

# Holy Spirit P3

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## Holy Spirit in the New Testament

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### Speakers in the audio file:

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# Holy Spirit in the New Testament

Jon: Hey, this is Jon from The Bible Project. This episode is the final part of a discussion between Tim and I, on the Holy Spirit. In the first episode, we talked about the Hebrew word "ruakh", which is translated as wind, breath, and also God's Spirit. In the second episode, we also talked about how the word ruakh is used to describe man spirit. Then we talked about the three activities that we find God's ruakh doing in the Old Testament: creating, empowering people, and then recreating.

Today's conversation moves into the New Testament. The New Testament is written in Greek and so the Hebrew word ruakh is translated with the Greek word Pneuma, which conveniently can also mean wind and breath, or to blow - pneuma. Also, it means spirit. We look at how the life of Jesus is one empowered by the Holy Spirit.

Tim: The resurrection is connected to the Spirit. Paul uses is the creative power of God's Spirit to describe what recreated Jesus' body. He was a human and he ate food and he could hang out with his disciples, but he had different properties.

Jon: We've tried to cover a lot of ground in these three episodes, but we expect that at the end of this there's still lingering questions. I know. I still have some. So what we'd like to do is hear from you what questions you have about God's Spirit.

You can send them on Facebook, [facebook.com/jointhebibleproject](https://facebook.com/jointhebibleproject) or email them to us, [support@jointhebibleproject.com](mailto:support@jointhebibleproject.com), and in the next episode of the podcast, we're going to answer your questions on the Holy Spirit. If you have access to record yourself asking the question, that would be really great so we can play your question on the podcast itself.

Without further ado, the Holy Spirit in the New Testament. Let's go.

Tim: The way the Spirit is talked about in the New Testament fits into these three main things God's Spirit does in the Old Testament. In each of the Gospels, especially Matthew and Luke, Jesus' origins are connected to the creative work of the Spirit.

Matthew and Luke talk about Mary's pregnancy with Jesus as being the activity of the Spirit. Here is the pneuma now in the New Testament. But that's not a surprise to us. We already know that God's ruakh hovers and creates life in dark, and uninhabitable places, whether it's the waters—

Jon: Or a womb.

Tim: Or a womb. Yeah, that's right. The Spirit plays another key role in Jesus story at his baptism. There, it's really cool. So Jesus' baptism, John the Baptist is down at the river. He doesn't live in a van by the river but he is down by the Jordan River, and he's starting this renewal movement of the repentant among Israel.

Then Jesus comes and John identifies him as the leader; the one who will renew God's people. Then as he's praying, Jesus is in the water, it says, "The heavens were

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open, Mark says they were ripped open, and the Holy Spirit descended upon him in physical form, like that of a dove. And then God's voice speaks from heaven: "You are my son, whom I love with you I'm well pleased." The baptism story is so legit. So much happening here.

Why the bird? Just stop. Can I think of any other times that God's Spirit manifests bird-like thing, activities over the waters?

Jon: Yeah, Genesis 1.

Tim: Page 1.

Jon: It's covering.

Tim: The ruakh hovers. We talked about this, I think.

Jon: We didn't talk about being a flight metaphor of bird kind of—

Tim: Well, the word used for hover in Genesis 1, the Spirit of God hovered over the waters, that word, rachaph is only is like three other times in the Hebrew Bible, and always to describe birds.

Jon: Birds hovering?

Tim: Birds hovering.

Jon: Wow.

Tim: So the gospel authors are intentionally describing the Spirit coming on Jesus...

Jon: The creative spirit of Genesis 1.

Tim: ...recalling the language of God's ruakh

Jon: That's cool.

Tim: Yeah, it's totally cool. Notice also the three in one vision of God here. You have Jesus, and God the father who's talking to the Son, and the one who communicates the presence and love from the Father to the son is Spirit. What later Christians would call a Trinitarian God. The language is later than the New Testament, but the idea of the three in one God is all over the New Testament. This story is a really important one of them.

Jon: Now, it says, "The Holy Spirit," and that's the first time we've used that phrase in this entire conversation.

Tim: No. David said, "Holy Spirit. Don't take your Holy Spirit from me."

Jon: Okay.

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Tim: The Holy Spirit occurs a couple times in the Old Testament. It's usually the Spirit of God.

Jon: What's the Hebrew there? The holy?

Tim: Holiness. Kadosh.

Jon: Kadosh. We didn't talk about that in the holiness video.

Tim: Oh, just the vocabulary word? Yeah.

Jon: Yeah. Kadosh. "Don't take your ruakh of kadosh off me."

Tim: Yeah. It's a miracle. Holiness is about God's unique, one of a kindness, specifically referring to this role as creator, the author of life.

Jon: So, if it happens so infrequently in the Old Testament, why does it become just standard vocabulary in the New Testaments?

Tim: It's interesting. That's a good question. I'd have to do some homework on that. I'm sure somebody thought about that. But I don't know. It's not the only New Testament way the spirit is described. Spirit is described as the Spirit, the Holy Spirit, the Spirit of God, and the Spirit of Jesus in the New Testament.

Jon: But it's all talking about God's personal presence.

Tim: The personal presence of God. But in the New Testament, just like in the Old Testament, but more clear in the New Testament, it's a distinct personal presence. It's distinct from Jesus and it's distinct from the Father. And here we're into the three in one God.

Jon: Does Jesus has it?

Tim: Yes. What's interesting then is Jesus goes on from here, all of the Gospels talk about it, but the Gospel of Luke highlights it more than any other, is that in his ministry in Galilee announcing the kingdom, Luke mentions multiple times that Jesus is led by the Spirit, He speaks by the Spirit or like in Luke 4:1, "Jesus, full of the Holy Spirit returned from the Jordan."

So full, we're using the water metaphor now. He's filled up. He's like a vessel, like a container filled up with the spirit, meaning the spirit is permeating Jesus' existence in mind.

Jon: He's soaked with it.

Tim: It's a great metaphor. So the whole mission of Jesus' day to day Kingdom announcement was all linked to the work of the Spirit.

Jon: So that was his appointing?

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Tim: It's appointing. He was appointed to do his kingdom mission by the leading and empowering of the Spirit.

Jon: So those two activities are embedded in the baptism scene?

Tim: Yes.

Jon: Because it's an appointing moment, but it comes in this language and form of...

Tim: New creation.

Jon: ...the creative Spirit. New creation or just creation?

Tim: Well, it echoes Genesis 1, but Jesus is here to bring about that new creation that Isaiah talked about.

The other thing specific to Jesus' story in the New Testament is resurrection is connected to the Spirit.

Right at the beginning of Romans, Paul talks about Jesus as God's Son, born of the line of David, who was declared to be the Son of God with power when he rose from the dead by the Holy Spirit. Literally, he says, "By the spirit of holiness." Paul uses the creative power of God's Spirit to describe what recreated Jesus' body to walk out of the tomb and leave it empty.

Jon: Yeah, recomposed it.

Tim: Yeah. I mean, he was dead; is dead. And the kind of existence Jesus had post-resurrection was different.

Jon: Fundamentally different.

Tim: Fundamentally different. He was a human and he ate food and could hang out with his disciples, but he had different properties that can only be described as new creation. As strange as a lion hanging out with a lamb seems to us, and children's playing near cobra's nests is the kind of physical human body Jesus had or was. The New Testament authors, here Paul describes that as being the creative work of the Spirit.

In 1 Corinthians 15, Paul says that precisely the form of existence that followers of Jesus hope for, in our resurrection. He calls it a Spirit-empowered existence.

Jon: Which no other humans achieve in the Bible. You don't see any other humans who have a resurrected body.

Tim: No. Jesus is the only walking, talking bit of new creation in physical existence. But then now, we're into the role of then the Spirit in the rest of the New Testament. At

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the end of John, Jesus appoints his disciples. He says, "As the Father — this is in John chapter 20 — as the Father sent me, I sent you." It's interesting.

He's in the upper room with the disciples. He says that, and then he breathed on them, and said, "Receive the Holy Spirit." Such a powerful scene. Actually, the breathing on them, John's very specifically—

Jon: He ruakhed on them.

Tim: He ruakhed on them. It's precisely the same sentence phrases from Genesis 2 of God breathing on the pile of dirt. [unintelligible 00:11:14]. Receive the Holy ruakh. So he breathed on them, which we think like, "Oh, what does Jesus' breath smell like?" This is such a strange part of the story, but he's commissioning them, just the way David and the prophets were breathed upon by the Spirit.

Look, at what he says before it. "As the Father sent me, so what I came and was doing, now you're going to go do that." And just as the Spirit empowered Jesus to do it, so now he is appointing them by means of the spirit to go do the same thing.

[00:12:20]

Tim: Now we're into the Pentecost. The whole concept of the Spirit filling up Jesus' people, empowering them, coming upon them, this is all Old Testament vocabulary, but it's now all happening through Jesus. So, the book of Acts begins using a wind, right?

The Pentecost, the followers of Jesus are in that upper room, and we're told a violent wind comes into the room. The room that's full of this wind, Hurricane in the room, and they look at each other, and there's little mini fires, little fires above everybody's head. Which is clear references you want to the pillar of fire and cloud that came to rest over the tabernacle and temple. So, now we're melding spirit and temple storylines.

Jon: Did that get melded in the Old Testament? That God's Spirit for the temple.

Tim: It's interesting. No, no.

Jon: God's ruakh doesn't fill the temple?

Tim: It's God's kavod. His glory is what fills the temples. In the New Testament, God's Spirit is what comes into his new temple, which is the community of Jesus followers. And then all of them are filled up with the Holy Spirit. Then we're to the appointing liquid metaphor.

Jon: For the task of going and bringing good news to the ends of the world.

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Tim: That's right. Yeah, announcing the kingdom of God. All throughout the rest of the book of Acts, you see the Holy Spirit as an actor, like a character in the story. Acts 13, Paul and Barnabas were working at the church of Antioch, and the Holy Spirit said, "Set apart Barnabas and Saul for me." Other times in the story, Jesus appears and he'll say things, but then sometimes in the book of Acts, the Holy Spirit just appears and says things.

Paul and Barnabas want to go up to Galatia, and they're forbidden by the Spirit. The Spirit of Jesus didn't permit them. So, the spirit becomes a full-on personal presence of Jesus. But sometimes Jesus will appear to Paul in a visionary form, other times, it's the Spirit of Jesus, or the Spirit of God. What's the story with them being forbidden by the Spirit? Did they miss the boat? They missed the boat.

Jon: Right.

Tim: And they are just like, "Well, I guess the Spirit didn't want us to go."

Jon: Or did the wind blow and whisper like, "You guys shouldn't go," and they are like, "Oh, man, that was the Spirit."

Tim: Or one time is through a dream. Paul has a dream of a guy in Macedonia saying, "Come here." And so he goes. Here, we're into the realm of the day to day life of a follower of Jesus as being a life where if I'm going to become a mature disciple, I need to cultivate the skill of being aware of the Spirit and what the Spirit is saying to me, and prompting or influencing me to do or to say, or to be. That's the appointing Spirit.

Jon: The very beginning of this conversation on the Holy Spirit that we recorded last time, we talked about our tradition. And I come from a secessionist tradition, where, yeah, the apostles needed to pay attention to what the Spirit was doing and listening to the Spirit and that kind of thing, and it's a character. And now...I don't know. We never talked about cultivating that skill.

Tim: Yes.

Jon: And whenever I hear someone talk about that, it raises suspicions, like "Is that really the Spirit? Did you miss that boat because of the Holy Spirit or were you just lazy? Did you just forget to show up on time while sleeping? Or, does God really want you to take that job or is that just what you want to do?"

Tim: But we're already prepared for that with the idea that humans have a ruakh , God has a ruakh . And the way that God will influence you is by—

Jon: Influencing my ruakh .

Tim: So then the question is—

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Jon: How do you know when that's happening?

Tim: Yeah, yeah. The apostles know this is a potential problem. That's why in 1 John, he says, "Always test the spirits."

[crosstalk 00:17:00]

Tim: Yeah. John's very aware if somebody comes with a word from God to a church community, you better test that. You test it against the teachings of Jesus, test it against the teachings of the apostles. It might be that you're just hearing that woman's or that guy's prophet's ruakh and it's not God's law, actually speaking to the church through them. But other times, it will be God's ruakh influencing that prophets ruakh .

Jon: So when he says, "Test the spirits," is it that man spirit, or is it God's Spirit? That's what he means?

Tim: The point is, there are many ruakh s out there with many words...?

Jon: Really?

Tim: Yeah. You've got one. I've got one. Spirit is one of the words used to describe non-physical, personal beings that are evil,

Jon: Demons.

Tim: Demons is another vocabulary word for them in the New Testament, but there's sometimes called unclean spirits or evil spirit. That's a whole other topic. There is another personal invisible presence of a—

Jon: Something gnarly.

Tim: Yeah. That's a whole other podcast. The point is, is that being aware of the influence of God's Spirit in my spirit, and doing or saying, making choices because I think that's what God's Spirit wants me to do, it's subjective. Maybe that's best way to say it. It's always a subjective enterprise.

Therefore, Paul talks about evaluating words that people say come from the Spirit or John will say, "Test the spirits."

Jon: You don't see them in Acts testing that. They're just like, "Whoa, the Spirit said that, let's do it.

Tim: In Acts, no, they pray and fast. No, they were praying and fasting.

Acts 13, "At the church in Antioch, there were prophets and teachers: Barnabas, Simeon, Lucius, Manaen, and Saul. While they were worshipping the Lord and fasting,



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the Holy Spirit said, "Set apart for me Barnabas and Saul." So they're in a time of prayer, presumably discerning what God wants them to do.

Jon: So, I have to start to assume what was happening there in a sense.

Tim: Yeah, there's kind of untold story.

Jon: Because they could have been sitting there in a room and they're all praying and fasting, and one guy goes, "I hear God telling us not to go." Then another person goes, "That's what God's telling me too." And then another person saying, "Yeah, that's what I'm getting." And you like, "Okay, we're not supposed to go."

Tim: In this case, they are supposed to go, but then later on, in chapter 16, they were forbidden. There's untold story there. Through some means that Luke doesn't tell us, they discerned the spirit telling them not to go up to Galatia. It could be circumstantial, they missed the boat. It could be that they and some others all prayed and discerned it.

Jon: And together discerned, [then got late?].

Tim: That's right.

Jon: Or could it have been that the Spirit of God descended like a dove and said, "Don't go."

Tim: Here's another way the Spirit works. Acts chapter 15, there's this huge debate about whether non-Jewish Christians should start obeying the commands of the Torah. Some Jewish Christians say they should. So Paul, Barnabas, the apostles all get together in Jerusalem, they have a serious debate, like dispute. They're arguing the pulling out their Bibles. It's a long debate.

They finally come to a resolution and they write up a letter. What they say to in this letter, they said, "The apostles and elders, To the Gentile believers in Antioch, Syria, Galatia, we heard this news, so we all agreed to get together and talk about it." It seemed good to the Holy Spirit and to us." And then they go on and talk about their conclusion."

Jon: So they came up with something and Holy Spirit said, "It looks good." Or the Holy Spirit.

Tim: They discerned that through all of these wise, godly people coming together, debating, praying, Bibles are open, they come to a unified agreement, which is surprising given the diversity of people in the room. And they discern that that was the work of God's Spirit.

So they say, "It seemed good to the Holy Spirit and to us. And then here is what we decided." Isn't that interesting?

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Jon: Yeah.

Tim: So it could be through prophets. It could be through Bible open debate, prayer.

Jon: Not to get too picky, but by that, are they saying, "We came to this independently, or we came to this idea, and then God approved it?" Or they're saying, "By coming to this idea together, that's really God's idea?"

Tim: I'm not sure those are separate. I think the point is, they see those as unified. "Here's what we came to, therefore, we discern, that's what God let us to by the Spirit."

Jon: Led us to or...? Because the word there is "it seemed good."

Tim: It seemed good to the Holy Spirit and to us. Well, what does that refer to? All we have is the story of them having a big debate and Bible interpretation session and prayer meeting. Then what they say is, "It seemed good to the Spirit and to us here's what you should do."

So they believe that their conclusion through all of that process is what seems good to the Spirit and to them. The book of Acts everywhere is saying, "Part of being a mature disciple of Jesus is being aware of the presence of the Spirit."

Jon: So they would have been very aware when their Bibles are open, and they're debating that's God's there working on this.

Tim: Yes, the Spirit's in this. The Spirit is here.

Jon: And so, as they're doing it, when they're done, they're like, "Well, it seems good to us and God's been here, so it's good with God."

Tim: Yeah.

Jon: Okay, that's cool.

Tim: Yeah, that's the process they go through. The last main goldmine for the Spirit in the New Testament is Paul's letters. He mentions the Spirit. Let me do a quick words number search.

Jon: Yeah, sure.

Tim: Sure. I've got 149 hits of pneuma in Paul's letters. 149 times he mentions the Spirit.

Jon: To put that in context, how many chapters does Paul have?

Tim: There are 13 letters.

Jon: 13 letters.

Tim: Oh, man, I'd have to do...It'll take me a couple of minutes.

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- Jon: So 13 letters, 150 times he talks about the Spirit.
- Tim: All that to say is the Spirit is a really big deal for Paul's vision of the Christian life.
- Jon: Is it Paul who says keep in step with the Spirit?
- Tim: Yeah. Oh, man, best book out there on the Spirit and Paul's by a scholar named Gordon Gee. It's called "God's Empowering Presence." Its exhaustive. He studies in detail all 149.
- Jon: Oh, wow.
- Tim: He groups them together in categories. It's a really helpful study.
- Jon: Is it super geeky academic?
- Tim: Yeah. I mean, it's a thorough study. He's not messing around. But it doesn't presume Greek or Hebrew. He keeps most of that to the footnotes and stuff like that.
- Jon: Cool. Can I ask a question though?
- Tim: Yeah.
- Jon: We talked about these three activities in the Old Testament: creating, appointing, new creation. It seems like appointing happened for a time.
- Tim: Yes, yes. Right.
- Jon: And now, in the New Testament, there's an appointing, but now it's a lifestyle. Right?
- Tim: Yes.
- Jon: It's not just like, "Hey, for this task." It's like, "It's for a new way of life., and so now, you have to reorient everything through the Spirit." Is that a new step forward or is that how David was thinking?
- Tim: What we looked at, it's what David and Ezekiel knew needed to happen. It's what they hoped for. Moses hoped for it too. In the wilderness, he has this line in Numbers 11, "I wish all of God's people had the Spirit on them."
- So, yeah, the Old Testament prophetic voice is hope for and know that so a life permeated with God's ruakh is what's needed for new creation to really happen.
- Jon: So, if Ezekiel was watching the apostles—
- Tim: The upper room or Pentecost.
- Jon: Pentecost. But then all this activity through Acts, would he and then he's like, "Oh, this is the Valley of dry bones happening?"

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Tim: Correct. Yes, I think so. The resurrection of Jesus by the Spirit, and then the permeation of God's people, Jesus' followers by the Spirit, the book of Acts, all the apostles are very clearly saying, "This is what the prophets were pointing to." We didn't even talk about...sheesh, there's so much to explore here that we can't do in necessarily a video.

But at Pentecost, Peter in his sermon because of what the people start doing with the tongues of pillars of fire over their head is speaking in all these languages they didn't already know. And there's all of these Israelites there from all over the world, and they all understand and become unified all of those who turn and follow Jesus as a people. So Israel gets renewed right there at Pentecost. The tribes come together again. So, Luke is trying to say this is the recreation of Israel the covenant people of God.

Then that same thing happens to Cornelius and the Gentiles. There's another outpouring of the Spirit, and then these non-Jewish people are speaking in these unknown languages. Tongues, it's called. There's a lot of debate, obviously, a lot of debate in Christian history about speaking in tongues, and so on.

In the book of Acts, it happens at key moments where the boundary lines of God's people are broken, and new people, more and more different kinds of people get included in the family of Jesus. That's when tongues appear in the story. It plays that role.

So the Spirit is about expanding and spreading the more and more humans in the book of Acts, Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria, to the ends of the earth. So the point is about the new humanity that the Spirit is creating through the mission of Jesus. That's the book of Acts.

Luke is saying, "That's what the prophets were hoping for is what was happening through the people of Jesus."

Jon: Now, that isn't the fullness of what the prophets are hoping for, because lions aren't laying down with lambs and the knowledge of God hasn't permeated the earth.

Tim: Well, it doesn't look like Isaiah 11.

Jon: And people are going to die and then be resurrected.

Tim: Still injustice, still, death, all that.

Jon: So it's just an aspect of what they're hoping for.

Tim: It's an aspect, yeah. Here, we're to the whole big storyline framework of the Bible is that Jesus inaugurates the kingdom of God. He walks out of the tomb as a bit of walking, talking new creation. Paul talks about the presence of the Spirit as a down

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payment. He says that in 2 Corinthians and Ephesian, is that down payment of the new creation.

Jon: So, is that where we're still at? We're still at the down payment - the inauguration?

Tim: Yeah.

[crosstalk 00:29:14]

Jon: We're not into the second mortgage payment. This is still the down payments.

Tim: That's right. Yeah, we're in this period where new creation has really started. I get a taste of it. When I taste new creation is when I am fully submitted to and aware of and permeated by the presence of the Spirit.

Jon: And so, the Spirit will be doing something unique during this era of the down payment?

Tim: Yeah. Messing with people.

Jon: Messing with people?

Tim: Messing with your ruakh . God's ruakh comes and starts to mess with your ruakh , and you're like, "Oh, man, I'm really screwed up. I need help. I need a new heart. I need to be rescued from my selfishness." And Paul will say, "Yeah, that's the pneuma of Jesus. The Spirit is messing with you, preparing you—

Jon: Pneuma being the Greek translation of ruakh ?

Tim: Yeah. And that's how the Spirit works on people. Then when they hear the story about Jesus, they go, "That's who I need. I need Jesus." The Spirit always points you to Jesus according to Paul. Never to just have an experience but the point you to Jesus. The Spirit then becomes the presence of Jesus. For Paul, the Spirit is the presence of Jesus is going to start reshaping you. The fruit of the Spirit, for example, at the end of Galatians, it's—

Jon: So it's shaping me for this era?

Tim: It's, first of all, garden imagery, fruit. So Garden of Eden entry right there. What would the Garden of Eden look like with character renewal? Love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control, which is all Jesus. It's the life of Jesus made alive within me. That's the role of the Spirit is to create Jesus inside of me.

Paul can sometimes say, "I died with Jesus when he died on the cross. So the life I now live, it's not me, it's Jesus living in me." So he can say, "Jesus lives in me." But then later on in the letter to the Galatians, he'll say, "It's the Spirit in you producing fruit." So it's two sides of the same coin for Paul.

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- Jon: And that passage, Paul's, I was reminded of that when we were talking about David saying, "Give me a new ruakh ." Oh, no, Ezekiel. David says, "Create in me a new ruakh ." Ezekiel says, "They need a new ruakh ."
- Tim: Correct.
- Jon: So David wants it recreated, Ezekiel is like, "They are going to get a new one." Then I was thinking about Paul, he says, "I no longer live but Christ lives in me."
- Tim: How does Christ lives in me? He doesn't say it in chapter 1, but that's his whole vision of the Spirit.
- Jon: So, Paul's thinking, "It's a new one. It's God's ruakh ."
- Tim: Yeah, I need a new life. Brand new humanity. A new existence.
- Jon: So God might be recreating my heart but as far as my ruakh , He's just got to... It's a surgery. It's a transplant.
- Tim: "I need a new one." And then right after he finishes listing the fruit of the Spirit, he says, "So, if you were given a new life by the Spirit, keep in step with the Spirit."
- Jon: So you still have a ruakh ?
- Tim: Yeah. He doesn't bonk you over the head and make you a brand new human overnight. You have to partner with the Spirit just like the apostles had to partner with the Spirit in that room with the Bible open, debating, and praying together just like Paul and Barnabas.
- Jon: So, you're given a new ruakh , God's ruakh but you still have your own sense of self that needs keep in step with it.
- Tim: Correct, yeah. Paul calls it the war of your flesh and your spirit; your sinful nature and your new humanity created by the Spirit, and there's this battle. He calls it a battle inside of you. There's been lots of good sermons and metaphors about that.
- Jon: So, I have a will, a mind, I have God's Spirit, but then I also have the flesh. So there are three kinds of elements here?
- Tim: Yeah.
- Jon: And my ruakh decides—
- Tim: Your fresh there isn't referring to your physical body. It's referring to your selfish, morally corrupt—
- Jon: My aptitude to be morally corrupt.
- Tim: Correct.

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Jon: So I can decide to keep in step with that or I can decide to keep in step with God's ruakh . And why didn't Paul call that my spirit? Why did he call it my flesh?

Tim: It's a whole long debate, I think. But there's something about flesh in the way that he was using the—

Jon: Sárkas.

Tim: Yeah, good. Sarx, sárkas in Greek. Whereas an image it communicates my body has appetites: food, sleep, sex, and those appetites can drive me to really destructive behaviors if I don't control them. And so, that vocab, that idea gets communicated by the word flesh in the Old and New Testaments.

Jon: This is why people become monastic.

Tim: Yeah, that's right. But Paul's idea of the new humanity isn't non-physical. But it's a new type of physical existence, one that is permeated by the Spirit. Which doesn't mean you're not human anymore. It means you're more human.

Jon: So I can be a glutton and that's my flesh. But not be glutton doesn't mean now I don't enjoy food. It means I eat to God's kavod. I eat to the glory of God.

Tim: You eat and drink for the glory of God.

Jon: And to do that, I have to keep in step with God's Spirit, God's ruakh .

Tim: There's so much in the New Testament. Spiritual gifts, which Peter and Paul talk about, it's the same. Jesus was appointed, we're appointed, so God can appoint different people, can enhance their natural abilities, inspire them so that what they contribute to the church is what God wants to have happen in that church community. So Paul talks about that at length.

Jon: And that's all about how we as Christians live in participation as God's Spirit. Which is something that the Old Testament, Ezekiel, and David and Moses, all these people were kind of longing for and prophesying this moment would come where humans could do this. However, there's also this anticipation that all of creation will be fundamentally changed.

We've been talking about kindness in-between time, and the New Testament also then we'll begin to talk about God's Spirit recreating things. Now, is this me keeping in step with the spirit and being filled with the Spirit, that's not recreation, that's just the being appointed or is that the beginning of recreation?

Tim: There are two ways Paul would talk about the Spirit. One is that appointing. He'll appoint you to be a good leader, or a good servant or a good administrator in the church.

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Jon: Those are spiritual gifts?

Tim: Spiritual gifts. But then there's this moral character transformation - ethical renewal. And that's we're in new creation territory.

Jon: And that's happening.

Tim: Yeah. Like in Romans 8, Paul will say, "If the Spirit that raised Jesus from the dead lives in you, the one who raised Christ from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through His Spirit." He can, first of all, link the Spirit that raised Jesus to your own hope of resurrection. But then he can also totally link the Spirit of Jesus and the resurrection to your moral recreation.

Jon: So the moral recreation is happening now, but your physical recreation will happen during the resurrection.

Tim: Will happen in the resurrection. For Paul, it's the same new life that you're participating in. So, when I have moments where I check my selfish agenda at the door and I just love and serve my wife or my neighbor, even though I'm hungry and I didn't get much sleep last night, but I sense Jesus wants me to just be a servant right now. And I do it. And it's the right thing, and it's awesome. Paul would invite you—

Jon: And you're not even doing it on your own strength completely.

Tim: Yeah, and I'm tired and cranky but I find this desire and motive and I act on it. And then something good comes out of it. Paul would invite me to see a little taste of my true self as a new human in Jesus. That's my new humanity coming out.

A maturing follower of Jesus, for Paul, is someone who when they tap into that, they go, "That's who I really am. I'm going to do more of that." And when they do more of that, as Paul did, he'll look back and he'll say, "I worked harder than all of the other apostles." Well, sorry, sorry, it was God's grace working in me." may feel attributed to God even though he was the one who did it. And that's the dynamic of the Spirit is that, when I do it, it's me, but it's not me.

Jon: In Colossians, doesn't he say something like, "I work with God's Spirit?" There's a verse in Colossians that's kind of speaks to that.

Tim: It's this melding. It's that my will become so intertwined with God's will. My ruakh , my mind, and purpose, become so unified with the Spirit that that's when I know I'm following Jesus. And primarily in the present, pre-resurrection, for me, that's when I know I'm in the sweet spot, is when I'm exhibiting the fruit of the Spirit when I'm doing the kinds of things Jesus would do. That's my new humanity.



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Paul says, "Feed that." And you won't be able to do by yourself. You need to be in a community of a whole bunch of other people who are undergoing that same process. And together, you'll be able to carry each other along this process.

[00:40:08]

Jon: So, the life of a Christian, a way to think about it is really learning how to live in this inauguration period and to step into one side of it, and stay there and to do that as a community. One side of it being in step with the Spirit, even though we still have that baggage of what Paul calls the flesh.

Tim: Yeah.

Jon: Paul says in Colossians 1:29, "To this end, I strenuously contend with all the energy Christ so powerfully works in me."

Tim: Oh, yeah. There it's Christ, not the spirit. But he commonly swaps Jesus and the Spirit. So, "Here I am working really hard."

Jon: With the power of Christ in me.

Tim: With the with the power that Jesus is working here. So is it me, or is that Jesus? Exactly.

Jon: Right. I'm also really going to attach this idea, the era of inauguration because we're still in it, and it's 2000 years later. So it's not like a moment in time. It's a lot of human history. And who is to say it's not going to be another 1,000 years?

Tim: Correct. It could be.

Jon: Or 2000 years. And so, this whole period of time with generations and generations, and civilization after civilization, I mean, it's the time of inauguration of new creation. You have to step back and get this very big history perspective to think of 2,000 years as an inauguration. Inauguration is like a moment. It's inaugurating. It's the ceremony. If it was an hour, it was too long.

Tim: The better analogy would be the time period between an election in democratic Republic, an election of a leader and their being appointed. Usually, there's a gap.

Jon: Yeah, they're elected in November, they start in January.

Tim: There you go.

Jon: So they are inaugurated in November, their reign begins in January.

Tim: Correct

Jon: So their inauguration lasts for like three months.

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Tim: But what's the time period between the election and the inauguration, and then the appointing?

Jon: I don't know.

Tim: Anyway. But the point is it's a multi-step process or the gap.

Jon: Got it.

Tim: That's the way the New Testament envisions the time between Jesus' resurrection and his reach return.

Jon: Jesus was elected. Not democratically.

Tim: Jesus was elected and inaugurated with the empty tomb.

Jon: And then he inaugurated new creation.

Tim: And the resurrection and the coming of the Spirit.

Jon: Then he says, "Participate in new creation with me. It's not here and full, but it's here and it's happening." That's the apostles doing that. Then 2000 years later, it's us still doing that. But one day, we will look back and we'll go, "Hey, that season of inauguration, that was just a moment, a brief moment in human history compared to new creation." Right?

Tim: That is the way that Jesus and the apostles talked about it.

Jon: But to us, it's like our entire life and our children's lifetime likely and generations back as far as we can think. So to us, it doesn't feel like a special moment in time. It just feels like human history.

Tim: Yeah, right. Yes, it's a good point. What you're pointing out is that it's actually hard for us to foster to live in the story? It's a hard story to live in.

Jon: Yeah. You have to think this is a very special moment in human history. I mean, we haven't talked about eternity much, but if life is eternal and humans and God live for a long time together, humanity will be around for a long time. This moment, whether it's 2,000 years or 10,000 or 20,000. It's a blip in human history and it's a very significant moment of transition. It's at the center of new creation.

It's like being built up with the prophets and then it is inaugurated with Jesus, and then we get to live in it. And that's where we're at right now. Just to reorient my mind to that seems important.

Tim: And that it takes effort.

Jon: It takes a lot effort.

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Tim: I think especially in the modern Western world, with our narrative, cultural story of progress, political education, technological progress, that's a narrative that says, "We are just at the cusp of the pinnacle. or we could create the pinnacle kind of thing."

The biblical story also has a progression, saying, we are a part of something progressing, but what we hope for, ultimately, is for something that we have to receive as a gift that we won't be able to accomplish on our own steam. Which doesn't mean sit back and do nothing. That would also be living in the wrong story.

Jon: This is all embedded in creation, new creation. Like to understand the Spirit, if you understand creation, new creation, then the Spirit kind of fits right into the same grids.

Tim: But this isn't the new creation video.

Jon: No.

Tim: This is the Holy Spirit video. And it overlaps.

Jon: It overlaps.

Tim: It overlaps in a big way.

Jon: Because what is it going to mean to you if I say, "The Holy Spirit's role is to bring new creation if that's not a category in your mind?"

Tim: Yeah, that's true. So we have to bring that in. For me, I think the biggest win for the video will be this reorientation of just God's Spirit in the Bible and the work it takes us to get there, and then the storyline that the Spirit unify how this—

Jon: The storyline though being creation, new creation.

Tim: Creation, and then appointing a human to lead humanity into new creation.

Jon: Thanks for listening to this final part of the discussion on the Holy Spirit. Just a reminder that we're going to do a question and answer podcast episode next week on the Holy Spirit. So send us your questions.

We're going to record our answers to those on Monday so if you can get your question for then, we'd love to answer them. Tim would love to answer them, and I'll do follow up questions for you.

The Bible Project is a nonprofit. We believe the Bible is one unified story that leads to Jesus and has profound wisdom for the modern world. You can find us at [thebibleproject.com](http://thebibleproject.com). We make lots of videos and other resources.

The video on the Holy Spirit will be out very soon, sometime the end of March so keep an eye out for that. And thanks for being a part of this with us.

# Holy Spirit in the New Testament