

## BASIC BIBLE TRUTHS

### The Holy Spirit

#### GOD'S SPECIAL POWER

When you have read this article you will know the answers to these questions:

1. How do God, Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit relate to each other?
2. How has God used His Holy Spirit in the past?
3. Is God's Holy Spirit at work today?
4. How will God use

#### 1. HOW DO GOD, JESUS CHRIST AND THE HOLY SPIRIT RELATE TO EACH OTHER?

- God is the great creator of all things
- Jesus Christ is the Son of God
- The Holy Spirit is the power of God.

Can this be proved from the Bible? Yes, it can. God **always** called Jesus **His Son**. When Jesus was baptised God said, "This is **My beloved Son**, with whom I am well pleased" (Matthew 3:17). Jesus **never** claimed to be equal with God. He said "**the Father is greater than Jesus** **always** called God his Father. God knew from the beginning of creation that He would need to save the world through his son. However, Jesus **did not exist** until Mary gave birth. Peter said, "He (Jesus) was foreknown before the foundation of the world but **was made manifest in the last times for your sake**" (1 Peter 1:20). Jesus is **always** called the "**Son of God**" in the Bible, and never "God the Son". The Holy Spirit cannot be the third part of a "Trinity", if the first two parts do not exist. There is a strong relationship between the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. It is not, however, one of being "co-equal and co-eternal". It is true that sometimes in the Bible, the Holy Spirit is called "He". But it is very common in the Bible for things to be given personalities. Here are two examples: Speaking of "**Wisdom**", we read "**She** is more precious than jewels" (Proverbs3:15). Jesus spoke of "**Riches**" being a "Master" (Matthew 6:24). We even call ships "**Her**"! The Holy Spirit is God's power, not a person.

#### 2. HOW HAS GOD USED HIS HOLY SPIRIT IN THE PAST?

God **used His Holy Spirit at creation**. When "the earth was without form and void ... the Spirit of God was hovering over the face of the waters" (Genesis 1:2). God **used His Holy Spirit to create man**. "the LORD God formed the man of dust from the ground and **breathed** into his nostrils the **breath of life**, and the man became a living creature" (Genesis2:7). God **used His Holy Spirit to direct His prophets** to teach Israel and to tell the nation of things to come. Peter said "no prophecy was ever produced by the will of man, but men **spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit**" (2 Peter 1:21). That is why we can trust the Bible teachings. All the messages were God-given. God **used His Holy Spirit on the virgin Mary**. "The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the **power of the Most High** will overshadow you; therefore the child to be born will be called holy – the Son of God" (Luke 1:35). God **gave His Holy Spirit to Jesus without limit**. Because of it, Jesus had a unique understanding of scripture. He knew that the Old Testament had prophecies about his birth, life, death and resurrection. They all came true. Jesus raised from the dead Jairus' daughter, the widow of Nain's son and Lazarus. Jesus could truly say to the people, (and to us) "The words that I have spoken to you are spirit and life" (John 6:63). We should say with Peter "You have the words of eternal life" (v68). God **gave His Holy Spirit to the apostles**. They needed special help to establish Christianity. It would not be easy. The Romans, who ruled Israel, had their own gods. The Jewish leaders hated Jesus so much that they crucified him. The fact that the apostles could perform miracles added weight to their words. God must have sent them to preach about Jesus. The results were impressive. Thousands believed and were baptised. Within thirty years, Christians were living in well-organised groups in many towns and cities, including Rome. The special gift of the Holy Spirit had served its purpose. Only the apostles had been able to pass on the power of the Spirit to others by the laying on of hands (Acts8:14-24; 2 Timothy 1:2). After they died, and those to whom they gave it died, this special gift ceased. From the first century until today, nobody else has had personal control of God's Holy Spirit. We now have written down for us to read for ourselves, the complete, inspired Bible; these scriptures "are able to make you wise for salvation, through faith in Christ Jesus" (2 Timothy3:15). We need nothing more.

### 3. IS GOD'S HOLY SPIRIT AT WORK TODAY?

Yes, very much so. **God is still working through His Spirit by directing world affairs.** Daniel told a king, "the Most High rules the kingdoms of men and gives it to whom he will" (Daniel 4:32). God is still doing that today. The end of it all will be "the God of heaven will set up a kingdom that shall never be destroyed" (Daniel 2:44). **God is still working through His word the Bible.** Paul said the gospel of Christ "**is the power of God for salvation** to everyone who believes" (Romans 1:16). We can be influenced by God's word. "Faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God" (Romans 10:17 NKJV). Faith will help us to keep God's commandments. Because the scriptures were written under the influence of God's Holy Spirit, believers will have the "Spirit of Christ" (Romans 8:9). That is, the influence of God's word will help us to develop spiritual lives. This is vital, but very different from us having special powers like the apostles. **God is still working by answering prayer.** We are encouraged to "pray without ceasing" (1 Thessalonians 5:17). "If we ask anything according to His will He hears us" (1 John 5:14). Being able to talk to God in prayer is a great blessing. He will answer our prayers in a way which will best help our spiritual growth.

### 4. HOW WILL GOD USE HIS HOLY SPIRIT IN THE FUTURE?

**God will use His Holy Spirit to bring about His kingdom on earth.** "truly, as I live ... all the earth shall be filled with the glory of the LORD" (Numbers 14:21). This will be achieved when Jesus returns to be king of the world. **God will use His Holy Spirit to raise the dead,** and give his faithful ones everlasting life (John 5:28,29). They will then be able to use God's spirit as Jesus did. **God will use His Holy Spirit, through His word the Bible.** The mortal population, then, as now, will have the opportunity to respond to it. The great news is, if you follow Jesus now, you will live forever with him. You will have a glorified immortal body (one that does not die), just like Jesus has now (Philippians 3:20,21). May we all be wise enough to heed the words of Jesus: "hear the voice of the Son of God, and those who hear will live" (John 5:25).