

GOD LOVES HIS ELECT-THE HOLY SPIRIT'S WORK IN THE ADMINISTRATION OF THE EVERLASTING COVENANT OF GRACE

Sermon to the saints at Westboro Baptist Church on October 4, 2020

Elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, through sanctification of the Spirit, unto obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ: Grace unto you, and peace, be multiplied. (1 Peter 1:2)

*Although my house be not so with God; yet he hath made with me an everlasting covenant, ordered in all things, and sure: for **this is all my salvation**, and all my desire, although he make it not to grow. (2 Samuel 23:5)*

The covenant of grace is an agreement made from all eternity between God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit, concerning the salvation of the elect. This sermon and others I hope to deliver in the future is for the better understanding of these transactions between them for the benefit of the elect, before the world was, when there were no creatures, neither angels nor men in being; and which lay the foundation of all the grace and glory, comfort and happiness, of the saints in time and to eternity. Today, I offer some words about the role of the Holy Spirit in this covenant of grace.

The Holy Spirit was not a mere bystander, spectator, and witness of this solemn transaction, compact, and agreement, between the Father and the Son, but was a party concerned in it. The third person, the Holy Spirit, gave his approval of, and assent unto every article in the everlasting covenant of grace. And, he agreed to perform many terms and conditions contained therein.

In general, what respected the salvation of the chosen ones; for that is the grand and principal article of the covenant; "*this*," says David, speaking of the covenant, "*is all my salvation*," (2 Samuel 23:5) that is, the whole of his salvation; all things relative to it were provided for in it, and secured by it; in the management and performance of which each Person took his part; and that of the Spirit is Sanctification; which makes the elect meet for the enjoyment of complete and eternal salvation; therefore called "*the sanctification of the Spirit*," (1 Peter 1:2; and see 2 Thessalonians 2:13: "*But we are bound to give thanks alway to God for you, brethren beloved of the Lord, because God hath from the beginning*

chosen you to salvation through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth.”) And this clearly shows, that the Spirit approved of, and assented to the whole scheme of salvation; or otherwise he would never have taken a part in it; and as it was the purpose and will of God the Father to save men by his Son, and he appointed them to obtain salvation by him; so the Son of God came to seek and save men, being sent of God for that purpose in which mission of his the Spirit joined; "*Now the Lord God, and his Spirit, hath sent me,*" **Isaiah 48:16**, which is a plain proof that he approved of and assented to it.

Because that the Son of God should be the Savior of men; and whereas it was proper that the Son of God should assume human nature, and in it work out the salvation of men; so it was approved of and assented to by the Spirit; as appears from his concern in the incarnation of Christ; for what was "*conceived in the Virgin was of the Holy Ghost,*" **Matthew 1:18,20**. "*Now the birth of Jesus Christ was on this wise: When as his mother Mary was espoused to Joseph, before they came together, she was found with child of the Holy Ghost. But while he thought on these things, behold, the angel of the Lord appeared unto him in a dream, saying, Joseph, thou son of David, fear not to take unto thee Mary thy wife: for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Ghost.*"

Seeing it was necessary that the Savior of men should suffer and die for them, to satisfy law and justice; and the divine Father enjoined his Son to lay down his life for them; to which command he became obedient; so the Spirit declared his approbation of it, by testifying beforehand, in the prophets, "*the sufferings of Christ, and the glory that should follow*" (**1 Peter 1:10-11**); as well as was assisting to the human nature of Christ, in the sacrifice of himself; since it was "*through the eternal Spirit,*" he offered up himself without spot to God, (**1 Peter 1:11; Hebrews 9:14**). As it was highly proper, that as Christ should be delivered to death for the offences of men, so that he should rise again for their justification; or otherwise, the whole affair of salvation would have miscarried; hence the Father in covenant enjoined his Son, as to lay down his life, so to take it up again; and which he did, and in which the Spirit was concerned; and which showed his approval of this closing part of the scheme of salvation by Christ. See **Romans 1:4**: "*And declared to be the Son of God with power, according to the spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead.*"

Gill, I believe, helps us here: “according to the Spirit of holiness; which may be understood of the Holy Spirit, the third person in the Trinity, who is holy in himself, and the author of holiness in the saints; and who is the declarer of Christ’s sonship, partly by bearing a testimony to it in the word, and in the hearts of believers, and chiefly by being concerned in the resurrection of the body of Christ from the dead;...”

The Spirit of God approved of and agreed to all the promises in the covenant: there are many exceeding great and precious promises in the Scriptures (**2 Peter 1:4**), which are transcribed from the covenant, and are all Yea and Amen in Christ (**2 Corinthians 1:20**), and in which the Spirit has a concern; hence he is called "*the Holy Spirit of promise.*" **Ephesians 1:13-14**: “*In whom ye also trusted, after that ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation: in whom also after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that holy Spirit of promise, Which is the earnest of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, unto the praise of his glory.*”

Indeed, the Holy Spirit himself is the great promise of the covenant; promised both to Christ the Head, and to his members, the elect. **Matthew 12:18**: “*Behold my servant, whom I have chosen; my beloved, in whom my soul is well pleased: I will put my spirit upon him, and he shall shew judgment to the Gentiles.*” **Isaiah 42:1**: “*Behold my servant, whom I uphold; mine elect, in whom my soul delighteth; I have put my spirit upon him: he shall bring forth judgment to the Gentiles.*” **Isaiah 44:3**: “*For I will pour water upon him that is thirsty, and floods upon the dry ground: I will pour my spirit upon thy seed, and my blessing upon thine offspring.*” **Galatians 3:14**: “*That the blessing of Abraham might come on the Gentiles through Jesus Christ; that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith.*”

And he is concerned in the application of every promise to the elect.

- It is he that remembers to them the word of promise. **John 14:26**: “*But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you.*”
- On which the Lord has sometimes caused them to hope. **Psalms 119:49**: “*ZAIN. Remember the word unto thy servant, upon which thou hast caused me to hope.*”

- It is he that opens the promise to them, instructs them in it, and shows them what is contained in it, the nature, use, and suitableness of it; it is he that applies the promises to them at a proper season, when they are *“like apples of gold in pictures of silver”* (**Proverbs 25:11**); and he it is that keeps up their faith and hope, as to the grand promise of eternal life; so that they, *“through the Spirit, wait for the hope of righteousness by faith,”* **Galatians 5:5**.

By which it appears, that he approved of every promise of the covenant made in eternity, or he would never act the part he does, in the application of them in time.

The blessed Spirit approved of and gave his assent to all the grants made to Christ, and to his people in the covenant, to the sure mercies of David (**Isaiah 55:3; Acts 13:34**), to the spiritual blessings wherewith the elect are blessed in heavenly places in Christ (**Ephesians 1:3**); for he takes of these in time, and shows them to the persons interested in them, and their interest therein, **John 16:13-15**: *“Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak: and he will shew you things to come. He shall glorify me: for he shall receive of mine, and shall shew it unto you. All things that the Father hath are mine: therefore said I, that he shall take of mine, and shall shew it unto you.”*

The Spirit of truth would not do these things if he had not approved of the grants of these blessings to the elect, in the everlasting covenant. As for instance, the blessing of a justifying righteousness, to be wrought out by Christ, was provided in the covenant; and which being brought in, is revealed in the gospel from faith to faith (**Romans 1:17**): and besides the external revelation of it in the gospel, the Spirit of God brings near this righteousness, and sets it in the view of an awakened sinner, and shows him its suitableness, fullness, and excellency, works faith in him to receive it, and pronounces in his conscience his justification by it; hence it is said of such, that they are *“justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit our God,”* **1 Corinthians 6:11**: *“And such were some of you: but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God.”*

Pardon of sin is another blessing of the covenant through Christ, and the Spirit takes the blood of Christ, the blood of the covenant, shed for the remission of sin, and sprinkles it on the conscience, and thereby speaks peace and pardon to it;

saying, Son, or daughter, *“be of good cheer, thy sins are forgiven thee,”* (**Matthew 9:2**). (**Hebrews 8:12**: *“For I will be merciful to their unrighteousness, and their sins and their iniquities will I remember no more.”* **Hebrews 10:22**: *“Let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and our bodies washed with pure water.”* **Hebrews 12:24**: *“And to Jesus the mediator of the new covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling, that speaketh better things than that of Abel.”*)

Adoption also, a blessing of grace, provided in the covenant, and which the Spirit bears witness to and makes application of, and is sent down into the hearts of the third party covenant beneficiaries and adopted ones for that purpose, and is hence called *“the Spirit of adoption,”* **2 Corinthians 6:18**: *“And will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty.”* **Romans 8:15-16**: *“For ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear; but ye have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father. The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God.”* **Galatians 4:6**: *“And because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father.”*

In short, all the grace given to the elect in Christ, before the world began, all the things that are freely given them of God in the covenant, the Spirit in time makes known unto them, and declares and testifies their interests in them, **1 Corinthians 2:9-12**: *“But as it is written, Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him. But God hath revealed them unto us by his Spirit: for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God. For what man knoweth the things of a man, save the spirit of man which is in him? even so the things of God knoweth no man, but the Spirit of God. Now we have receive not the spirit of the world, but the spirit which is of God; that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God.”* All which abundantly proves his approval of and assent unto everything contained in the covenant of grace.

There are many things which the Holy Spirit himself undertook and engaged in covenant to do; and nothing more strongly proves this than his doing them; for had he not agreed to do them, they would not have been done by him.

Some things he has done, as he agreed to do, with respect to Christ; he formed the human nature of Christ, in which he obeyed and suffered for the salvation of

the elect: every individual of human nature is, indeed, made by him; "*The Spirit of God hath made me,*" says Elihu, **Job 33:4** but the individual of Christ's human nature, was "*fearfully and wonderfully made*" by him, as David, representing him, says he was "*in secret, and curiously wrought in the lowest parts of the earth,*" in the womb of the Virgin, according to the model of it, in the book of God's purposes and decrees; it was produced by the power of the Highest, the overshadowing of the Holy Ghost, without the instrumentality of man; and so was free from the pollution of sin, propagated by ordinary and natural generation, and therefore called the holy thing, born of the Virgin, **Psalm 139:14-16**; and **Luke 1:35**: "*And the angel answered and said unto her, The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee: therefore also that holy thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God.*"

The Spirit of God filled the same human nature with his gifts and graces without measure, which are the oil of gladness he anointed him with above his fellows (**Psalm 45:7**; **Hebrews 1:9**; **Acts 10:38**), and thereby fitted and qualified him as man, for the discharge of his office as Mediator, **Isaiah 11:1-3** ("*And there shall come forth a rod out of the stem of Jesse, and a Branch shall grow out of his roots: And the spirit of the LORD shall rest upon him, the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the LORD; And shall make him of quick understanding in the fear of the LORD: and he shall not judge after the sight of his eyes, neither reprove after the hearing of his ears*"); **Isaiah 42:1** ("*Behold my servant, whom I uphold; mine elect, in whom my soul delighteth; I have put my spirit upon him: he shall bring forth judgment to the Gentiles.*"); and **Isaiah 61:1** ("*The Spirit of the Lord GOD is upon me; because the LORD hath anointed me to preach good tidings unto the meek; he hath sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound.*").

He descended upon him as a dove at his baptism; which was the signal by which John the Baptist knew he was the Messiah, and pointed him out as such to others (**John 1:32-35**); he assisted him as man, in the ministry of the gospel, whereby he "*spake as never man did*" (**John 7:46**), and with an authority the Scribes did not (**Matthew 7:29**); and in the performance of miracles; for he cast out devils, as he himself says, by "*the Spirit of God,*" **Matthew 12:28**. He also was concerned in Christ's offering up himself as a Sacrifice; and in his resurrection from the dead, as before observed; whereby he glorified him, as well as by other things,

Christ said he would, **John 16:13-14**: *“Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak: and he will shew you things to come. He shall glorify me: for he shall receive of mine, and shall shew it unto you.”* All which he did according to covenant agreements and settlements.

The Holy Spirit, pursuant to the terms of the everlasting covenant of grace, administers to such as are in a public office and capacity, as the prophets of the Old Testament; whom He inspired to speak and write as they did, pursuant to **2 Peter 1:21**: *“For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost.”* To the apostles of the New Testament, who he endowed with power from on high, with His extraordinary gifts to preach the gospel, in all languages, to all people, and to confirm it with miracles. See **Acts 1:1-2, 4-5**: *“Jesus,.. through the Holy Ghost had given commandments...And, being assembled together with them, commanded them that they should not depart from Jerusalem, but wait for the promise of the Father, which, saith he, ye have heard of me. For John truly baptized with water; but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost not many days hence.”* **Acts 2:4**: *“And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance.”* **Hebrews 2:3-4**: *“How shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation; which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed unto us by them that heard him; God also bearing them witness, both with signs and wonders, and with divers miracles, and gifts of the Holy Ghost, according to his own will?”* And ordinary ministers of the word, in all succeeding generations, with gifts and grace suitable to their office; whom he calls and separates to it, directs where they should go, he has work for them to do, and makes them overseers of flocks or churches committed to their care. **Acts 13:2-4**: *“As they ministered to the Lord, and fasted, the Holy Ghost said, Separate me Barnabas and Saul for the work whereunto I have called them. And when they had fasted and prayed, and laid their hands on them, they sent them away. So they, being sent forth by the Holy Ghost, departed unto Seleucia; and from thence they sailed to Cyprus”* **Acts 16:6-7**: *“Now when they had gone throughout Phrygia and the region of Galatia, and were forbidden of the Holy Ghost to preach the word in Asia, After they were come to Mysia, they assayed to go into Bithynia: but the Spirit suffered them not”* **Acts 20:28**: *“Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost*

hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood.” It is he that makes the word preached by them effectual to the conviction and conversion of sinners, and to the comfort and edification of saints; and whereby he conveys himself into the hearts of men. **1 Thessalonians 1:5-6:** *“For our gospel came not unto you in word only, but also in power, and in the Holy Ghost, and in much assurance; as ye know what manner of men we were among you for your sake. And ye became followers of us, and of the Lord, having received the word in much affliction, with joy of the Holy Ghost.”* **2 Corinthians 3:6,8:** *“Who also hath made us able ministers of the new testament; not of the letter, but of the spirit: for the letter killeth, but the spirit giveth life. How shall not the ministration of the spirit be rather glorious?”* **Galatians 3:2:** *“This only would I learn of you, Received ye the Spirit by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith?”* All which he undertook to do, and has done pursuant to the terms and conditions of that same everlasting covenant of grace.

The Holy Spirit administers those terms and conditions of the covenant of grace to such as are in a private capacity, to whom he is at least the following:

A Spirit of “*conviction*”; he convinces them of sin, original, actual, of all their sins of thought, word, and deed; of the demerit of sin, and of the inability of men to make atonement for it; and brings them to such a sense of it, as to loath it, and themselves for it; to blush and be ashamed of it, and to have such a godly sorrow for it, which works repentance unto salvation. And “**of righteousness**”; of the insufficiency of their own righteousness to justify them before God; and of the excellency and suitableness of the righteousness of Christ. And “*of judgment*”; that there is one not to be escaped, and at which all must appear, and in which there will be no standing, but in the righteousness of Christ, **John 16:7-8:** *”Nevertheless I tell you the truth; It is expedient for you that I go away: for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send him unto you. And when he is come, he will reprove [or, convict] the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment.”*

A Spirit “*of regeneration*” and “*renovation*”; men must be born again, and they that are born of God, even of the Spirit of God, are renewed by him in the Spirit of their minds; all things are made new; a new man is created in them, a new heart and a new spirit are given unto them, according to the covenant of grace; hence we read of “*regeneration*,” and “*the renewing of the Holy Ghost*,” **Titus 3:5:** *“Not*

by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost.”

A Spirit "of faith"; all men have not faith, only God's elect; and therefore true faith is called "*the faith of God's elect*" (**Titus 1:1**); and those that have it, have it not of themselves, it is the gift of God (**Ephesians 2:8**); it is of the operation of God (**Romans 10:17**), a work of his almighty power (**1 Corinthians 2:5**), begun, carried on, and performed with power, and that by the Holy Ghost: and therefore he is called "*the Spirit of faith*," **2 Corinthians 4:13**.

A "*Comforter*," under which character he is often spoken of, and promised by Christ, that he should be sent by him, and from his Father, according to covenant agreements; and which office, as he freely undertook in covenant, he performs, by shedding abroad the love of God and Christ in the hearts of his people (**Romans 5:5**); by leading into the comfortable doctrines of the gospel; by opening and applying the precious promises of it; by taking of the things of Christ, and showing them to them; and by witnessing to them their adoption; and by being the earnest of their inheritance, and the sealer of them up unto the day of redemption (**Ephesians 4:30**). **John 14:16**: "*And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever;*" **John 14:26**: "*But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you;*" **John 15:26**: "*But when the Comforter is come, whom I will send unto you from the Father, even the Spirit of truth, which proceedeth from the Father, he shall testify of me;*" **John 16:7**: "*Nevertheless I tell you the truth; It is expedient for you that I go away: for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send him unto you.*"

A Sanctifier; if any are sanctified, it is by the Spirit of God; sanctification is his work, and therefore called "*the sanctification of the Spirit*," (**2 Thessalonians 2:13**) as before observed: it is the Spirit that begins, and carries on, and finishes the work of grace and holiness upon the hearts of God's elect, without which no man shall see the Lord (**Hebrews 12:14**). He is the Spirit of strength to the saints (**Ephesians 3:16**), to enable them to exercise grace, and to perform duties he is put into them according to the covenant of grace, to cause them to walk in the statutes and judgments of the Lord to do them (**Deuteronomy 7:11**); to strengthen

them to walk on in the ways of the Lord (**Psalm 68:28; 2 Samuel 22:22**), and to persevere in faith (**Ephesians 6:18**) and holiness to the end. And all this the Spirit of God does, as he engaged and undertook to do, in the everlasting covenant; and therefore he is said to "*come*," being sent, to do these things; not without his will and consent, but according to his voluntary engagements in covenant, without which he could not be sent by the Father and the Son, being equal to them; and this will account for the several passages where he is said to be sent by the Father, in the name of Christ, and by Christ, from the Father (**John 14:16,26; John 15:26; John 16:7; Galatians 4:6**). This being all agreed on, and settled in the covenant between them.

This verse ranks among the most comforting in all of Scripture: "*Although my house be not so with God; yet he hath made with me an everlasting covenant, ordered in all things, and sure: for this is all my salvation, and all my desire, although he make it not to grow.*" (**2 Samuel 23:5**). This is true for several reason including that this everlasting covenant of grace theme runs throughout the Bible defining the terms and conditions of that covenant and the specific things that the Almighty actors have pledged to perform for the elect due to their eternal love for them. This terminology is an accommodation by the Holy Spirit towards us for our comfort and edification.

I love you. Amen.