

RESISTING THE HOLY SPIRIT OF GOD!

Acts 7:51

INTRODUCTION:

“Resisting the Spirit!” This term is often used and is most familiar in religious circles regarding a **“Direct Operation of the Holy Spirit.”** EVEN THOUGH there’s lots of misunderstanding as well as lots of false teaching about it, **IT IS A SCRIPTURAL TERM**, and since it **IS POSSIBLE** to **“RESIST THE SPIRIT”**, we need to understand as best we can this important topic.

I. FIRST, NOTE HOW STEPHEN’S HEARERS RESISTED.

- A. In order to properly understand the context we need to see the background of the text through an examination of Acts 7.
1. Consider the similarity of Stephen’s and Peter’s sermons. Acts 2:4 *“And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit was giving them utterance.”* Acts 1:8 *“but you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be My witnesses both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and even to the remotest part of the earth.”* Acts 2:14 *“But Peter, taking his stand with the eleven, raised his voice and declared to them: “Men of Judea, and all you who live in Jerusalem, let this be known to you, and give heed to my words.”*
 2. Stephen ALSO was inspired. Acts 7:55 *“But being full of the Holy Spirit, he gazed intently into heaven and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing at the right hand of God;”* Acts 6:6-8 *“And these they brought before the apostles; and after praying, they laid their hands on them. 7 And the word of God kept on spreading; and the number of the disciples continued to increase greatly in Jerusalem, and a great many of the priests were becoming obedient to the faith. 8 And Stephen, full of grace and power, was performing great wonders and signs among the people.”* Acts 6:15 *“And fixing their gaze on him, all who were sitting in the Council saw his face like the face of an angel.”*
 3. Stephen was before the council answering false blasphemy charges but he took advantage of the occasion to PREACH GOD’S PLAN AND APPLY THE LESSON TO HIS AUDIENCE!
- B. He accused the forefathers of his Jewish audience of resisting the Holy Spirit, and told them they were doing the same thing!
1. He showed how their forefathers had turned from God’s prophets: Acts 7:35, 38-41, 52-53- *“This Moses whom they disowned, saying, ‘WHO MADE YOU A RULER AND A JUDGE?’ is the one whom God sent to be both a ruler and a deliverer with the help of the angel who appeared to him in the thorn bush. 38 “This is the one who was in the congregation in the wilderness together with the angel who was speaking to him on Mount Sinai, and who was with our fathers; and he received living oracles to pass on to you. 39 “And our fathers were unwilling to be obedient to him, but repudiated him and in their hearts turned back to Egypt, 40 SAYING TO AARON, ‘MAKE FOR US GODS WHO WILL GO BEFORE US; FOR THIS MOSES WHO LED US OUT OF THE LAND OF EGYPT—WE DO NOT KNOW WHAT HAPPENED TO HIM.’ 41 “And at that time they made a calf and brought a sacrifice to the idol, and were rejoicing in the works of their hands.52 Which one of the prophets did your fathers not persecute? And they killed those who had previously announced the coming of the Righteous One, whose betrayers and murderers you have now become; 53 you who received the law as ordained by angels, and yet did not keep it.”*
 2. The H.S. even THEN spoke to the people of God through the PROPHETS! 2 Pet 1:20-21 *“But know this first of all, that no prophecy of Scripture is a matter of one’s own interpretation, 21 for no prophecy was ever made by an act of human will, but men moved by the Holy Spirit spoke from God.”*
 3. SO, by resisting the words spoken by the prophets of God their forefathers had also resisted the Holy Spirit of God!
- C. NEXT, consider the characteristics of these people Stephen was trying to get to understand:
1. They were stiffnecked [harsh, hard-necked] and uncircumcised in their hearts! cf. Deut. 10:16 *“Circumcise then your heart, and stiffen your neck no more.”*
 2. They were dull of hearing. Matt.13:15 *“For the heart of this people has become dull, and with their ears they scarcely hear, and they have closed their eyes lest they should see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and understand with their heart and return, and I should heal them.”* Heb. 5:11- *“Concerning him we have much to say, and it is hard to explain, since you have become dull of hearing.”*

D. So, we must conclude that they resisted the Holy Spirit of God when they resisted Stephen's words!

II. FOR A PROPER UNDERSTANDING OF THE TOPIC, WE MUST BE AWARE OF HOW THE HOLY SPIRIT OPERATES TODAY!

A. The H.S. IS NOT THE WORD of God but, ESSENTIALLY, the H.S. operates IN and THROUGH the Gospel today!

1. Remember, the GOSPEL is God's power to save! Rom.1:16; 1 Cor.15:2; Jas.1:21.
 - a) The GOSPEL is God's WILL revealed in WORDS! 1 Pet.1:25.
 - b) And God's will in these words of the gospel is made known by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit! 1 Cor.2:9-11- *"but just as it is written, "THINGS WHICH EYE HAS NOT SEEN AND EAR HAS NOT HEARD, AND WHICH HAVE NOT ENTERED THE HEART OF MAN, ALL THAT GOD HAS PREPARED FOR THOSE WHO LOVE HIM." 10 For to us God revealed them through the Spirit; for the Spirit searches all things, even the depths of God. 11 For who among men knows the thoughts of a man except the spirit of the man, which is in him? Even so the thoughts of God no one knows except the Spirit of God."* Eph.3:3-5.
 - c) And that Spirit-given word is complete and sufficient for all our spiritual guidance. 2 Tim.3:16-17; 1 Jno.2:27- *"And as for you, the anointing which you received from Him abides in you, and you have no need for anyone to teach you; but as His anointing teaches you about all things, and is true and is not a lie, and just as it has taught you, you abide in Him."*
2. God revealed the access to man's salvation from sin through the Holy Spirit, and this has been one of the greatest TASKS of the H.S. --- that revealing of God's will regarding man's redemption!
 - a) The inspiration from heaven came from God by the Spirit to the Apostles, telling about this salvation! 1 Cor.2:12-13- *"Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is from God, that we might know the things freely given to us by God, 13 which things we also speak, not in words taught by human wisdom, but in those taught by the Spirit, combining spiritual thoughts with spiritual words."*
 - b) So you can say that the SPIRIT gives us LIFE, THROUGH THE APOSTLES! 2 Cor 3:6- *"who also made us adequate as servants of a new covenant, not of the letter, but of the Spirit; for the letter kills, but the Spirit gives life."* cf. the words of Jesus in Jno.6:63- *"It is the Spirit who gives life; the flesh profits nothing; the words that I have spoken to you are spirit and are life."*
 - c) And THE WAY the Spirit gives us life is BY and THROUGH the WORD OF GOD! Rom.8:4-5, 9, 11, 13-15: *"in order that the requirement of the Law might be fulfilled in us, who do not walk according to the flesh, but according to the Spirit. 5 For those who are according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh, but those who are according to the Spirit, the things of the Spirit..... 9 However, you are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if indeed the Spirit of God dwells in you. But if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he does not belong to Him..... 11 But if the Spirit of Him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, He who raised Christ Jesus from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through His Spirit who indwells you.... 13 for if you are living according to the flesh, you must die; but if by the Spirit you are putting to death the deeds of the body, you will live. 14 For all who are being led by the Spirit of God, these are sons of God. 15 For you have not received a spirit of slavery leading to fear again, but you have received a spirit of adoption as sons by which we cry out, "Abba! Father!"*
3. And it is through this means of revealing Salvation through the gospel that the Holy Spirit convicts us of our sins. **[After all, if we didn't bel. we had any we wouldn't seek forgiveness from them, would we?]** Jno.16:8- *"And He, when He is come, will convict the world in respect of sin..."*
 - a) AGAIN, this takes place through the WORD OF THE GOSPEL! Acts 2:4, 37.
 - b) The PURPOSE for convicting one of sinful guilt is for the purpose of creating a desire to COME OUT OF THAT CONDITION!
 - c) Knowing the truth and that we're not living the truth, should cause us to desire a change!
 - 1) This is what the Lord WANTS and encourages us to do! Isa.55:7- *"Let the wicked forsake his way, And the unrighteous man his thoughts; And let him return to the LORD, And He will have compassion on him; And to our God, For He will abundantly pardon."*

2) This is SO important to us, because God's promises are ONLY TO THE PENITENT! **Psa 34:18**
"The LORD is near to the brokenhearted, And saves those who are crushed in spirit.[or, are of a
contrite spirit!]"

4. With all this fitting together so neatly, it's easier for us to understand Jesus statement in **Jno.8:31-32**, that the TRUTH makes us free!

a) The truth is revealed by words thru the H.S. **Jno.16:13**.

b) The truth will make us free only when we obey its commands. **1 Pet.1:22-23**.

c) If we NEGLECT or REFUSE obedience, it quenches / grieves the H.S. 1 Thes.5:19; **Eph.4:30**.

d) So, for salvation, we must obey the words of the Spirit! **Heb.11:6; Ax.17:30; Phi.2:11; Ax.2:38**

e) And THAT'S how we become children of God. **Rom.8:16; Gal.4:6; Acts 5:32**.

B. Even today, though, people have different attitudes toward the word of God.

1. Just like the Pentecostians, many now gladly receive the truth. **Acts 2:37, 41**. [Pricked in hrt/ gladly received]

2. Those of our text RESISTED THE HOLY SPIRIT. **Ax.7:51, 54**. [Cut to heart, stoned the preacher]

3. In BOTH instances God, through the Holy Spirit, employed the SAME INDIRECT FORCE: **THE WORD OF GOD!** The DIFFERENCE was in the attitude of the hearers!

4. God NEVER DID, at any time, use DOHS to save a sinner from his sins!

III. HOW CAN WE BE GUILTY OF RESISTING THE HOLY SPIRIT OF GOD?

[Remember, man needs guidance from God regarding salvation, and it only comes through the Holy Spirit! We, today, resist the H.S. when we resist that guidance!]

A. We can resist the HS regarding God's commands in order for us to become Christians: **B+R+C+B**.

1. By **rejecting those commands**, as did the Jews in the first century. **Jno.1:11**. Then the Lord's servants will just go to others, as they did in the first century. **Acts 28:28**- "Let it be known to you therefore, that this salvation of God has been sent to the Gentiles; **they will hear it!**"

2. By trying to **substitute something else** for God's commands! **Mourner's bench** [resisting the very thing they're trying to pray for]; **Faith only; Being mem.of WRONG church**.

3. **Not being faithful** to the covenant you make with God in becoming His child: worldliness/ ungodliness/ not persevering.

4. Do we DARE resist the Holy Spirit of God???

B. We can resist the HS even when we think we're worshipping. **Matt.15:9**.

1. Just as the Jews resisted Moses. **Acts 7:37-43; Deut.4:2**- "Ye shall not add...neither diminish."

2. By going beyond that which is authorized. **Jno.4:24; 2 Jno.9**.

C. We can resist the HS regarding the Organization/ Work of the Church.

1. Local congregations under elders. **Acts 14:23; 1 Pet.5:2**.

2. PG--BW--ES--Maintain Worship.

3. No other organization or work is authorized by the NT.

4. To contradict the teachings of NT here is also to RESIST THE H.S. of the Lord.

CONCLUSION:

God blesses all who accept and do the words of the H.S. **Jas.1:22, 25; Rev.22:14**. The result of resisting the H.S. by not doing words of N.T. is eternal condemnation! **2 Thes.1:7-9; Jno.12:48**.