

## GOD'S HOLY SPIRIT



*The Little-spoken-of Third Person of the Trinity.*

**W**E HAVE SPENT MUCH TIME so far in this course discussing the work of God the Father (creation), and the work of God the Son (redemption). So far we have not spoken at length of the *third* Person of the Trinity, the Holy Spirit. It is time to study the vitally important work carried out by the Holy Spirit in our lives. The work of the Holy Spirit is *sanctification*.

### Who is the Holy Spirit?

1. Read Genesis 1:2. *What important event was the Holy Spirit present for? What does the Bible describe Him as doing?*

2. Look up Christ's "Great Commission," Matthew 28:19. Here Jesus gave each Christian his assignment as God's Missionary. In the process, He also tells us something about the Holy Spirit. *Of what is the Holy Spirit a member?*

3. Read, once again, Deuteronomy 6:4. *How many true Gods are there?*

4. Read John 15:26. *Name two of the ways in which Jesus refers to the Holy Spirit:*

*As the...* \_\_\_\_\_

*And the...* \_\_\_\_\_

#### ICON KEY

Introduction

Important point

For further reading

## "LEARN FROM ME"

5. Some people say that the Holy Spirit is not really a separate Person of the Trinity. But read Acts 5:1-5. This is the account of how a man and his wife, Ananias and Sapphira, in unbelief tried to cheat the Christian congregation at Jerusalem. Along the way, this account also proves something important about the Holy Spirit. According to verse 3, *to WHOM did Peter say that Ananias lied?*

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6. In verse 4, Peter repeats the accusation in different words. *Here Peter says that Ananias had lied to...*

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7. If you put the previous two passages together, *what does it tell you about the Holy Spirit?*

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## The Holy Spirit Converts the Unbeliever

8. Read I Corinthians 12:3. From the last half of this verse, *what would no one be able to confess if the Holy Spirit did not show it to him?*

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9. Some religions teach "decision theology" - they say an unbeliever has the power to turn *himself* into a Christian just by *deciding to do it*. But that's not what the Bible says. Look up I Corinthians 2:14. *What does this passage say about the abilities of "natural" (unconverted) man?*

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10. Some of those same religions teach that people are born with a tendency toward good - or at least are neutral toward God at birth. *But what does Romans 8:7-8 say?*

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11. John 3:1-5 is the beginning of a conversation Jesus had with a Pharisee named Nicodemus. According to verse 5, *what has to happen before a person can enter the kingdom of God (become a believer)?*

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The Holy Spirit is the only one who can turn an unbeliever into a believer. A person just can't do it himself, no matter what "decision" he makes and no matter how strong his "commitment" is. *"No one can say that Jesus Christ is Lord, except by the Holy Spirit!"*

## The Holy Spirit Strengthens the Believer

12. Not only is it the Holy Spirit *alone* who can put faith in a person's heart, only the Holy Spirit can *strengthen* the faith of one whom He has already made into a believer. Read Romans 14:17. **WHAT ARE THREE THINGS** *which only the Holy Spirit keeps on adding to those whom He has already brought to faith in Christ?*

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13. Read II Peter 1:19-21. Especially from verse 21, *for what important work is the Holy Spirit responsible?*

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14. Some people think being a Christian should be all smooth sailing - it's not! Romans 5:1-5 tells us that believers especially may endure much tribulation in their lives. But even in the midst of tribulation, *what does the Holy Spirit keep pouring into the heart of a believer?*

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15. Have you ever felt that the *prayers* you pray are weak and inadequate? Read Romans 8:26-27. *What is another function that the Holy Spirit carries out for believers?*

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16. Look up Psalm 51:10-12. *What comfort does the Holy Spirit provide to a believer?*

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17. Isaiah 61:1-3 was an Old Testament prophesy of the coming Christ. *What did the Holy Spirit enable Jesus to do (a function which is still carried out by His servants today)?*

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## "LEARN FROM ME"

18. Read II Corinthians 6:14-18. This passage tells believers that they should not be joined together with unbelievers in spiritual matters. Verse 16 gives a special reason for this warning. *What is so special about the Christians that is very different from unbelievers?*

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19. Read Galatians 5:16-25. A Christian is someone who "walks" or behaves in a way that is very different than the "walk" or behavior of a non-Christian. This also is the work of the Holy Spirit. *Write down some of the things that make the behavior of a Christian stand out:*

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20. Look up I Peter 1:1-5. The Holy Spirit *sanctifies* the lives of Christians - He sets them apart as His own, for His own holy purposes. Not only is it the Holy Spirit who *makes* people into believers. *What does verse five tell us that only the power of God's Holy Spirit can do?*

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## The Main Question of Theology

We need to have Bible proof for everything we believe and teach as Christians. We are to say neither more nor less than what God's Word teaches. This truth is especially important when we explore the following two questions: 1) Why do some people become believers and go to heaven, and 2) Why do some people not believe and end up in hell?

21. Read I Timothy 2:4. *Whom does God desire to be saved?*

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22. Many people say that it is up to the unbeliever to *choose* God and thus be saved. But read John 15:16. *Who does the "choosing" when a person comes to believe in Jesus?*

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**"LEARN FROM ME"**

23. Read Ephesians 2:8-9. *How is a person saved? How can a person NOT be saved?*

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24. From the above three passages, *who alone deserves the credit when a person is saved and goes to heaven?*

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25. Read Acts 7:51. *Who alone deserves the blame when a person is NOT saved?*

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26. Read Matthew 23:37. *Again, who alone deserves the blame when a person is NOT saved?*

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The two teachings presented above do not fit logically together. They can be understood only by faith, not our human understanding. Martin Luther tells us that sometimes we have to "poke out the eyes of our reason" when dealing with scriptural mysteries such as this. When a person believes and is saved, God deserves all the credit. When a person does not believe and is damned, that person alone deserves all the blame. The Bible clearly teaches both things, so we will submit ourselves to God's Word and thank Him that He has revealed the truth about Jesus to us through His Holy Spirit!

## **Additional Bible Readings**



You may wish to do some further Bible reading in connection with this lesson. Please read Acts, chapters 1 through 6, and Romans 6 and 7.