

The Spirit in the Book of Revelation

Thesis: *This presentation, therefore, will demonstrate that the book of Revelation has several references to the Spirit, some of which are not explicit, that show the Spirit active throughout the vision in close union with both the Son and the Father, but especially the Son.*

The “Seven Spirits” in the Saluation (Rev 1:4-5; 3:1) and Throne Room Vision (4:5; 5:6)

1. [Rev 1:4a] Ἰωάννης ταῖς ἑπτὰ ἐκκλησίαις ταῖς ἐν τῇ Ἀσίᾳ· χάρις ὑμῖν καὶ εἰρήνη (John to the seven churches that are in Asia, Grace to you and peace. . .).
2. [Rev 1:4b-5] χάρις ὑμῖν καὶ εἰρήνη ἀπὸ τοῦ ὄντος καὶ τοῦ ἦν καὶ τοῦ ἐρχόμενου καὶ ἀπὸ τῶν ἑπτὰ πνευμάτων ἃ ἐνώπιον τοῦ θρόνου αὐτοῦ καὶ ἀπὸ Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ, ὁ μάρτυς, ὁ πιστός, ὁ πρωτότοκος τῶν νεκρῶν καὶ ὁ ἀρχὼν τῶν βασιλείων τῆς γῆς (Grace to you and peace from the One who is, who was, and who is to come, and from the Seven Spirits who are before his throne, and from Jesus Christ the faithful witness, the firstborn from the dead, and the ruler of the kings on earth).
3. [2 Cor 13:13] Ἡ χάρις τοῦ κυρίου Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ καὶ ἡ ἀγάπη τοῦ θεοῦ καὶ ἡ κοινωνία τοῦ ἁγίου πνεύματος μετὰ πάντων ὑμῶν (The grace of Jesus Christ and the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with all of you).
4. [Zech 4:6, 10b] “Not by might, nor by power, but by my Spirit,” says the LORD of hosts. . . . These seven are the eyes of the LORD, which range through the whole earth.
5. [Rev 3:1] And to the angel of the church in Sardis write: “The words of him who has the seven spirits of God and the seven stars.”
6. [Rev 5:6] Seven eyes that are the seven spirits of God sent out into all the world.

The Call to Hear Formula at the Close of Each of the Seven Sermons

7. [Rev. 2:7, 11, 17, 29; 3:6, 13, 22] Ὁ ἔχων οὖς ἀκουσάτω τί τὸ πνεῦμα λέγει ταῖς ἐκκλησίαις (“The one who has ears, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches”).
8. [Rev 1:2; see also 1:9; 6:9; 20:4] ὁ λόγος τοῦ θεοῦ καὶ ἡ μαρτυρία Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ (the word of God and the testimony of Jesus Christ)

The Spirit as the Voice Who Guides the Entire Prophetic Vision

9. [Rev 1:10-11] I was *in the Spirit* [ἐν πνεύματι] on the Lord’s Day, and I hear behind me a loud voice like a trumpet saying, “Write what you see in a book and send it to the seven churches”
10. [Rev 4:2] The first voice I heard speaking to me like a trumpet said, “Come up here, and I will show you what must take place after this.” At once I was *in the Spirit* [ἐν πνεύματι].
11. [Rev 14:13] And I heard a voice from heaven saying, “Write this: Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord from now on.” “Blessed indeed,” says the Spirit, “that they may rest from their labors, for their deeds follow them!”

The Seven Spirits and the Seven Angels before the Throne

12. [Rev 8:2] εἶδον τοὺς ἑπτὰ ἀγγέλους οἱ ἐνώπιον τοῦ θεοῦ ἐσθήκασιν (I saw the seven angels who stand before God).

13. [Rev 1:4] καὶ ἀπὸ τῶν ἑπτὰ πνευμάτων ἃ ἐνώπιον τοῦ θρόνου αὐτοῦ (and from the seven spirits who are before his throne)
14. [Rev 4:5] καὶ ἑπτὰ λαμπάδες πυρὸς καιόμεναι ἐνώπιον τοῦ θρόνου (and the seven torches of fire that are burning before the throne).
15. [Rev 5:6] Seven eyes that are the seven spirits of God sent out into all of the earth.
16. [Rev 17:1-3] Then one of the seven angels who had the seven bowls came and said to me, “Come, I will show you the judgment of the great harlot”. . . . And he carried me away *in the Spirit* [ἐν πνεύματι] into the wilderness.
17. [Rev 21:9-10] Then came one of the seven angels who had the seven bowls full of the seven last plagues, and spoke to me, saying, “Come, I will show you the Bride, the wife of the Lamb.” And *in the Spirit* [ἐν πνεύματι] he carried me away to a great, high mountain, and showed me the holy city Jerusalem coming down out of heaven from God.
18. [Ezek 3:14] The Spirit lifted me up and took me away.
19. [Rev 19:10; 22:9] “I am a fellow servant with you. . . . Worship God.”

The Spirit and the Church

20. [Rev 19:12-13] ἔχων ὄνομα γεγραμμένον ὃ οὐδεὶς οἶδεν εἰ μὴ αὐτός, καὶ περιβεβλημένος ἱμάτιον βεβαμμένον αἵματι, καὶ κέκληται τὸ ὄνομα αὐτοῦ ὁ λόγος τοῦ θεοῦ (having a name that has been written on him that no one knows except he himself knows. He is dressed in a robe dipped in blood, and his name is called the Word of God).
21. [Rev 3:12] “He who conquers, I will make him a pillar in the temple of my God; never will he go out of it, and I will write on him *the name of my God* [τὸ ὄνομα τοῦ θεοῦ μου], and *the name of the city of my God* [καὶ τὸ ὄνομα τῆς πόλεως τοῦ θεοῦ μου], the new Jerusalem that comes down from my God out of heaven, and *my own new name* [τὸ ὄνομά μου τὸ καινόν].”
22. [Rev 14:1] Then I looked, and behold, on Mount Zion stood the Lamb, and with him a hundred and forty-four thousand who had *his name and his Father’s name* [τὸ ὄνομα αὐτοῦ καὶ τὸ ὄνομα τοῦ πατρὸς αὐτοῦ] written on their foreheads.
23. [Rev 22:4] There will no more be anything accursed, but the throne of God and of the Lamb will be in it, and his servants will worship him; they will see his face, and *his name* [τὸ ὄνομα αὐτοῦ] will be on their foreheads.
24. [Rev 7:2-3] Then I saw another angel ascend from the rising of the sun, with the seal of the living God, and he called with a loud voice to the four angels who had been given power to harm earth and sea, saying, “Do not harm the earth or the sea or the trees, till *we have sealed* [σφραγίσωμεν] the servants of our God upon their foreheads.”

Conclusion

The Spirit is **the Voice** who regularly guides John’s whole revelatory experience, the **Seven Spirits** who are depicted as the **Seven Torches of Fire** that burn before the throne and go out into the world, and possibly also as the **Seven Principal Angels**. This makes the book of Revelation an important and significant document testifying to an early Christian expression of pneumatology and Trinitarian theology.

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