

The **Bible** Unpacked

Comprehensive Study Series

A compilation of the Bible's teaching
for believers established in the faith

paul mallison

4. The Holy Spirit

This series of studies is based on the
Comprehensive Edition of The Bible Unpacked.

There are seven editions of *The Bible Unpacked.*
These aim to address the needs of
NON-CHRISTIANS through to MATURE CHRISTIANS,
from TEENAGERS to ADULTS.

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Through prayer, encouragement and practical assistance we can assist and fellowship with persecuted Christians in their suffering. You can play a vital part in this through contacting one of the organizations listed below. Most produce regular news/prayer letters.

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CSI works to defend religious liberty and help persecuted Christians.

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It advocates for freedom of religion and justice for persecuted believers.

Compass Direct – www.compassdirect.org

This is a Christian news service providing news, reports, interviews and analyses of situations facing persecuted Christians.

Open Doors – sb.od.org; www.opendoors.org.au

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Religious Liberty Commission – www.worldevangelicals.org/commissions/rlc/; www.ea.org.au/ea-family/Religious-Liberty.aspx

RLC defends and aids persecuted Christians. See also www.idop.org
Receive weekly updates by sending a blank email to join-rpb@hub.xc.org.

The Bible League – www.bibleleague.org/persecuted; www.bibleleague.com

It supplies Bibles to persecuted Christians and also provides training.

Voice of the Martyrs – www.persecution.com; www.persecution.com.au

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Then the King will answer, 'I tell you the truth, anything you did for even the least of my people here, you also did for me.' Matthew 25:40 NCV

The Bible Unpacked™

Comprehensive Study Series

A compilation of the Bible's teaching for believers established in the faith

4. The Holy Spirit

Composed by Paul Mallison

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Overview of *The Bible Unpacked*


There are seven editions of *The Bible Unpacked*, as shown below. Each edition is an abbreviated version of the next longest edition. As such they have similar structures. Four of the editions have studies based on them, with the same text along with questions. For more details and free downloads of all the material, go to www.thebibleunpacked.net.


 **Two-Minute Edition:** Key Bible teachings for people “on the run”
For giving to non-Christians.


 **Pocket Edition:** Key Bible teachings for seekers of truth
Largely for giving to inquiring non-Christians or young new Christians.

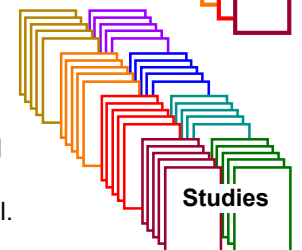
 **Concise Edition:** A look at the Bible’s teaching for new and young believers. For either new or young Christians. Suitable to give to non-Christian friends. Has study series based on it.

 **Foundations Edition:** A compilation of the Bible’s teaching for believers consolidating their faith. For newer Christians. Study series is ideal for studies with newer believers.

 **Intermediate Edition:** A compilation of the Bible’s teaching for believers growing in the faith. For developing a sound understanding of the faith. Studies are excellent for Bible study groups.

 **Comprehensive Edition:** A compilation of the Bible’s teaching for believers established in the faith. For a comprehensive knowledge of the faith. Useful as a study or a devotional tool - and preparing talks. Studies are ideal for studying topics in detail.

 **In-Depth Edition:** A compilation of the Bible’s teaching for teachers and students of the Bible. For Christians keen to gain a deep understanding of their faith. Useful for speakers preparing talks, study groups leaders, Bible students and Bible colleges. It is also in an electronic version, which is a PDF file.



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22. Having Faith in God

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A Quick Word

This series of studies aims to present a compilation of the Bible's teachings in a clear and readable order. There are 40 booklets in the series, based on the 40 chapters of the book *The Bible Unpacked - Comprehensive Edition*. Each booklet has two sections, which can be used for two or more studies.

See *Topics in This Series* towards the end of this booklet for a full listing of all the topics. Note that studying booklets alternatively from the two major sections (*What to Know* and *What to Do*) would add variety.

The material contains Bible verses. Before the verses are headings, which reflect what the verses say – in particular the parts of the verses in *italics*. The verses are sometimes followed by a comment.

The verses often have a brief introduction. Usually these state who is speaking and often who they are speaking to. Apart from God and Jesus Christ, the main speakers are:

- Moses – who lead the Israelites out of Egypt and taught them God's laws;
- David – Israel's greatest king who wrote many of the psalms, most of which are essentially prayers;
- Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Daniel and other prophets – who spoke to the people of Israel on God's behalf; and
- Paul, Peter, John and other leaders of the early church – who spoke to various groups and wrote letters to believers.

Much care has been taken in order to correctly interpret the verses. Nevertheless, if you encounter a verse that is used to teach something that is contrary to or goes beyond your understanding, assess its use by doing such things as: reading the passage it is from; and considering how its teaching fits in with Scripture as a whole (e.g. interpret OT teaching in the light of NT teaching).

For more information on *The Bible Unpacked* and free downloads, go to the website: www.thebibleunpacked.net

Paul Mallison

Topics in This Series

Section I: What to Know

Part A. God and Spiritual Powers

1. God's Being

- I. Basics
- II. God's Pre-Eminence

2. God's Character

- I. Holy Characteristics
- II. Loving Characteristics

3. Jesus Christ

- I. General
- II. Jesus Christ and God

4. The Holy Spirit

- I. General
- II. God, Christ and the Holy Spirit as One

5. Angels, Satan and Demons

- I. Angels
- II. Satan and Demons

Part B. God and the World: Basics

6. God's Creation

- I. General
- II. God's Creation of People

7. God's Sovereignty

- I. God's Supreme Authority
- II. God's Control over the World

8. God's Word

- I. General
- II. Key Old Testament Covenants

9. The Problem of Sin

- I. General
- II. The Law's Provision for Israel's Sin

10. God's Judgment

- I. Basics
- II. The Manifestation of God's Judgment

Part C. God and the World: Jesus Christ

11. God's Promised Messiah

- I. The Messiah's Identity
- II. The Messiah's Purpose and Person

12. Jesus Christ's Mission

- I. God's Enablement of Jesus Christ
- II. Jesus Christ's Ministry, Death and Resurrection

13. Salvation through Jesus Christ

- I. Salvation from Sin
- II. Salvation for the World

14. The New Order

- I. Jesus Christ and the Law's Diminished Role
- II. Key Elements of the New Order

15. 'The Last Things'

- I. Jesus Christ's Return and the Final Judgment
- II. The Afterlife

Part D. God and His Own People

16. The Standing of God's People

- I. Belonging to God
- II. Being 'in' Jesus Christ

17. Keys to God's Interaction with His People

- I. Basics
- II. God's Holy Spirit in His People

18. God's Transformation of His People

- I. General
- II. Spiritual Attributes

19. God's Care of His People

- I. God's Saving of His People
- II. God's Preservation of His People

20. God's Plans for His People

- I. General
- II. God's Plans for Israel

How do you explain the same roles or acts being attributed to God, Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit?

If God, Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit are so closely identified with each other, why in 2 Thessalonians 2:16–17 (for example) does Paul mention Jesus Christ and God the Father separately in regard to a common role, rather than use a single term for both of them – and moreover not mention the Holy Spirit?

Are there any differences in the parts played by God, Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit in accomplishing things?

They each give God's people joy and peace

ROM 15:13 [PAUL, TO BELIEVERS:] Now *may the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace* as you believe in him, so that you may abound in hope by the power of the Holy Spirit.

JOHN 15:11 [JESUS, TO HIS DISCIPLES:] *I have told you these things so that my joy may be in you, and your joy may be complete.*

JOHN 14:27 [JESUS, TO HIS DISCIPLES:] *Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you;* I do not give it to you as the world does. Do not let your hearts be distressed or lacking in courage.

GAL 5:22–23 But *the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, ²³gentleness, and self-control.* Against such things there is no law.

I. General

(⇒ II. *God's Holy Spirit in His People*, in 17. *Keys to God's Interaction with His People*)

The Holy Spirit is the Spirit of God, as often indicated in the Bible. This assertion is reflected by the Holy Spirit's divine and imposing attributes. However, the Bible also distinguishes the Holy Spirit from God, portraying him as a personal being in his own right.

(Note that in regard to the Holy Spirit and God's people, see *God's Holy Spirit in His People*, cross referenced above.)

a) The Holy Spirit of God

The Holy Spirit is the Spirit of God . . .

GEN 1:2 Now [in the beginning] the earth was without shape and empty, and darkness was over the surface of the watery deep, but *the Spirit of God* was moving over the surface of the water.

EPH 4:30 [PAUL, TO BELIEVERS:] And do not grieve *the Holy Spirit of God*, by whom you were sealed for the day of redemption.

The Holy Spirit is God's spirit. As such one should bear in mind that when the Bible speaks of the Holy Spirit, it is in effect speaking of God himself.

. . . Accordingly, God refers to the Holy Spirit as his Spirit

EZEK 39:29 I will no longer hide my face from them, *when I pour out my Spirit on the house of Israel, declares the sovereign LORD.*

“Spirit” clearly is referring to the Holy Spirit.

The Holy Spirit is correlated with God's presence

1JN 3:24 [JOHN, TO BELIEVERS:] And the person who keeps his commandments resides in God, and God in him. Now *by this we know that God resides in us: by the Spirit he has given us.*

This verse correlates the Holy Spirit with God's presence by asserting that the fact that believers have God's Spirit verifies that God lives in them.

The Holy Spirit is from God

(➔ *God gave the Holy Spirit through Jesus Christ, in 11. God's Promised Messiah; God Gives the Holy Spirit to His People, in 17. Keys to God's Interaction with His People*)

1COR 2:12 [PAUL, TO BELIEVERS:] Now we have not received the spirit of the world, but *the Spirit who is from God*, so that we may know the things that are freely given to us by God.

ACTS 2:33 He [Jesus Christ] has been exalted to the right hand of God, *has received from the Father the promised Holy Spirit*, and has poured out what you are seeing and hearing. 1SV

ROM 15:16B [PAUL:] I do this in order that I might bring the nations to God as an acceptable offering, *made holy by the Holy Spirit.* GW

They each are constantly with God's people

DEUT 31:8 [MOSES, TO THE ISRAELITES:] The LORD will lead you into the land. *He will always be with you* and help you, so don't ever be afraid of your enemies. CEV

MATT 28:20B [JESUS, TO HIS DISCIPLES:] And remember, *I am with you always*, to the end of the age.

JOHN 14:17B [JESUS, TO HIS DISCIPLES:] But you know *the Spirit, who is with you and will keep on living in you.* CEV

They each strengthen God's people

ISA 41:10B *I am your God. I will strengthen you. I will help you. I will support you with my victorious right hand.* GW

PHIL 4:13 *I can do everything through Christ who strengthens me.* GW

ACTS 1:8 [JESUS, TO HIS DISCIPLES:] But *you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you*, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the farthest parts of the earth.

They each teach God's people

ISA 48:17B [GOD, TO ISRAEL:] *I am the LORD your God. I teach you what is best for you. I lead you where you should go.* GW

2TIM 2:7 [PAUL, TO TIMOTHY:] Think about what I am saying and *the Lord will give you understanding of all this.*

JOHN 14:26 [JESUS, TO HIS DISCIPLES:] But the Advocate, *the Holy Spirit*, whom the Father will send in my name, *will teach you everything, and will cause you to remember everything I said to you.*

c) Mutual Divine Roles

The following subsections point to the oneness of God, Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit by attributing the same divine roles or actions to all three. These common roles also reflect the fact that God works through Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit. Note that the latter roles are not exclusively divine in every sense, with believers also having roles akin to them.

God, Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit are each ascribed a primary role in creation

NEH 9:6 You alone are the LORD. *You made the heavens, even the highest heavens, along with all their multitude of stars, the earth and all that is on it, the seas and all that is in them. You impart life to them all, and the multitudes of heaven worship you.*

JOHN 1:3 *All things were created by him [Christ], and apart from him not one thing was created that has been created.*

JOB 33:4 [ELIHU:] *The Spirit of God has made me, and the breath of the Almighty gives me life.*

They each give spiritual or eternal life

1JN 5:11B *God has given us eternal life, and this life is in his Son.*

JOHN 5:21 For just as the Father raises the dead and gives them life, so also *the Son gives life to whomever he wishes.*

JOHN 6:63A *The Spirit is the one who gives life; human nature is of no help!*

They each make God's people holy

LEV 20:8 Obey my laws, because *I am the LORD and I make you holy.*
GNT

EPH 5:25–27 Husbands, love your wives just as *Christ loved the church and gave himself for her* ²⁶*to sanctify her by cleansing her with the washing of the water by the word,* ²⁷*so that he may present the church to himself as glorious – not having a stain or wrinkle, or any such blemish, but holy and blameless.*

God and the Holy Spirit know each other's mind

ROM 8:27 And *he [God] who searches our hearts knows the mind of the Spirit*, because the Spirit intercedes on behalf of the saints according to God's will.

1COR 2:10–11 [PAUL, TO BELIEVERS:] *The Spirit searches out all things, even the deep secrets of God.* ¹¹Who knows the thoughts that another person has? Only a person's spirit that lives within him knows his thoughts. It is the same with God. *No one knows the thoughts of God except the Spirit of God.* NCV™

What do you think the Bible means in describing the Holy Spirit as the Spirit of God?

As best you can, explain the connection between the Holy Spirit and God's presence.

What things does the phrase "the mind of the Spirit" (Rom 8:27) indicate about the Holy Spirit?

b) The Holy Spirit's Being

As well as being a spirit, the Holy Spirit is everywhere

Ps 139:7–8 [DAVID, TO GOD:] *Where shall I go from your Spirit? Or where shall I flee from your presence? ⁸If I ascend to heaven, you are there! If I make my bed in Sheol, you are there!* ESV

Verse 7 links the Holy Spirit with God's presence, and so along with v.8 implies that the Holy Spirit is omnipresent – i.e. everywhere.

The Holy Spirit is eternal

HEB 9:14A How much more is done by the blood of Christ. He offered himself through *the eternal Spirit* as a perfect sacrifice to God. NCV™

The Holy Spirit has great power . . .

ISA 11:2 And the Spirit of the LORD shall rest upon him [the Messiah], the Spirit of wisdom and understanding, *the Spirit of counsel and might*, the Spirit of knowledge and the fear of the LORD. ESV

1JN 4:4 [JOHN, TO BELIEVERS:] You are from God, little children, and have conquered them, because *the one who is in you is greater than the one who is in the world.*

The “one who is in you” is most likely referring to the Holy Spirit. As such, the description of the Holy Spirit as greater than Satan – “the one who is in the world” – is indicative of the Spirit's great power.

. . . and the Holy Spirit can enable people to do great things

ZEC 4:6B–7 [GOD, TO ZERUBBABEL:] *‘Not by strength and not by power, but by my Spirit,’ says the LORD who rules over all.*” ⁷“*What are you, you great mountain? Because of Zerubbabel you will become a level plain! And he will bring forth the temple capstone with shoutings of ‘Grace! Grace!’ because of this.*”

Zerubbabel would not rebuild the temple with the aid of outstanding human might or power, but through the power and

JOHN 6:69 [THE DISCIPLES, TO JESUS:] *We have come to believe and to know that you are the Holy One of God!*

HEB 10:15A *The Holy Spirit* also tells us about this. NCV™

What does the “glory” of God, Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit involve?

What is the significance of God, Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit all having divine attributes?

Are there any differences in any of these attributes in God, Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit? For example are there any differences in their power or in their expression of it?

Omniscience – they each have complete knowledge

1JN 3:20 If our conscience condemns us, we know that God is greater than our conscience and that *he knows everything*. GNT

JOHN 16:30A [JESUS' DISCIPLES, TO JESUS:] Now *we know that you know everything* and do not need anyone to ask you anything.

1COR 2:10B For *the Spirit searches all things, even the deep things of God*.

The Holy Spirit searches out or finds out all things (cf. CEV, NCV, NLT).

Divine glory

NUM 14:21 [GOD:] But truly, as I live, *all the earth will be filled with the glory of the LORD*.

MATT 25:31 *When the Son of Man comes in his glory and all the angels with him, then he will sit on his glorious throne.*

1PET 4:14 [PETER, TO BELIEVERS:] If you are insulted for the name of Christ, you are blessed, because *the Spirit of glory*, who is the Spirit of God, rests on you.

Eternal existence

Ps 93:2 [A PSALMIST, TO GOD:] Your throne is established from of old; *you are from everlasting*. ESV

REV 22:13 [JESUS CHRIST:] *I am the Alpha and the Omega, the first and the last, the beginning and the end!*

Alpha and Omega are the first and the last letters of the Greek alphabet, used together to depict Jesus Christ spanning all time – as do the subsequent pairings in the verse.

HEB 9:14A How much more is done by the blood of Christ. He offered himself through *the eternal Spirit* as a perfect sacrifice to God.

NCV™

Holiness

REV 4:8B “*Holy Holy Holy is the Lord God, the All-Powerful, Who was and who is, and who is still to come!*”

direction of the Holy Spirit (v. 6) – who would help Zerubbabel overcome mountainous obstacles (v. 7a).

The Holy Spirit has great knowledge . . .

JOHN 14:26 [JESUS, TO HIS DISCIPLES:] But the Advocate, *the Holy Spirit*, whom the Father will send in my name, *will teach you everything, and will cause you to remember everything I said to you*.

That the Holy Spirit would teach them “everything” and cause them to remember everything Jesus had said to them is indicative of the Holy Spirit’s profound knowledge.

. . . The Holy Spirit even has knowledge of the future

1TIM 4:1 *Now the Spirit explicitly says that in the later times some will desert the faith and occupy themselves with deceiving spirits and demonic teachings . . .*

The Holy Spirit has great wisdom

ACTS 6:9–10 But some men from the Synagogue of the Freedmen (as it was called), both Cyrenians and Alexandrians, as well as some from Cilicia and the province of Asia, stood up and argued with Stephen.
¹⁰*Yet they were not able to resist the wisdom and the Spirit with which he spoke.*

This suggests that Stephen’s profound wisdom was a product of the Holy Spirit – indicative of the Holy Spirit having great wisdom.

Do you think God's omnipresence (being present everywhere) is through the Holy Spirit?

Are there any attributes listed that you had not previously associated with the Holy Spirit? Can you think of any other attributes of the Holy Spirit that were not mentioned in the verses?

How can we be open to the Holy Spirit working through us, enabling us to do great things (cf. Zec 4:6b–7; Rom 15:18–19)?

b) Mutual Divine Attributes

Common attributes do not necessarily imply oneness, but as the following shared attributes are divine – and as the Bible teaches that there is only one God – they do point to the oneness of God, Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit. The same applies to their common divine roles, discussed in the following section – *Mutual Divine Roles*.

The listings here of their mutual divine attributes and roles are by no means comprehensive. Note that the majority of the subsections are composed of three verses or passages – of which the first refers to God, the second to Jesus Christ and the third to the Holy Spirit.

Omnipresence – God, Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit are everywhere

JER 23:24B “Do you not know that *I am everywhere?*” the LORD asks.

EPH 4:10B *Christ did that to fill everything with his presence.* NCV™

PS 139:7 [DAVID, TO GOD:] *Where can I go to get away from your Spirit? Where can I run from you?* NCV™

Omnipotence – they each have infinite, sovereign power

JOB 42:2 *I know, LORD, that you are all-powerful; that you can do everything you want.* GNT

PHIL 3:20B–21 *Our Lord Jesus Christ²¹ has power over everything, and he will make these poor bodies of ours like his own glorious body.* CEV

1JN 4:4 [JOHN, TO BELIEVERS:] You are from God, little children, and have conquered them, because *the one who is in you is greater than the one who is in the world.*

As noted earlier, “the one who is in you” – who is greater than Satan – is most likely referring to the Holy Spirit. As such this is illustrative of the Holy Spirit's supreme power.

How does Matthew 28:19 imply a very close association – even a oneness – between God, Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit?

What is your understanding of the Holy Spirit's relationship to God and Jesus Christ?

How do God, Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit work together in saving people? What parts does each of them play?

c) The Holy Spirit's Personhood

The Holy Spirit is distinguished from God and Jesus Christ

JOHN 15:26 [JESUS, TO HIS DISCIPLES:] But *when the Helper comes, whom I will send to you from the Father, the Spirit of truth, who proceeds from the Father, he will bear witness about me.* ESV

EPH 4:4–6 [PAUL, TO BELIEVERS:] *There is one body and one Spirit, just as you too were called to the one hope of your calling, ⁵one Lord, one faith, one baptism, ⁶one God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all.*

The Holy Spirit has a mind

ROM 8:27 And he [God] who searches our hearts knows *the mind of the Spirit*, because the Spirit intercedes on behalf of the saints according to God's will.

1COR 12:11 [PAUL, TO BELIEVERS:] But it is *the Spirit who does all this and decides which gifts to give to each of us.* CEV

That the Holy Spirit “decides” such things is indicative of him having his own mind and will.

The Holy Spirit is referred to with personal pronouns

JOHN 16:13 [JESUS, TO HIS DISCIPLES:] But when *he, the Spirit of truth*, comes, *he* will guide you into all truth. For *he* will not speak on *his* own authority, but will speak whatever *he* hears, and will tell you what is to come.

1COR 6:19 [PAUL, TO BELIEVERS:] Or do you not know that your body is the temple of *the Holy Spirit who* is in you, *whom* you have from God, and you are not your own?

The fact that personal pronouns are used of the Holy Spirit suggests that he is an entity in his own right, as well as alluding to him being a personal being.

The Holy Spirit has personal characteristics

ROM 15:30 [PAUL, TO BELIEVERS:] Now I urge you, brothers and sisters, through our Lord Jesus Christ and through *the love of the Spirit*, to join fervently with me in prayer to God on my behalf.

GAL 5:22–23A But *the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness,*²³ *gentleness, and self-control.*

Each of these characteristics is described as a “fruit of the Spirit” because – like fruit from a tree – their source and means of growth is the Holy Spirit. Arguably this implies that as their source and the one who fosters them, the Holy Spirit’s own character is reflected in them.

The Holy Spirit communicates . . .

ROM 8:16 [PAUL, TO BELIEVERS:] *The Spirit himself bears witness to our spirit that we are God’s children.*

ROM 8:26B [PAUL, TO BELIEVERS:] But *the Spirit himself speaks to God for us*, even begs God for us with deep feelings that words cannot explain. NCV™

. . . and the Holy Spirit interacts in other ways

ACTS 9:31B The church became stronger, as *the Holy Spirit encouraged it and helped it grow.* CEV

ROM 8:14 For all who are *led by the Spirit of God* are the sons of God.

Note: Like a person, the Holy Spirit can be treated wrongly

EPH 4:30 [PAUL, TO BELIEVERS:] And *do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God*, by whom you were sealed for the day of redemption.

Note that this verse indicates that – like people – the Holy Spirit has feelings. This further testifies to the Holy Spirit’s personhood.

The Holy Spirit is described as both the Spirit of God and the Spirit of Jesus Christ

ROM 8:9 [PAUL, TO BELIEVERS:] You, however, are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if indeed *the Spirit of God* lives in you. Now if anyone does not have *the Spirit of Christ*, this person does not belong to him.

This not only closely correlates the Holy Spirit with God and with Jesus Christ, it also associates Jesus Christ with God, with the one Spirit being said to be of them both.

God, Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit work together in unity of purpose . . .

JOHN 20:21–22 So Jesus said to them [the disciples] again, “Peace be with you. *Just as the Father has sent me, I also send you.*”²² *And after he said this, he breathed on them and said, “Receive the Holy Spirit.*

God sent Jesus Christ to carry out his purposes and Jesus Christ sends his people empowered with the Holy Spirit to continue his work.

. . . Most prominently, they work together in saving people

ACTS 5:31–32 [PETER AND THE OTHER APOSTLES:] *God exalted him to his right hand as Leader and Savior, to give repentance to Israel and forgiveness of sins.*³² *And we are witnesses of these events, and so is the Holy Spirit whom God has given to those who obey him.*

Verse 32 points to the Holy Spirit’s role in the salvation of people, witnessing to them. This work of the Holy Spirit is in conjunction with God’s will, and with what God has done through Jesus Christ (v. 31) to save people.

a) Mutual Association

God, Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit are very closely associated

MATT 28:19 [JESUS, TO HIS DISCIPLES:] Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in *the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit* . . .

The phrase “the name of” denotes a single name. Here it is applied to all three of God, Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit. As such it points to a very close relationship between the three.

2COR 13:14 [PAUL, TO BELIEVERS:] *The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all.*

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The close association of God, Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit is pointed to by the attributing of these complementary blessings to the three of them at the one time.

The Holy Spirit is identified with God . . .

ACTS 5:3, 4B But Peter said, “Ananias, why has Satan filled your heart *to lie to the Holy Spirit* and keep back for yourself part of the proceeds from the sale of the land? ⁴ . . . *You have not lied to people but to God!*”

Peter indicates that to lie to the Holy Spirit (v. 3) is to lie to God (v. 4). As such Peter identifies the Holy Spirit with God.

. . . and the Holy Spirit is also identified with Jesus Christ

2COR 3:17–18 [PAUL, TO BELIEVERS:] Now *the Lord is the Spirit*, and where the Spirit of the Lord is present, there is freedom. ¹⁸ And we all, with unveiled faces reflecting the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from one degree of glory to another, which is from *the Lord, who is the Spirit*.

There are a number of interpretations of “the Lord is the Spirit” (v. 17) and “the Lord, who is the Spirit” (v. 18). The ones that are arguably the most plausible are compatible with a literal reading, demonstrating the very close association between the Lord Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit.

Some people teach that the Holy Spirit is a thing or a force rather than a personal identity. What aspects of the above teaching suggest otherwise?

How do you find it helpful or encouraging recognizing the personal nature of the Holy Spirit?

Is there anything you find difficult to grasp about the Holy Spirit? Discuss this with the group.

Write down how you would explain the Holy Spirit to someone who had not heard of him.

II. God, Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit as One

(➔ *Jesus Christ and God Are One*, in *3. Jesus Christ*)

The NT speaks of God the Father, Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit as three identities, but also shows them as being related to each other in a unique and indivisible unity. From this comes the concept of them being three “persons” but also being one entity, the doctrine of the Trinity. This close-knit relationship between God, Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit is one of the most intriguing and debated aspect of the Bible. The following provides some basic “building blocks” for coming to terms with this relationship.