

WHAT DOES

# THE BIBLE

TEACH ABOUT

## THE HOLY SPIRIT?

*“But I tell you the truth, it is to your advantage that I go away; for if I do not go away, the Helper shall not come to you; but if I go, I will send Him to you. And He, when He comes, will convict the world concerning sin, and righteousness, and judgment; concerning sin, because they do not believe in Me; . . . But when He, the Spirit of truth, comes, He will guide you into all the truth; . . .” (John 16:7–15).*

**T**hree personalities are described in the Bible as being God: God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit. John 3:16 portrays God as the Father: “For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish, but have eternal life.” In John 1 we see God in the person of the Son:

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God (vv. 1, 2).

And the Word became flesh, and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, glory as of the only begotten from the Father, full of grace and truth (v. 14).

In Acts 5 we see God as the Holy Spirit. As the apostle Peter was reprimanding Ananias about his dishonesty in giving, he said, “Why has Satan filled your heart to lie to the Holy Spirit, and to keep back some of the price of the land? . . . You have not lied to men, but to God” (Acts 5:3, 4).

All three—the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit—are called God and have the distinction of standing together, even in our baptism. In Matthew 28:19 Jesus said, “Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit.” It should be understood, however,

that They are not the same Being. They all possess the same divine nature, but They are three distinct Beings. The Father gave the Son (John 3:16). Jesus had to go away for God to send “the Helper” (John 16:7).

Without question, we have an easier time understanding what the Bible teaches on God the Father and Christ the Son than we have in understanding the Holy Spirit. Let us examine some basic truths as we learn more about the Holy Spirit.

### THE HOLY SPIRIT IS A BEING

Since the Holy Spirit is never given a name such as Jehovah or Jesus, it is easy for people to get in their minds that He is not a Being as the Father and the Son are. Many have thought of Him as being an “it” or an “influence.” On the contrary, the Bible always speaks of the Holy Spirit in terms of “He.” Jesus said, “But I tell you the truth, it is to your advantage that I go away; for if I do not go away, the Helper shall not come to you; but if I go, I will send *Him* to you” (John 16:7; emphasis mine). Also, in verse 13 He said, “But when He, the Spirit of truth, comes, He will guide you into all the truth; for He will not speak on His own initiative, but whatever He hears, He will speak; and He will disclose to you what is to come.” In both of these proclamations of the

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Lord the description of the Holy Spirit uses the word "He."

The fact that He is a spirit being simply says that He shares the same nature as God the Father, for John 4:24 says, "God is spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth." Really, "Holy Spirit" is not a name but a description. As far as character is concerned, He is holy. In nature, He is spirit.

He has always been just like the Father and the Son. In Genesis 1:2 "the Spirit of God was moving over the surface of the waters." In Hebrews 9:14 He is referred to as "the eternal Spirit." Throughout the Old Testament the Holy Spirit was involved in helping those who were the servants of God, but His full mission was to take place after Christ left this world. He was to become the representative of the Godhead who would abide with people till the end of time. Christ had come and lived for thirty-three years on this earth, but the time had come for Him to go back to the Father in heaven. The Holy Spirit would come to abide with us for the rest of time. In this capacity, He would not leave us as orphans, but would be our Helper. He had been *with* the apostles but would be *in* the child of God (John 14:16–18; emphasis mine).

## THE MISSION OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

Shortly before He was crucified, Jesus explained to His disciples the role of the Holy Spirit:

And He, when He comes, will convict the world concerning sin, and righteousness, and judgment; concerning sin, because they do not believe in Me; and concerning righteousness, because I go to the Father, and you no longer behold Me; and concerning judgment, because the ruler of this world has been judged (John 16:8–11).

John 14 describes the mission of the Holy Spirit. His mission among the apostles was to guide them into all truth. In the same way, He guided the inspired writers in order to provide for us the New Testament. His mission to the world was to convict unbelievers. To "convict" means to cause us to see the error of our ways and bring us to change our hearts toward God. The Holy Spirit was sent into the world to reach

people for God with the message of truth.

### Convict of Sin

He was sent to convict the world of sin, "because they do not believe in Me" (John 16:9). As we read in the Bible, sin is something which every person who has reached the age of accountability has committed. Romans 3:23 says, "For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God." A person may sin in several ways. We can sin by transgressing the law of God. According to 1 John 3:4, "sin is lawlessness." When God says not to do something and we do it anyway, it is sin. Also, "All unrighteousness is sin" (1 John 5:17). Every time we fail to do what God says we must do in order to be right with Him, we sin. According to Romans 14:23, "Whatever is not from faith is sin." The writer, Paul, had been talking about matters of conscience which were not right or wrong in themselves. Even in those areas, we commit sin when we believe an act is wrong but do it anyway. Finally, we can sin by failing to do good. James 4:17 says, "To one who knows the right thing to do, and does not do it, to him it is sin." Therefore, sin is a universal problem. It involves each of us personally.

The greatest sin in the world is the failure to believe in and place our trust in Jesus Christ the Son of God, who came to this world to offer us salvation. If the only sin ever committed in one's life were the failure to believe in Christ as God's Son, he would stand guilty of the worst sin of all. Jesus said, "For unless you believe that I am He, you shall die in your sins"; and "I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father, but through Me" (John 8:24; 14:6). In Acts 4:12 Peter said, "And there is salvation in no one else; for there is no other name under heaven that has been given among men, by which we must be saved."

God's Spirit has come to call us to faith and show the horribleness of sinning against God by not believing in His Son.

### Convict of Righteousness

In addition, the Holy Spirit was sent to convict the world of righteousness, "because I go to the Father, and you no longer behold Me" (John 16:10). On its most basic level, righteousness means doing right. Since all of us have sinned,

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“there is none righteous, not even one” (Romans 3:10). We also read, “For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who suppress the truth in unrighteousness” (Romans 1:18).

The only One who has ever lived on this earth and suffered the temptations of sin without falling prey to them is Jesus. He was tempted in all points as we are, yet without sin (Hebrews 4:15). While Jesus was on earth physically, men could look at Him and see that He was different from those around Him; they could find righteousness in Him. If we are to partake of the righteousness of Christ, we must do so through our faith in Him, by which we have His righteousness placed to our account. In Romans 4, after Paul explained that Abraham’s faith had been accounted to Him for righteousness, he said,

Therefore also it was reckoned to him as righteousness. Now not for his sake only was it written, that it was reckoned to him, but for our sake also, to whom it will be reckoned, as those who believe in Him who raised Jesus our Lord from the dead, He who was delivered up because of our transgressions, and was raised because of our justification (vv. 22–25).

The Holy Spirit convicts the lost world of righteousness by pointing to the One who is righteous and offering to all of us the opportunity to partake in His righteousness by faith.

### **Convict of Judgment**

The Spirit is to convict man also “concerning judgment, because the ruler of this world has been judged” (John 16:11). The ruler of this world is Satan. He is called “the prince of the power of the air” (Ephesians 2:2) and “the god of this world” (2 Corinthians 4:4). When Jesus was tempted by him in Matthew 4, Satan told Him that if He would bow down to him, he would give Christ the rule of this world, because it had been granted to him. Satan is the god of this world, but when Jesus came into the world, He took up the battle with Satan. This battle carried Him to the cross in death but led to His triumphant resurrection from the dead. When Christ rose from the dead, He dethroned the devil. Satan has now been judged. The day is coming when he will be completely banished into hell.

Even now he is bound from tempting the child of God beyond his ability to bear it (1 Corinthians 10:13).

The message of the Book of Revelation is that a battle is raging between the devil and his angels and the Lord Jesus and His angels. The victory will go completely to Christ. This question remains for each of us personally: Will we be on the side of Christ when we have finished our lives on this earth?

### **HIS MISSION TO ALL FOR ALL TIME**

The mission of the Spirit to all and for all time is to glorify Christ. Jesus said, “He shall glorify Me; for He shall take of Mine, and shall disclose it to you. All things that the Father has are Mine; therefore I said, that He takes of Mine, and will disclose it to you” (John 16:14, 15).

The Holy Spirit has come into this world not to glorify Himself or even to focus our attention on Him. His mission is to glorify Christ. It is to turn us to Him for our own salvation.

### **CONCLUSION**

All three members of the Godhead are to be revered, for They are all in one accord. Today, the message of the Holy Spirit to you is to have faith in Christ which will move you to submit to Him in complete obedience so that your sins can be forgiven and you can have life in Him.

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### ***Understanding the Holy Spirit***

There is much we do not know about the Holy Spirit. There is a reason for this. In John 16 Jesus said, “But when He, the Spirit of truth, comes, . . . He shall glorify Me; . . .” (vv. 13, 14; emphasis mine). The Holy Spirit’s purpose was not to reveal Himself, but to reveal and glorify Christ. As a result, most of us find it harder to grasp the concept of the Holy Spirit than we do the Father and the Son. Keep in mind, however, that the Holy Spirit is part of what the KJV calls “the Godhead” (Acts 17:29; Romans 1:20; Colossians 2:9). Probably the best way to understand the Holy Spirit is just to think of Him as God. Think of the Holy Spirit in the same way that you think of God, and you will not be wrong.