

What Is the Holy Spirit?

HOLY SPIRIT

Do you have God's Holy Spirit? Do you understand what God's Spirit really is, and why you need it?

This first in a brief series of studies about God's Spirit will begin to answer these crucial questions from your own Bible.

The method of study is easy. You simply look up and read in your Bible the scriptures you are directed to after each question. Comments following the questions will further elaborate on the verses just read. (This study is based on the Revised Authorized Version of the Bible, unless otherwise indicated, but you may use any translation.) Now let's begin this eye-opening study.

Most of traditional Christianity has come to believe that God is a "trinity" made up of three divine Personages — the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit.

However, the Bible reveals that the Holy Spirit is the power and energy of the God Family, as well as the very nature, life and mind of God — *not* another spiritual entity!

Let's understand.

1. Does God's Spirit fill the entire universe? Psalm 139:7-8, Jeremiah 23:24. Is the Spirit of God the power by which God — the ultimate source of all power — created all things? Jeremiah 32:17, Psalm 104:30.

2. How did God utilize His Spirit of power to create all things? Psalm 148:1-5. (Notice the word *commanded* in verse 5.) Also read Psalm 33:6-9 and Genesis 1:1-3.

Spirit proceeds from the Father and the Son and fills the entire universe, much like air is everywhere present on earth. The Bible clearly shows that God's Spirit is the instrument or means by which the God Family creates. Jesus Christ, the *Logos* or "Word" of the God Family (John 1:1-3, 14), "spoke and it was done" by God's Spirit.

It was by the Spirit of God that the creative energy of God was transformed into the physical creation we see around us (Hebrews 11:3). And it was by the power of God's Spirit that He renewed the surface of the earth.

3. Does God sustain and rule His vast creation by His great power? Nehemiah 9:6, Hebrews 1:2-3, Psalm 66:7.

God sits at the controls of the entire universe,

so to speak, ruling and sustaining everything by the awesome power of His Spirit.

Many scriptures prove that the Spirit of God is not a personality, but rather the very *power* of God — the power by which God accomplishes His will.

(For absolute proof that the Holy Spirit is not a personage in a trinity, write for our free article "Just What Is the Holy Spirit?")

Now let's notice when God first offered human beings the opportunity to receive the Holy Spirit.

4. What kind of trees did God cause to grow in the Garden of Eden? Genesis 2:8-9. Which tree did God warn Adam not to eat from? Verses 15-17. What would happen to him if he ate the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil? Verse 17.

The tree of life and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil were literal trees, but they also had symbolic meaning.

The tree of life represented the Holy Spirit of God and eternal life. It also represented the way of God's government, which is the spiritual law of God.

The tree of the knowledge of good and evil represented the way of Satan, which is diametrically opposite to the way of God's law. It pictured sin and its penalty — eternal death (Romans 6:23).

Had Adam and Eve partaken of the tree of life, they would have received God's Spirit. It would have imparted to them spiritual knowledge and understanding. It would have enabled them to understand the spiritual law of God — the way of life that leads to peace, happiness, contentment, success in life, cooperation and mutual concern for fellowman.

The Holy Spirit would have provided the power to develop the very character of God in them, and would finally have changed their mortal bodies into Spirit-composed members of the God Family! (More about this in next month's ministudy.)

5. But did Satan cleverly delude Eve into disbelieving and disobeying God? Genesis 3:1-6. Did Satan subtly imply that God was hiding knowledge from her she ought to have? Verses 5-6.

6. Was Adam deceived, or did he really know

better? I Timothy 2:14. Did he nevertheless choose the way of disobedience to God by partaking of the forbidden fruit with his wife? Genesis 3:6.

On the first Sabbath day, the member of the God Family who created the first humans, the one who later became Jesus Christ, instructed Adam and Eve in God's way — the way of His government, based on His law — the way that, if followed, would lead to true happiness.

Soon afterward Satan subtly deceived Eve into taking the forbidden fruit and giving some to Adam.

By taking that fruit, Adam chose to disobey God's command, and thus rejected the rule of God's government over them. Adam took to himself the authority to decide what is good and evil — what is right and wrong — what is righteousness and what is sin. He became totally self-reliant.

Thus Adam rejected revealed spiritual knowledge from God. His choice limited him to knowledge of the physical and material. He rejected the spiritual knowledge that would have produced a happy relationship with God and fellowman.

He rejected God's Holy Spirit, God's love, God's government and eternal life! Adam disobeyed the explicit command of his Maker and sinned, bringing the penalty of sin upon himself and his descendants, all of whom have also sinned (Romans 5:12-19, 6:23).

7. Were Adam and Eve denied further access to the tree of life and therefore God's Spirit? Genesis 3:22-24.

When Adam sinned, he cut himself off from God (Isaiah 59:2). And God cut him and his descendants off from access to the tree of life. The human family was cut off from the Holy Spirit, except for a special few whom God would individually call to serve Him, such as Noah, Abraham and the prophets (I Peter 1:10-11).

8. Who is the second Adam spoken of in the Bible? I Corinthians 15:45-47. Did God make the Holy Spirit and eternal life available again through Jesus Christ? Verse 22, John 1:4, 10:10, 7:37-39, I John 5:11-12.

9. But since Jesus' first coming, is it only those whom God the Father calls who may receive His Spirit and become one of His "firstfruits"? John 6:44, 65, Acts 2:38-39, James 1:18. Will the opportunity to receive the Holy Spirit and eternal life be given to everyone after Jesus Christ returns and establishes the rule of God over the earth? Isaiah 11:9, Joel 2:28-29.

Humanity, since Adam, was not offered eternal life until Jesus Christ, the second Adam, established His Church and began offering God's Spirit to those the Father would call to be

"firstfruits" of His plan of salvation before Jesus' Second Coming. Some of you, like Adam, are being offered the Holy Spirit and eternal life today, by a special calling from God the Father Himself!

10. Is the Holy Spirit clearly a gift from God? Acts 2:38, 10:45, II Timothy 1:6. Are repentance and baptism required steps to receiving God's Spirit? Mark 1:14-15, Acts 2:38, 5:32.

God will give His Spirit only to those who have demonstrated, both by attitude and actions, that they have repented and want to obey Him.

Repentance means to turn around and go the other way — to forsake all of one's own natural, carnal ways that have been contrary to God's law, and turn to God's way, which is the way of His law. To "believe the gospel" means to believe the message Jesus brought — the good news of the coming Kingdom of God, which includes belief on and acceptance of Him as personal Savior.

After belief and sincere, heartfelt repentance, the next step toward becoming a Christian is water baptism, as we learned in last month's ministudy.

Baptism is an outward symbol of our repentance of our old sinful, disobedient life — our complete departure from our old sinful way of living — and of our willingness now to obey God in every way.

Once you have taken these steps, then you are unconditionally promised the Holy Spirit. God has bound Himself to perform His part if you first perform yours. God says: "You shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit" (Acts 2:38).

It is an absolute promise of God to those He has called!

You can ask God thereafter to direct and empower you, through His Holy Spirit, to lead a new life in conformity with His revealed Word, the Holy Bible.

This study on the Holy Spirit will continue next month. □



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