

A STUDY ON THE HOLY SPIRIT

According to the Bible there are three persons in the Trinity, so what is the Trinity? Trinity means the union of three Divine Persons, God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit. It can be difficult to understand how three different things can be one. 1 Timothy 3:16 says "...great is the mystery of godliness." An example that may bring some clarification is that of an egg which has three parts: the shell, the yoke and the white. Despite these three substances, the egg is not three but one in trinity. Another illustration is that a man can be a father, a son and a husband all at once; he is three things but only one person. This principle of Trinity is seen in 1 John 5:7, Matthew 28:19 and is also seen at work in Genesis 1:26.

We now want to focus on understanding one particular person of the Trinity – God the Holy Spirit. Who is the Holy Spirit? Jesus talked of Him in John 14:26 and John 16:7-16. The Holy Spirit is a helper and a comforter. He teaches us, as we saw in John 14:26 so when there are things we don't understand about God, the Holy Spirit can reveal it to us. John 15:26 says He will testify of Me [Jesus]. So again the Holy Spirit helps us to recognise and understand more of Jesus. The Holy Spirit also gives us power as is demonstrated in Acts 2:1-15 on the Day of Pentecost.

What is interesting is the change that occurs in Peter after he receives the Holy Spirit. Peter denied Jesus when He was crucified because he was afraid and yet in Acts 2:38-41 we see him boldly preaching the Gospel, bringing 3000 people to Christ. The disciples were all followers of Jesus but they also needed the empowerment of the Holy Spirit to equip them. In the same way we need the empowerment from the Holy Spirit to help us in our Christian walk and to give us the power we need to overcome life's struggles.

So are we saying then that the Holy Spirit is a person? Yes! There are five biblical reasons for believing He is a person:

- 1) He is referred to as a person – John 16:13-14; Hebrews 3:7
- 2) He is affected by the actions of others – Acts 5:3; Ephesians 4:30
- 3) He performs acts as a person – Luke 12:12; Genesis 1:2-3
- 4) His name is mentioned alongside other people – John 16:14
- 5) He has personal characteristics – 1 Corinthians 2:10-11

Therefore we need to ask for the Holy Spirit to come and help us. Luke 11:13 says that we will receive the Holy Spirit if we ask. A requirement though of receiving the Holy Spirit is being a Christian. Paul says in Acts 2:38 "...repent and let every one of you be baptised in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins *and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.*" So once you have accepted Jesus as Lord, you are entitled to the gift of the Holy Spirit, this is often referred to as the Baptism of the Holy Spirit and is referred to in Matthew 3:11 and Acts 1:5.

The evidence that someone has received the Baptism of the Holy Spirit is three-fold.

- 1) As in Acts 2, those who receive the Spirit begin to speak in other tongues which are simply special words that we can use to communicate with Him.
- 2) Power is received, no longer is it such a struggle to break free from old habits and sins because the bondage is broken as (Acts 10:38).
- 3) The Fruit of the Spirit as outlined in Galatians 5:22-23 should be evident in our lives.

Once the Holy Spirit is dwelling within us, we can have an intimate, personal relationship with Him in the same way that we do with God the Father and God the Son. To know the Holy Spirit in this way and to experience His works in our lives, we need to surrender to Him every day. True surrender is not an easy task; it is only possible through prayer and brokenness before the Lord. The Holy Spirit could be compared to a guest who comes to your home: while you are preparing food in the kitchen, the guest sits in the living room waiting for you. He doesn't barge into the kitchen saying he's waiting for you; he will wait to be invited. In the same way, the Holy Spirit will not intrude into our lives; we need to welcome Him, allowing Him to do His work in us and through us.

The Holy Spirit has many names shown to us through the Bible that can help us understand His personality.

- 1) The Spirit of Adoption-Romans 8:14-16 The Spirit bears witness to the fact of our adoption into the family of God with all the rights that come with it, including our right to cry out 'Abba Father'.
- 2) The Spirit of Glory-1 Peter 4:14 In the midst of persecution, we can have the assurance that the Holy Spirit of Glory will rest upon us, energising us and giving us the strength to go on.
- 3) The Spirit of Grace-Hebrews 10:28-29. We were sanctified by grace; the motivation behind Jesus' sacrifice was grace. Who are we then to abuse this, living in sin as if that sacrifice which brought our salvation was nothing? By this the Bible says we can insult the Spirit of Grace and the penalty will be severe.
- 4) The Spirit of Grace and Supplication- Zechariah 12:10 When the Spirit comes upon us, He can break through our resistance, helping us to experience God's grace. Rather than hardness of heart, we can now go before the Lord in brokenness, asking for mercy knowing that we will find forgiveness.
- 5) The Spirit of Wisdom and Understanding-Isaiah 11:2 Wisdom can be defined as the ability to apply the knowledge of God's Word to our daily lives. The Hebrew word used for understanding in this Scripture means 'the power of judgement and perceptive insight and is demonstrated in the use of knowledge.' We need to actively seek this kind of understanding from the Holy Spirit as it comes from God alone.
- 6) The Spirit of Counsel and Might-Isaiah 11:2 The Counsel and Might of the Holy Spirit keeps our perspective insightful and fresh. His Counsel can reveal mysteries to us about God the Father and God the Son. The Holy Spirit can also counsel and guide us in the plans that God has for us and He also then imparts the strength and energy to carry them out by His Might.
- 7) The Spirit of Knowledge and the Fear of the Lord-Isaiah 11:2 The Holy Spirit gives us the ability to look at the world and perceive God's handiwork and purpose therefore giving us a better understanding. The Holy Spirit also brings the 'Fear of the Lord'. *Proverbs 1:7 says "The Fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge."* The Fear of the Lord is a healthy respect for His power which keeps us from sinning and instead living a life of obedience.
- 8) The Spirit of Life-Romans 8:2, John 6:63 When the Spirit comes, He brings life, breaking the power of sin and death. **"The Spirit of the Lord is waiting to heal your past, guarantee your future and liberate you to experience abundant life right now."** Pastor Benny Hinn
- 9) The Holy Spirit of Promise-Ephesians 1:13-14 Guarantor of our inheritance. The Holy Spirit living within us is demonstrating daily that one day we will walk into our full inheritance in God.
- 10) The Spirit of Truth-John 14:17 The Holy Spirit has an assignment from God to communicate to us what is true: the truth about Jesus (*John 14:17*), the truth about the Bible (*John 16:13*) and the truth about ourselves (*2 Corinthians 3:18*). As we listen to the voice of the Holy Spirit, every area of our lives that are invisible to us will be identified and refined by the Holy Spirit.
- 11) The Comforter-John 14:16 The word 'comforter' in the Greek Language is Paraclete meaning 'one called alongside to help'.
- 12) The Eternal Spirit-Hebrews 9:14 The redemption through Christ that the Holy Spirit reveals to us is superior to the temporary remedies of the law. Also in being called eternal, it is confirmed that the Holy Spirit is part of the Deity.

- 13) The Spirit of Holiness-*Romans 1:4* The Holy Spirit is the Holiness of God and He works that holiness in all those who believe in Jesus as Saviour.
- 14) The Spirit-*John 1:13, John 3:5, Acts 9:17, Ephesians 5:18* While having many titles, most often the Holy Spirit is referred to as simply 'The Spirit'. He needs no definition, He is the one and only Spirit, there is no-one else like Him.

It is very significant that Jesus didn't start His ministry until He was baptized with the Holy Spirit. *Luke 3: 21-22* This is an important example for us. We need to seek greater fellowship with the Holy Spirit before attempting great things. Jesus Christ as God did not need the anointing, He was and is the source of it. But Jesus the man was fully dependent on the Holy Spirit's power. Remember there were no miracles before the Holy Spirit descended on Him at the River Jordan.

Andrea Onduku