

"The Holy Spirit"

Some call Him the Holy Ghost, others the Holy Spirit. Who is He? Hello, I'm Phil Sanders, and this is a Bible study "In Search of the Lord's Way." And today we're exploring what the Bible says about the Holy Spirit. So stay with us.

Welcome to In Search of the Lord's Way! We're here to search the Scriptures. And I'm so thankful God gave us the Scriptures through the Holy Spirit. Now whatever was written there could easily be called God's word and could just as easily be called the words of the Holy Spirit. Hebrews 3 verses 7 to 11 introduce a quotation from Psalm 95:7 to 11 with the words, "just as the Holy Spirit says." You see, the Spirit gave us this tremendous message. And thanks for taking time with us today. We want to be a part of your life each week.

From the earliest days of the church, people have had strange ideas about the Holy Spirit. In the third century a heretic named Sabellius taught the Holy Spirit was just one of the names of God but was not a separate person from God the Father or Jesus His Son. In the fourth century a heretic named Arius taught the Lord Jesus and the Holy Spirit were not eternal but had a beginning. Others taught the Holy Spirit was just a force or a presence and not a real person. So, it's easy to see that there's a lot of confusion about the Holy Spirit.

Some older versions used the word "it" to refer to the Holy Spirit. And to be fair, the word "Spirit" in the original Greek language is a neuter word *pneuma*. But the Holy Spirit is not a thing. The Lord Jesus said in John 16 verse 13, "But when He, the Spirit of truth, comes, He will guide you into all the truth; for He will not speak on His own initiative, but whatever He hears, He will speak; and He will disclose to you what is to come." The word for "He" in this verse is not neuter but masculine. Yes, the Spirit is a person.

We have more to say about the Spirit in this study, and we offer this study free. If you'd like a printed copy or a CD of our study and live in the United States, mail your request to In Search of the Lord's Way, P.O. Box 371, Edmond, OK 73083 or send an e-mail to searchtv@searchtv.org. Or you can call our toll-free telephone number. That number is 1-800-321-8633. We also have materials free on our website at www.searchtv.org.

The Edmond church will now worship in song, we'll read from 1 Peter 1:22 to 25, and we'll study what God says about the Holy Spirit.

Our reading today comes from 1 Peter chapter 1, verses 22 to 25. "Since you have in obedience to the truth purified your souls for a sincere love of the brethren, fervently love one another from the heart, for you have been born again not of seed which is perishable but imperishable, *that is*, through the living and enduring word of God. For, 'All flesh is like grass, And all its glory like the flower of grass. The grass withers, And the flower falls off, But the word of the Lord endures forever.' And this is the word which was preached to you." That's from God's holy word given by the Holy Spirit. Let's pray together. Father, we're grateful that the Holy Spirit inspired this word. And moved men to write the things that we most need so that we may know You and may come to love You. Help us always Father to do Your will. In Jesus name, Amen!

The Scriptures describe the Holy Spirit as a person. The Holy Spirit has a mind. Romans 8, verses 26 to 27 says, "In the same way the Spirit also helps our weakness; for we do not know how to pray as we should, but the Spirit Himself intercedes for us with groanings too deep for words; and He who searches the hearts knows what the mind of the Spirit is, because He intercedes for the saints according to the will of God." Now only a person can have a mind, can think, or speak, or intercede.

The Holy Spirit searches our hearts so that He may communicate to the Father what we are thinking. Now only a person could do this.

Jesus promised in John 14 verses 16 to 17, "I will ask the Father, and He will give you another Helper, that He may be with you forever; that is the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it does not see Him or know Him, but you know Him because He abides with you and will be in you." Jesus here calls the Spirit "another Helper" like Himself. The Spirit is described here as "another of the same kind" as Jesus. Just as Jesus was a helper or one called to the side of the apostles, so the Spirit will be a helper to teach and guide them. Well only a person could do this.

The Holy Spirit, as a person, has emotions and feelings. Paul spoke of the "love of the Spirit" in Romans 15 verse 30 and the "fellowship of the Spirit" in Philippians 2 and verse 1. He warned the Ephesians in Ephesians 4 and verse 30, "Do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, by whom you were sealed for the day of redemption." Indeed, when we sin, we grieve the Holy Spirit of God. A person grieves but not some force or influence. So, the Holy Spirit is a person.

The scriptures not only describe the Holy Spirit but attribute to Him a Divine personality. More than one hundred times He is called the "Holy Spirit," which is a clear reference to His deity. In Hebrews 9 verse 14, He is called the eternal Spirit. The apostle Paul taught in 1 Corinthians 2 verses 10 to 12, that the Holy Spirit is omniscient, that is, He knows all things. Paul said, "For to us God revealed them through the Spirit (that is the things in scripture); for the Spirit searches all things, even the depths of God. 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."

Well since the Spirit is Divine, he is omnipotent or able to do all things. Genesis 1 verses 1 and 2 says, that "In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth. Well the earth was without form and void, and darkness was over the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God was hovering over the face of the waters." Now the word "hovering" in Hebrew is used of an eagle hovering in the sky, poised, and alert and watchful, ready for instant action to catch its fledglings. In Deuteronomy 32 and verse 11 it's a metaphor for God watching over His people.

David said that the Spirit was present everywhere, well this is another sign of being Divine. He said in Psalm 139 verses 7 to 10, "Where can I go from Your Spirit? Or where can I flee from Your presence? If I ascend to heaven, You are there; if I make my bed in Sheol, behold, You are there. If I take the wings of the dawn, if I dwell in the remotest part of the sea, Even there Your hand will lead me, And Your right hand will lay hold of me."

When the Lord Jesus was conceived, the Holy Spirit was involved. The angel told Mary in Luke chapter 1 verse 35, "The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; for that reason the holy Child shall be called the Son of God." Later an angel of the Lord told Joseph in Matthew 1 verse 20, "Joseph, son of David, do not fear to take Mary as your wife, for that which is conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit."

When Jesus and the apostles began working miracles, they acted in the power of the Holy Spirit. Peter recalled in Acts 10 and verse 38, "how God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and with power. And He went about doing good and healing all who were oppressed by the devil, for God was with him." In every miracle of Jesus, the Father and the Spirit were very much involved. Likewise, God was confirming His message through the miracles that the apostles and others performed by the Holy Spirit. Hebrews 2 verses 3 to 4 says about our salvation, that "It was declared at first by the Lord, and it was attested to us by those who heard, while God also bore witness by signs and wonders and

various miracles and by gifts of the Holy Spirit distributed according to His will." You see, the Holy Spirit was behind and involved in every single miracle.

Now when God raised Jesus from the dead, the Holy Spirit was very much involved. Romans 8 and verse 11 says, that "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 dwells in you." So, when Jesus comes again, the Holy Spirit will raise our bodies from the dead. And only a divine being can do this. Likewise in Acts 11 and verse 28 a prophet named Agabus made a prediction. "And one of them (the Bible says) named Agabus stood up and began to indicate by the Spirit that there would certainly be a great famine all over the world. And this took place in the reign of Claudius." Well only God can know the future. My friend, the Holy Spirit is divine.

The Holy Spirit is indeed involved in inspiring those who wrote the words of the Bible as we've mentioned. Jesus promised the apostles in John 14 and verse 26, "But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, he will teach you all things and bring to your remembrance all that I have said to you." Well Jesus promised the apostles that the Spirit would guide them into all the truth. The Lord Jesus said in John 16 verses 12 to 13, "I still have many things to say to you, but you cannot bear them now. But when the Spirit of truth comes, he will guide you into all the truth, for he will not speak on his own authority (his own initiative), but whatever he hears he will speak, and he will declare to you the things that are to come."

For this reason the apostle Paul could say in 1 Corinthians 2 verses 12 to 13, "Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is from God, so that we may know the things freely given to us by God, 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." My friend, every word written in Scripture is there by the power of the Holy Spirit. 2 Peter 1:20 to 21 says, "But know this first of all, that no prophecy of Scripture is a matter of one's own interpretation (that is they didn't make it up), for no prophecy was ever made by an act of human will, but men moved by the Holy Spirit spoke from God." Now the human authors did not write whatever they pleased to write in Scripture; the Holy Spirit moved them to write the things that they did.

In Acts chapter five, the Scripture compares lying to the Spirit with lying to God. When Ananias and Sapphira agreed to give the purchase price of a piece of land, but secretly held back some of that price, Peter confronted them. And he said in Acts 5 verses 3 and 4, "Ananias, why has Satan filled your heart to lie to the Holy Spirit and to keep back some of the price of the land? While it remained unsold, didn't it remain your own? And after it was sold, was it not under your control? Why is it that you've conceived this deed in your heart? You've not lied to men but to God." Oh, to lie to the Holy Spirit is to lie to God. The Spirit is divine.

The Scriptures also describe the Spirit as authoritative and sovereign. For instance, the Holy Spirit decided who would receive the various miraculous gifts; people couldn't choose which gifts they wanted for themselves. 1 Corinthians 12 and verse 11 says, "All these (that is all these people who had miraculous gifts) are empowered by one and the same Spirit, who apportions to each one individually as he (that is the Spirit) wills." The Holy Spirit determined who received what gift. I tell you, the Holy Spirit is divine!

When the Lord Jesus spoke to the seven churches of Asia in Revelation, chapters 2 and 3, He ended each segment with the warning, "He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches." Now the Spirit of God speaks with authority in Scripture today, and the Lord Jesus plainly commands us to hear what the Spirit is saying.

When we are born again as Christians, the Holy Spirit plays a part in our regeneration. The Lord Jesus said in John 3 and verse 5, "Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God." Now this new birth is a reference to baptism, it's a birth of both water and the Spirit. Titus 3 and verse 5 explains that God "saved us, not because of works done by us in righteousness, but according to his own mercy, by the washing of regeneration and renewal the of the Holy Spirit." You and I cannot earn our salvation, but God saves us through the washing that regenerates (well that's baptism) and the renewing of the Holy Spirit. It is the Spirit that causes us to have this new life at the time of baptism. Romans 6 and verse 4 says, that "We were buried therefore with him by baptism into death, in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we too might walk in newness of life." So, God raises us up in baptism to walk in newness of life. You might ask then, "Well how is the Holy Spirit involved in our new birth?"

Well, 1 Peter 1:22 to 23, explains, "Having purified your souls by your obedience to the truth for a sincere brotherly love, love one another earnestly from a pure heart, (he says) since you have been born again (now here's how), not of perishable seed but of imperishable, through the living and abiding word of God." You see the Spirit of God inspired the word of God and gave us that seed which is in the word of God, that word that He guided the apostles and prophets to write, and that's the truth. And so we can know the truth today, because the Spirit led these men to write down God's word. And when people hear and obey this inspired truth from the Holy Spirit, this imperishable seed that comes from the Holy Spirit, that causes them to be born again, we're born of an imperishable seed, that's the word of God. The Holy Spirit works through the word planted in our hearts to cause our new birth. The seed is not some miraculous, direct operation of the Holy Spirit no, but it's the inspired word that was preached by the apostles and is found today in Scripture.

Now some folks think we're saved when the Holy Spirit directly and miraculously changes us from a totally depraved sinner into a saint. And they believe the Spirit does this irresistibly and that we have no choice, that's what they believe. But the Scriptures teach that we have free will and choose whether or not to serve God. Romans 6 verses 17 and 18 says, "But thanks be to God that though you were slaves of sin, you became obedient from the heart to that form of teaching to which you were committed, and having been freed from sin, you became the slaves of righteousness." Now here were slaves of sin who obeyed the truth and then they became slaves of righteousness. That's how they were born again, when they obeyed it from their heart. And you know what my friend, you can do the same thing! Won't you? Won't you obey the Lord from your heart, and be born again? Let's pray together. Father we're so grateful for your love, and we're so thankful for Your word. And we're thankful for it's power to cause us to be able to be born again, and to be able to serve You. We pray that Your will will be done always in heaven and on earth. In Jesus name, Amen!

Does your life honor or grieve the Holy Spirit? Do the words you speak and how you speak them honor or grieve God? Does the way you treat other people cause the Holy Spirit to grieve over your soul? God wants to save you; the Lord Jesus died for you; and the Holy Spirit inspired the Scriptures which teach the truth and have that message of eternal life. Now when you listen carefully and obey, you honor God. But when you ignore God by failing to hear and obey what He says, what He wants for you, you will surely cause Him grief. You will also cause yourself grief.

When people fail to love and serve God but live with selfish ambition for their own pleasures, surely they can't imagine that God is pleased. Many live as if there were no God, never giving Him a second thought. They don't realize how God longs for a relationship with them. Do you have a close,

loving, peaceful relationship with God? If you do, God is smiling; but if you don't have one, why not come to the Lord today?

You can be right with God and live with Him eternally by hearing the gospel, believing in Jesus Christ, by repenting of your sins, and by confessing aloud Jesus as the Son of God, and by being baptized into Christ. You see, it's when you are baptized that God washes away your sin and gives you newness of life. That's when you are born again and when the Lord adds you to His church. God also wants your heart and your love. He wants you to love Him with all your heart, all your soul, all your mind, and all your strength. And that means serving Him fully every single day. That means getting involved with His family, the church. It means avoiding anything sinful and realizing you that you were saved to love and to serve others and help spread the gospel. My friend, will you honor the Lord by giving yourself to Him?

We hope that today's study about the Holy Spirit has really been helpful to you. Now we're now publishing a booklet entitled "One God, Three Persons," and we'd love to send you one free, they'll be ready in November, and we'd love to send you one then. Now if you live in the United States and you want a free printed copy or a CD of this message, mail your request to In Search of the Lord's Way, P.O. Box 371, Edmond, OK 73083 or send an e-mail to searchtv@searchtv.org. Or you can call the Search office toll-free at 1-800-321-8633. Now you can download these lessons at our website: www.searchtv.org. We also offer free Bible Correspondence courses. Now if you write or call us, don't worry, we won't hassle you for money or put you on a list. We're not here to exploit you.

We do want to ask that you get involved with a local church of Christ in your area. If you're looking for a healthy, Biblical church home, we can help you find one of those congregations, where you can be a part of it, and they'll love you and you can love them. Well we'll be back next week, Lord willing. We try to be here every week for you. So keep searching God's Word with us and tell a friend about this program. Well as always we say to you, God bless you and we love you from all of us at In Search of the Lord's Way.