

PARTNERS IN PRAYER- "God We Exalt You!"

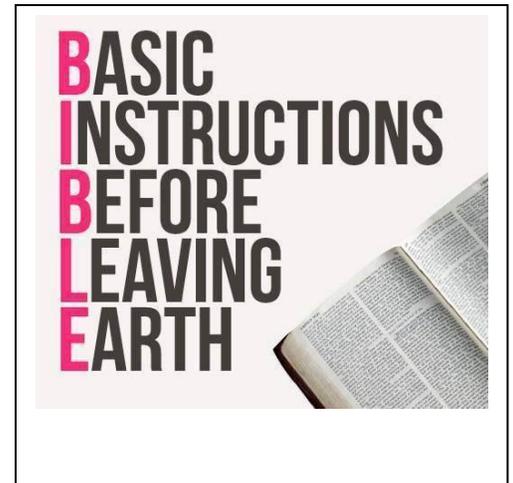
April 24th, 2022 The Holy Spirit in the Book of Revelation
Dear Prayer Team,

"John to the seven churches which are in Asia: Grace be unto you, and peace, from Him which is, and which was, and which is to come; and from the seven Spirits [Holy Spirit] which are before His throne."

Revelation 1:3 (AKJV)

"That He may give unto you the Spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Him: and that the eyes of your understanding being enlightened; and that you may know what is the hope of His calling, and what the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints."

Ephesians 1:17-18 (NKJV)



When was the last time you tried to find a manual, but couldn't find it? We all have an owner's manual for our car. It's probably stuffed in the back of the glove box, but we usually don't consult it unless something goes wrong. My fear is that many people treat their Bibles like that. It's the manual for our lives, and our Creator-Manufacturer has given us these instructions. But it's not consulted. It's overlooked. What even infuriates me more is that those "manuals" which you used to have for new products, such as your dishwasher, your highchair, and other home appliances, are no longer produced on paper for us. The millennial generation's response that we all get today is: "We don't write manuals anymore; we just go on to YouTube and look it up." I don't know how that feels for you, but I'm still one of those people stuck in the "stone-age" using ink and paper. I love to see printed words and pictures in print! I love the feel and hear the sound of the paper in a book. I don't like just looking things up on a screen. Isn't that telling of my age?

You know, in this day of "look it up on a computer or phone," we are missing out on a blessing. That is, "the good old-fashioned study it out and deeply-find-and root-it out kind-of-learning." Just as there was joy in building a sand castle, there is joy in hunting through books to learn. There was a time when people were academically minded, and would study and chase after book learning like it was one of the greatest prizes for wisdom. And the rewards were a "spirit of wisdom and truth" that seemed to improve our lives.

Could it be that in these final days before Christ comes, we are throwing the baby out with the bathwater? Again, I'm not saying it is wrong to not look things up with Siri or Google. I'm not saying it isn't convenient, or even faster, because truly it is; but I am saying that some old ways still have benefits we may lack in skill. Such is the truth about the Holy Spirit and God's Word. The

Holy Spirit is the Author of Scripture, “All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works” (2 Timothy 3:16-17). That word “inspired” is a word meaning “Spirit breathed” or “the breath of the Living Spirit”. What we are saying is, “God’s Word is inspired, written, authored, knowable, and gives us living knowledge, because it is from the living Holy Spirit.” If that is true, then when we crack open the pages of our Bible, we are not looking into a dead book of facts, but a living, breathing book of true knowledge. I love the alliteration for B.I.B.L.E. that I learned in Sunday School years ago: “This Bible is Basic Instructions Before Leaving planet Earth!” And is not the Holy Spirit a vital part to our understanding of the Book of Revelation? As we transition back into our study of the Book of Revelation, I want to understand the great benefits and how the Holy Spirit is described by the Book of Revelation.

Now, frankly, a lot of people think more about how they feel about truth, not about truth itself. The prophet Hosea said, "My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge" (Hosea 4:6). Echoing this, the late James Montgomery Boice said, "We do not have a strong church today, nor do we have many strong Christians. We can trace the cause to an acute lack of sound spiritual knowledge in the Bible." I think he hit the nail on the head. Ignorance is not bliss, and we are accountable to know truth! Are we seeking the Spirit’s living and breathing Word?

I’ve heard some questions about the Person of the Holy Spirit in the Book of Revelation, and I’m asking us this question as we work to return to the Book of Revelation study: “How is the Holy Spirit introduced to us and seen in the Book of Revelation?”

The Spirit plays a significant role in the Book of Revelation. In fact, the book begins and ends with references to the Spirit (Rev. 1:4; 22:17). But for some, the fact that the Spirit is not described as being on the throne with the Father and the Son means that He is not a person, much less a member of the Godhead. Let’s examine the evidence.

1. Role of the Spirit in Revelation: The Spirit is called “the Spirit of life” (11:11, NKJV; some translations read “breath of life”), that is to say, He is life and He gives life. In the Bible life is identified with God and Jesus. Another important role of the Spirit is to communicate messages of God and Jesus through the gift of prophecy (1:10; 4:2; 17:3; 19:10; 21:10). Both Jesus and the Spirit speak to the church. Each of the messages to the churches contains the phrase “He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches” (2:7, 11, 17, 29; 3:6, 13, 22). These messages are exhortatory and usually contain promises or revelations about God’s plan for the churches, as well as Satan’s intentions. Jesus promised His disciples that He would come to them in the Person of the Spirit (John 14:15-18). In Revelation we see Jesus

speaking to His church through the Spirit, the voice and presence of Christ within the church. He blesses the church (14:13), gives believers grace and peace (1:4), and is directly involved in the mission of the church (22:17). The church exists through the power and presence of the Spirit.

2. The Godhead and the Spirit: Revelation indicates that the Spirit is one of the Persons of the Godhead. The Godhead did not hand the church over to an impersonal force! Demonic spirits are His counterpart, and they too are personal beings who deceive the kings of the earth (16:13, 14). It's true that we occasionally find passages in which only the Son and the Father are mentioned (e.g., 5:13; 7:10). But silence does not prove anything.

There is a triadic formula in which the three Persons of the Godhead are mentioned: "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, and from Jesus Christ" (1:4, 5). Grace and peace are gifts of God that find their origin in the members of the Godhead. The book closes with a reference to the three Persons: Jesus (22:16), the Spirit (22:17), and God (22:18). We also find the three of them mentioned several times in the throne vision: the seven Spirits of God (4:5); God (4:9); and Jesus under the symbols of a Lion and a Lamb (5:5, 6).

3. The Throne and the Spirit: In Revelation the Spirit is not described as sitting on the throne of God. Have you ever thought about "famous thrones?" Once, I tried looking up everything I could find on the famous thrones of history. Some of them were splendid. Solomon's throne was made of gold and ivory. It had six steps leading up to it and a footstool of gold. On each side was a golden lion with a golden lion standing at each end of each of the steps. Other kingdoms made copies of it.

On the other hand, there was the Coronation Throne of Great Britain, also called King Edward's Chair. It is quite plain with a straight back and a very hard-looking seat. I would choose my La-z Boy over that throne any day of the week, but every British monarch since the year 1307 has received the crown of the British Empire seated on Edward's Chair. Its main feature is a shelf under the seat designed to hold the Stone of Scone, a 300-pound rock that represents the pride and identity of Scotland. The original point, I suppose, was to demonstrate the subjugation of Scotland to the British monarch.

Thrones are more than chairs. They are symbols of power. They have names that represent the values and culture of a kingdom – the Lion Throne, the Dragon Throne, the Iron Throne, Saint Peter's Chair. (That one belongs to the Pope, and anything he says while seated there is considered true and binding on the whole Roman Catholic Church.)

God has a throne too. Ezekiel the prophet devotes the entire first chapter of his book describing it. John the Apostle saw visions of it in the Book of Revelation and it was enough to make him tremble. But for all of its fearful appearance, God's throne has an astounding name. Hebrews 4:15-16 tells us that it is called "The Throne of Grace."

Think of that! The seat of all power and supreme authority in God's Universe is called the Throne of Grace! Despite its fearsome majesty, we are told that we can approach with confidence – not with arrogance but certainly not creeping and groveling either, because the One who sits on it has walked where we walk. He is "not unable to sympathize with our weaknesses," for He too has faced and dealt with every temptation that we encounter in life (verse 15). And because He thoroughly understands our weakness, He has invited us to approach with confidence and when we do, we will find mercy for our past failures and grace (God's enabling power) for anything that might be coming our way. What a throne! What a King! What a Kingdom! And we are its ambassadors (2 Corinthians 5.18-20).

In Revelation, God's Throne is the center of Heaven! (Rev. 4-5). The Spirit is not described as sitting on the throne of God. There are four main reasons for this. First, the emphasis placed on Christ sitting on the throne with God is based on the fact that He overcame the forces of evil. Jesus—God in human flesh—ascended to heaven and was granted the honor of sitting on the throne as coregent with God (5:12, 13). Second, the Spirit is indeed associated with the throne. He stands before it (4:5), and when the Lamb stands before the throne He is described as having the seven Spirits of God, that is to say the fullness of the Spirit (5:6). Third, even though the Spirit stands before the throne, He does not participate in the adoration of God and the Lamb. Only the four living beings and the 24 elders prostrate themselves before them and worship (4:9, 10). Fourth, in Revelation the function of the Spirit within the divine economy of salvation is not to sit on the throne, but to be present in the world and with the church. He is "the seven Spirits of God sent out into all the earth" (5:6). He has become a Servant of God, standing before Him to obey His command (1:4). We want to be listening to the voice of the Spirit as we go back into the Book of Revelation: "He who has the ears to hear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the seven churches" (Revelation 2:1), a phrase repeated over seven times.

In contrast to having our ears open and ready to listen to the Holy Spirit, the phrase "itching ears" found in 2 Timothy 4:3 is a desire for novelty. *The Message* puts it this way: "There will be times when people will have no stomach for solid teaching but will fill up on spiritual junk food—catchy opinions that tickle their fancy."

This warning to us today isn't about unbelievers or the culture at large turning from the truth—it's about believers. Paul was writing about superficial or

nominal Christians who join the ranks with true Bible-believing Christians, but eventually reject the plain written truth of God. Sadly, many in the church today, even pastors, do not have a biblical worldview. They stop looking in their Bibles and seeking and learning knowledge in the Word of God. They don't realize how they sell themselves short for not enjoying or employing the Bible as the one safe manual for their lives. Is that true for you?

So our calling is to know the truth, believe the truth, love the truth, speak the truth, and live the truth. When Paul said to Timothy, "Preach the Word," (2 Tim. 4:2) his exhortation was for us as well. We must be ready in-season and out-of-season, when we feel like it and when we don't, when it's convenient or when it's not. Preach the Bible. Not our opinions. Not our politics. Not our culture. Preach God's Word! And open our manuals daily so we can hear the Spirit's instructions before Jesus comes and calls us to leave planet earth and meet Him in glory! He's coming soon!

Will you pray with me?

"Our Father upon the Throne of Heaven, hallowed be Your name! We worship You today as we enter Your holy presence by the body and blood of Your Holy Son, Jesus Christ. Oh, Father, thank You for the life-giving breath of Your Holy Spirit. We pray for spiritual insight, wisdom, and knowledge of Your Word. May we be excited explorers of the Scriptures today. We love You! We love to learn more of You. May You increase, and our lives decrease. May our hearts catch fire from the blazing Holy Spirit's knowledge and wisdom which He wants all Your children to possess. Give us inspiration. Give us joy! Help us truly exalt Your Name through the powerful strength of the Spirit of the Living God! And we ask humbly and joyfully, In Jesus' Name. Come quickly to us, Oh, Jesus! Amen."

Reading and praying by the Holy Manual, Pastor Corvin <><

Quote:

"Holy Fire, burn away
My desire, for anything
That is not of You
And is of me
I want more of You
And less of me
Empty me, empty me
Fill, won't you fill me
With You, with You Holy Spirit!" ... Jeremy Camp (2004)

