

Fake News about the Holy Spirit
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GFC - 10/8/17

We're in a sermon series entitled Fake News – Replacing Lies with the Truth. Today I'm preaching on Fake News about the Holy Spirit.

It seems like people have an easier time understanding God the Father and Jesus Christ rather than the Holy Spirit. One of the problems is that the Holy Spirit seems so mystical.

We can picture God the Father, because we've all seen fathers.

We can picture God the Son because He became human and we can read about what He did and what He's like.

But when we try to picture the Holy Spirit our minds go blank, and we end up with symbols like a dove, or wind, or oil, or fire. We sometimes think this because He is called a spirit, or the Holy Ghost.

Fake News #1- The Holy Spirit is an it, a thing, a force or an influence

People call the Holy Spirit an "it" as if the Spirit is like God's laser beam, but the Holy Spirit is a "he" not an "it."

Some people seem to think the Holy Spirit is some kind of a force like in Star Wars. "May the force be with you." The Holy Spirit is not a force, influence or impersonal power.

Some people think that the "Holy Spirit" is more than impersonal power, but is merely a reference to the influence or power of God. However, this does not work because if you substitute "power" for the "Holy Spirit" in the Bible, you come up with phrases like this in Acts 10:38 - *God anointed Jesus with the Holy Spirit and with power.* Does this mean God anointed Jesus with power and with power?

The Good news is that the Holy Spirit is not the same as the Star Wars force and it's not like Casper the friendly ghost. Obviously the Holy Spirit is more than an it, a thing or a power. The Holy Spirit is a HE! The Holy Spirit is God and therefore, worthy of our worship and praise.

When we say the Holy Spirit is a person, we do not mean a human being. We mean a living spiritual being with personality. Personality includes life, self-consciousness, freedom of choice, purpose, intelligence, will, and emotions.

The Holy Spirit has all the characteristics of a person: He has a mind, a will and emotions. That's why the Bible says He can be resisted, grieved or lied to.

The Holy Spirit does things only a person can do:
 Acts 8:29 – He speaks

Lk 12:12 – He teaches
 John 14:26 – He helps
 John 15:26 – He testifies of Jesus
 1 Cor. 12:8-11 – He gives gifts
 1 Cor. 12:11 – He works
 Rom. 8:26 -- He intercedes

Fake News #2 – The Holy Spirit is less than the Father and the Son

The Scripture states clearly that the triune Godhead coexists coequally, coeternally as one unit. The Holy Spirit possesses the divine attributes of God. He is eternal, omnipresent, omnipotent, and omniscient.

His divinity is also revealed in the other names of the Holy Spirit:

Spirit of God (1 Cor. 3:16)	Spirit of Christ (Rom. 8:9)
Spirit of truth (John 14:17)	Spirit of grace (Heb. 10:29)
Spirit of life (Rom. 8:2)	Spirit of adoption (Rom. 8:15)
Spirit of holiness (Rom 1:4)	Eternal Spirit (Heb. 9:14)

There are not three Gods - there are not three parts to God - there is one God revealed in three persons. Trinity is a word formed from three and unity – tri-unity – three in one.

There are two Hebrew words for the word “one”. Yechead means the number one and is never used of God. The other word - Echad (ekh-awd') - means united as one; collective unity. The people were of one mind, the husband and wife are one flesh.

When the Bible says God is one, the word used is always the one meaning oneness as in united. One of the Hebrew words for God is Elohim, which is the plural of El. In Gen. 1:26 God said, “*Let Us make man in Our image...*” Who is God talking to? The Son and the Spirit. Acts 10:38 says:

God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and with power, who went about doing good and healing all who were oppressed by the devil, for God was with Him.

We see the Father, Son and the Holy Spirit in this verse.

The Father is God, Jesus is God, and the Holy Spirit is God.

However, the Father is not the Son and the Son is not the Holy Spirit.

The Father sent the Son, the Son died, and the Holy Spirit was sent on Pentecost.

I John 5:7-8 says:

For there are three that bear witness in heaven: the Father, the Word, and the Holy Spirit; and these three are one. And there are three that bear witness on earth: the Spirit, the water, and the blood; and these three agree as one.

The Scriptures show the Holy Spirit uniquely at work in these roles:

1. The Holy Spirit inspired the writing of the Bible.
2. He reveals truth and the deep things of God.
3. He anoints leaders for service. The Scriptures name no less than 16 Old Testament leaders who received this anointing including Joseph; Moses; Joshua; Samson; Saul; David; Elijah; and Elisha.
4. The Holy Spirit convicts and draws unbelievers to Christ.
5. The Holy Spirit supplies the power by which a person is born again.
6. He bears witness to us that we are children of God.
7. He indwells believers.
8. The Holy Spirit is the Paraclete, Comforter, or Helper.
9. The Holy Spirit leads and provides guidance to believers.
10. The Holy Spirit empowers believers for ministry and outreach.
11. The Holy Spirit gives gifts to every believer so they can fulfill their ministry calling.
12. The Holy Spirit empowers Christians to live a holy life.
13. The Holy Spirit is the pledge or guarantee by which believers are sealed for the day of salvation.
14. The Holy Spirit changes our character through the fruit of the Spirit.
15. The Holy Spirit brings liberty into our lives because
“Where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty” (2 Cor. 3:17).
16. The Holy Spirit conforms us to the image of Christ.
We are *“being transformed into the same image from glory to glory, just as by the Spirit of the Lord”* (2 Cor. 3:18).
17. He *“makes intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered”* (Rom. 8:26-27).
18. The Holy Spirit loves through us. Romans 5:5 says *“the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Spirit.”*

19. Unites Believers.
20. Fills us with His power from on high.

The Holy Spirit is powerful, but He is more than power, He is a person you can have a relationship with. You cannot have a personal relationship with a power. That would be saying I have a loving relationship with a power like electricity or nuclear power.

You don't have a relationship with power. You don't talk to it, relate to it, share with it, have an intimate relationship with it or introduce it to others. You do one thing with it. You use it. But the Holy Spirit is God in us and we can relate to Him!

Fake News #3- The Holy Spirit lives somewhere "out there"

The truth is: The Holy Spirit lives in all believers. 1 Corinthians 6:19 says:

Do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit, who is in you, whom you have received from God?

Under the old covenant, God lived in the temple. In the new covenant, *you* are the temple of the Holy Spirit. Where does He live? In you!

Fake News #4 – The Holy Spirit comes and goes

In Old Testament times, the Holy Spirit came and went. The Spirit would come upon someone to enable them to do something and then leave. David is the only one mentioned in the Old Testament as having the Holy Spirit on an ongoing basis. 1 Samuel 16:13-14 says:

Samuel took the horn of oil and anointed him in the midst of his brothers; and the Spirit of the Lord came upon David from that day forward. But the Spirit of the Lord departed from Saul.

That was Old Testament – the Holy Spirit coming and going - but Jesus taught His disciples that man's relationship with the Holy Spirit was going to change. John 14:16-18 says:

I will pray the Father, and He will give you another Helper, that He may abide with you forever - the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees Him nor knows Him; but you know Him, for He dwells with you and will be in you.

Jesus promised that the Holy Spirit would live in all believers. And once He lives in you, the Holy Spirit is not going anywhere. He promised to never leave nor forsake us!

Fake News #5 – The Holy Spirit is synonymous with speaking in tongues

The Holy Spirit gives the gift of speaking in tongues – but He is not the gift of speaking in tongues. The giver is not the gift. We cannot reduce God down to one of His spiritual gifts!

Fake News #6 - The gifts and power of the Holy Spirit are NOT for today

There are some churches and some people who teach this. These people are called cessationists. The root word of cessation is “cease” which means to stop. So, cessationists are people who believe miracles stopped.

The problem with this is that the Bible never says miracles will cease on earth. Miracles happened in the Old Testament and in the New. Miracles happened all the way through the Bible – from the creation in Genesis to the signs and wonders in the Book of Revelation.

Some of the events in Revelation have not happened yet – and they include miracles, signs and wonders. So – there’s miracles in the past and miracles in the future – but some theologians want us to believe they stopped for now. There is no biblical reason to believe miracles stopped happening.

The only passage that cessationists use to try to justify their misbelief is 1 Corinthians 13:8-10 which says:

Love never fails. But where there are prophecies, they will cease; where there are tongues, they will be stilled; where there is knowledge, it will pass away. For we know in part and we prophesy in part, but when perfection comes, the imperfect disappears.

Cessationists say that the perfect that was to come is the Bible and once the Bible was written, all miracles and spiritual gifts ceased. But there is nothing here that indicates that the perfection mentioned is the Bible. In fact, verse 12 says:

Now we see but a poor reflection as in a mirror; then we shall see face to face. Now I know in part; then I shall know fully, even as I am fully known.

The perfect that is coming is Jesus! That’s when we will see God face to face! Perfection comes when we see God face to face in heaven. Full knowledge comes in the hereafter. In this lifetime, we will always see dimly – but in heaven we will see clearly. Obviously, there will be no need for miracles in a perfect heaven. There will no need for prophecy or tongues or any gifts of the Spirit. But we are not there yet!

There is absolutely no biblical justification for believing that miracles have stopped happening.

Some people try to explain away the lack of supernatural power in their lives by saying God has changed, but God never changes. In Malachi 3:6 God said:

For I am the Lord, I do not change.

If He changed – we could never count on Him or His promises – because they might change. But nothing about God ever changes! Don't be led astray by those who tell you God has changed.

Hebrews 13:8 says *Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever.* The very next verse says *Do not be carried away by all kinds of strange teachings.* What are those strange teachings? A different Jesus – a Jesus who has changed from the Jesus of the New Testament. But the Bible says Jesus does not change. Whatever He did in Bible days, He does now.

If He saved then, He saves now.

If He healed then, He heals now.

If He delivered then, He delivers now.

If He baptized in the Holy Spirit then, He baptizes in the Holy Spirit now.

But some of you have bought into:

Fake News # 7 – You don't need the power of the Holy Spirit.

I want you to think about this: before Jesus was water baptized He did no miracles and preached no sermons. But after that, He began to do miracles and operate in the power of God. What happened? Did water baptism have that effect on Him? NO.

Jesus did not start operating in the supernatural until after He was filled with the Holy Spirit. Right after Jesus was water baptized, He was filled with the Holy Spirit. Luke 4:1 says:

Then Jesus, being filled with the Holy Spirit, returned from the Jordan.

Jesus was the Son of God – but when He came to earth He laid aside the independent exercise of power and relied upon the power of the Spirit.

After He was filled with the Holy Spirit – everything Jesus did was in the power of the Spirit.

He taught in the power of the Spirit.

He performed miracles in the power of the Spirit.

He was led by the Holy Spirit.

Jesus showed us how to live the Christian life in the power of the Spirit.

Trying to be Christlike – to live and love like Christ without the Holy Spirit is like:

Trying to fly without wings

Trying to breathe without air – (wind knocked out of me)

Trying to drive a car without gas.

The baptism of the Holy Spirit is an experience after salvation where a believer receives power from on high.

Jesus is the baptizer in the Holy Spirit and He told the disciples they needed to wait until the Holy Spirit came upon them in power. Understand, they were already believers and had the Holy Spirit in them. But Acts 1:4-5 says:

He commanded them not to depart from Jerusalem, but to wait for the Promise of the Father, "which," He said, "you have heard from Me; for John truly baptized with water, but you shall be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days from now."

And that happened in Acts 2. On the Day of Pentecost the Holy Spirit came upon them in power just like He came upon Jesus in power when He was baptized. This drew a crowd and Peter preached the Gospel to them. When he was finished Acts 2:37-39 says:

Now when they heard this, they were cut to the heart, and said to Peter and the rest of the apostles, "Men and brethren, what shall we do?" Then Peter said to them, "Repent, and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. For the promise is to you and to your children, and to all who are afar off, as many as the Lord our God will call."

Peter told them the same pattern for power we saw in Jesus. Be saved – Be water baptized – Be baptized in the Holy Spirit.

This happened everywhere the disciples went. They got people saved, water baptized and baptized in the Holy Spirit. And notice that this promise is for everyone throughout history who is called by God to salvation.

Is God still calling people to salvation? YES! Then the promise of the Holy Spirit is for today and for you! You need to be saved by the blood of Jesus. You need to be baptized in water. And you need to be baptized in the Holy Spirit.

The Bible tells us that we cannot live the Christian life in our own power. We need something greater. That something is Someone – the Holy Spirit. Jesus said in Acts 1:8

But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.

There's a lot of fake news about the Holy Spirit, but the good news is that just as Jesus was:

Born of the Spirit

We can be

Filled with the Spirit

We can be

Anointed by the Spirit	We can be
Led by the Holy Spirit	We can be
Taught by the Holy Spirit	We can be
Spoke by the Holy Spirit	We can
Performed miracles by the Spirit	We can
Lived a holy life by the Spirit	We can.

Jesus said in Luke 11:9 & 13

Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you. For everyone who asks receives; he who seeks finds; and to him who knocks, the door will be opened. If you then, though you are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father in heaven give the Holy Spirit to those who ask Him!

God wants to fill you with His Holy Spirit. Ask Him and expect to receive. Follow the Jesus pattern and you will never be the same!