

THE BREATH OF GOD

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For thousands of years, the breath of God has been attributed to the third person of the Trinity, the Holy Spirit, but has been greatly overlooked. God’s breath has been associated with the Holy Spirit in both the Old and New Testaments. The Holy Spirit and the breath of God have become intertwined. However, I believe that there is more to the breath of God than to simply say God’s breath reveals only one more aspect of the work of the Holy Spirit. Not only does the Holy Spirit help reveal that since Genesis 1:1, our Creator is a Triune God, but also that the breath of God is the only means of life or oneness with our Creator. The breath of God has been active since the creation account in Genesis 1, plays a vital role in salvation, helps to better explain the imago Dei (Image of God)¹, is seen through the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ, and works within every believer.

Before focusing upon the breath of God, it is wise to begin with a brief overview of the Holy Spirit. “God unfolds His revelation of Himself in the Bible progressively.”² The Holy Spirit is the third person of the Trinity and is best understood in the New Testament. In John 16:7, Jesus states that it is best for Him to leave so the Holy Spirit will come. With the Holy Spirit now present, the Spirit is the believer's Helper (John 14:26). The Holy Spirit tabernacles, or indwells, each believer (John 14:17), providing a seal of salvation (Ephesians 1:13). Through the Holy Spirit, believers are assisted in prayer (Jude 1:20), and the Spirit intercedes for God’s people (Romans 8:26-27).

¹ The imago Dei is Latin for image of God. Genesis 1:26 says God created people “in our image and likeness.” This does not mean people physically look like God because “God is Spirit” (John 4:24). The imago Dei is referring to the immaterial part of humanity and sets people apart from the animal world. The likeness of being created in God’s image is seen socially, mentally, and morally. Humanity can think, make decisions, love, feel happiness and sadness, get angry, have fellowship, communicate, and have conversations. Humans can reason and choose, as God does, while humanity also inwardly knows the difference to right and wrong. When Adam and Eve brought sin into the world, their free will of choosing themselves over God marred all of humanity's image of God. Thankfully, those who are in Christ are created new and brought back to a restored imago Dei (2 Corinthians 5:17; Ephesians 4:24).

² Billy Graham, *The Holy Spirit: Activating God's Power in Your Life*, 3rd ed. (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson, 2008), 8.

At conversion, the new believer is baptized by the Holy Spirit (Acts 2:38; 1 Corinthians 12:13). The process of sanctification is enabled and continued through the Holy Spirit as believers begin to turn from sinful works to fruitful works (Galatians 5:16-26). Instead of being filled with worldly temptations, believers are to be filled with the Spirit (Ephesians 5:18). This Holy Spirit also provides believers with spiritual gifts that are meant to be used to serve others for God's glory (Romans 12:6-8; 1 Corinthians 12:4-11; 1 Peter 4:10-11). As the believer matures through sanctification, a Christian life should reflect the fruit of the spirit (Galatians 5:22-23). As Basil of Caesarea said in summing up the work of the Holy Spirit, "Through the Holy Spirit we are restored to paradise, led back to the Kingdom of heaven, adopted as children, given confidence to call God 'Father' and to share in Christ's grace, called children of light, and given a share in eternal glory."³

The person and work of the Holy Spirit are greatly seen in the New Testament, but since the Holy Spirit is God, then the Spirit must be present and active throughout the Old Testament as God was present and active in the Old Testament. As Clement of Alexandria pointed out, "The universal Father is one, and the one the universal Word; and the Holy Spirit is one and the same everywhere."⁴ Irenaeus agreed by teaching how the Holy Spirit had a distinct role and was a distinct person in the Godhead while remaining one God. The Holy Spirit is not "another Son," but the continuing work in the economy of God's salvation.

The Holy Spirit as the breath of God is best seen in salvation. To better understand how the Holy Spirit as the breath of God works in salvation throughout history, the Old and New

³ Alister McGrath, *Christian Theology: An Introduction*, 6th ed. (Malden, MA: John Wiley & Sons Ltd, 2017), 294-95.

⁴ James Richardson, "Quotes from the Early Church Fathers: On the Trinity," apostles-creed.org, March 18, 2015, <http://apostles-creed.org/confessional-reformed-christian-theology/theology/early-church-fathers-quotes-trinity/>.

Testament names of the Holy Spirit must be defined in both the original Hebrew and Greek. By defining the Hebrew and Greek names for the Holy Spirit, a common theme will emerge. This common theme will further reveal how the Holy Spirit is God while also illustrating how the Holy Spirit as the breath of God is central to salvation.

“The Hebrew and Greek words that are translated ‘spirit’ are *ruach* and *Pneuma*, both meaning literally ‘wind, breath.’”⁵ The Hebrew word *ruach* and the Greek word *Pneuma* are defined the same way. This reveals that since creation, God as the Holy Spirit has held the same functions and does not change (Malachi 3:6). God remains the same, but how God chooses to express the Godhead does. It is these functions that have been progressively revealed throughout history. Since both Hebrew and Greek words for Spirit define the same functions of the Holy Spirit, for the rest of this essay, the words used for Spirit, Holy Spirit, *ruach*, *Pneuma*, and breath of God will be used interchangeably.

The Old Testament word for Spirit is *ruach*, meaning spirit, wind, and breath. “The word can refer to the natural spirit of a man, the wind as it blows or, most importantly, to the Spirit of God.”⁶ The first appearance of *ruach* is found in Genesis 1:2 when “The Spirit of God (*Ruach Elohim*) was hovering over the waters” (NIV). In the Old Testament, when the “Spirit of the Lord” or the “Spirit of God” is mentioned, it is *ruach*. *Ruach* can also relate to the human spirit when given by God. Thus, God’s *ruach* provides life for every *ruach* of humanity. It is the *ruach* that is the source of life. *Ruach* is also a feminine noun indicating that God is not classified by gender.

⁵ J. D. Douglas and Merrill Tenney, *New International Bible Dictionary: Based On the Niv*, 4th ed. (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 1987), 447.

⁶ Eugene Carpenter and Philip Comfort, *Holman Treasury of Key Bible Words: 200 Greek and 200 Hebrew Words Defined and Explained* (Nashville, TN: B&H Publishing Group, 2000), 179.

It is important to note that God is not male nor female. God did choose to be revealed as the man of Jesus Christ, but “God is Spirit” (John 4:24). This is important because God is the Creator of all of humanity, male and female, who desires everyone to acknowledge God’s sovereignty over all of creation. It is because “God is Spirit” that makes God the wind and breath involved in salvation, as well as in the creation of the universe and the “new creation” (2 Corinthians 5:17) of those saved by grace through faith (Ephesians 2:8-9).

God wasted no time in declaring that God is Triune and that God the Holy Spirit has different functions. In Genesis 1:2, translations such as the New International Version (NIV) record, “the *Spirit* of God was hovering over the waters” (italics mine). Other translations, like the New Revised Standard Version (NRSV), regard Genesis 1:2 as saying, “a *wind* from God swept over the face of the waters” (italics mine). Both versions tell the same story but highlight a different aspect of the Spirit’s role in creation. Although wind can cause chaos, the *wind* of God can also create, thereby revealing God’s ultimate and almighty control over the created order.

In the New Testament, “The Greek word for ‘Spirit’ is derived from the verb *pneo*, meaning ‘to breath.’”⁷ *Pneuma* still means spirit, wind, and breath, but now also includes life (John 3:8). The Holy Spirit as *Pneuma* is used as the Spirit of God (1 Corinthians 2:11), continuing the understanding that God is the same Triune God throughout both Old and New Testaments. This Greek word, *Pneuma*, is of great importance because it explains how the risen Christ was able to be with every believer.

Jesus Christ is able to be with every believer because every believer is said to be baptized by the Spirit (Matthew 3:11; Acts 1:5; 2:38; 1 Corinthians 12:13; Galatians 3:27). Being baptized by the Spirit means the Holy Spirit tabernacles (dwells) within every believer just as God

⁷ Eugene Carpenter and Philip Comfort, *Holman Treasury of Key Bible Words: 200 Greek and 200 Hebrew Words Defined and Explained* (Nashville, TN: B&H Publishing Group, 2000), 399.

tabernacled with Israel (Exodus 40:34-35). This “indwelling and endowment with the Holy Spirit, which became available through Christ to all who believe, came inevitably to be linked with, and described in the language of, that crucial public step by which individuals first became Christians and were accepted as members of the Spirit-filled, Spirit-led, Spirit-empowered church of Christ.”⁸

To be baptized by the Spirit is to be filled with the Spirit. One example comes from Ephesians 5:18, which says, “Do not get drunk on wine, which leads to debauchery. Instead, be filled with the Spirit” (NIV). The Greek word used for “filled” in Ephesians 5:18 is *pleroo* and pictures something hollow being completely filled up. The Spirit (Pneuma) in Ephesians 5:18 is completely filling the person with God’s breath. Elmer Towns noted that “When a person is drunk, he is controlled by the spirits of the bottle; his walk, talk, and sight are controlled. So when a person is filled with the Spirit, his walk, talk, and sight are controlled by the Spirit.”⁹ The breath of God (Pneuma) fills the believer so that each believer can live a life led by God.

Being filled with the breath of God enables the believer to mature in the knowledge of God as a disciple. A disciple is a continual learner and matures in the knowledge of their teacher in both words and conduct. Christians are disciples of Christ, empowered by the Holy Spirit to know the things of God and become “holy as God is holy” (1 Peter 1:16). To be holy is to be set apart. Christians are set apart in the sense that the breath of God fills them, thereby setting them apart from those who have not confessed Christ as Savior, have been baptized by the Holy Spirit, and have received the breath of God.

⁸ Walter Elwell, *Evangelical Dictionary of Theology*, 2nd ed. (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2001), 137.

⁹ Elmer Towns, *Theology for Today* (Mason, OH: Cengage Learning, 2008), 301.

People who are filled with the breath of God have God's life living within them, connecting them to God and making worship a service of love. True worship of God can only come from believers who have received the Holy Spirit. Worship of God is not restricted to Sunday church service, but as a way of daily life. Every action, thought, and word spoken is an act of worship enabled by being filled with the Holy Spirit, the breath of God. As Adrian Rogers said, "To keep worship from becoming routine and mundane, you need to be filled with the Holy Spirit of God."¹⁰

Every believer is capable of living a life pleasing to God because they are filled with the life-giving power of the breath of God. The breath of God provides the new life Jesus mentioned when He told Nicodemus to be born again of water and Spirit (John 3:3,5). "This phrase highlights the new life of which Jesus speaks, because 'water' evokes the waters of physical birth, and 'spirit' points to a new birth from God."¹¹ This new life is the salvation¹² provided by Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of sins. Every human has earthly life, but only those who have placed faith in Christ have spiritual and eternal life with God.

J.I. Packer noticed, "The first and fundamental difference between the Creator and his creatures is that they are mutable and their nature admits of change, whereas God is immutable and can never cease to be what he is."¹³ Human nature changes as an effect of sin in the world.

¹⁰ Adrian Rogers, *What Every Christian Ought to Know: Essential Truths for Growing Your Faith* (Nashville, TN: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 2005), 171.

¹¹ Carol Newsom, Sharon Ringe, and Jacqueline Lapsley, *Women's Bible Commentary: Twentieth-Anniversary Edition*, 3rd ed. (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 2012), 520.

¹² Salvation is a broad term that not be discussed in depth in this essay. The most basic meaning of salvation is to be delivered and protected. A person stuck in a burning building can find salvation with a firefighter delivers them to safety. In the biblical context, salvation is attributed to being delivered from eternal death to eternal life. It is to be protected from the powers of evil and enabled to live righteously. Salvation is being delivered from darkness and placed in the light of Christ. It is to leave the chaos of sin and have the shalom of God's breath residing within every believer. Salvation is to have sins forgiven, have a restored image of God, and become a child of God by being filled with God's breath. It is being saved by grace through faith (Ephesians 2:8-9). For more information on Salvation and Grace, visit: [A Wesleyan understanding of grace | ResourceUMC](#).

¹³ J.I. Packer, *Knowing God: 20th-Anniversary Edition* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1973), 77.

Thankfully, God never changes and is able to provide for humanity what humanity is incapable of accomplishing. Sin leads to death, but Christ leads to life (Romans 6:23). Every person who dies without Christ is eternally dead (Matthew 25:46), but every follower of Christ has eternal life with God. This is the basis of salvation, and the breath of God is key to salvation and one's eternity.

“In the realm of nature it is the role of the Holy Spirit to give life to all animate creatures, whether on the ground or in the sky and sea.”¹⁴ Psalm 104:29b says, “when you take away their breath, they die and return to their dust” (NRSV). That verse is the core understanding of the breath of God in life and salvation. When the breath of God is gone, death is the outcome, and once something is dead, it begins to decompose and return to dust. This is extremely important to understand for both physical life and death and also spiritual life and death. To begin, let's pursue the word “dust” back to the beginning of creation.

Genesis 2:7 says, “then the LORD God formed man from the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life” (NRSV). The Bible calls this man “Adam,” who was created in the image of God (Genesis 1:26-27). Adam and Eve became living beings because the breath of God was within them. Just as air provides life, the breath of God provides life.

When Adam was created, sin had not yet entered creation because God referred to creation as “very good” (Genesis 1:31). Adam was free from sin but not the possibility of sin. “Cyril of Jerusalem (c.313-86) emphasized that there was no need for Adam or Eve to fall from this state of grace. It took place as a result of their decision to turn away from God to the material world. As a result, the image of God in human nature has been defaced and disfigured. Since all

¹⁴ Wayne Grudem, *Systematic Theology: An Introduction to Biblical Doctrine* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1994), 636.

of humanity traces its origins to Adam and Eve, he argued, it follows that all humanity shares in this defacement of the image of God.”¹⁵

When God created Adam, God’s breath entered Adam, and Adam became a living person. Adam and Eve lived in this state of grace until they disobeyed God. Genesis 3 records the events of Adam and Eve’s rebellion and how sin entered the world. When Adam and Eve ate from the forbidden tree of knowledge, the Bible says that death was the result (Genesis 2:17; 3:3). It was the breath of God that made Adam a living person, and it was the removal of the breath of God that caused Adam and Eve to die after disobeying God.

The question can be argued that Adam and Eve continued to breathe and did not die after eating the forbidden fruit. However, it must be understood that the Bible lists three types of death. These three types of death include physical death (when a person’s body dies), spiritual death (the separation of the spirit from the body), and eternal death (eternal separation from God).¹⁶ When Adam and Eve ate the forbidden fruit, thereby disobeying God, Adam and Eve did not die physically, but spiritually.

Adam and Eve died spiritually because Genesis 3:24 states that God drove them out of the Garden of Eden. Psalm 5:4 teaches that God does not dwell with sin. Since God is not pleased with sin, God will not associate with sin, thereby forcing Adam and Eve away from God’s presence. Humanity’s image of God was broken, but thankfully God is a God of grace who determined to restore sinful humanity.

¹⁵ Alister McGrath, *Christian Theology: An Introduction*, 6th ed. (Malden, MA: John Wiley & Sons Ltd, 2017), 329.

¹⁶ Don Stewart, “Did Adam and Eve Die When They Ate the Forbidden Fruit?,” BlueLetterBible, accessed April 9, 2021, https://www.blueletterbible.org/faq/don_stewart/don_stewart_709.cfm.

Since salvation is being saved from something, the biblical idea of salvation is being saved from the consequences of sin. When Adam and Eve sinned, they lost their breath of God and died spiritually. Sin separates people from God because God is holy. Sin causes spiritual death, but the body continues to live, breathe, and function. It is the person who keeps sinning that John calls the “sin that leads to death” (1 John 5:16-17). The sin that leads to death is eternal death, and spiritual death will lead to eternal death if not confessed and repented for God’s salvation.

A good illustration of the breath of God in life and death is the valley of the dry bones in Ezekiel 37:1-14. God asked Ezekiel if the dry bones could live (Ezekiel 37:3) and told Ezekiel to prophesy to the bones to live by making the breath of God enter the dry bones (37:5-6). Ezekiel obeyed and saw flesh and tendons cover the bones (37:7-8). Then, in verses 9-10, the breath of God entered the bones, and they came to life. This is a great example of humanity. People will live on Earth, just like those fleshy bones, but true life, eternal life, only comes when the breath of God enters. The filling of the breath of God creates new, everlasting life.

The apostle Paul taught the breath of God as active in salvation. Paul said in Romans 6:23 that “the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord” (NIV). The result of sin is to lose one’s breath and become like the dry bones in Ezekiel. It separates the person from God, spiritually and eventually eternally, returning them to dust. Paul taught that everyone who does not have the breath of God are just like Adam, spiritually dead and separated from having a relationship with God. However, the second Adam (last Adam) is Jesus Christ, who offers eternal life as a free gift for all who receive Jesus Christ through faith. Every person who comes to God through faith and repentance is baptized by the Holy Spirit, thereby having the breath of God dwell within them, which is salvation.

The apostle Paul knew that Adam died spiritually and that Christ provides spiritual life. That is why Paul refers to Jesus as the “last Adam” (1 Corinthians 15:22). A few verses later, in 1 Corinthians 15:44-45, the apostle Paul teaches that “There is a natural body and a spiritual body.” The natural body, according to Paul, is Adam who was made of dust. The spiritual body is that of Jesus Christ, who offers eternal life instead of Adam's eternal death. The breath that left Adam is found in Christ, who offers the breath of God to all who confess Christ as Savior. “Just as we participate in the nature and image of the first Adam made of dust, so will we share in the nature and image of the final Adam, the life-giving Spirit.”¹⁷

Remember, *breath* in both the Old and New Testaments means Spirit. Just as taking a deep breath of air helps to calm a person down, God’s breath provides a calm amid chaos (Genesis 1:2) that surpasses anything humanity could ever achieve. The breath of God provides a calmness called *shalom*, which denotes wholeness and completeness. Just as being filled with the Spirit means something hollow being filled completely, *shalom* is being completely filled. “The word *shalom* is most commonly used to refer to a state of affairs, one of well-being, tranquility, prosperity, and security, circumstances unblemished by any sort of defect. *Shalom* is a blessing, a manifestation of divine grace.”¹⁸

The breath of God is the Breath of Life. Since life is in the breath of God, then the creation of humanity was not by blind chance. God formed¹⁹ humanity like a potter who crafts his creation. The potter is God who is intelligent and possesses the power of creation to create

¹⁷ James Mays, *HarperCollins Bible Commentary: Revised Edition* (New York, NY: HarperCollins Publishers, 2000), 1092.

¹⁸ Aviezer Ravitzky, “Shalom: Peace in Hebrew,” myjewishlearning, accessed April 9, 2021, <https://www.myjewishlearning.com/article/shalom/>.

¹⁹ The Hebrew word used for “formed” is *yatsar*, which means to mold, shape, or form. *Yatsar* teaches that God is both all-powerful (omnipotent) and all-knowing (omniscient) to create, form, shape, and mold humanity.

humanity in God's image and with God's breath. Thereby God's love for humanity is intentional and valuable.

God's love and the breath of God are best seen in Jesus Christ and His sacrifice on the cross for humanity. The Council of Chalcedon in 451 C.E. stated that "We all with one voice confess our Lord Jesus Christ to be one and the same Son, perfect in divinity and humanity, truly God and truly human, consisting of a rational soul and a body, being of one substance with the Father in relation to his divinity, and being of one substance with us in relation to his humanity, and is like us in all things apart from sin (Hebrews 4:15)."²⁰ That statement teaches that Jesus is the last Adam because while Jesus is fully human, Jesus is also fully God. Christ is not made of dust, and it is the breath of God that Jesus gives as a free gift.

Jesus Christ, who is fully human and fully God, is known as the incarnation. Since humanity is not capable of forgiving sin and making dry bones live, God acted for humanity to forgive sin and give life. The Pneuma of God was in Jesus Christ as Jesus lived, breathed, and walked upon Earth. Jesus could forgive sin because He is God and because God alone can provide the breath of God needed for salvation.

On the cross, Christ hung for humanity's salvation. The Bible said when Jesus died, He cried out in a loud voice and "gave up his spirit" (Matthew 27:50; John 19:30). Jesus Christ gave us His Pneuma. At that moment, Jesus Christ died because His Pneuma was gone. Immediately after this, "The earth shook, the rocks split and the tombs broke open. The bodies of many holy people who had died were raised to life" (Matthew 27:51-52 NIV). Jesus Christ gave up His spirit, and the spirit, the breath of God, opened the tombs of those holy (set apart) people to be raised to life because of the resurrection. When Jesus said, "It is finished (John 19:30), "That

²⁰ Alister McGrath, *Christian Theology: An Introduction*, 6th ed. (Malden, MA: John Wiley & Sons Ltd, 2017), 224.

victorious pronouncement marked the sealing of a victory in a battle which began in the Garden of Eden.”²¹

The resurrection of Jesus Christ marked the availability of the breath of God for all who believe in Jesus Christ. It raised to life the people faithful to God who died during the Old Testament days that awaited Christ’s resurrection. Jesus Christ gave up His Spirit so all of humanity, past, present, and future, could breathe in the breath of God and receive life in Christ’s name.

After Jesus’ resurrection, Christ appeared over forty days to hundreds of people. In one instance, Jesus visited His disciples, who were hiding because of fear. Since Jesus is God, and God is Spirit (John 4:24), Jesus is free to give His Spirit. When Jesus addresses His disciples, He breathes on them and tells them to “Receive the Holy Spirit” (John 20:19-23). Jesus told them to receive the breath of God.

Later, in Acts 2, a wind (spirit) came from heaven (2:2) and filled the room where the disciples were sitting. The Spirit (wind, Pneuma) filled each disciple, enabling them to speak in other languages. The Pneuma came from heaven, filled the believers, and because the believers were filled, they were equipped and enabled to fulfill God’s purpose.

Earlier, when Jesus told the disciples to receive the Spirit (breath of God), Jesus was baptizing them with the Holy Spirit and the promise of salvation. The disciples now had spiritual life because of the breath of God. In Acts 2, these same disciples are now “filled” (Acts 2:4) with the breath of God and enabled to carry out God’s purposes. Only children of God can freely serve and love God. Being filled with the breath of God restores the image of God, makes the believer a child of God, and enables that believer to accomplish God’s will in their life.

²¹ Elmer Towns, *Theology for Today* (Mason, OH: Cengage Learning, 2008), 293.

“The whole purpose for which we exist is to be thus taken into the life of God.”²² God created humanity with the purpose of having a relationship with God. God desires to be close to people (James 4:8), and the intimacy of that closeness comes from the breath of God which dwells inside each believer. It is God who does not want any person to perish but for everyone to come to Christ for salvation (2 Peter 3:9). Salvation and eternal life come and are sustained by the breath of God, but God also has revealed who God is through the written word and God’s breath.

2 Timothy 3:16-17 teaches that “All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that the servant of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work” (NIV). The Bible is not simply a collection of stories or ideas about God; it is not a mere human book. It is through the Holy Spirit that God revealed who God is by using people to write God’s message. God breathed in the disciples who wrote Scripture, and the words the disciples exhaled came from God’s breath. The disciple's personalities, character, and opinions are still present, but because they breathed God’s breath in writing Scripture, the disciple's words are true because “God cannot lie” (Hebrews 6:18).

To say, as 2 Timothy 3:16 says, that the Bible is “God-breathed” is to say that Scripture is inspired.²³ This means that Scripture has a divine origin because it came about through the breath of God. However, inspiration must be understood as thought-for-thought and not word-for-word. God’s thoughts have been recorded in the Bible, which allows the human authors who were breathing out God’s word to retain their history and character. God desires people to know

²² C.S. Lewis, *Mere Christianity* (New York, NY: HarperCollins, 1980), 161.

²³ The phrase “God-breathed” in most English Bibles is translated from the Greek word *theopneustos* which means the contents of Scripture, both Old and New Testaments, are God-breathed. Jerome translated the Bible into Latin (Latium-the language of the common people) and translated *theopneustos* as *divinitus inspirate* which means “divinely breathed into.”

Christ and find salvation and guidance in Jesus' name. Through the breath of God, this is accomplished. As 2 Peter 1:21 says, "For no prophecy was ever made by an act of human will, but men moved by the Holy Spirit spoke from God."

The breath of God is vital for the believer. Not only does the breath of God equip people to accomplish God's will, but the breath of God is also the only means of salvation. In the Old Testament, Job knew about God's breath when he said, "as long as I have life within me, the breath of God in my nostrils, my lips will not say anything wicked" (NIV). Job is a good example throughout history because Job's life illustrates the fact that people will never fully understand God and, at times, become angry with God. People are well aware that they can say wicked things, but as Job knew, eternal life only comes from God's breath, and no person can speak ill about how God decided to offer salvation.

God's breath gives and sustains life. Salvation can only come from God because it is only God in Jesus Christ who gave up His breath for humanity's salvation. The breath of God saves because Jesus gave up His breath for the forgiveness of sins and life everlasting. "Throughout the Bible, the real source of life is God; and as religious thought developed, 'Spirit' came to be associated particularly with the life created by God."²⁴

The most basic need for survival is air. Without air, there is no life, plant or human. People can fast from food and even fast from water for a short time, but no person can fast from air. Oxygen is too critical to creation's existence and humanity's relationship with God. Dr. Resner said, "God's own breath breathes through us with movements and articulations that God knows and understands."²⁵

²⁴ Alan Richardson, *A Theological Word Book of the Bible* (New York, NY: Macmillan Publishing Company, 1950), 234.

²⁵ André Resner, *Living In-between: Lament, Justice, and the Persistence of the Gospel* (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 2015), 53.

God knows and understands because God's breath as the Holy Spirit lives within every believer. Creation came into existence through God's breath, is sustained by God's breath, and life can only be possible through God's breath. Hence, God is the Creator and Sustainer over creation. That is why every believer is born into new life because of the new breath they receive (2 Corinthians 5:17).

The breath of God is what makes salvation possible and is the only thing that makes salvation available. People have asked the question for centuries about why the Christian God is the only God for salvation. The answer is because it is only the Christian God who provides the breath of life because God is life and breath. The road to salvation is not narrow-minded, for God's breath will dwell with any person who confesses Christ as Savior. Psalm 1:4 illustrates how God's breath separates the righteous from the unrighteous as wind blows the chaff away. To be righteous is to have the breath of God. Having the breath of God does not mean the person is God; rather, it means they have God's Holy Spirit living within them. Salvation is only found in Jesus Christ because only Jesus Christ gave up His breath so people could be filled with God's breath and receive salvation and eternal life.

The breath of God transforms a person to become more Christlike and restores humanity's broken image of God. Job 33:4 says, "The Spirit of God has made me; the breath of the Almighty gives me life" (NIV). God's breath reveals God's abundant grace towards humanity. God offers salvation to everyone who believes (Romans 10:13) and will pour out God's breath to all who desire eternal life with Jesus Christ. God's breath brings God's life to all who receive it through the Holy Spirit. The breath of God is the eternal life that destroys death, so let every believer worship God through their breath because of God's breath.

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