

School of Theology



The Holy Spirit

Part 1 – Foundations and the Bible

Sunday 19 April 2026

Introduction

Questions

When you think about the Holy Spirit, what comes to mind? (e.g. images, roles, experiences, Bible passages)



Where in the Bible would you go to understand who the Holy Spirit is and what he does? Why?

If you could ask the Holy Spirit one question about his work in your life or in the church, what would it be?

Overview

Week 1: Foundations and the Bible (19 April)

Who the Holy Spirit is, and how he reveals God through inspiring and illuminating Scripture

Week 2 – The Holy Spirit in Salvation (26 April)

The work of the Spirit in bringing people to new life and applying the work of Christ

Week 3 – The Holy Spirit in Sanctification (3 May)

How the Spirit indwells believers and works in holiness, assurance, and transformation

Foundations for Thinking Well About the Holy Spirit

‘Careful Treatment Required’¹

(a) He’s in Everything

Now the earth was formless and empty, darkness was over the surface of the deep, and the Spirit of God was hovering over the waters. Genesis 1:2 (NIV)

Spirit רוח (*ru.ach*) : wind, breath

Without the Spirit’s work there would be no new birth, no knowledge of who Jesus is, no relationship with God, no Bible to read and no understanding of truth, no growth in holiness, no unity between Christians, no confidence in evangelism, and no security for the future².



¹ The Work of the Holy Spirit, *Abraham Kuyper*

² ‘Experiencing the Spirit’, *Graham Beynon*

The Holy Spirit



The Holy Spirit has been sent from heaven to glorify Christ and to apply his work of salvation. He convicts sinners, imparts spiritual life and gives a true understanding of the Scriptures. He indwells all believers, brings assurance of salvation and produces increasing likeness to Christ. He builds up the Church and empowers its members for worship, service and mission.³

Implication: *If somebody is neglecting the Holy Spirit, the first way to correct that tendency is to recognize the Spirit's presence and power in the main, central things of the gospel. Resist the urge to rush off toward a special, unfamiliar zone where the Spirit is supposedly lurking.⁴*

Exercise: Looking at the broad topics of what Christians believe, can you pick one and explain the Spirit's work in it?

1. God

2. The Bible

3. Humanity

4. The Fall

5. The Lord Jesus Christ

6. Salvation

7. The Holy Spirit

8. The Church

9. Baptism and the Lord's Supper

10. The Future

³ <https://becclesbaptistchurch.co.uk/who-we-are/what-we-believe>

⁴ 'The Holy Spirit: An Introduction', *Fred Sanders*

(b) He's Behind Everything

The person without the Spirit does not accept the things that come from the Spirit of God but considers them foolishness, and cannot understand them because they are discerned only through the Spirit.

1 Corinthians 2:14 (NIV)



Remember that the Holy Spirit surrounds and empowers Christian life and thinking, which often places him not out in front of our attention but back behind our power of attending.⁵

*Your Spirit lives inside
And He points us to Your truth
Shining like a ~~flashlight~~ floodlight
Revealing more of You⁶*



Implication: *When you set out to study the Holy Spirit and find him expertly pointing to the Son or to other theological truths, follow his lead by paying attention to those things. You will end up understanding the Spirit better by obeying him than by resisting his pointing.⁷*

Summary: The Holy Spirit works behind all that is 'central' and 'ordinary' to a Christian, but who is he.....?

⁵ 'The Holy Spirit: An Introduction', Fred Sanders

⁶ 'Our Help', Bob Kauflin and Sovereign Grace Music

⁷ 'The Holy Spirit: An Introduction', Fred Sanders

(c) He's the Third Person of the Trinity

'We begin with a bedrock principle, taught throughout the Scriptures, that the Holy Spirit is the divine third person of the Holy Trinity. The Holy Spirit is just as much God as the Lord Jesus is, though without a human body, of course. But his invisibility and lack of bodily form in no way diminish his deity...'⁸

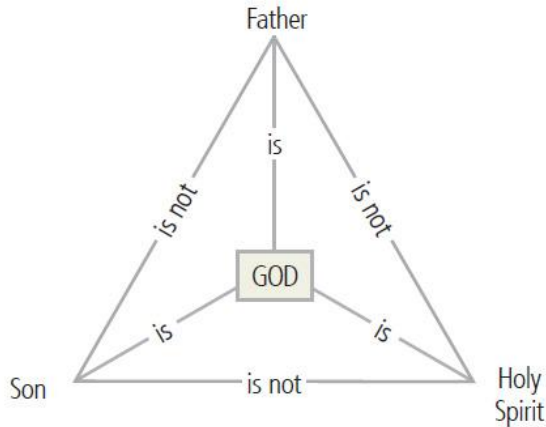


Figure 1: The Elements of the Doctrine of the Trinity⁹

Passage	What does the passage tell us about the Holy Spirit?	How does this passage prove the Holy Spirit is God? (Divinity)
Psalm 139:7		
Psalm 33:6 (Genesis 1:2)		
Hebrews 9:14		

⁸ 'Spirit of Truth', *Daivd Jackman*

⁹ <https://www.thegospelcoalition.org/blogs/justin-taylor/the-trinity-explain-it-to-me-like-im-a-two-year-old-edition/>

Romans 8:11		
		How does this passage prove the Holy Spirit is a person? (Personhood)
Acts 5:3-4		
Ephesians 4:30		
Acts 13:2		

‘Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit’
Matthew 28:19 (NIV)

May the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all.
2 Corinthians 13:14 (NIV)

*We believe in the Holy Spirit,
the Lord, the giver of life,
who proceeds from the Father and the Son,
who with the Father and the Son is worshipped and
glorified,
who has spoken through the prophets.* ¹⁰

¹⁰ <https://www.churchofengland.org/faith-life/what-we-believe/nicene-creed>

Never 'It'

.....So we must never allow ourselves to be trapped into using the impersonal pronoun "it" to describe the Spirit or his work. He is for ever God, utterly divine¹¹

*'...we know that it was He, not It, who "brooded" over the primeval deep. He, not It, "stroved with man," or "ruled in man" of old. He, not It, was in Joseph in Egypt, and upon Moses in the wilderness of wandering, and upon judges and kings of after-days. He, not It, "spake by the prophets," "moving" those holy men of God. He, not It, drew the plan of the ancient Tabernacle and of the first Temple. He, not It, lifted Ezekiel to his feet in the hour of vision. He, not It, came upon the Virgin, and anointed her Son at Jordan and led Him to the desert of temptation, and gave utterance to the saints at Pentecost, and caught Philip away from the road to Gaza, and guided Paul through Asia Minor to the nearest port for Europe. He, not It, effects the new birth of regenerate man, and is the Breath of his new life, and the Earnest of his coming glory. By him, not by It, the believer walks, and mortifies the deeds of the body, filled not with It, but Him. He, not It, is the Spirit of faith, by whom it is "given unto us to believe on Christ." He, not It, speaks to the Churches. He, not It, says from heaven that they who die in the Lord are blessed, and calls in this life upon the wandering soul of man to come to the living water.'*¹²

Implication *"If we think of the Holy Spirit as so many do as merely a power or influence, our constant thought will be, How can I get more of the Holy Spirit, but if we think of Him in the Biblical way as a Divine Person, our thought will rather be, How can the Holy Spirit have more of me?"*¹³

Summary: The Holy Spirit is both God and a person, but what does he do.....?

¹¹ 'Spirit of Truth', *Daivd Jackman*

¹² Thoughts on the person and Work of the Holy Spirit of Promise, *H. C. G. Moule* – Referenced in 'The Holy Spirit: An Introduction', *Fred Sanders*

¹³ The Person and Work of the Holy Sprit as Revealed in the Scriptures and in Personal Experience, *R. A. Torrey* - Referenced in 'The Holy Spirit: An Introduction', *Fred Sanders*

‘Sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God.’

The Spirit’s great work is to reveal God to mankind¹⁴



The unique qualification of the Spirit

*...The Spirit searches all things, even the deep things of God. ¹¹For who knows a person’s thoughts except their own spirit within them? In the same way no one knows the thoughts of God except the Spirit of God. **1 Corinthians 2:10-11***

(d) Inspiration

*‘All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that the servant of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work.’ **2 Timothy 3:16-17***



¹⁴ ‘Spirit of Truth’, *Daivd Jackman*

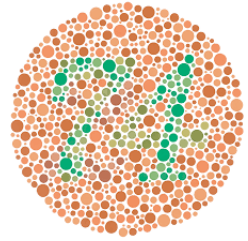
Passage	How does this passage explain the Holy Spirits work in giving us Scripture?
<i>1 Peter 1:10-11</i>	
<i>1 Peter 1:12</i>	
<i>2 Peter 1:20-21</i>	
<i>Hebrews 3:7 and Hebrews 4:7</i>	
<i>Matthew 22:43</i>	
<i>John 16:13</i>	
<i>2 Timothy 3:16-17</i>	

‘According to the doctrine of inspiration.... the Bible is an ‘infallible rule of faith and practice.’”⁶¹⁵

Implication: What colour are the words in your Bible?

¹⁵ *Christianity & Liberalism, J. Gresham Machen*

(e) Illumination



Passage	How does this passage explain the Holy Spirits work in explaining Scripture to us?
<i>1 Corinthians 2:14</i>	
<i>Hebrews 4:12</i>	
<i>Ephesians 1:17-18</i>	
<i>John 14:26</i>	
<i>Romans 8:16</i>	

“our full persuasion and assurance of the infallible truth and divine authority thereof, is from the inward work of the Holy Spirit bearing witness by and with the Word in our hearts” (WCF 1:5)

Implication: Are you reliant on the Spirit to understand his words?

(f) Meeting with God?

For I resolved to know nothing while I was with you except Jesus Christ and him crucified. ³I came to you in weakness with great fear and trembling. ⁴My message and my preaching were not with wise and persuasive words, but with a demonstration of the Spirit's power

1 Corinthians 2:2-4 NIV

We also have the prophetic message as something completely reliable, and you will do well to pay attention to it, as to a light shining in a dark place, until the day dawns and the morning star rises in your hearts. 1 Peter 1:19 (NIV)



“You say stunning things that should blow me away — that should give me a sense of your worth beyond anything any message outside should give. So, Father, if I am not seeing, if I am not hearing, have mercy upon me, and open my eyes”¹⁶

¹⁶ <https://www.desiringgod.org/interviews/does-god-verbally-speak-to-me#:~:text=His%20Word%20Shines%20Forth,read%20it%20prayerfully%20and%20dependently.>

*Our Help to understand Your word
Our Help who gives us strength to serve
Our Help so we can love You more
We need Your Holy Spirit, Lord¹⁷*

Implication:

Summary: The Holy Spirit is God who reveals God, but has he done that for me.....? (next week)

Conclusions?

When you think about the Holy Spirit, does anything new comes to mind?

Have you seen any new places in the Bible you would go to understand who the Holy Spirit is and what he does?

Have you come to any more answers to the Holy Spirit's work in your life or in the church (yet)?



¹⁷ 'Our Help', *Bob Kauflin and Sovereign Grace Music*