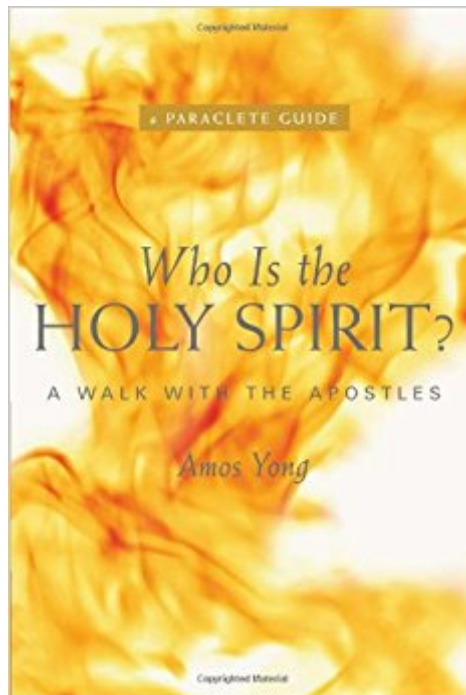




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# **Who Is The Holy Spirit?: A Walk With The Apostles (A Paraclete Guide)**



## Synopsis

Christians talk about the Holy Spirit, but rarely know how to recognize the Spirit's presence and activity in the world. These meditations attempt to discern how the winds of the Spirit have blown in the lives of Jesus, his disciples, and the earliest Christians so that we can track and participate in the works of the Holy Spirit in the global village of the 21st century.

## Book Information

Series: A Paraclete Guide

Paperback: 224 pages

Publisher: Paraclete Press (June 1, 2011)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 1557256357

ISBN-13: 978-1557256355

Product Dimensions: 0.8 x 5.2 x 7.8 inches

Shipping Weight: 8.5 ounces (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 4.3 out of 5 stars 9 customer reviews

Best Sellers Rank: #236,505 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #128 in Books > Christian Books & Bibles > Theology > Pneumatology #5410 in Books > Religion & Spirituality > Religious Studies > Theology

## Customer Reviews

Where and how is the Holy Spirit at work in our world? The Holy Spirit is invoked in scripture, sermons, and bible studies, but do we really know how to recognize the Spirit's presence and activity in the world? What does it mean that the Holy Spirit is at work among us? How and where do we read the signs of the power of the Holy Spirit in our lives and the world? One of this country's most dynamic teachers of the New Testament, Amos Yong offers this incisive look at what the apostles have to say. Beginning with Luke, the most illuminating Gospel writer on the topic, Yong offers a series of meditations on Luke and Acts to show how the winds of the Spirit blew in the lives of Jesus, his disciples, and the earliest Christians--all so that we can see and participate in the work of the Spirit today.

Amos Yong is J. Rodman Williams Professor of Theology at Regent University School of Divinity in Virginia Beach, where he also directs the PhD in Renewal Studies program. He earned his PhD from Boston University. He has authored over a dozen books including The Spirit of

Creation:Â Modern Science and Divine Action in the Pentecostal-Charismatic Imagination. This book grew out of a much-discussed article that he wrote in 2006 for Christianity Today titled "AÂ Wind that Swirls Everywhere."

This text was ordered November 12th and arrived November 16th before the estimated delivery date as described. A great resource I'm using as a reference for my doctoral dissertation research on Spiritual Giftedness. Thank you.

Very inspiring! Helps with spiritual growth.

This is a nice complimentary book to use with Levisons Fresh Air. It presents a comprehensive view of the work of the Holy Spirit in scripture.

Yong has written a book that explains the mission of the church better than any book I have read before.

ok

This is my fourth review of Paraclete Press`s series of guides on the Holy Spirit. The other books I reviewed, each of the authors seek to articulate their understanding of the Holy Spirit from their own theological tradition (Jewish, Orthodox and Protestant). While the author of Who is the Holy Spirit?, Amos Yong, is deeply formed by the Charismatic and evangelical tradition this book examines the Holy Spirit by providing a close reading of the book of Acts and supplemented by material from Luke. The effect is that Yong is able to draw out some of the social and political implications of who the Spirit is and his activity in the world. Right now, some of you may be saying, "the Holy Spirit I know, but who is Amos Yong? Why do I need to read this book?" Amos Yong is one of the most well known and respected Pentecostal scholars working today. He is the J. Rodman Williams Professor of Theology at Regent University School of Divinity in Virginia Beach (as a graduate of Regent College, we call this the other Regent). Because Regent University was founded by Pat Robertson some may be tempted to write it off as a `rightwing institution' but Yong's analysis has implications for people on both the right and the left [note: I actually have no idea what Yong's politics are, I just want to make sure you don't think you know what he's gonna say before you read the book]. This book came to fruition when the acquisitions editor at Paraclete Press read an article

by Roger Olson in Christianity Today entitled, "A Wind that Swirls Everywhere: Amos Yong Thinks He Sees the Holy Spirit Working in Other Religions Too[<sup>note: the back of the book mistakenly attributes the article to Yong, but it is an article about Yong</sup>]." In response to this idea, Amos Yong went to work on exploring the material on the Spirit in Luke and Acts for a Sunday School class at his church. *Who is the Holy Spirit?* is divided into 39 chapters covering all of Acts and selections from Luke, and a discussion guide for each chapter. Acts has been fertile ground for Charismatic reflection. Personally I have read through Acts to see evidence of the Spirit, miracles, to discover how to do (be) the church and to explore missional implications. What sets Yong's book apart is that he focuses not only on where the Spirit is invoked, but what the Spirit evokes. He doesn't just point out the Spirit's presence but he asks us to open our eyes to discover that the scope of the Spirit's work is bigger, more inclusive than we sometimes imagine. Yong writes: I now believe that the Spirit is at work not just at the level of the individual but also at the level of society and its various political and economic structures; not just the otherworldly, spiritual level but also at the this-worldly level of the material and concrete domains of our lives; not just in and through the church but also in and through wider institutional, cultural and religious realities. In other words, I now think the world of the Holy Spirit is much wider than I'd guessed, and that the work of the Spirit is to redeem and transform our world as a whole along with all of its interconnected parts, systems and structures (x). And so, Yong sets out to answer the question of *Who is the Holy Spirit?* not by giving us doctrinal formula and propositional truth, but by paying careful attention to the narrative of Luke-Acts and showing us the Spirit's work. He explores how the Spirit brings and is bringing about the full promise of the Kingdom of God, how the Spirit overcomes divisions of language, ethnicity, nationality, gender and class, and how the Spirit brings about new freedom and liberation. This isn't a denial of the Spirit's individual and personal work within the human soul, but he probes the narrative also for wider socio-political implications. Acts provides rich fodder for reflection as he explores how the church is born through the Spirit's work in overcoming divisions of language and culture at Pentecost and the Spirit keeps impelling their witness outward from Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria and to the ends of the earth. Each chapter explores a text (or set of texts), discovers what it is saying, the implications of the Spirit's work, and explores the implications for our own context. I found this book refreshing! Too often confessional scholars examine spiritual realities in the text while critical scholarship focuses on the political aspects of the early church. It is exciting to read a Bible study which explores both of these poles. Yong's bibliography, while only showing the references he deems 'accessible,' displays his willingness to tackle the issue and draw on a wide range of scholarship. As this is not a scholarly book, there are no footnotes. Most people probably

like this better, but I missed them and my reading would have been enriched by knowing where he drew various aspects from and being able to chase things back. But lucky for me, this isn't the only thing Yong has written on the topic, and I will get my chance. Yong's critics (even Olson) point out that his views weaken the need for evangelism by de-emphasizing Christian particularity and paving the way for pluralism and syncretism. This seems hardly fair. By rooting his reflections in the book of Acts, Yong is able to affirm both the continuities and discontinuities between other religions and the gospel. Yong says: If the work of the Spirit brought about renewal, restoration and re-appropriation of all that was good and true in the social, cultural, and religious spheres of human life, it could also be seen from another perspective that the coming of the Spirit turned the world upside down in each of these domains of human endeavor. Continuity or discontinuity, when and how? These are questions that require ongoing discernment of the Spirit's presence and activity(160) This has implications for how we engage in mission. We do not dismiss other religions out of hand as utterly false; we do look for evidence of where the Spirit is at work (like Paul in the Aeropagus). This book would be great for personal reflection, or as a curriculum for a small group Bible Study. I certainly think it would inspire a rich discussion of the Spirit's role, presence and work in our lives and in the church. I am not sure that Yong answers, or intends to give us a firm answer to the question: Who is the Holy Spirit?. Instead through his calling to attention the widening scope of the Spirit's work, he helps us to see that the Spirit is bigger and more wonderful than we have previously imagined. Thank you to Paraclete press for providing me with a copy of this book in exchange for this review.

Who is the Holy Spirit uses the parallel books of Luke and Acts to illustrate how the Holy Spirit empowers Christians to do God's work in the world. For the last six months of last year I was focused on reading and reading about the gospel of Luke. Spending that much time in Luke really helped to focus me on how intentional the parallels from the gospel of Luke and the books of Acts are. This book takes the parallels and focuses on how the Holy Spirit not only is God, in the same way that Jesus was God in person on the earth, but shows how the Apostles, through the power of the Holy Spirit, worked to fulfill the mission of God just as Christ did. This is a wide ranging book. And if anything, that would be my main criticism. I almost wish it was more focused. But Yong wants to hit all the major themes and actions of the Holy Spirit in the book of Acts. So there is a very good section on the power of the spirit in salvation and empowering the apostles while they were in Jerusalem. The economics of Acts and the implications of how the Spirit worked in class, cultural issues, language and racial politics of Israel take a significant role in the book. The way that Holy Spirit pushes and prods the early church away from their previous understanding and expectations

of a kingdom of Israel toward seeing God's Kingdom as broader than Israel and the fulfillment of scripture is often missed when we already know the story of the church as gentiles. While I think this was a very good book, the Holy Spirit was at times lost in the story of the early church. Because everything in the book is assumed to be the work of the Holy Spirit, at times it almost seemed like the Holy Spirit moved to the background and became an understood instead of an explicit subject. I would have liked a bit more tangible discussion of the Holy Spirit as the Holy Spirit instead of looking at the Holy Spirit purely through the results of the work that the Holy Spirit has done. That being said, this is a very good book to take you through the book of Acts. It is very biblically focused and with 39 short chapters it can be read in a lot of short chucks. Yong is a professor at Regent University and very well known for his books on the theology of disability and the study of Pentecostalism and missions. I am going to get to those. I have had those recommended to me several times before I picked this book up. I did not realize he was the same author, I just picked it up because it was on sale and I am reading about the trinity this year.

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