



WHO IS THE HOLY SPIRIT?

The Alpha Course week 7

For a long time in the church, the person and work of the Holy Spirit has been:

- Ignored - sometimes a greater concentration on the Father and the Son, but the Holy Spirit is biblical and third person of the Trinity
- Misunderstood – “Holy Ghost” sounds like an impersonal force, but the Holy Spirit is a person not an “it”
- Resisted - fear of what He does, but the Holy Spirit is gentle.

1. HE WAS INVOLVED IN CREATION

- Bringing order out of chaos (*Genesis 1:1-2*)
- The Creator Spirit - giving life to mankind (*Genesis 2:7*)

2. HE CAME UPON PARTICULAR PEOPLE AT PARTICULAR TIMES FOR PARTICULAR TASKS

- Bezalel - for artistic work (*Exodus 31:1-5*)
- Gideon - for leadership (*Judges 6:14-15, 34*)
- Samson - for strength and power (*Judges 15:14*)
- Isaiah - for prophecy (*Isaiah 61:1-3*)

3. HE WAS PROMISED BY THE FATHER

- The promise of a “new thing”
 - “I will put my Spirit in you.” (*Ezekiel 36:26-27*)
 - “I will remove from you your heart of stone and give you a heart of flesh.” (*Ezekiel 36:26-27*)
 - “I will pour out my Spirit on all people.” (*Joel 2:28-29*)

However, the prophecies remained unfulfilled for at least 300 years.

With the coming of Jesus there is a great activity of the Spirit - not just for particular people at particular times but for everyone.

- Everyone surrounding the birth of Jesus is filled with the Holy Spirit:
 - Mary (*Luke 1:35*)
 - Elizabeth (*Luke 1:41*)
 - John the Baptist (*Luke 3:16*)

4. JOHN THE BAPTIST LINKS HIM WITH JESUS

“John answered them all, ‘I baptize you with water. But one more powerful than I will come, the straps of whose sandals I am not worthy to untie. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and with fire.’” (*Luke 3:16*)

- Jesus was filled with the Spirit
 - Jesus received power through the anointing of the Holy Spirit at His baptism. (*Luke 3:22; Luke 4:1, 14, 18*)

5. JESUS PREDICTS HIS PRESENCE (*John 7:37-39*)

However, He tells them to wait for the gift promised by the Father (*Acts 1:4-5, 8; Luke 24:49*)

- At Pentecost the disciples were filled with the Spirit and received:
 - New languages (*Acts 2:4-12*)
 - New boldness (*Acts 2:14*)
 - New power (*Acts 2:37-41*)

We live in the age of the Spirit. God has promised to give His Spirit to every Christian (*Acts 2:37-39*).

“Whoever believes in me, as the Scripture has said, will have streams of living water flowing from within.”

John 7:37-38

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION IN GROUPS

1. Who would you say is the Holy Spirit?
2. Have you experienced the Holy Spirit? How, and what difference has he made for you?
3. Jesus was empowered by the Holy Spirit. What does that imply for us?
4. What do you need the Spirit’s help with at this time? You may wish to take some time to pray for one another.



WHY DOES PETER FOCUS ON THE SPIRIT?

“In the last days, God says, I will pour out my Spirit on all people. Your sons and daughters will prophesy, your young men will see visions, your old men will dream dreams. Even on my servants, both men and women, I will pour out my Spirit in those days, and they will prophesy. I will show wonders in the heavens above and signs on the earth below, blood and fire and billows of smoke. The sun will be turned to darkness and the moon to blood before the coming of the great and glorious day of the Lord. And everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.” Acts 2 17-21

There’s an amazing change we see in Peter, Jesus’s friend and disciple. He was the one who denied Jesus three time, but now just a few weeks later he preaches the most amazing sermon to thousands in Jerusalem. What caused this transformation?

Here Peter quotes from the Old Testament prophet Joel. It’s easy to think that the Holy Spirit wasn’t really present before Jesus, but that is very far from the truth. There are many stories of God anointing particular people with his Spirit, but these are at specific times for specific purposes. Some are very practical, such as the craftsmen who built the Temple in Jerusalem. Others received the Spirit’s power to achieve great results. The Spirit spoke to prophets, often in ways we might find pretty scary, to guide the people. David is a king who was empowered by the Spirit, even if at times he got it very wrong.

But Joel speaks of the Spirit being poured out on all people, not just a select few. This changed Peter. At Pentecost, he (along with all Jesus’ followers) received the Holy Spirit, the Spirit of Jesus, in a powerful way. Jesus had gone, but by his Spirit was now back. He was poured out upon them, transforming their lives and through them others’. For Peter, the Holy Spirit is no ‘add on’ to being Jesus’ disciple. He would have remembered Jesus telling his disciples they would do even greater things than him. Because he now has the Spirit of Jesus with him 24/7, that might just be possible.

Holy Trinity
Church • Frome

In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. Now the earth was formless and empty, darkness was over the surface of the deep, and the Spirit of God was hovering over the waters. Genesis 1:1–2

I will put my Spirit in you and move you to follow my decrees and be careful to keep my laws. Ezekiel 36:26–27



Watch this week’s video at <https://vimeo.com/184825492>

QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION

1. The Hebrew word for Spirit is translated ‘ruach’ or ‘breath’. How does this help you understand the Holy Spirit? Have you felt his ‘breath’?
2. What does it mean for the Holy Spirit to be the Spirit of Jesus? What consequences does this have for Christians today?
3. Pentecost changed everything for Peter. How has it changed you?
4. The Bible says that we living in the last days. Read Joel’s prophecy and discuss or reflect upon what we should expect to see. Do you see it? If not, why not?

Breathe into me, Holy Spirit, that my thoughts may all be holy. Move in me, Holy Spirit, that my work, too, may be holy. Attract my heart, Holy Spirit, that I may love only what is holy. Strengthen me, Holy Spirit, that I may defend all that is holy. Protect me, Holy Spirit, that I may always be holy.

Saint Augustine

FOCUS ON THE HOLY SPIRIT

9.30am – 1pm Saturday 22 April at *Trinity First School*

You might like to read *Come, Creator Spirit* by *Raniero Cantalamessa*

holytrinityfrome.com
Trinity Street, Frome, BA11 3DE
holytrinityfrome@gmail.com 01373 453425
Registered Charity no. 1129366

