



The Holy Spirit: Who He is and what He does

John 14:15-27; Acts 2:1-4

Introduction

It is ironic that, although we are asked to 'make every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit' (Ephesians 4:3), it has tended to be our understanding of who the Holy Spirit is and what he does that has divided so many churches over the years. It is important when thinking about the Holy Spirit that we don't fall into the trap of limiting Him to a doctrinal formula or experiences we have had of Him in the past.

Even though the Bible uses a number of symbols to represent something of the Holy Spirit's nature (i.e. wind, fire, oil, a dove), it is also important that we don't think of Him as an impersonal force. He is a person and has a personality (He speaks, He guides, He can be grieved, He can be lied to – see attached sheet). The Holy Spirit's prefix should be therefore never be 'it'...it should be 'He'!

He is the third person of the Trinity (Father, Son & Holy Spirit) – no less God than the Father and Jesus, but subordinate to them in terms of His role – i.e. the Father sent Jesus and both the Father and Jesus sent the Holy Spirit; the Holy Spirit's job is to bring glory



to Jesus, just as Jesus' job was to bring glory to the Father. Having said that, although each member of the Trinity has a distinct personality and role, they are not three God's...they are one God. Not $1+1+1=3$, but $1 \times 1 \times 1 = 1$. One God, three persons.

The Holy Spirit was involved in creation (Gen 1:2) and sustains life (Psalm 104:30). He is described as the 'Ruach' (or breath) of God and is at work bringing life and working out God's purposes throughout the created universe – both perceptibly and imperceptibly.

Under the Old Testament covenants, the Spirit filled various people at various times to do God's work, but after Pentecost, the Holy Spirit was poured out on all God's

people and now indwells every believer – our bodies have become the temple of the Holy Spirit (1 Cor 6:19-20). He is the seal of the King on our lives and the down-payment of the inheritance that is to come.

The Holy Spirit is at work wooing us into a relationship with Jesus and is directly involved in bringing witnessing to Jesus, bringing repentance and leading people to faith. He then makes us into new creations as our spirits are brought alive by him (John 3:6). When we surrender our lives to Jesus, the Holy Spirit begins the ongoing work of forming Christ's likeness in us and producing good fruit in us as we yield to Him. He gives us the powers to serve Jesus and live a godly life.

Jesus promised the Holy Spirit as a gift for all believers. Although we have the Holy Spirit living in us when we become Christians...there is more! In Ephesians 5:18, Paul commands Christians to be filled with the Spirit, and contrasts this to being drunk on wine. The idea is that we should not be 'under the influence' of alcohol, but under the influence of the Holy Spirit. By living a Spirit-filled life, we experience more of His presence and enjoy greater intimacy with the Lord (He pours the Father's love into our hearts and assures us we are His precious children). We are also empowered to serve others using the gifts He gives us.

Life Group questions...

- 1. If non-believer asked you to tell them about the Holy Spirit, how would you attempt to describe Him?**
- 2. Why does it matter that we call the Holy Spirit 'He' and not 'it'?**
- 3. The word Trinity is not mentioned in the Bible. How can we know with certainty that the Holy Spirit is God (with the Father & Son)?**
- 4. See attached sheet. Look at the symbols of the Holy Spirit – what does each tell us about the Holy Spirit's nature?**
- 5. In Acts 1:8, Jesus promises that believers will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on them. What kind of power do you think He is talking about?**
- 6. Read Ephesians 5:18. What does 'be filled with the Holy Spirit' mean? Why do you think God wants us to be filled?**
- 7. Compare Acts 2:1-4, Acts 8:14-17 & Acts 10:44. What is the evidence of people being filled with the Holy Spirit? How should we expect to be different when the Holy Spirit fills us?**
- 8. Read Luke 11:9-13. How do we receive a greater measure of the Holy Spirit in our lives?**

Pray for each other to be filled with the Spirit (afresh, or for the first time).