**WHO IS THE HOLY SPIRIT?**

Plenty of people know how their faith would be affected if there was no Jesus, but very few know how life would be different without the Holy Spirit! We sing songs about the Holy Spirit, we call upon His name, and we hear He has something to do with crazy Pentecostal churches but sometimes that is the extent of our understanding of Him. So I pose that question to you tonight? Who is this Holy Spirit? Do you know Him personally? Do you know what He means for your life?

The Bible has a lot to say about the Holy Spirit. From start to finish He is there in the stories of Scripture. In the Old Testament He is not called the “Holy Spirit” but is often referred to as the “Spirit of the Lord” or simply the “Spirit”. But we see Him do many things throughout all of Scripture and His ministry and work is not to be so easily dismissed.

The Holy Spirit is a person of the godhead. It is important to remember that the Trinity represents One God in three person. The Holy Spirit is not a separate God nor is He separate from God. He is God, just as Christ is God and just as the Father is God. He is One God in three persons. The Holy Spirit is a person of the Godhead. Hard to wrap your head around? No doubt! But let us keep in mind that the Trinity is the primary doctrine that cannot be explained in humans terms accurately. God is simply that magnificent and wonderful. But how do we know He is one of the persons of the Trinity? There are several verses that show us but perhaps one of the more famous ones was spoken by Jesus Himself:

Matthew 28:19 Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in[[a](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Matthew%2028%3A19%20&version=ESV#fen-ESV-24211a)] the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit (ESV)

Here Jesus commands His disciples to baptize new believers in the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. This puts the Holy Spirit on equal standing with the Father and the Son (that Son being Jesus). In John 5:18 we know that Jesus made statements that meant He recognized Himself as equal with God the Father and then when He makes this statement in Matthew 28 He adds the Holy Spirit to the mix. The Holy Spirit is a person of the Godhead.

Not only does this confirm to us that the Holy Spirit is God, but the Bible tells us the Holy Spirit was present before and at the time of Creation!

Genesis 1:1 In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth. **2**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. (ESV)

The Holy Spirit was present at Creation! He shows up only two verses into the Bible! And if He was present at the time of Creation it can only mean that He too is a person of the Trinity—He is God!

With that being we have to understand also that our finite minds cannot comprehend an infinite God. There are just certain aspects of who the Holy Spirit is that are not so easily understood. That is why the Bible uses symbols and names to help us understand who the Holy Spirit is and the work He does in our lives. There are five different symbols used in the Bible to demonstrate who the Holy Spirit is. Each of these symbols sheds light on a different aspect of who He is! These symbols are Wind, Water, Fire, Oil, and a Dove.

**Wind**

There are two words used in the Bible that represent the Spirit with the idea of wind. The Hebrew word is “RUACH” which is used in the Old Testament and translated to represent the Holy Spirit. It is sometimes translated “breath”, “spirit”, or “wind”. In Ezekiel 37 God states that He will put his “RUACH” or “breath” into Israel, giving them life! In verse 14 He then says He will put His Spirit in Israel, meaning God’s Spirit brings life! The Greek word which is used in the New Testament to describe the Holy Spirit is “PNEUMA”. It carries the same meaning as “RUACH”. The point is that bundled into the very name of the Holy Spirit is the idea that He is wind or breath—wind which is mysterious and breath which brings life. In John 3, during Jesus conversation with Nicodemus, Jesus states:

John 3:8 The wind blows where it wishes, and you hear its sound, but you do not know where it comes from or where it goes. So it is with everyone who is born of the Spirit.”

Jesus compares the work of the Holy Spirit to wind. You can feel wind, you can even see its impact on other things, but you cannot see wind. Such is the same of the Holy Spirit. We can feel the Holy Spirit, we can see His impact on others, but we cannot see Him! This is represented even more clearly on the Day of Pentecost in Acts 2 when the believers waiting on the Holy Spirit felt a “mighty, rushing wind” fill the house where they were sitting. We cannot see our breath but we can feel it and we know it is there—without it we would die. The Holy Spirit as wind or breath represents the life-giving power of the Holy Spirit! You can only survive about three minutes without oxygen or breath in your lungs. So without the Holy Spirit our spiritual life suffocates and dies.

**Water**

John 7:37 On the last day of the feast, the great day, Jesus stood up and cried out, “If anyone thirsts, let him come to me and drink. 38Whoever believes in me, as[ the Scripture has said, ‘Out of his heart will flow rivers of living water.’”39Now this he said about the Spirit, whom those who believed in him were to receive, for as yet the Spirit had not been given, because Jesus was not yet glorified. (ESV)

At this point the Holy Spirit has not fallen on believers but Jesus promises it here and states that the Holy Spirit is like water. Water is necessary for life! You can only make it about three days without water before your physical body dies. And you can only make it so far in your spiritual life without the Holy Spirit before your spiritual life is dead and useless. Not only does the Holy Spirit give life, but He sustains life too!

**Fire**

On the day of Pentecost in Acts 2, when the mighty, rushing wind filled the house, tongues of fire also appeared on the heads of believers. This was a sign of the Spirit. But the idea of the Holy Spirit as fire is originally brought up by John the Baptist:

Matthew 3:11 “I 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. **12**His winnowing fork is in his hand, and he will clear his threshing floor and gather his wheat into the barn, but the chaff he will burn with unquenchable fire.” (ESV)

Most people take this passage to be a reference to what would end up happening at Pentecost but more so than that, it represents the Holy Spirit as a purifying agent. Fire purifies gold and silver and precious metals. It cleans them. And in the same way the Holy Spirit purifies us, making us more like Jesus and also makes a clear line of demarcation between believers who truly live in holiness and those who do not—those who will be cast into the fires of judgement in hell one day.

**Oil**

Oil is used in the Bible to anoint priest and kings for service in God’s temple or kingdom. It represents setting apart and consecrating a person for service to God. Jesus is described as having been anointed by the Holy Spirit on several occasions:

Acts 10:37 you yourselves know what happened throughout all Judea, beginning from Galilee after the baptism that John proclaimed: **38**how God **anointed** Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and with power. He went about doing good and healing all who were oppressed by the devil, for God was with him. (ESV)

Isaiah 61:1 The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me, because the Lord has **anointed** me to bring good news to the poor; he has sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to those who are bound;

This verse in Isaiah is later quoted by Jesus in Luke 4 when Jesus declares that this verse is specifically about Him. The Holy Spirit set Jesus apart for service and ministry! In the same way, we can be anointed of the Holy Spirit for service and ministry. In 1 John 2, John states that the believers He is speaking to have the anointing of the Holy Spirit, and that not only does this anointing consecrate but also teaches believers.

**Dove**

In the Gospel accounts, when Jesus is baptized, the Holy Spirit descends on Him like a dove. Why a dove? Because doves represent peace and gentleness. The Holy Spirit is a gentleman. He doesn’t force Himself upon us. He doesn’t bust down the doors of our heart to get in. He knocks and enters when we open to Him.

With all the symbols of the Holy Spirit in mind we can understand much of who He is! Without the Holy Spirit:

1. You have no spiritual life
2. Your spiritual life is weak
3. You cannot be pure
4. You cannot perform true ministry.

But he doesn’t force any of these things upon us, so it is our responsibility to put our faith in God, open our hearts and receive Him. You need the Holy Spirit! Yes, you need Jesus, but the Holy Spirit points us to Jesus and helps us become more like Him! If you recognize your need for the Holy Spirit pray for Him tonight. If you’ve never given your heart to God, you need the Holy Spirit! If your spiritual life is stagnant you need the Holy Spirit. If you are not living pure and holy before God, you need the Holy Spirit. If you want to minister truly each and every day, you need the Holy Spirit! You can’t go it alone.

Come forward tonight and let’s pray to the Holy Spirit for these things!