

Eschatology

The Holy Spirit What's His Role During the 70th Week?

One of the important considerations accompanying a study of eschatology and particularly the tribulation period is the relationship of the Holy Spirit to that period and the work He will accomplish in it.

There is much debate amongst scholars, theologians, teachers and preachers as to the Holy Spirit's relation to the tribulation period based on one's interpretation of 2Thess. 2:7-8. How one interprets this passage will not only have an effect on one's viewpoint on eschatology but on the very nature of God and the relationship between the Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

“And you know what restrains him now, so that in his time he will be revealed. For the mystery of lawlessness is already at work; only he who now restrains will do so until he is taken out of the way.”

The proper interpretation of 2Thess. 2:7-8 requires a study of the workings of the Holy Spirit in the Old Testament, the New Testament and finally during the tribulation period. Hermeneutically speaking, this type of study is called a [syntactical-theological](#) model of interpreting scripture.

Walter Kaiser, Jr. defines this model of interpretation as “Doing the traditional grammatical-historical study of the text (i.e., studying the text in its proper context), followed by a study of its meaning that shows its theological relevance – both with respect to the rest of Scripture and with respect to its contemporary application.” In other words, this is how you properly determine doctrine.

The Holy Spirit in the Old Testament

Jesus said in John 17:16,17 “I will ask the Father, and He will give you another Helper, that He may be with you forever; that is the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it does not see Him or know Him, but you know Him because He abides with you [present tense] and will be [future tense] in you.”

The nature of His work in the OT:

1. He was in certain people
 - Joseph (Gen. 41:38)
 - Joshua (Num. 27:18)
 - Daniel (Dan. 4:8; 5:11-14; 6:3)
2. He came upon certain people
 - Such as the judges, Saul, the prophets Balaam and Azariah. (Num. 24:2; Judg. 3:10; 6:34; 11:29; 13:25; 1Sam. 10:10; 1Sam. 16:13; 2Chron. 15:1)
3. He filled certain people
 - The Holy Spirit filled Bezalel (Exod. 31:3; 35:31)
This was a special enablement that was unique to the experience of the Israelites.
4. He protected and guided God’s people to overcome their enemies
 - He was in their midst at the exodus (Isa. 63:11-12)
 - He was with them on their return from the exile (Hag. 2:5)
 - He caused Saul and his messengers to involuntarily fall to the ground and prophecy (1Sam. 19:20-23) thus defeating them in their purpose to come up against David and Samuel.

Salvation in the OT was an individual salvation, accepted by faith, based on blood sacrifice, which sacrifices were the foreshadows of the true sacrifice to come. This salvation was resented as an inheritance, to be received at a future time rather than as a present possession. The individual Israelite who believed God was truly saved, but awaited a future experience of the fullness of that salvation. Completed by the finish work of Jesus on the Cross (John 19:30).

The Holy Spirit in the New Testament

1. He [indwells](#) every believer
Acts 11:15-17; Rom. 5:5; 1Cor. 2:12-13
2. He [seals](#) every believer as a child of God
2Cor. 1:21-22; Eph. 1:13-14; 4:30; Rom. 8:23
3. He [baptizes](#) every believer into the body of Christ
Acts 1:15; 11:15-16; 1Cor. 12:13; Eph. 4:5
Rom. 6: 1-10; Col. 2:12
4. He [fills](#) every believer with power and control
Luke 1:15, 41, 67; Acts 6:3-5; 7:55; 11:24; 13:52; Eph. 5:18
5. He [teaches](#) and [guides](#) every believer
John 16:12-15; Acts 8:29; 10:19-20; 13:2; 16:6-7; Rom. 8:14
6. He [sanctifies](#) every believer
1Cor. 1:2; 6:11; Eph. 5:26-27; 1Pet 1:16; Jude 24-25
7. He [regenerates](#) and [renews](#) every believer
2Cor. 4:16-18; Col 3:10; Titus 3:5

Whereas the ministry of the Holy Spirit was selective to the faithful in the OT days, the ministries of the Holy Spirit in the NT is universal to each and every believer who places his or her faith and trust on the completed work of Jesus the Christ. Thereby salvation is now a present possession, unlike to the OT saint.

This brings us to the statement made by Paul in 2Thess. 2:6-7 regarding the role of the Holy Spirit in the 70th week of Daniel:

“And you know what restrains him now, so that in his time he will be revealed. For the mystery of lawlessness is already at work; only he who now restrains will do so until he is taken out of the way.”

Who is the restrainer? There are five major theories as to the identity of the restrainer:

1. The Roman Empire under which Paul lived.
2. Human government and law.
3. The archangel Michael.
4. The church.
5. The Holy Spirit.

With the identity of the restrainer as the Holy Spirit, many miss-interpret that Paul was saying the Holy Spirit would be “removed from the earth” when the rapture takes place, thereby allowing Satan and the Antichrist to have complete control of the earth. If this is accurate, than no one will be saved during the tribulation because you cannot be saved apart from the Holy Spirit.

Two important questions that need to be answered:

Question 1.

[Is the Holy Spirit removed from the earth with the rapture of the church?](#)

Answer: **No.**

In chapter 2 of 2Thessalonians, Paul is addressing the issue of the church that many believe the Antichrist (the “man of lawlessness”) is already on the scene. Paul is telling the church in vs. 3 that the apostasy must come first and then (vs.7) the restrainer (Holy Spirit) will be taken out of the way and the Antichrist will then be allowed to show his true self (vs. 8).

Nowhere in the text does Paul say that the restrainer is removed off the earth, nor is it implied here. Paul makes it very clear that the restrainer is “taken out of the way” i.e. stops restraining so the “lawless one” will have authority to deceive and perform false signs and wonders. God is in complete control!

The answer to question 1 is further reinforced by the answer to the next question, because without the Holy Spirit, you cannot have salvation.

Question no. 2

[Will people be saved during the tribulation period?](#)

Answer: **Yes.**

In speaking about the tribulation period Jesus said in Matt. 24:14 **“This gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in the whole world as a testimony to all the nations, and then the end will come.”**

Between chapters 7 and 20 in the book of Revelation, John gives us 12 accounts that individuals, both Jew and Gentile will be saved during the 70th week:

- 7:4 144,000 Israelites are “sealed” as God’s “bond-servants”.
- 7:10 “Salvation to our God and to the Lamb.”
- 7:14-17 People were made clean by the “blood of the Lamb”.
- 11:3 The two witnesses prophecy and give testimony of the gospel.
- 11:8 The two witnesses are identified with the crucified Christ.
- 12:10 “Salvation, power & authority of His Christ.”
- 12:11 Overcame by “blood of the Lamb and their testimony”.
- 12:17 The woman and children “hold to the testimony of Jesus”.
- 14:1-5 The 144,000 are purchased and belong to the Lamb.
- 14:12 Perseverance of the saints by their faith in Jesus.
- 19:10 The testimony of Jesus is prophecy, “worship Him”.
- 20:4 beheaded souls because of “their testimony of Jesus”.

Not only will there be individual salvation, there will also be national salvation to the house of Israel as prophesied by the prophets:

[Ezekiel 20:37-38](#); [Zechariah 13:8-9](#); [Romans 11:27](#)

And finally, the Holy Spirit is promised to the nation of Israel during the tribulation:

[Isaiah 44:1-5](#); [Ezekiel 39:29](#); [Joel 2:28-32](#); [Zechariah 12:10-14](#)

In Conclusion

To say that the Holy Spirit is no longer on the earth when the church is raptured is to take away the gospel of Jesus that we are saved by grace and not by works (Eph. 2:8-9). Salvation during the tribulation is a completed work, not like the OT days when their salvation was partial, waiting for Jesus to make it complete.

[Luke 16:19-31](#); [Eph. 4:9-10](#); [Col. 2:14-15](#); [1Pet. 3:18-19](#)