

# The Spirit of Revelation

**Text:** Revelation 22.17; John 16.7–15

**Theme:** We must hear the words of the Holy Spirit who testifies to the glory of Jesus Christ

## Introduction – Revelation attracts & repels readers alike

- attracts because depicts strange new world
- apocalyptic vision captures our imagination
- we know there is something beyond us as we read it
- and of course, we always seem to be curious about the future
- what's going to happen? When will it all come to an end?

## Revelation can repel at the same time

- we wonder what it all means; it seems to confuse us
- we despair of making any sense of it at all
- some great teachers of the past never wrote about it
- out of all the commentaries John Calvin wrote, he left this book alone
- and perhaps some of the wilder speculations have put us off as well

## I've given you a little something to help keep things clear

- in your bulletin is a simple bookmark
- on it you'll find the song of Revelation & its major themes
- tuck in your Bible in the book of Revelation & draw upon it often

## So, how can we hope to enjoy this book, let alone learn from it?

- well, we need the help of the Holy Spirit
- this is the case with all of Scripture
- apart from the Spirit of God, we cannot understand the Bible
- *Now we have received not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is from God, that we might understand the things freely given us by God. And we impart this in words not taught by human wisdom but taught by the Spirit, interpreting spiritual truths to those who are spiritual.*

*The natural person does not accept the things of the Spirit of God, for they are folly to him, and he is not able to understand them because they are spiritually discerned. The spiritual person judges all things, but is himself to be judged by no one.*

(1 Corinthians 2:12–15 ESV)

- this is why it is so necessary to have the Spirit to learn from Revelation
- this book is, after all, the revelation of Jesus Christ
- so we need the Spirit to point us to Christ

## Re-read John 16.13–14

*When the Spirit of truth comes, he will guide you into all the truth, for he will not speak on his own authority, but whatever he hears he will speak, and he will declare to you the things that are to come. He will glorify me, for he will take what is mine and declare it to you.*

John 16:13–14 ESV

- it may appear that the Holy Spirit doesn't get mentioned much in Revelation
- and this would be a true observation
- but don't be mistaken: the Spirit is key to understanding Revelation
- and the Holy Spirit is essential to God's plan of redemption

## Jesus told His disciples that the Holy Spirit would guide them into all the truth

- He points the readers of Revelation to Christ crucified and risen
- grace and peace come from the Holy Spirit
- just as they do from God the Father and Jesus the Son
- so, just as with Christ, the Spirit is co-equal with God
- as such, He has authority to call the churches to hear His words to the churches
- so, we must not turn a deaf ear to what the Spirit tells us
- we must hear His words because He testifies and glorifies Jesus Christ

*So, let's consider the...*

### **I. THE SPIRIT**

- according to the Apostle John, the Spirit is the Spirit of Revelation
- the Spirit speaks the Word of God
- it also the Spirit who, in a sense, takes John on several of his visionary tours
- for example, Revelation 1.10

*I was in the Spirit on the Lord's day, and I heard behind me a loud voice like a trumpet*

Revelation 1:10 ESV

- here, John will see the stunning vision of the Son of Man
- so the Spirit is the spirit of prophecy, pointing our vision to Jesus Christ
- thus fulfilling John 16.14 when Jesus said, "He will glorify Me."

#### **1. In the Spirit**

- John uses this phrase frequently; what does it mean, exactly?
- it occurs when John is given another vision; he's receiving something from the Lord
- many say this is prophecy, but essence of prophecy is the Spirit breathing God's Word out
- and the Spirit centers that Word upon Christ Jesus
- to be in the Spirit is telling us to look at and to Jesus
- Spirit directs our attention to the Lamb that was slain
- He reveals Him as the Son of Man who rules over the kings of the world
- the Spirit's role is to shine the floodlight upon Jesus Christ
- Christ is the One who has accomplished redemption; He is the Savior

#### **2. Always pointing**

*At once I was in the Spirit, and behold, a throne stood in heaven, with one seated on the throne.*

Revelation 4:2 ESV

- here, the prophetic spirit is upon John as he sees the majesty of the throne room of heaven
- in this throne room, he will see Jesus Christ in His glory as the Lion of the tribe of Judah
- this Lion, as we saw last Lord's Day, is the Lamb who was slain
- this is the Spirit's work: to direct attention, not to Himself, but to the majesty on High
- there are many who seem to talk almost inordinately about the Holy Spirit
- they make much of His gifts to each believer, especially spectacular gifts
- if you attending a service at a church which does this, it would seem quite different
- the question that must always be asked is this:
- who got the attention in all this? Holy Spirit? Or Jesus?
- based upon what Jesus Himself said about the Spirit, it will not be the Spirit
- the Spirit is always pointing away from Himself to Jesus

#### **3. A central role of victory**

- there is another occasion where John finds himself "in the Spirit"

*And he carried me away in the Spirit into a wilderness, and I saw a woman sitting on a scarlet beast that was full of blasphemous names, and it had seven heads and ten horns.*

Revelation 17:3 ESV

- what John now sees is judgment coming upon Babylon
- destruction will come upon her, the reign of evil is limited and over
- we see this more in Revelation 21

*And he carried me away in the Spirit to a great, high mountain, and showed me the holy city Jerusalem coming down out of heaven from God*

Revelation 21:10 ESV

- two women are in view here: the great whore Babylon, and the beautiful bride of Christ
- the new heavens and the new earth belong to the bride, not to Babylon
- a new world is coming, a new heaven and earth
- this tells us that history ultimately belongs to the purified bride of Christ
- Babylon has no place in the heavenly Jerusalem; Rome has been cast down

#### 4. Speaking to the churches

- when John is told to write to the seven churches in Asia, each letter contains the same words
- “what the Spirit says to the churches”
- yes, it is the Spirit, but they are the words of Christ as He speaks to His bride
- so we have the Spirit of prophecy, the Spirit of revelation
- we have the third member of the Trinity lifting up the second, Jesus Christ
- and finally, at the end of the book, the Spirit speaks to the church

*The Spirit and the Bride say, “Come.” And let the one who hears say, “Come.” And let the one who is thirsty come; let the one who desires take the water of life without price.*

Revelation 22:17 ESV

- the Spirit invites Christ to come & all to come to Him in faith
- let the one who is thirsty...this is the Spirit’s work and the Spirit’s desire: create a thirst and bring one to Christ to have it satiated

*But there is another phrase connected to the Holy Spirit here; it is...*

#### II. THE SEVEN SPIRITS

- Revelation 1.4 has a phrase that raises our eyebrows
- John to the seven churches that are in Asia:

*Grace to you and peace from him who is and who was and who is to come, and from the seven spirits who are before his throne*

Revelation 1:4 ESV

- what is the identity of these “seven spirits”?
- we see grace and peace coming from the Father
- in the next verse, v. 5, this grace and peace come from Jesus
- but who or what are these seven spirits?
- some say they are the angels who watch over each church
- but there is no other reference to angels doing this in Scripture
- so, it most likely isn’t referring to angels
- this means that it refers to the Holy Spirit
- how do we know this?
- the number seven, as we will keep on learning, is symbolic in Revelation
- seven refers to the perfect of the Holy Spirit
- again, note vv. 4–5: “Grace and peace from...”
- He who was and is and is to come — this is God the Father
- v. 5 “and from Jesus Christ...” — so grace and peace are coming from Jesus as well
- but this grace and peace also come from the seven spirits
- again, it can’t be angels because nowhere do we ever read of grace & peace from angels

- if these two blessings are coming from God the Father and God the Son and a third person is mentioned, we have every reason to believe this is the seven-fold perfect Holy Spirit
- keep this in mind whenever we come across references to “the seven spirits”
- the Holy Spirit is in God’s presence, directing our gaze to Jesus Christ

### **Conclusion – Hear...and be saved!**

- in Revelation, the Holy Spirit speaks
- He speaks prophetically
- He reveals what is going on in the spiritual realm
- He speaks God’s Words to the churches
- He testifies to Jesus Christ, the faithful witness
- so we must hear what the Spirit says
- we must obey what the Spirit says
- this Spirit was sent into the world by God the Father
- when God the Son had been crucified, buried, raised and exalted, the Spirit came
- God the Spirit is here to point us to Christ
- by convicting us of our sin
- by regenerating our hearts so we might believe
- and by sealing us with God’s mark upon us
- so let’s hear the Spirit speaking in God’s Word
- and, since He is the Spirit of Holiness, let us walk in that holiness to God’s glory