

Intercontinental Church of God

5. Holy Spirit

DOCTRINAL STATEMENT

The Holy Spirit is the essence, power, mind and spiritual extension of God. God begets Christians as His sons through this Spirit. It strengthens a Christian spiritually, converts his mind and serves as an earnest or guarantee of eternal life.

DOCTRINAL OVERVIEW

The Holy Spirit is described in the Bible as "the Spirit of God," "the Spirit of the Lord," "the Spirit of Jesus Christ," "the Spirit of truth," and "comforter" or "advocate." It is the power of God, the mind of God and the extended means by which God accomplishes His work throughout the universe. As such, the Holy Spirit is not a separate being, it has no independent existence as an individual entity or person within the godhead.

It was through His Spirit that God created the earth (Gen. 1:2). It was through this Spirit that David received his moral strength (Psa. 51:10-13), and by it Elijah and Elisha—men with normal physical proclivities and weaknesses—were made into powerful prophets of God (2 Kings 2:9, 15). Even though these men and others had access to God's Spirit, it is also clear that they were among the relative few who in the Old Testament era were blessed with the privilege of actually having the mind and power of God work with or dwell within them.

God uses His Spirit to accomplish all His work. Whether causing prophets to prophesy, kings to reign, craftsmen to create (Ex. 31:3), bodies to be moved (Ezek. 3:12, 14) or people to keep His laws (Ezek. 36:26-27), everything God does is through the power of His Spirit.

God is spirit (John. 4:24); both members of the godhead ("Elohim"), Father and Son, are literally *composed* of spirit; they are wholly made of spiritual essence, in the same fashion as we are made of physical particles. Yet God the Father and Jesus Christ are separate beings: each maintains His own distinct identity and independent existence; and each, therefore, utilizes His own "Spirit," though both the Father's Spirit and Christ's Spirit are an integral part of the common Holy Spirit. The being who later became Jesus Christ was the God who revealed Himself to the patriarchs and prophets and worked with them. When He utilized His mind, His nature and His power, He was doing so through *His* Holy Spirit which was the projection of His own unique, perfect spiritual power. God the Father was unknown in the Old Testament; Jesus Christ came to reveal Him in the New. God the Father was the one who begot Jesus Christ; He did so through *His* Spirit, which is the same Spirit He begets spiritual children through today. Indeed, God the Father has retained to Himself the unique capacity to beget new spiritual beings.

Under the New Covenant the Spirit of the Father has been made available in a universal way, as was explained by Peter on the day of Pentecost when the Church began (Acts 2:17-18). Before His death, Christ promised His disciples that the Holy Spirit, which then worked *with* them should be given to them and should actually be *in* them (John. 14:17). This "Comforter" should teach the disciples all things and remind them of all that Christ had said to them (John. 14:26).

This same Spirit which was given to the disciples on the day of Pentecost is available to all whom God calls. Upon true repentance granted by God and upon true belief in Jesus Christ, one may be baptized and then receive God's Spirit through the laying-on-of-hands ceremony performed by God's ministers (Acts 2:38; 8:12-17). God further states that He gives His Holy Spirit only to those who obey Him (Acts 5:32). God's Holy Spirit is efficacious—It creates deep changes within the individual, actually converting or changing the type of mind that

the person possesses. The Holy Spirit generates within Christians its very fruit, which "is love, joy, peace, long suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance" (Gal. 5:22-23). It encourages us through trials and empowers us to do the Work of God.

Once a person receives the precious gift of the Holy Spirit, he must use it in order to grow in the knowledge and grace of God. God's Spirit gives Christians the mind of Christ (1 Cor. 2:16) to enable them to view life from a godly perspective instead of from a selfish one. It is this power that gives us the capacity to obey God. The deep mystery of the plan of God for mankind. cannot be completely and totally understood without the Holy Spirit (1 Cor. 2:7-10).

Of even greater significance is the fact that through this Spirit we are actually "begotten" as sons of God and become members of the body of Christ—the Church (1 Cor. 12). The seed of this Holy Spirit, planted by God after baptism, grows and develops spiritually within us as we grow in obedience and submission to God's law. The Holy Spirit is dynamic: it flows from God to and through the Christian and is expressed in his attitudes and actions. The more we use God's Spirit the stronger our new spiritual life becomes. Finally, at the resurrection, this spiritual part of us becomes the totality of our composition and essence and overtakes the physical, so "that mortality [our physical essence] might be swallowed up of [spiritual] life" (2 Cor. 5:4).

God's Word reveals that the Holy Spirit is an "earnest"—a formal pledge or assurance—of eternal life which God has implanted within us making us sons. As long as this Spirit is living within us, we are actually sons of God and brothers of Christ. "Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of His" (Rom. 8:9). "For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God" (Rom. 8:14). Indeed, the presence of the Holy Spirit is the best criterion to define the true Christian: it is his only real ratification, for one cannot be a true Christian without it. As long as we nurture the Holy Spirit, and continue to renew it daily within us (2 Cor. 4:16) through prayer and diligent study of God's Word, then this earnest of God's Spirit is the absolute guarantee that we will be resurrected to spiritual life at Christ's return (ef. Eph. 1: 14).

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This publication is intended to be used as a personal study tool. Please know it is not wise to take any man's word for anything, so prove all things for yourself from the pages of your own Bible.

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