparting life, so that our Lord teaches once more what He said to Nicodemus, that the work of the Spirit is to impart spiritual life in the new birth. And the words He speaks are Spirit and are life. The Spirit and Life is in them.

John 7: 37-39

John 7: 37-39. "In the last day, that great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried, saying, If any man thirst, let Him come to Me and drink. He that believeth on Me, as the Scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water. (But this He spake of the Spirit, which they that believe on Him should receive, for the Holy Spirit was not yet given, because that Jesus was not yet glorified."

These words of promise were spoken by Him during the feast of tabernacles. Daily there was drawn from the pool of Siloam water and then poured out. On the last day this ceremony was omitted. It had a symbolical meaning. They commemorated the fact that the Lord had supplied the water during the wilderness journey. On the eighth day no water was poured out, for that day stands in type for the day when they entered the land and drank of the springs there. These waters are typical of the living water promised to His people Israel (see Zech. 14:8; Isa. 12; Ezek. 47, etc.). It was on that last day, typical of Israel's promised blessing, that He spoke these words. The nation had rejected Him and the promised national blessings could not come then. Instead He offers individual blessing to him who comes by faith. To such He gives the living water, which in return shall flow forth from the believer's heart, as streams of living water. He spoke of the Spirit which they should receive who believe on Him. Here we read that all these promises of the gift of the Spirit are dependent on His glorification, following His sacrificial death. We discover that His teaching concerning the Spirit is progressive. In the third chapter He speaks of the Spirit communicating eternal life in the new birth; He is the life-giving Spirit. In the fourth chapter He teacheth under the well of living water springing up into eternal life the indwelling Spirit. In the seventh chapter He reveals Him as the outflowing Spirit, flowing forth to others.

John 14:16-18

John 14:16-18. "And I will pray the Father, and He shall give you another comforter, that He may abide with you for ever; 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. I will not leave you orphans; I will come to you."

All believers know that the blessed chapters in this Gospel in which our Lord has His own disciples with Him to give to them His last words of instruction and promise, ending with His great prayer (13-17), are not found in the Synoptics.

He was about to leave His disciples, who were gathered about Him, except Judas, who had gone out into the night to betray the Lord. He assured His perplexed disciples that He would not leave them comfortless. It means literally, "I will not leave you orphans." So He promised them another comforter. The word comforter is in the original "Paraclete," which means one who stands alongside to help and to defend. The same word appears in I John 2:2, where it is translated with "advocate." "If any man sin we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous." The other Paraclete, or advocate, is the Holy Spirit. During the absence of the Lord Jesus Christ He is to take His place alongside of His believing people. The passage before us reveals some important facts: (1) The other comforter, the Holy Spirit, is the gift of the Father through the Son, for our Lord says, "I will pray the Father and He shall give you another comforter." This is a new revelation for we do not find anywhere in the Old Testament such a promise. (2) The Holy Spirit, the Paraclete is to abide with God's children for ever. This also is new. In the Old Testament the Spirit of God was with those who believed in the coming of the Messiah, who trusted the Lord. But He was not known as the abiding Spirit. There was no assurance given that He would remain. That is why David prayed in his penitential psalm, "Take not Thy Holy Spirit from me"(Psa.51:11). No believer in the New Testament needs to pray this prayer. (3) He is the Spirit of Truth, because He is the author of the Word of

God which is Truth, and He brings Christ, the Truth, to the hearts of God's people. (4) The disciples knew Him already, for the Lord said, "He dwelleth with you." They were believers on Him the Son of God (except Judas) and therefore were born again, clean every whit as the Lord had told them. Because they had accepted Christ the Holy Spirit was with them, in the same sense as He was with all Old Testament believers. (5) The Lord gives a promise which was to be fulfilled in the future "and shall be in you." When the Lord spoke this to the eleven men the Holy Spirit as the indweller, who makes the believer's heart a temple, had not yet been given. He came to dwell in them and to fill them on the day of Pentecost.

"But the comforter, the Holy Spirit, 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." The Spirit of Truth is to teach the believer just as Christ taught His disciples, and the words which Christ taught and the disciples did not understand, He would bring to their remembrance all He had said to them. A number of times the Lord told them that they should know the meaning of His words afterwards, that is, when the Spirit had come. See John 2:22 and 12:16, in both passages we read of the fulfillment of this promise. The Holy Spirit then supplies the spiritual needs.

John 15:26

John 15:26. "But when the Comforter is come, whom I will send unto you from the Father, the Spirit of Truth, who proceedeth from the Father, He shall testify of Me." It is the same we have pointed out before. As the Spirit of Truth He testifies of Him who is the Truth.

John 16:7-14

John 16:7-14. What the effect of the presence of the Holy Spirit means in the world is now taught by our Lord. These words are generally misunderstood. The common interpretation is that the Holy Spirit convinces people that they are lost sinners, that they need righteousness and also convinces them of a coming judgment. Conviction of sin is certainly the work of the Holy Spirit, who also quickens those who believe, but this is not the teaching of the passage before us in this paragraph. Much depends on the right rendering of the word "reprove." It has not the meaning of an inward conviction, but rather means a conviction by demonstration. It means conviction by an unanswerable argument. The Holy Spirit on earth is the convicting demonstration of the world's sin, in having cast Him out, rejecting the Lord of Glory, and having not believed on Him. The world therefore is under condemnation and the Holy Spirit in His presence on earth bears witness to it. Then the presence of the Holy Spirit is the convicting demonstration of righteousness, because He has gone to the Father. The Son of God who lived the life of perfect righteousness on earth, who pleased God always, was condemned by the world as an unrighteous man. They cast Him out and all was done in the name of God. Perhaps some of them stood before the Cross when that dread darkness enshrouded the Lamb of God and heard the cry "My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?" and they may have imagined a vindication of their awful deed. But God in His righteousness acted in His behalf. He raised Him from the dead and gave Him glory. He rewarded Him who had been obedient to Him in His holy life, obedient unto death, the death of the cross. The world sees Him no more but the presence of the Holy Spirit demonstrates His righteousness and is the convicting argument that He is at the right hand of God. And therefore but one thing remains for the unbelieving world with its guilt, and that is judgment. Already the prince of this world is judged, though the full sentence of judgment in the all-wise purpose of God is not yet executed. The Spirit on earth therefore is the convicting evidence of that coming judgment.

The many things which were on His loving heart they could not understand in their present condition. The coming of the Spirit would bring to them the revelation of these things. He is the Spirit of truth and therefore lie will lead into all truth. The word truth, means both the written Word and the living Word. Of the written revelation of God our Lord bears witness in the next chapter, when He says "Thy Word is Truth." Of Himself He witnessed, "I am the Truth." The Spirit has come to guide us into all truth, the truth as it is revealed in the Bible. Believers, many of whom are found in certain Pentecostal sects, who believe and teach that there is a Spirit-guidance independent of the Bible, by inward impressions, by dreams and visions, are deluded. Some have gone so far as to declare that their inward experiences are sufficient and that they have no more need to study the Word of God. And the Word of God, which is truth, witnesses of Him Who is the Truth. It is noteworthy that in the Greek the word truth in the above passage has the definite article shall guide you into all the truth. Through the written Word He guides to Him Who is the Truth, our Lord.

He does not speak from Himself, that is in independence of the Father and the Son. His testimony is the testimony of the Father and the Son, as the Son on earth heard the Father's voice and spoke of that which He heard from the Father. Furthermore, He will show things to come. He has done so through the testimony of the apostles. The Word of God is now complete and He does no longer reveal the future through individuals. His great work is to glorify Christ, to take of the things of Christ and to show them unto those who belong to Christ and in whom He dwells.

John 20:22

John 20:22. "And when He had said this, He breathed on them, and saith unto them, receive ye the Holy Spirit." This passage contains the first mention of the Holy Spirit after His resurrection. He breathed on them, which was a symbolical action. Never before had He done this, nor is the Greek expression used elsewhere in the New Testament. It is also significant that the definite article before Holy Spirit is not in the original text. In Gen. 2:7 we read, "The Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and man became a living soul." It was the same Lord who did that in the hour of creation, who now breathed on His disciples, the breath of a better life, that, His own life, which had passed through death, the life which delivers from the law of sin and death. And so it is written, "The first man Adam was made a living soul; the last Adam was made a quickening spirit" (1 Cor. 15:45).

Inasmuch as He said, "Receive ye Holy Spirit" and not "the Holy Spirit," it is evident that the Person of the Holy Spirit was not sent down from heaven at this time when He breathed on them, for He had not yet ascended to the right hand of God. He communicated to them the energy of His own life through the Spirit of God. It has been suggested that this breathing pointed to a revival of faith in the hearts of the disciples, while others see in it a gift of understanding corresponding to the statement in Luke 24:45, "then opened He their understanding that they might know the Scriptures." Still others think that the Spirit was bestowed upon them for the fifty days between His resurrection and the day of Pentecost. We believe, as pointed out above, it was a symbolical action. In the 23rd verse the church, the body of Christ, composed of those who are born again and possess the life in Him, is anticipated. The authority to discipline is not conferred upon a priestly class, as Rome teaches, but upon the assembly of believers.

"Repentant souls were baptized for the remission of sins, whilst a Simon Magus was pronounced in the gall of bitterness and the bond of iniquity (Acts 8). So the wicked person was put away from among the saints, and the same man after the judgment of his evil and his own deep grief over his sin, was to be assured of love by being received back by the church (1 Cor. 5 and 2 Cor. 2). It was the action of the

church. "To whom ye forgive anything, I also; for also what I have forgiven, if I have forgiven anything, it is for your sakes in the person of Christ."

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