

Who is the Holy Spirit?

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Date: 16 January 2019

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[0 : 0 0] Well if we could, with the Lord's help, and the Lord's enabling, if we could turn back to that portion of scripture that we read, the Gospel according to John, John chapter 14, and if we read again at verse 25 and 26, John chapter 14 and verse 25.

Now where Jesus says, these things I have spoken to you while I am still with you, but the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, he will teach you all things and bring to your remembrance all that I have said to you.

Amen. Well, I knew that would happen one day, and well today was the day.

Today was the day I lost my whole sermon. So, you start studying at five in the morning, and you finish at about two in the afternoon, and then you think, well, I've got enough time to go and visit, so I'll go out visiting.

And then you come back at about half five, six, well you come back to the sermon at about half five, six, and you open it up, and there's nothing there. So, we're beginning a study this evening on the Holy Spirit, and understanding his work in our lives, but ironically we're looking at a verse where Jesus has just told us, the Helper, or he's telling me, the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, he will teach you all things and bring to your remembrance all that I have said to you. So, I hope he brings everything I planned to say this evening to my remembrance.

[2 : 0 0] But as I said, we're beginning a study on the Holy Spirit, and the title of our study, I suppose it is, The Holy Spirit Understanding His Work in Our Lives. But we not only have to understand the work of the Holy Spirit, I think, first of all, we have to understand the person.

So, the question I want us to ask this evening is, well, who? Who is the Holy Spirit? Who is the Holy Spirit? And I think it's safe to say that the Holy Spirit is probably the most misunderstood person of the Trinity, because, well, in the church, the church worldwide, the person and work of the Holy Spirit, He's either overemphasized by some or under-emphasized by others.

But as always, our foundation is always to be the Word of God, and, well, nothing else is worth believing. And so we have to ask the question, well, what do the Scriptures say about the Holy Spirit?

Who is this Holy Spirit? What kind of character does the Holy Spirit have? And how is it to our advantage that Jesus has ascended to heaven?

He has ascended to glory, to the right hand of the Father, and the Holy Spirit has come to the church. How is that to our advantage? But, you know, that's what Jesus is explaining here in John chapter 14.

[3 : 2 2] Jesus and his disciples, as you know, they've gathered in the upper room. They've gathered together to celebrate the Passover. And, well, as they've gathered together, it was to be what was their last supper.

But after the Passover meal has ended, and Judas, he has gone out into the night to seek to betray Jesus, Jesus then instituted the Lord's Supper.

And as Jesus then prepares for his departure from this world, he assures the troubled hearts of the disciples that he will come again for them.

That's what we're told at the beginning of this wonderful chapter. Jesus says to his troubled disciples, Let not your hearts be troubled. Believe in God, believe also in me.

In my Father's house are many rooms. If it were not so, I would have told you that I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and take you to myself, that where I am, there you may be also.

[4 : 2 6] But, you know, what's remarkable is that Jesus not only declares to his disciples that he's leaving them, but he also says that his departure is to their advantage. His departure is to their

advantage.

Because Jesus then says later on in verse 12, Truly, truly, I say to you, whoever believes in me will also do the works that I do, and greater works than these will he do, because I am going to the Father.

So Jesus says that his departure is an advantage to the church. The fact that he's going to the Father is a good thing. Because then he says down in verse 16, I will ask the Father, and he will give you another helper to be with you forever.

Even the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees him nor knows him. You know him, for he dwells with you, and will be in you.

I will not leave you as orphans. I will come to you. So Jesus says that if he doesn't leave them, or if he doesn't leave them, then the Spirit cannot come.

[5 : 36] But in his leaving them, he's not going to leave them helpless. No, he will ask the Father to send to the church another helper who will be with them forever.

And he describes this helper as the Spirit of truth. And you know, it's no wonder the disciples, they're totally confused. They're absolutely heartbroken.

Jesus is telling them, I'm going to the Father. And, well, this Spirit is coming, and he's going to be to your advantage. But you know, how could we ever think that it's to our advantage that Jesus would leave us?

Because, I suppose you could ask the question, which would you rather have? Who would you rather have? Would you rather have Jesus as he was in the upper room, or the Holy Spirit? Who would you prefer? Who would you prefer to have? This real, physical man, whom you could see and touch, and hear his voice, and experience his physical presence, and sense the power and weight of his love, and his gentleness.

[6 : 44] Who would you rather have in the church today? Would you rather have Jesus as he was, or would you like to have this unknown person called the Holy Spirit?

And you know, our instinctive answer is to say, well, I would rather have Jesus. I would rather have Jesus in here tonight, whom I could see and touch, than talk about this Holy Spirit, whom we can't see and can't touch.

But you know, when we speak about Jesus, when we speak about Jesus, and we see him in the Gospels, and we see his character, and his person, and we see him as this loving, caring, gentle, meek, and patient man, who moved with compassion, he was the only begotten son, he was the express image of the father, he is the saviour of sinners.

When we see Jesus, we realise how wonderful he is, but when it comes to the Holy Spirit, we feel that, we don't really know him. We struggle to understand who, or what he's really like.

And we wonder, how is Jesus going to the father, an advantage to the church? Because we would far rather have Jesus with us, than this Holy Spirit.

[8 : 01] But as always, well, as always, Jesus is right, because it is to our advantage, that Jesus goes to the father, and it is to our advantage, that the Holy Spirit comes to the church.

But how? How is it to our advantage? Because, who is the Holy Spirit? And that's a question we're asking this evening.

Who is the Holy Spirit? And so as we begin our study on the Holy Spirit, we want to understand, who he is. Who is the Holy Spirit?

And I'd like us just to consider, this question, under two headings. The two headings I can remember. The person of the Holy Spirit, and the purpose, of the Holy Spirit.

The person of the Holy Spirit, and the purpose of the Holy Spirit. So first of all, the person, the person of the Holy Spirit. Look again at verse 26, this is our key text.

[8 : 57] But the helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the father will send in my name, he will teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance, all that I have said, to you. Now, we're all familiar with the Catechism.

We were all brought up on it. And now as Christians, well, we find it, well, I find it, one of the most wonderful documents. Not only to learn Christian doctrine, but also to relearn the Christian doctrines that are taught in the Bible.

And of course, the Catechism asks us helpful questions, so that we learn who God is, and what God is like. And we all know what question four is.

It says, what is God? And the answer that we're given is, well, God is a spirit. He is infinite, eternal, and unchangeable in his being.

And that God who is a spirit, he is infinite, eternal, and unchangeable in his being, in his wisdom, power, holiness, justice, goodness, and truth.

[10:03] In other words, there's no other God like him. And all the other gods are but idols done. Which is why question five goes on to ask, goes on to ask, are there more gods than one?

And the Catechism affirms to us, there is but one only, the living and true God. But then you go to question six, and it's amazing how they're all numbered, so that we think through them all in order. Because the question six in the Catechism, it not only reminds us that, well, this God is a spirit, he's infinite, eternal, and unchangeable. But he's also unchallengeable, because there's no other God besides him.

But the Catechism teaches, it teaches us, and affirms to us, that this God, whom we have to do, he's not one, but he's three.

How many Persians are there in the Godhead? There are three Persians in the Godhead. The Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. These three are one. They are the same in substance, equal in power, and glory.

[11:11] So they're not three gods, but there are three Persians in one God. And you know, the wonder and glory of our Trinitarian God, is that the Persians of the Godhead, they cannot be separated, yet their role in the work of creation and redemption, is distinct.

They cannot be separated, but their role in the work of creation, and redemption, is distinct. And you know, the Bible, the Bible has always taught us, this plurality of the Godhead, that there is more Persians, than one Persian in the Godhead.

There are three Persians. You go right back to the beginning of our Bible. You go to, when God makes the apex of creation, when God creates Adam, what does he say about Adam?

God the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, they say, let us make man, in our image, after our likeness. There's a plurality there, straight away.

Let us make man, in our image. So the Trinity is there, right at the beginning, working in creation. The Trinity appears again, it appears at the baptism of Jesus.

[12:25] You remember how Jesus, he came up, out of the water. And as he came up, out of the water, the Spirit descends like a dove. The Holy Spirit is present. And then the voice, the voice of the Father from heaven.

This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased. Listen to him. Then you have Jesus, at the Great Commission. He's sending out his disciples.

Jesus reminds them, all authority, in heaven and on earth, it has been given to me. It has been given to me, from my Father. Go therefore, he says, into all nations.

Baptizing them. Baptizing them, into the one name. One name, but three Persians. One name, into the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

Baptize them, into that one name. And lo, I am with you always, even, to the end of the world. And then you have that benediction. You know, the benediction, is a Trinitarian benediction.

[13:29] Every time the benediction, is pronounced. It's this blessing, a Trinitarian blessing, upon God's people. And the benediction, that's pronounced, every Lord's Day, and every midweek.

It's taken from, the last words, of 2 Corinthians 13. The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God the Father, and the fellowship, of the Holy Spirit, be with you all.

That's the blessing, we're to receive. It's a Trinitarian blessing. A benediction. It's pronounced, upon us. Because our God, is a Trinitarian God.

But you know, I've given you this, Athanasian Creed. I don't know if you, did you all get one? The Athanasian Creed. It's a creed, that was produced, in the 4th century, by, it wasn't written by, Athanasius of Alexandria.

It was written, after his death. But it's called, the Athanasian Creed, because it's, it bases, it's based upon, his theology. And Athanasius, he was heavily involved, in debates, and, well, he was, involved in many debates, to do with, the Trinity, and also what's on the back, is, the Persian, of Jesus.

[14:54] And you know, all these councils, and all these debates, and all these creeds, well they are, this is the foundation, of our teaching, and our understanding, today. All these creeds, and, all these debates, they are what produced, the Westminster Confession, and all our catechisms.

This is where it all came from. And you know, the Athanasian Creed, it's a wonderful thing, because it explains, clearly, who the Trinity is, and what the Trinity is like.

And I just want to read the first, first, first, first, first, page here. You can read, about the person, of Jesus yourself. But it says, whoever desires, to be saved, and should, above, should, should above all, hold to the Catholic faith.

Now, Catholic, doesn't mean Roman Catholic, it means the Holy Church, the universal Church, of Jesus Christ. Anyone who does not, keep it whole, and unbroken, will doubtless, perish eternally. Now this is, the Catholic faith, the universal faith, that we worship one God, in Trinity, and the Trinity, in unity, neither blending their persons, nor dividing their essence.

[16:03] For the person of the Father, is a distinct person, the person of the Son, is another, and that of the Holy Spirit, still another. But the divinity of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, is one, their glory equal, their majesty co-eternal.

What quality the Father has, the Son has, and the Holy Spirit has. The Father is uncreated, the Son, is uncreated, the Holy Spirit, is uncreated, the Father is immeasurable, the Son is immeasurable, the Holy Spirit, is immeasurable, the Father is eternal, the Son is eternal, the Holy Spirit, is eternal, and yet there are not, three eternal beings, there is but one, eternal being.

So too, there are not, three uncreated, or immeasurable beings, but there is, one, uncreated, and immeasurable being. Similarly, Joffzee 10.

There are not three gods. There is but one God. Thus the Father is Lord, the Son is Lord, the Holy Spirit is Lord. Yet there are not three lords. There is but one Lord.

Just as Christian truth compels us to confess each person individually as both God and Lord, so Catholic religion forbids us to say that there are three gods or lords.

[17:30] The Father was neither made nor created nor begotten from anyone. The Son was neither made nor created. He was begotten from the Father alone.

The Holy Spirit was neither made nor created nor begotten. He proceeds from the Father and the Son. Accordingly, there is one Father, not three fathers. There is one Son, not three sons. There is one Holy Spirit, not three Holy Spirits.

Nothing in this Trinity is before or after. Nothing is greater or smaller in their entirety. The three persons are co-eternal and co-equal with each other. So in everything, as was said earlier, we must worship their Trinity in their unity and their unity in their Trinity.

Anyone then who desires to be saved should think thus about the Trinity. And you know, when we think of the Trinity, we should never think of it as a hierarchy where it's Father, Son and Holy Spirit. The Father is the first person because as it said there in the second last paragraph, the Father was neither made nor created nor begotten from anyone. So that's why he's the first person.

[18:45] The Son is the second person because as it says in that paragraph, the Son was neither made nor created, but he was begotten by the Father alone.

And the Holy Spirit is the third person. It's not a hierarchy, but it's not a hierarchy there. Co-eternal, co-equal. He's the third person. Why? Because he was neither made nor created nor begotten, but he proceeds from the Father and from the Son.

That's why he's called the third person in the Godhead. So the first, the second and the third person in the Godhead. And we have to remember the Holy Spirit is a person.

We don't call him it. It is he. He is a person. And a person, as we all know, has a name. And the Holy Spirit in the Bible, he has many names.

He's called the Spirit of God. The Spirit of the Lord. He's called the Spirit of Christ. The Spirit of Jesus. He's the Spirit of truth. We read that here in John 14.

[19:50] He's the Holy Spirit. But another name that's given to him, as we see in verse 26 here, and it's used elsewhere in the passage in verse 16. The other name that's given to him is the Helper.

He is called the Helper. If you're using the authorised version, it's the Comforter. But the word Helper in Greek is the Paraclete, which means he is called alongside.

And you know, that's a wonderful description of the Holy Spirit. That Jesus asked the Father and called him alongside the church.

The Spirit was called alongside the church. So that he would comfort the church. That he would guide the church to know the truth. That he would remind the church, as Jesus has just said here.

He would remind the church of all that Jesus has said. That he would instruct the church in the teachings of Jesus. And he would also fill the church with the power of God.

[20 : 49] So we're to be led by the Spirit. The Spirit is to lead us. To lead us. To look more and more to Jesus. But you know, this leads us on to the purpose of the Spirit.

So we've considered the Persian. Who is the Holy Spirit? That's the question we're asking. The Persian of the Holy Spirit. But then I want us to consider, secondly, the purpose of the Holy Spirit. The purpose of the Holy Spirit. Read again at verse 26. But the helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name. He will teach you all things.

And bring to your remembrance all that I have said to you. Now, of course, Jesus teaches here that the purpose of the Spirit is that he will teach the church.

He will teach the church what Jesus has taught. And he will bring to their remembrance. He will remind. The Spirit will remind the church of all that Jesus has said.

[21 : 48] And as we go through our study in the coming weeks, we'll see more and more of this. But you know, I want us to consider the purpose of the Holy Spirit under, I suppose you could say, three subheadings.

Because the purpose of the Holy Spirit is to create form, fullness, and fellowship. The purpose of the Holy Spirit is to create form, fullness, and fellowship.

And we see the first two of these right at the beginning of our Bible. We see the Holy Spirit creating form and fullness right at the beginning of the Bible.

You know, you go, we all know those words, the opening words of our Bible. In the beginning, God. God, what? He created the heavens and the earth. And how was the earth?

The earth was without form. And it was void. The darkness was over the face of the deep. And the Spirit, we're told, was hovering over the face of the deep.

[22 : 53] And you know, the earth, we're told, was formless. And it was empty. It was without form.

And it was void. There was an emptiness. But the Spirit, we're told, right at the very beginning, the Spirit is present. And he's there hovering over the face of the waters.

And that verb, too, that describes the Spirit, hovering. Why is the Spirit hovering? Well, the Spirit is hovering because he's waiting. He's waiting for an instruction.

He's waiting upon the Father to speak. Because as soon as the Father speaks, he'll speak through the Son. And as soon as the Son speaks, as soon as the Word comes, the Spirit will effect and bring form and fullness into the world.

And you know, that's actually what happened at creation. God the Father speaks from heaven. And it comes through the Word. The Word.

[23 : 58] And you'll remember how John, in his Gospel, he echoes the words of Genesis 1.1. John says, in the beginning was the Word. The Word was with God.

The Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God. All things were made through him. And without him, nothing was made that was made. So the Father spoke.

And it came to life with words. The Word. The Son. Let there be light. And the Spirit effected the whole thing.

It was a Trinitarian act. The creation was a Trinitarian act. The Father speaks. The Son is the Word. And the Spirit effects life.

And you know, it's amazing what happened. That there is, that the Spirit effected this formless earth. And brought form. The Spirit brought what was empty.

[24 : 59] He brought fullness. And you know, you see that in the days of creation. You see that in the days of creation. The Father speaks. The Son gives the Word. And then the Spirit effects it.

And what does he do? He forms the skies, the seas, and the earth. Then the Father speaks. The Son is the Word. The Spirit effects it.

What does he do? He fills it on. There's form and fullness. Form and fullness. And you know, this is what the Spirit does. He brings form and order out of what was shapeless and empty.

He brings fullness into this empty mass that was there. That's what the Spirit does. He effects this formlessness and emptiness.

To take formlessness. He gives formlessness form. He gives emptiness fullness. He brings order out of chaos.

[26 : 02] And you know, that's what you see in the whole of chapter 1. And God said, let there be. And it was. And God saw that it was very good.

The Spirit brings form and fullness. And you know, right at the beginning of the Bible, we're being taught what the Spirit does every time he works. Because that's what we'll see him doing all the way through Scripture. He brings form and fullness. And he does this both in creation and in redemption. He brings form and fullness. Because, well, we've seen what he does in creation. But what does he do in redemption? Think of your own life. Especially if you had a non-Christian past. I think of my own life. And when I lived my life without Jesus Christ, it was without form. And it was empty. My life was meaningless.

[27 : 03] It was without purpose. There was no rationale. I was going nowhere. It was empty. But when the Spirit began to work in my life, and maybe in your own experience too, when the Spirit began to work, you were made to see the emptiness.

You were made to see that your life had no form. It had no real direction. You were like Psalm 107. They strayed in deserts pathless way, with no city found to rest. There was no form in your life. And it was empty. This emptiness. I don't know if you ever experienced that emptiness. And you were trying to fill your life with everything else. Trying to fill your life and bring that satisfaction that could never actually come until the Spirit came and worked in your life and worked in your heart. And he brought form and he brought fullness. He brought form and he brought fullness. And you know, that's what the Spirit does when we come to faith in Jesus Christ.

[28 : 05] He gives us, he brings order out of chaos. He gives form to our formlessness. He gives fullness to our emptiness. And you know, it's amazing what the Spirit does.

And you know, that's what Jesus actually promised. The fullness of life. I have come that you might have life and have it more abundantly. The Spirit works form and fullness in our Christian life. But he also works fellowship. He works fellowship. This is the other F. He not only creates form and fullness in creation and redemption, but he also works fellowship. Because we need fellowship. When Adam was created, Adam needed fellowship. He needed a wife. But he also walked with God in that perfect humanity. He had fellowship with God. He had communion with God. But when Adam sinned, when Adam sinned against his holy God, he lost communion.

[29 : 16] He lost fellowship. That closeness became this huge chasm between holy God and sinful man. And we were at enmity with God then.

There was no communion. There was no fellowship. We were at enmity. And how does the catechism put it? All mankind, by their fall, lost what? They lost communion with God. That's the first thing that went. We lost communion with God. We're under his wrath and curse and so made liable to all the miseries of this life, to the pains of death and hell forever.

And you know, that's how far we went. This chasm that was created because of our sin. But you know, it's the work of the Spirit to restore and to renew that fellowship, that communion with this holy God.

The Spirit, he not only works form into our formlessness, he not only works fullness into our emptiness, but he also works fellowship. Then to our enmity against a holy God.

[30 : 28] He restores communion and fellowship with God where there is this renewed and restored fellowship. And you know, that's what the tabernacle was all about.

That's what the temple was all about. It was all about seeking to restore fellowship with a holy God. And fellowship could only be achieved through sacrifice. Fellowship could only ever be restored through sacrifice. And that's what we see again and again in the Old Testament. All these sacrifices just so that the people of God could have fellowship with their holy God.

But then Jesus comes in the fullness of time. Jesus comes and amazingly, the Spirit is there. He's there bringing form into Mary's womb. The form of a man. The Spirit is there again bringing fullness into Mary's womb. Why is he doing it? In order to bring fellowship between sinful man and holy God.

[31 : 36] That's why Jesus comes. He's there to renew fellowship. And you know, that's, and how does he do it? Through sacrifice. All through sacrifice.

We have this renewed fellowship with our holy God. We have a mediator between God and men. The man Christ Jesus. We have an advocate with the Father.

Jesus Christ, the righteous. And you know, when the Spirit comes, when he came in power at Pentecost, and when he comes to dwell in our heart, we become, in many ways, a temple in which we have fellowship with God through the Spirit.

We enjoy communion and fellowship. But you know, that communion and fellowship that we enjoy tonight and in our Christian walk, it's only, I suppose you could say as Paul puts it, we only see through a glass darkly.

It's only partial fellowship as to what we will have in the world to come. Because the promise is that when faith gives way to sight, we shall see him.

[32 : 49] And when we see him, we shall be like him. And see him even as he is. The Spirit, his work, he's not finished with you.

He's still bringing form into your formlessness. He's still bringing fullness into your emptiness. He's still bringing fellowship into your enmity. And he will bring it all to completion at the day of Christ Jesus.

When it all comes to an end and we see him face to face. You know, that's a wonderful work. I've looked forward to beginning this study for a long time.

The work of the Holy Spirit and understanding his work in our lives. So who is the Holy Spirit? Well, he's a person. And we must respect him as a person.

A person of the Godhead. And he has a purpose. He has a wonderful purpose. To bring form, fullness, and fellowship. He brings form into our formlessness.

[33 : 51] Fullness into our emptiness. and fellowship into our enmity with God. So the person and the purpose of the Holy Spirit.

Well, I hope and I pray that Jesus was faithful to his words. That he will teach you all things and bring to your remembrance all that I have said to you.

May the Lord bless these thoughts to us. Let us pray. O Lord, our gracious God, we marvel at who thou art.

Lord, there is so much that we do not understand. And we can say, like David did in that psalm we were singing, that such knowledge is too strange for me, too high to understand.

But we bless thee, O Lord, and we praise thee that thou art the God who has revealed thyself to us. And that thou art the God who is teaching us. And bringing to remembrance all that Jesus has said.

[34 : 51] And we pray that thy spirit would work in our lives. That he has begun that good work. And that he will bring it on to completion. That he would bring form into our formlessness.

And fullness into the emptiness. And fellowship. O that wonderful fellowship that we are able to experience. Not only with thee, our great God. But even with one another.

To have fellowship with one another. Knowing that we have this wonderful union because of Jesus. O we marvel how great a God thou art. Help us then to come and praise in adoration.

And worship thee for thou art one who is worthy of praise. Bless us then, we pray. Bless thy truth to us. Lead us and guide us, we ask. And remember all those, Lord, whom we have mentioned.

Those who are laid aside this evening. those who are receiving treatment. Those who are recovering from treatment. Lord, may thy hand be upon them that they would know thy grace being sufficient.

[35 : 54] That they would know help. And that they would know the promise of the helper. The one who is able to draw alongside. O keep us then, we ask. Do us good. Take away our iniquity.

Receive us graciously. For Jesus' sake. Amen. We're going to bring our service to a conclusion by singing the words of Psalm 139 from verse 7 down to the verse marked 12.

Psalm 139 from verse 7 down to the verse marked 12. Page 432 it's in the Scottish Psalter.

From thy spirit whither shall I go? From thy presence fly. Ascend thy heaven lo thou art there there if in hell I lie. Take I the morning wings and dwell in utmost parts of sea.

In their Lord shall thy hand me lead. Thy right hand hold shall me. So Psalm 139 from verse 7 to 12 to God's praise. Amen. Blonde from esc seamless from minus earth for And ye shall last thy eyes I lie.

[37 : 36] Take I the morning wings and dwell in utmost parts of sea.

In there, Lord, shall thy hand me lead, thy right and whole shall be.

If I do say the darkness shall me cover from thy sight, then surely shall the very night about me be as light.

The darkness hideth not from thee, but night doth shine as day.

To thee the darkness and the light are both alike always.

[39 : 31] The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God the Father, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all, now and forevermore. Amen. Amen.