

1:4) John: To the seven churches in Asia. Grace and peace to you from the one who is, who was, and who is to come, and from the seven spirits before his throne.

3:1) Write to the angel of the church in Sardis: *Thus says the one who has the seven spirits of God and the seven stars.*

4:5) Flashes of lightning and rumblings and peals of thunder came from the throne. Seven fiery torches were burning before the throne, which are the seven spirits of God.

5:6) Then I saw one like a slaughtered lamb standing in the midst of the throne and the four living creatures and among the elders. He had seven horns and seven eyes, which are the seven spirits of God sent into all the earth.

Having affirmed God the Father as “the one who is, who was, and who is to come,” the Apostle John now introduces God the Spirit – “from the seven spirits before his throne. John never uses the expression “the Holy Spirit” in the *Apokalupsis*, but addresses the Spirit in several ways. John certainly is acquainted with the Holy Spirit. He is the one who recorded in the Gospel the words of Jesus regarding the role and function of the Holy Spirit:

John 14:26 – *“But the Counselor, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you all things and remind you of everything I have told you.”*

John 15:26 – *“When the Counselor comes, the one I will send to you from the Father – the Spirit of truth who proceeds from the Father – he will testify about me.”*

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, but he will speak whatever he hears. He will also declare to you what is to come. He will glorify me, because he will take from what is mine and declare it to you.”*

The Spirit’s role and function in Revelation is extremely significant.

1. The Powerful Presence of the Holy Spirit – “seven spirits before His throne.”

“Seven spirits” used 4 times in Revelation.

- 1:4 – The Spirit as member of the Trinity (Father, Son, Holy Spirit)

- 3:1 – Jesus as the sovereign Lord holds the seven spirits and speaks to the Sardis church.
- 4:5 – seven lamps blazing, which are the seven spirits of God
- 5:6 – the Lamb has seven eyes, which are the seven spirits of Gods sent into all the earth.

In the Bible, numbers represent symbolic meaning. Seven is the number of perfection, or completeness. God has written the number seven in and through everything. How many days in a week? Seven. How many notes in a musical score? Seven. When Joshua marched against Jericho, how many time did encircle the city? Seven. How many parables concerning the kingdom in Matthew? Seven (Parable of the Seed and the Sower, Wheat and Tares, Mustard Seed, Leaven, Buried Treasure, Precious Pearl, and the Fishing Net.) Multiples of seven exist: Seventy weeks in Daniel. Psalm 90:10 affirm the human life span of seventy years. (Adrian Rogers, *Unveiling the End Times in Our Time*, pp. 18-19)

- Zechariah 4:6, 10 forms the background of the seven spirits – “*Not by strength or by might, but by my Spirit,*” says the Lord of Armies....These seven eyes of the Lord, which scan throughout the whole earth. The Holy Spirit define the eyes and presence of God in throughout the world, watching over all of His creation, and fighting against all kinds of evil.
- God the Father resides in heaven, seated on His throne. Jesus, God’s Son, completed His earthly assignment, and now shares His Father’s throne in heaven. As we wait the unveiling of the end time, the Holy Spirit continues the work of the Father and the Son on planet Earth.

2 The Distinct Voice of the Spirit – the Spirit speaks in Revelation first by unveiling the visions to John and then inspiring the prophecies of the *apokalupsis*. John is described as being “in the spirit” four times:

- 1:9-10 – the Spirit unveils the vision of Revelation to John as he is worshipping.
- 4:2 – the Spirit escorts John into heavenly worship service.
- 17:3 – the Spirit reveals God’s judgment upon the great prostitute, Babylon.

- 21:10 – the Spirit introduces John to a different woman – the Bride of Christ, walking down the aisle to meet her husband.
- These spiritual visions unveil God’s heart and God’s plans. God speaks to His people through these visions, engaging them in faithfulness in the midst of their hardship and difficulty. In Revelation 19:10, John is commanded to worship God, because the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy.” God the Spirit is the source of this prophetic testimony about Jesus and from Jesus. The Spirit unveils God’s plans and their centric focus on Jesus.
- Jesus proclaims a message to each of the seven churches, but at the end of each church message, we are told – *Let anyone who has ears to hear listen to what the Spirit says to the churches.* The words of God the Son and God the Spirit never conflict or contradict one another. The Spirit speaks words of comfort and encouragement to these congregations. Some have rejected false teaching and the endorsement of ungodliness. Some have remained faithful to Jesus in spite of difficulty, testing, and persecution. Others have maintained a faithful witness in evil and dark cities. Some have embraced ministries of service and love, even though viewed as weak and powerless by their community culture. May we, the church today, be encouraged and comforted as we serve God and maintain our faithfulness in hard places and during hard times. The Spirit also warns and rebukes the seven churches. One church is called out for abandoning the love they embraced when they first became Christians. Several churches pursued false teaching and allowed immorality and idolatry to invade their fellowship. One church maintained an influential reputation in their city, but Jesus marked them as spiritually dead. A different church is accused of spiritual self-sufficiency and compromise. Jesus is seriously concerned that many of these first-century Christians have become too cozy with their culture and are failing in living their lives according to God’s truth. May we, the church today, heed these same words of warning and rebuke.

1. The Holy Spirit in the Heavenly City

- 21:3 – Then I heard a loud voice from the throne: “*Look, God’s dwelling is with humanity, and he will live with them. They will be his*

peoples, and God himself will be with them and will be their God.”

(Implication: In the Old Testament, God’s dwelling with His people evidenced in the tabernacle and the Temple [Exodus 25:8, God required the Israelites “*to make a sanctuary for me so that I may dwell among them.*” and Exodus 40:34 describes the cloud that *covered the tent of meeting, and the glory of the Lord filled the tabernacle.*

Hebrew = *Shkinah*.] In the New Testament, Jesus dwelled among humanity in person. John described Jesus in the introduction to the Gospel – The Word became flesh and dwelt among us – literally “pitched his tent and tabernacle among us”. We observed his glory, the glory as the one and only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth.]. When Jesus ascended into heaven, God sent the Holy Spirit to take his place in the heart and body of every believer as a seal of the promise [Ephesians 1:13, Paul affirmed “In Christ you also were sealed with the promised Holy Spirit when you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation, and when you believed.” I Corinthians 6:19-20, Paul declared “Don’t you know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have from God? You are not your own, for you were bought at a price. So glorify God with your body.)]

- 21:22 – “*I did not see a temple in it, because the Lord God the Almighty and the Lamb are its temple.*” (Implication: Our heavenly home is a place where God’s Spirit lives eternally.)
- 22:5 – “*Night will be no more; people will not need the light of a lamp or the light of the sun, because the Lord God will give them light.*” (As 4:5 indicates, the seven lambs (seven spirits of God) will illuminate heaven constantly and continuously.) Wow, what a place heaven must be!

Conclusion: God dwells within us and works in His world through His Holy Spirit. If we minimize the Spirit, we minimize the work and will of God. We cannot be “spiritual” apart from the Spirit, because “Spiritual” involves and includes EVERYTHING!