

The Holy Spirit - Reality

Who is the Holy Spirit?

Your Life depends on the answer to this question!

Why?

Because anyone who does not know - or believe in - the Holy Spirit is dead!

Of course we refer to spiritual death, not physical death. You cannot be truly alive without a correct understanding of the Holy Spirit. From a human point of view you may appear to be full of vigour and vitality but before God you are dead.

If you believe what the Bible tells us about the Holy Spirit, you will readily accept this. And before going any further, let us emphasize that only from the Bible can we derive the right words to say about the Holy Spirit. Only God can tell us about His Holy Spirit.

As His Name suggests, the Holy Spirit is a spiritual being. It's not easy to imagine this. We would, of course, rather see or observe something. The "spirit world" as we call it, is mysterious to us. There is nothing tangible or visible about it. It's even frightening to a degree. And it should be - if we refer to the world of demons. Demons are rightly to be feared, for they proceed from the Devil.

But we are speaking about the Holy Spirit, who comes from God. He is the Spirit who originates with and proceeds from God the Father and from Jesus Christ, the eternal Son of God. He can only be good and pure, great and glorious. He is called "Holy" for a reason: the Word suggests that He is set apart, separated from all that is evil and corrupt, in enmity with God. With the Father and the Son, the Holy Spirit forms the Holy Trinity: Almighty God, the creator and the upholder of all Creation.

Our limited intelligence will never comprehend this or even less express it adequately, but we must believe it. It is a matter of faith - faith, which must be worked in our hearts by the Holy Spirit.

One heresy which has been propagated - and still is, by people such as Jehovah Witnesses - is that the Holy Spirit is an impersonal power. A very special one, yes because it proceeds from God, but still only a force, one which is not essentially God.

The Bible does use the term "power" in connection with the Holy Spirit. The angel said to Mary, "... the Holy Spirit will come upon you and the power of the most High will overshadow you ..." (Luke 1:35) Something is being repeated here in two different expressions. First: "the Holy Spirit", and second: "the Power of the Most High". The two are the same.

But the Bible also indicates, in many places, that the Holy Spirit is also essentially God, as much so as God the Father and God the Son (cf John 14-16 - the Spirit calls; Romans 8:27 - the Spirit intercedes; etc.)

If we want to know about the Holy Spirit, we should look at what He does. Much can be read about this in the Bible. The very first page of the Bible speaks of Him: "... the Spirit of God was moving over the water..." Genesis 1 is about the creation of Heaven and earth. We see here that the Holy Spirit was a participant in the act of creation. Like the Father and the Son, he had an active role (cf Psalm 104:30). God's Spirit begot life. And from this same text we can also learn that the life-creating work of the Spirit is not restricted to the original formation of the world, "in the beginning", but that it still continues. God renews the face of the earth - His Spirit continually brings forth life. The beauty of nature, the changing of the seasons, the rich variety of animal life, all of this is due to the work of the Holy Spirit. Without exception, each new life is His handiwork - how terribly distressing this makes the sin of abortion!

It is clear from the above that the Holy Spirit is God Himself. For who can create, bring forth new life, renew all things, but God alone?

Together with the Father and the Son, the Holy Spirit is the true and eternal God in whom everyone must believe; and to whom everyone must pray and offer praise. God's Spirit is also active in God's plan of salvation. God not only created. He also re-creates. He wants to heal and renew what was broken through sin. In other words, He takes His creation and all His children out of the grasp of sin and the Devil - although they were in this state through their own disobedience and guilt.

Now it is God's Spirit who gives us true faith in God the Father, and in Jesus Christ His Son. By faithful reading and studying of God's Word, and by going to church and listening to the explanation of God's Word.

The Holy Spirit uses these means to work and maintain true faith in our hearts. And through that faith we are freed from Satan's power and saved for God.

This is the good news of the gospel. And it is the Holy Spirit who will continually reassure us of the certainty of this good news. Thus we learn to trust in God, to live and die with Him, and finally to be with Him in glory forever.

When the Lord Jesus Christ had almost completed His work on earth - shortly before his final suffering - He spoke with His disciples. This was His earnest message: "... I will soon go to my Father... and where I am going you cannot follow me now, but you shall follow afterward... and He will give you another Counselor, to be with you forever, even the Spirit of truth. For He dwells with you, and will be in you... but the Counselor, the Holy Spirit, whom my Father will send in My name. He will teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all that I have said to you." (John 14,15,16)

Christ's promise to His Church was fulfilled on the day of Pentecost. The outpouring of the Holy Spirit was a wonderful and comforting event for God's children - and wonderful heavenly gifts and powers were revealed in them. On that first day, 3000 people were brought to faith through their witness.

God's true children may still experience the upholding power of God's Spirit. His work does not stop when we have come to faith, but His work in us continues. The Holy Spirit changes us into different people. We no longer have pleasure in sin. but want to live in true love with God and

our neighbour. It will be a struggle: between our "flesh" (our sinful desires) and the Spirit (God's perfect Will); but God's Spirit will continue to work, and will progress. Our life is renewed and blessed, our heart finds peace in God.

God's Spirit continues to give gifts and powers so that His gospel may be brought to "the ends of the earth".

Thus Christ's Church is gathered here on earth; until Christ returns to gather His harvest of souls, and to give them the eternal life which He has earned for them with His blood.

Read more about "the flesh or the Spirit" in Galatians 5:13-26 and 6:1-10