

SECTION 2

DOCTRINES & DISTINCTIVES

“WATCH YOUR LIFE AND DOCTRINE  
CLOSELY. PERSEVERE IN THEM,  
BECAUSE IF YOU DO, YOU WILL  
SAVE BOTH YOURSELF AND YOUR  
HEARERS.”

1 TIMOTHY 4:16

# THE NECESSITY OF THE GOSPEL IN THE HOLY SPIRIT'S SAVING WORK

DR. GARY L. SCHULTZ, JR.<sup>1</sup>

Everything God does, he does as one God in three persons, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. All three of the persons perform distinct activities and have distinct roles in the outworking of God's plan, but all of their activities are the actions of the one God.<sup>2</sup> All of these distinct actions are also done in and by the one will and desire of the Godhead.<sup>3</sup> This can be seen clearly in actions such as creation and providence (John 1:1-3; Col 1:15-20; Heb 1:1-3), but it is perhaps clearest in the area of salvation.<sup>4</sup> Although particular activities in God's work of salvation are attributed to the different persons of the Godhead, salvation is a unified act of the one God.<sup>5</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup>Dr. Schultz graduated in December 2008 from Southern Seminary, having written his dissertation on *A Biblical and Theological Defense of a Multi-Intentioned View of the Atonement*. He has been serving as student associate in the Ministry Resources office at Southern Seminary.

<sup>2</sup>“The three Persons of the Godhead exhibit distinct roles in relation to one another. Distinct tasks and activities in accomplishing their common plan characterize nearly all of the work that the true and living God undertakes. Yet all the while, they carry out this work in complete harmony of activity and unity of purpose.” Bruce A. Ware, *Father, Son, and Holy Spirit: Relationships, Roles, and Relevance* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2005), 20.

<sup>3</sup>Roger Nicole, “The Meaning of the Trinity,” in *Standing Forth: Collected Writings of Roger Nicole*, by Roger Nicole (Ross-Shire, Great Britain: Christian Focus, 2002), 395.

<sup>4</sup>For evidence and an explanation of the working of the Trinity in creation and providence, see Robert Letham, *The Holy Trinity: In Scripture, History, Theology, and Worship* (Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R, 2004), 425-30; and Stanley J. Grenz, *Theology for the Community of God* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1994), 101-06.

<sup>5</sup>“The real divine mystery of mission, by which it lives, is the coming of the Son, who is both sent by the Father and is the content of that mission, and, in turn, is moved by and sends the Holy Spirit. While it is possible and necessary to distinguish the persons and to ascribe to each a particular activity (*appropriationes*) as creator, redeemer, and sanctifier, it is wrong to separate these since each is involved in the work of the other. Treated under the perspective of the Trinity it means that the one undivided God is present in his mission in all three persons, though each has a particular and special work to perform in conjunction with the others. As Father, Son, and Holy Spirit it is God's will to bring salvation to humanity.” John Thompson, *Modern Trinitarian Perspectives* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1994), 69.

The Bible articulates God's unity in salvation most plainly in Ephesians 1:3-14.<sup>6</sup> God the Father is the source of all spiritual blessings (v. 3). He "chose us" (v. 4), "predestined us to adoption" (v. 5), lavished upon us the riches of his grace (v. 6, 8), "made known to us the mystery of his will" (v. 9), and predestined us "according to his purpose" (v. 11). These verses make it clear that God the Father is the architect and designer of salvation (cf. also Acts 2:23; James 1:18; 1 Pet 1:20).<sup>7</sup> God the Son is the one in whom God the Father blesses Christians (v. 3). It is through Christ that the Father "predestined us to adoption" (v. 5). It is in Christ "we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses" (v. 7). It is in Christ that all things are summed up, "things in heaven and earth" (v. 10). According to this passage of Scripture the Son is the one who accomplishes the Father's plan in salvation (cf. also 1 John 4:14).

The first chapter of Ephesians also explains the role of God the Holy Spirit in salvation. The Holy Spirit determines the character of the blessings the Father bestows through Christ (v. 3), and he seals those whom the Father has chosen and the Son has redeemed (v. 13), serving as a "pledge of our inheritance" (v. 14). These verses describe the Holy Spirit as the one who applies the salvation that the Father planned and the Son accomplished.<sup>8</sup> The Holy Spirit's mission, as he is sent by both the Father (John 14:26) and the Son (John 15:26), is to work out salvation in light of the Father's intentions and the Son's accomplishments.<sup>9</sup> All that Christ accomplished in the atonement the Spirit now works to apply.<sup>10</sup> The way in which the Holy Spirit applies the saving benefits of the atonement to believers is through the proclamation of the gospel of the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus Christ as a sin-bearing substitute for the sins of humanity (1 Cor 15:1-4).

---

<sup>6</sup>"The divine saving purposes from eternity to eternity which are celebrated in Ephesians 1:3-14 are clearly set forth as the work of the triune God." P. T. O'Brien, *The Letter to the Ephesians*, Pillar New Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1999), 91.

<sup>7</sup>John S. Feinberg, *No One Like Him: The Doctrine of God*, Foundations of Evangelical Theology (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2001), 517.

<sup>8</sup>The Holy Spirit "applies, makes effective, and preserves the redemption Christ bought to those who believe." Bruce Demarest, *The Cross and Salvation: The Doctrine of Salvation*, Foundations of Evangelical Theology (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 1997), 44.

<sup>9</sup>For a good explanation of the Holy Spirit's procession from both the Father and the Son (the *filioque*) from a pneumatological perspective, see Sinclair B. Ferguson, *The Holy Spirit*, Contours of Christian Theology (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1996), 72-78.

<sup>10</sup>The Spirit does not make much of himself, rather "the Spirit's presence and work are known as he makes much of the Lord Jesus Christ." Ware, *Father, Son, and Holy Spirit*, 108. Similarly, "Scripture tells us that the Spirit of God does many works and that these works are indissolubly related not only to each other but also to the work and mission of the Son of God." Donald G. Bloesch, *The Holy Spirit: Work and Gifts*, Christian Foundations (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2000), 285.

Scripture consistently presents the proclamation, hearing, and acceptance of the gospel as absolutely necessary for the Holy Spirit's work of salvation to take place. Despite several recent arguments to the contrary, the Holy Spirit does not save people through general revelation or through other religions and cultures.<sup>11</sup> The Spirit, as the Spirit of the Father (Matt 10:20; Luke 11:13; 1 John 4:2) and the Spirit of the Son (Rom 8:9; Gal 4:6; Phil 1:19; 1 Pet 1:11), only saves people by explicitly applying the atonement of Jesus Christ through the gospel of Jesus Christ. This article will establish the truth of this statement by examining each one of the Holy Spirit's acts in salvation: effectual calling, regeneration, conversion, justification, indwelling the believer, baptism in the Spirit, sanctification, preservation, perseverance, and glorification. It will be demonstrated from Scripture how all the Holy Spirit's saving works are based upon the Son's work in salvation and presuppose knowledge of this work through the gospel. The proclamation of the gospel is indispensable in God's work of salvation.

### EFFECTUAL CALLING

The Holy Spirit begins to apply Christ's atonement to believers by effectually calling them to believe in the gospel. Effectual calling is the Spirit's work that causes an unbeliever who is dead in his sin (1 Cor 2:14; Eph 2:1) to understand the true meaning of the gospel of Jesus Christ. This call can be defined as "the Spirit's call to sinners to hear and to believe the gospel, rendered effectual by his supernatural enlivening work, or as the Spirit's provision of grace resulting in saving faith, rendered irresistible against all blindness, hardness, and unbelief."<sup>12</sup> It is always issued through the proclamation of the gospel (2 Thess 2:14), but it is distinct from the general invitation of the gospel (e.g., Isa 45:22; Matt 11:28), which goes out to all people, precisely because it always results in salvation.<sup>13</sup> Effectual calling is therefore a work of the Holy Spirit that is specifically for those who believe the gospel.<sup>14</sup>

---

<sup>11</sup>For recent inclusivistic proposals from an evangelical perspective, see R. Todd Magnum, "Is There a Reformed Way to Get the Benefits of the Atonement to 'Those Who Have Never Heard?'" *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society* 47.1 (2004), 125-34; Clark H. Pinnock, *A Wideness in God's Mercy: The Finality of Jesus Christ in a World of Religions* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1992); John Sanders, *No Other Name: An Inquiry into the Destiny of the Unevangelized* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1992); and Terrance Tiessen, *Who Can Be Saved?: Reassessing Salvation in Christ and World Religions* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2004).

<sup>12</sup>Bruce A. Ware, "Effectual Calling and Grace," in *Still Sovereign: Contemporary Perspectives on Election, Foreknowledge, and Grace*, ed. Thomas R. Schreiner and Bruce A. Ware (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2000), 204.

<sup>13</sup>Ibid., 210-211.

<sup>14</sup>Graham A. Cole helpfully points out that there is little exegetical evidence for the Spirit's role in effectual calling. There is a strong theological argument to be made, however, that the work of effectual calling is appropriately attributed to the Holy Spirit, as he is the one who works through all stages of salvation to apply that salvation. *He Who Gives Life: The Doctrine of the Holy Spirit* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2007), 215. There is good reason,

This call is articulated perhaps most clearly in Romans 8:28-30, although it is present in a myriad of Scriptures (Luke 14:23; John 6:44; Rom 1:7; 11:29; 1 Cor 1:9, 22-24; Eph 1:18; Phil 3:14; 1 Thess 2:12; 2 Thess 2:14; 2 Tim 1:9; Heb 3:1; 2 Pet 1:10). Romans 8:30 expounds upon the idea of calling that is mentioned in Romans 8:28 by making it clear that the called are the same ones who are predestined, justified, and glorified.<sup>15</sup> The close relationship between effectual calling and the atonement is seen when one realizes that the Holy Spirit's effectual call goes out to sinners to enable them to receive the salvific blessings and benefits of Christ's atonement.<sup>16</sup> Sinners only receive the salvific blessings of the atonement through faith in the gospel (1 Cor 12:3; Eph 2:8), which entails knowledge of the atonement (1 Cor 15:1-4). Effectual calling awakens a person's faith so that she can be united with Christ and experience the full scope and breadth of salvation.<sup>17</sup> Apart from the Spirit's work of effectual calling sinners would be unable to put their faith and trust in the gospel and the Son's accomplishment of salvation in the atonement would never come to fruition in the lives of believers.

### REGENERATION, CONVERSION, JUSTIFICATION

Regeneration can be regarded as "that work of the Spirit at conversion that renews the heart and life (the inner self), thus restoring the person's intellectual, volitional, moral, emotional, and relational capacities to know, love, and serve God."<sup>18</sup> Regeneration is transformational (2 Cor 5:17), it is solely a work of God, and it takes place in a person's union with Christ, and thus through his salvific work on the cross.<sup>19</sup> Most often in Scripture regeneration is attributed to the Holy Spirit (e.g., Titus 3:5). In the seminal passage in

---

therefore, to begin the description of the Holy Spirit's application of Christ atonement in salvation with the work of effectual calling.

<sup>15</sup>"Calling" (*kletos*), must be understood as effectual. It is not merely an invitation that human beings can reject, but it is a summons that overcomes human resistance and effectually persuades them to say yes to God. This definition of "calling" is evident from Rom. 8:30, for there Paul says that "those whom he called (*ekalesen*) he also justified." That text does not say that "some" of those called were justified. It fuses the called and justified together so that those who have experienced calling have also inevitably received the blessing of justification. Now if all those who are called are also justified, then calling must be effectual and must create faith, for "all" those who are called are justified and justification cannot occur without faith (3:21-22, 28; 5:1). Thomas R. Schreiner, *Romans*, Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1998), 450-51.

<sup>16</sup>Demarest, 211.

<sup>17</sup>"Only through the Spirit can we become one with Christ and can Christ live in our hearts." Anthony A. Hoekema, *Saved By Grace* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1989), 54.

<sup>18</sup>Demarest, 293.

<sup>19</sup>"Regeneration means that the person who was outside of Christ is now in Christ." Hoekema, 103.

Scripture on regeneration (John 3:3-8), Jesus tells Nicodemus that he must be born of the Spirit in order to see the Kingdom of God. It is only the Holy Spirit who produces a new nature, who imparts eternal life, and who makes people children of God.<sup>20</sup> The Holy Spirit regenerates believers through the gospel, as he opens blind eyes and awakens dead hearts to repent of sin and put faith Christ (2 Cor 4:4-6).<sup>21</sup>

Regeneration always takes place simultaneously with conversion, which is “the human being’s response to God’s offer of salvation and approach to the human.”<sup>22</sup> Conversion is made up of repentance and faith, or turning away from sin and turning toward God. Conversion is both a responsible human decision in response to the gospel and a work of the Holy Spirit through the gospel. As Graham Cole states, “To tell the story of the making of God’s people requires two tracks: the divine one of what God has done for us in Christ and in us by the Spirit; as well as the human one of how the Spirit is intimately involved in facilitating our very human, but nonmeritorious, responses of repentance and faith.”<sup>23</sup>

Besides conversion, justification also takes place as a believer puts his faith and trust in the gospel (Rom 3:26, 28; 5:1; Gal 2:16). Justification occurs simultaneously with regeneration and conversion in that, having received new life, the believer is now declared righteous in God’s sight, her sin being forgiven.<sup>24</sup> Justification is also intimately related to effectual calling, as Romans 8:30 makes clear. While Scripture repeatedly stresses that justification is something that Christ accomplished and is something that is only done on the basis of Christ’s atonement (Rom 3:21-30), it is also a work of the Holy Spirit. First Corinthians 6:11 states that believers are “justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and in the Spirit of our God,” explaining that the Spirit is the agent of justification.<sup>25</sup>

---

<sup>20</sup>For an explanation of this passage, see D. A. Carson, *The Gospel of John*, The Pillar New Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1991), 187-98.

<sup>21</sup>“Our regeneration and conversion, moving us to repent of sin and trust in Christ, is the work of the Spirit. The Spirit must awaken our hearts to see the beauty of Christ, fall before him, and put our hope and trust in him. God gets all the glory in our conversion.” Ware, *Father, Son, and Holy Spirit*, 121.

<sup>22</sup>Millard J. Erickson, *Christian Theology*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (Grand Rapids, Baker, 1998), 955. See also Hoekema, 107.

<sup>23</sup>Cole, 216.

<sup>24</sup>Wayne E. Grudem, *Systematic Theology*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2000), 722.

<sup>25</sup>While the New American Standard Bible has “in the Spirit of our God,” the preposition “in” (*en*) here is better translated as “by.” Anthony C. Thiselton, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, The New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2000), 455.

### Indwelling and Filling

As the Holy Spirit regenerates, converts, and justifies a person, he also indwells him. Although the Holy Spirit's indwelling actually takes place at the same time as his other saving work, it is a distinct ministry of the Holy Spirit (Rom 8:9, 11; 1 Cor 6:19-29; 2 Cor 5:5; Gal 4:6; 1 John 4:13). The indwelling of the Spirit in this present age is a result of Christ's glorification in the atonement and the resurrection as John 7:37-39; 14:17; and 16:7 make clear.<sup>26</sup> It is therefore the "Spirit of Christ" (Rom 8:9, 11) and the "Spirit of the Son" (Gal 4:6) who indwells believers, encouraging them to relate to God as Father. The Bible describes indwelling as a privilege that is only available to believers who are in Christ through the gospel (John 1:12).

The Spirit's indwelling also denotes God's abiding presence with the believer. The Spirit's indwelling is meant to result in the believer repeatedly being filled with the Holy Spirit, and therefore in sanctification and empowerment for mission.<sup>27</sup> There are several references throughout the book of Acts that depict believers being filled with the Spirit in order to do wonderful things for God (Acts 2:4; 4:8; 6:3; 7:55; 11:24; 13:9, 52).<sup>28</sup> Paul also commands believers to be filled with the Spirit in Ephesians 5:18, at least implying that some believers are not filled with the Holy Spirit at points in their lives.<sup>29</sup> Being filled with the Spirit presupposes knowledge of Christ and his work, as evidence of this filling is seen within the church in "making melody to the Lord," "giving thanks for all things in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ," and being subject to one another "in the fear of Christ" (Eph 5:18-21). The Holy Spirit's filling for empowerment also requires knowledge of the gospel, as it often results in the preaching of the gospel (Acts 2:4; 4:31; 13:9-10).<sup>30</sup>

---

<sup>26</sup>For a defense of this position, see James M. Hamilton, Jr., *God's Indwelling Presence: The Holy Spirit in the Old and New Testaments* (Nashville, TN: B&H, 2006).

<sup>27</sup>The Holy Spirit's filling is "the source of all vital experience in the life of the Christian," and is therefore essential for the believer's sanctification and their empowerment for witness and service. John Walvoord, *The Holy Spirit*, 3<sup>rd</sup> ed. (Wheaton, IL: Van Kampen, 1954), 189.

<sup>28</sup>Certain Old Testament saints were also periodically filled by the Holy Spirit for specific purposes (Gen 41:38; Exod 28:3; 31:3; 35:30-35; Num 11:17, 25; 27:18; Judg 3:10; 6:34; 1 Sam 10:9-10; 16:13; Dan 4:8; 5:11-14; 6:3). All New Testament believers, however, are permanently indwelt by the Holy Spirit and then continually filled by the Holy Spirit on the basis of that indwelling. See Walvoord, 155-56.

<sup>29</sup>James Leo Garrett, *Systematic Theology: Biblical, Historical, and Evangelical Volume 2* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1995), 175-76. There are some who see the command in Ephesians 5:18 to be filled with the Spirit as referring to the congregation and not to the individual. Therefore this passage is not about sanctification or empowerment, but rather about ecclesiology. See Cole, 243-44; and Andreas J. Köstenberger, "Filled with the Holy Spirit?" *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society* 40.2 (1997), 233-34. Either way the Spirit's filling as described in Ephesians 5:18-21 depends upon knowledge of the gospel.

### Baptism into the Body of Christ

The baptism in the Holy Spirit is one of the most controversial issues in contemporary evangelical pneumatology, due to the different ways that people interpret their experience in light of biblical concepts.<sup>31</sup> However, when Holy Spirit baptism is seen in light of New Testament teaching, it seems to be limited to one particular experience, which every believer experiences at the moment of his or her salvation. There are seven verses in the New Testament that mention Spirit baptism. Five of these verses (Matt 3:11; Mark 1:8; Luke 3:16; John 1:33; Acts 1:5) refer to a time in the future when Jesus is going to baptize with the Holy Spirit, with Acts 1:5 indicating a time only a few days away. In Acts 11:16, Peter applies the phrase “baptized with the Holy Spirit” to explain Cornelius’ conversion, referring to something that had already taken place. The seventh reference is 1 Corinthians 12:13, where Paul also refers to a past event. The one event that fits the reference of all these verses is clearly Pentecost, where the Holy Spirit was poured out upon the disciples (Acts 2:4).<sup>32</sup> At the time of their conversion, believers subjectively experience what objectively took place once and for all at Pentecost due to the atonement and resurrection of Jesus Christ: the baptism of the Holy Spirit.<sup>33</sup>

Jesus Christ baptizes believers in the Holy Spirit in order to bring them into his body.<sup>34</sup> The Holy Spirit, as he is poured out on believers, brings believers into Christ’s body by uniting them with Christ.<sup>35</sup> Union with Christ is an over-arching soteriological concept. It is the concept under which John Calvin discusses the whole of his soteriology, and he describes it as the work of the Holy Spirit based upon what Christ has accomplished on the

---

<sup>30</sup>Cole, 218.

<sup>31</sup>For example, see the five different perspectives on Spirit baptism in *Perspectives on Spirit Baptism: Five Views*, edited by Chad Owen Brand (Nashville, TN: Broadman and Holman, 2004) or the work on Spirit baptism by Frank D. Macchia, *Baptized in the Spirit: A Global Pentecostal Theology* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2006).

<sup>32</sup>For a more thorough explanation of the referent of these seven verses, see Walter C. Kaiser Jr., “The Baptism in the Holy Spirit as the Promise of the Father: A Reformed Perspective,” in *Perspectives on Spirit Baptism: Five Views*, edited by Chad Owen Brand (Nashville, TN: Broadman and Holman, 2004), 19-21. See also John R. W. Stott, *Baptism and Fullness: The Work of the Holy Spirit* 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1975), 19-46.

<sup>33</sup>“The Lord Jesus, mediator of the new covenant and the bestower of its blessings, gives both the forgiveness of sins and the gift of the Spirit to all who enter his covenant.” Stott, 43. This can only be on the basis of the cross.

<sup>34</sup>This understanding implies a consistent rendering of the preposition *en* in the seven previously noted verses as “in” or “with,” not “by.” See Kaiser, 21; and Stott, 38-43.

<sup>35</sup>“Baptism with or in the Spirit is about entry into the new life and the new community of Christ’s body. If so, Paul is arguing that the risen Christ unites members to himself through the agency of the Spirit [in 1 Cor 12:13].” Cole, 217.

cross.<sup>36</sup> Union with Christ denotes the truth that all believers are in Christ (John 15:4; 1 Cor 15:22; 2 Cor 5:17; 12:2; Gal 3:28; Eph 1:4; Phil 3:9; 1 Thess 4:16; 1 John 4:13) and that Christ is in all believers (Rom 8:10; 2 Cor 13:5; Eph 3:17; Gal 2:20; Col 1:27). As John Murray remarks,

We need to appreciate far more than we have been wont to the close interdependence of Christ and the Holy Spirit in the operations of saving grace. The Holy Spirit is the Spirit of Christ; the Spirit is the Spirit of the Lord and Christ is the Lord of the Spirit (cf. Rom 8:9; 2 Cor 3:18; 1 Pet 1:11). Christ dwells in us if his Spirit dwells in us, and he dwells in us by the Spirit. Union with Christ is a great mystery.<sup>37</sup>

It is only through being united with Christ by the Holy Spirit that believers can then experience regeneration, justification, sanctification, preservation, and glorification.<sup>38</sup> The strong relational and ethical implications of a believer's union with Christ seem to demand that some knowledge of this union is necessary in order to be a genuine believer.<sup>39</sup> Knowledge of this union is only available through the gospel (cf. Rom 10:14-17).

### Sanctification

Sanctification only takes place through the union that believers have with Jesus Christ by the Holy Spirit. There are two aspects to sanctification, definite (or positional) and progressive. Definite sanctification takes place at the moment of a believer's salvation (simultaneously with regeneration, justification, etc.) when he puts his faith in the gospel, and is the believer's "being set aside for God's possession and declared holy by faith in Christ's

---

<sup>36</sup>"To sum up, the Holy Spirit is the bond by which Christ effectually unites us to himself." John Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, ed. John T. McNeill, trans. Ford Lewis Battles, Library of Christian Classics, vols. 20-21 (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1960), 3.1.1. See also Hoekema, 54-67. For an explanation of the importance of Calvin's concept of union with Christ in his understanding of the atonement and its application, see Kevin Dixon Kennedy, *Union with Christ and the Extent of the Atonement in Calvin*, Studies in Biblical Literature (New York: Peter Lang, 2002).

<sup>37</sup>John Murray, *Redemption Accomplished and Applied* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1955), 166.

<sup>38</sup>Robert Letham, *The Work of Christ*, Contours of Christian Theology (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1993), 80; Walvoord, 141-42.

<sup>39</sup>"The relation, moreover, is a *comprehensive* union. The Christian's entire life and actions are exercised in relation to Christ – his life, values, power, and rule. The believer's speech is in Christ (Rom 9:1), his labors are in Christ (1 Cor 15:58; cf. Rom 16:3, 9, 12), his proclamation of the truth is in Christ (2 Cor 2:17), and his exercise of spiritual authority is in Christ (Phil 1:8). Paul testified that he was meek or gentle in Christ (2 Cor 13:4) and even that his imprisonment was in Christ (Phil 1:13). All this means that the entire Christian life is Christ-centered." Demarest, 332.

justifying work.”<sup>40</sup> It is seen in 1 Corinthians 1:2, where Paul addresses believers in Corinth as those who were already sanctified in Christ Jesus, and in 1 Corinthians 6:11, where Paul describes sanctification as a completed act akin to justification, done in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ by the Holy Spirit. Progressive sanctification, on the other hand, can be defined as “that gracious operation of the Holy Spirit, involving our reasonable participation, by which he delivers us from the pollution of sin, renews our entire nature according to the image of God, and enables us to live lives that are pleasing to him.”<sup>41</sup>

It is in progressive sanctification that the Holy Spirit makes Christ’s redemption effective in believers by conforming them to the image of Christ (Rom 8:29).<sup>42</sup> God chose believers for salvation “through the sanctification of the Spirit” (2 Thess 2:13). Believers only become acceptable to God through the sanctification of the Spirit (Rom 15:16). In order to be holy, believers are commanded to walk in the Spirit (Gal 5:16, 25). The Spirit continually works to produce his fruit, the characteristics of Christ, in those whom he indwells and who walk in him (Gal 5:22-23). The Holy Spirit continually fills believers in order that they might be equipped for service (Eph 5:18), giving them spiritual gifts to accomplish this task of ministering to others (1 Cor 12-14). The Spirit is the one who leads believers to live for God and to grow in righteousness (Phil 2:12-13). Most often, the Spirit sanctifies believers through Scripture, as he inspired the Scriptures for the salvation and edification of believers (2 Tim 3:16-17), and he presently illuminates Scripture to believers so that they can understand and apply them to their contemporary situation (1 Cor 2:10-16).<sup>43</sup> How one can experience any of these aspects of sanctification, and therefore salvation, apart from explicit knowledge of Jesus Christ and his saving work through the gospel is difficult to understand.

### **Preservation and Perseverance**

As the Holy Spirit sanctifies believers, leading them to grow in righteousness, he also preserves them in faith, causing them to persevere and endure in Christ until the end of their lives.<sup>44</sup> “The Spirit works in a multitude of ways to keep true believers in the path of faith, godliness, and security.”<sup>45</sup> He does this first by sealing all believers unto the day of redemption, guaranteeing their inheritance with Christ (Eph 1:13-14; 2 Cor 1:22; 5:5; Eph 4:30). The Holy Spirit is the believer’s *arrabon* (pledge) of future blessing with God. “When God gave us the Holy Spirit within, he committed himself to give all the future blessing of

---

<sup>40</sup>Ibid., 407.

<sup>41</sup>Hoekema, 192.

<sup>42</sup>Grudem, 746. Although sanctification is in Christ, it is a work that Scripture repeatedly attributes to the Holy Spirit. See Ferguson, 152-73.

<sup>43</sup>The Holy Spirit’s work of inspiring and illuminating Scripture is also inseparably related to the person and work of Jesus Christ. Jesus Christ is the Word (John 1:1) whose person and work is the central message of Scripture. See Cole, 261-66.

<sup>44</sup>Murray, 154-55.

<sup>45</sup>Demarest, 448.

eternal life and a great reward in heaven with him. . . . All who have the Holy Spirit within them, all who are truly born again, have God's unchanging promise and guarantee that the inheritance of eternal life in heaven will certainly be theirs."<sup>46</sup> The Holy Spirit's sealing takes place simultaneously with a person's conversion, and therefore through the gospel.<sup>47</sup>

Besides sealing believers, the Holy Spirit also causes believers to persevere by having them consciously reflect on Christ's work on the cross. The Bible uses the sacrificial atonement of Christ as an example to the believer of how she ought to live the Christian life. In Ephesians 5:2 Paul instructs believers to walk in love just as Christ loved them, and the way that Christ loved was by giving himself up to God on the cross.<sup>48</sup> Hebrews 12:1-3 encourages believers to persevere, to "run the race," by setting their eyes upon Jesus. What is pointed out about Jesus in these verses, however, is the way in which he endured the cross and the hostility of sinners against him. First Peter 2:21-25 is another example where the Bible instructs believers to endure in their walk with God by contemplating the way in which Christ suffered his atoning death. Christ's atonement not only made salvation a possibility, but it also serves as a concrete example of how one ought to live his life before God. The Holy Spirit can only encourage believers with the example of Christ if they are aware of that example through the gospel.

A final way the Holy Spirit causes believers to persevere is by assuring them of their right standing before God in Christ. The Holy Spirit does this as believers live in his power, resisting the flesh, obeying God, and advancing in righteousness (Rom 8:5-11).<sup>49</sup> He also does this by bearing witness with believers that they are the children of God (Rom 8:16). This is a subjective and internal witness of the Spirit whereby he convinces believers of their right standing before God, that God is their Father.<sup>50</sup> The Spirit continually works to make certain that all who are saved through the gospel of Jesus Christ are never lost, and that they are brought to glorification (cf. Rom 8:28-30). Again, it is difficult to see how the Spirit can perform this ministry in the life of a believer apart from explicit knowledge of Christ's atoning work for the salvation of humanity through the gospel.

---

<sup>46</sup>Grudem, 791.

<sup>47</sup>See Ferguson, 180-82.

<sup>48</sup>"The model of love is Christ himself. It is because he laid down his life for us that we are to love others to the point of sacrifice." A. Skevington Wood, *Ephesians*, in vol. 11 of *The Expositor's Bible Commentary*, ed. Frank E. Gaebelin (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1981), 66.

<sup>49</sup>See D. A. Carson, "Reflections on Assurance," in *Still Sovereign: Contemporary Perspectives on Election, Foreknowledge, and Grace*, ed. Thomas R. Schreiner and Bruce A. Ware (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2000), 258-59.

<sup>50</sup>Bernard Ramm, *The Witness of the Spirit: An Essay on the Contemporary Relevance of the Witness of the Holy Spirit* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1959), 49-57.

### Glorification

The present life of the Christian in salvation is but a foretaste of the glory to come. Those who are called, regenerated, converted, justified, indwelt, filled, baptized, united to Christ, sanctified, adopted, and preserved through perseverance will one day be glorified, as the unbreakable chain of Romans 8:28-30 indicates. This is the hope of all Christians (Rom 5:2; 2 Thess 2:14; 1 Pet 5:4). The Holy Spirit guarantees the future glorification of all believers. “Our pilgrimage will issue in a marvelous consummation in which the vestiges of the old self are eradicated and the new self is perfectly realized. Glorification is the bringing to a triumphant conclusion our redemption in Christ. It is the final realization of our unfolding salvation in Christ (Rom 13:11; 1 Pet 1:5).”<sup>51</sup>

Glorification is a realization of all of the blessings of salvation that were accomplished once and for all in the atonement. All who have the Spirit and who are therefore in Christ can look forward to the redemption of their bodies (Rom 8:23), to their inheritance that will never fade away or perish (1 Pet 1:3-5). The glorification of the believer includes her ultimate vindication before God at the last judgment, the future manifestation of an already accomplished justification (Rom 5:9-10). It includes a fullness of knowledge that comes with seeing Christ face to face (1 Cor 13:12; 1 John 3:2). In glorification the believer is spiritually and morally perfected; freed from sin, both in experience and in nature (Col 1:11; 1 Thess 3:13; Jude 24). Ultimately, all believers will be conformed to the image of their Savior, Jesus Christ (Rom 8:29).<sup>52</sup> Being glorified, all believers will dwell together with God in the new heavens and new earth forever (John 14:2-3; Rev 3:12).<sup>53</sup>

Also included in the glorification of believers is their resurrection. Believers only experience the resurrection because of what Christ did on the cross. This is made clear in 1 Corinthians 15. First Corinthians 15:13 states that there would not even be a resurrection from the dead if Christ had not died and been raised from the dead. First Corinthians 15:21-22 describes how Christ reversed the order of death that Adam instituted after he sinned. “The man who brought death is Adam, and the one who will bring about the resurrection of the dead is Christ.”<sup>54</sup> First Corinthians 15:35-50 argues that the resurrection and transformation of believer’s bodies is a consequence of Christ’s exaltation. First Corinthians 15:51 makes it clear that all who are in Christ will be changed, meaning that they will receive new bodies.<sup>55</sup> All who receive a new body in Christ, however, do so in the power of the Holy Spirit. Believers will be raised by the Spirit (Rom 8:11) and will receive a Spiritual body (1 Cor 15:44) after the likeness of Jesus Christ (1 John 3:2).<sup>56</sup> Even now, the Holy Spirit

---

<sup>51</sup>Demarest, 468.

<sup>52</sup>Ibid., 473-74; Erickson, 1010-11.

<sup>53</sup>For the corporate dimension of glorification, see Murray, 174-78.

<sup>54</sup>W. Harold Mare, *1 Corinthians*, in vol. 10 of *The Expositor’s Bible Commentary*, ed. Frank E. Gaebelein (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1976), 285.

<sup>55</sup>Demarest, 475.

causes believers to long for their resurrection bodies (Rom 8:23), a ministry that again seems to demand some knowledge of the gospel message.

## CONCLUSION

Everything the Holy Spirit does to save people, from effectual calling to glorification, he does on the basis of the atoning work of Jesus Christ and through knowledge of that atoning work in the gospel. According to Scripture, the only way salvation takes place in the New Testament age is through faith in the gospel, which explains the urgent instructions for worldwide evangelization that Jesus gave in the Great Commission (Matt 28:18-20) and the emphasis of the early church on the gospel message (Acts 2:23-24, 30-36; 3:13-26; 4:10-12; 13:14-41; 17:22-31). The proclamation of the gospel is not an ancillary element in God's work of salvation; rather it is a vitally essential and absolutely necessary part of it. It is only through the proclamation of the gospel that the Holy Spirit takes the redemption accomplished by Christ on the cross and makes it a present reality in the life of believers.<sup>57</sup> All Christians therefore have a responsibility to preach the gospel because it is the means through which God accomplishes his saving work in the world. All Christians also have the privilege to proclaim the gospel because as they do so they are participating in the Triune God's saving work. The Holy Spirit applies in salvation what the Son accomplished in the atonement according to the will of the Father, and he does so only through the gospel call.

---

<sup>56</sup>A spiritual body is one that is "consistent with the character and activity of the Holy Spirit." Grudem, 832.

<sup>57</sup>"It is by preaching that God makes past history a present reality. The cross was, and will always remain, a unique historical event of the past. And there it will remain, in the past, in the books, unless God himself makes it real and relevant to men today. It is by preaching, in which He makes his appeal to men through men, that God accomplishes this miracle." John R. W. Stott, *The Preacher's Portrait: Some New Testament Word Studies*, (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1961), 53.