

Who is the Holy Spirit?

2020-02-02

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When we follow Jesus, what does that mean? When we ask Jesus to be our Lord, what are we expecting? The Bible says that we are asking the Holy Spirit to lead and guide our lives. We are asking the Spirit of the Living God, the Creator, to make His home within each of us—literally. How can we fight sin or show love without God’s help? How can we forgive those who are hard to forgive? How can we live with wisdom, with Godly wisdom, if we do not have God’s Spirit? The Truth is that we cannot live for Jesus apart from His Spirit.

Sadly, some of us treat the Holy Spirit like baking a cake. Their Christianity is like a recipe of ingredients: A few cups of flour, add eggs, some oil, add vanilla extract, cocoa powder (for chocolate cake, of course) ... But, the Holy Spirit is not simply one ingredient among many ingredients. The Holy Spirit is the *only* ingredient. We need the Holy Spirit to live the Christian life. Without God’s Spirit, there is no Christian life at all.

And, It is not enough to be sprinkled or showered with the Spirit. It is not enough to have a bucket of the Holy Spirit poured onto us. We must be completely covered in the Spirit of Jesus Christ, completely submerged in God. To be a Christian is to be completely submerged into God. It is like taking a bath in Jesus’ Spirit.

Some think it is a mystery to figure out what God’s Spirit does in the life of a Christian. Yet, it is no mystery at all. As early as the beginning of Jesus’ ministry, John the Baptist talked about the Holy Spirit at Jesus’ baptism. John the Baptist said that he (John) baptizes with water but, the Messiah would baptize with the Holy Spirit.

Jesus also talked about the Holy Spirit before He went to the Cross—in the Gospels of Matthew, Mark, Luke and John. Also, the rest of the New Testament, especially the Apostle Paul, explains many of the different roles (or jobs) of the Spirit of Jesus. As the Holy Spirit enters our lives, He begins His job of becoming the Lord of our lives. Today, we will not talk about everything the Bible explains about the Spirit but we will discuss a few things. So, let us discover together more of who or what the Holy Spirit is, okay?

For example, before Jesus went up to Jerusalem, before His crucifixion, He told His disciples about the Holy Spirit: A “Helper” or “Advocate and Counselor”, In John 14:15-17

15“If you love me, you will keep my commandments. **16**And I will ask the *Father*, and he will give you another **Helper**, to be with you forever, **17**even the **Spirit of truth**,

whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees him nor knows him. You know him, for **he dwells with you and will be in you.** (John 14:15-17)

Here, Jesus promised we would *receive* this Helper, the “Spirit of Truth”, the Holy Spirit, to take Jesus’ place. The word for Helper in Greek (which, we remember, is the language of the New Testament) is paraclete: **παράκλητος, paraklétos** means (a) an advocate, intercessor, (b) a consoler, comforter, and helper. We see that paraclete means more than “helper”, as we think of someone helping us. Paraclete means to help, comfort, intercede and advocate on our behalf. The “helper” Jesus promised—the Holy Spirit—would do so much more than we often think.

We need to understand that Jesus said that the Holy Spirit would also comfort us. And, he would work on our behalf to help us have victory over sin. He would be Truth to us and to all who believe in Jesus. And more...

Further, the Holy Spirit would be “with” us. Jesus told us that the Spirit would live “within” each of us, as in verse 17: Jesus said, “...**You know him, for he dwells with you and will be in you.**” Jesus told this to the Twelve disciples before He went to the Cross. Also, remember when Jesus gave the Great Commission to the Apostles, after His resurrection (Matthew 28:19-20): Jesus said, “**I will be with you always.**” It is through the Holy Spirit that Jesus is with, and in, each of us.

After His resurrection, Jesus again reminded his disciples that they would be baptized in the Holy Spirit, as this baptism of the Holy Spirit was promised back at Jesus’ baptism by John the Baptist.

Here are the verses to find John the Baptist declaring Jesus to “baptize you with the Holy Spirit”:

Matthew 3:11: “I [John the Baptist] baptize you with water for repentance, but he who is coming after me is mightier than I, whose sandals I am not worthy to carry. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire.”

Mark 1:8: “I have baptized you with water, but he will baptize you with the Holy Spirit.”

Luke 3:16: “John answered them all, saying, ‘I baptize you with water, but he who is mightier than I is coming, the strap of whose sandals I am not worthy to untie. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire.’”

John 1:33: “I myself did not know him, but he who sent me to baptize with water said to me, ‘He on whom you see the Spirit descend and remain, this is he who baptizes with the Holy Spirit.’”

The author of the Book of Acts, Luke, starts out with Jesus appearing to the eleven Apostles. (Remember, Luke is the same author who wrote the “Gospel of Luke”)

Acts 1:1-5

1In the first book, O Theophilus, I have dealt with all that Jesus began to do and teach, 2until the day when he was taken up, after he [Jesus] had given commands through the **Holy Spirit** to the apostles whom he had chosen. 3He presented himself alive to them after his suffering by many proofs, appearing to them during forty days and speaking about the kingdom of God.

4And while staying with them he ordered them not to depart from Jerusalem, but to wait for the *promise of the Father*, which, he [Jesus] said, “**you heard from me; 5for John baptized with water, but you will be baptized with the *Holy Spirit* not many days from now.**”

So, I think we have answered the question of who is the Holy Spirit: It is the Spirit of Jesus, right? And, we also learned that Jesus is sending His Spirit to take His place in His people—the Church. That is us. We are the Church!

Then, what does baptize mean? And, what do the words “Holy Spirit” mean? Let’s dig into that next Sunday!

Let us pray...