

The Holy Spirit and the Church

Sunday Circle – June 1, 2025

The Holy Spirit

The third person of the Trinity. In the Hebrew Testament, “spirit” was primarily used to express God's power in the world. In the Christian Testament, Jesus is called the Christ because he is the one anointed by the Spirit. The gift of the Spirit to Jesus' disciples after the crucifixion is associated with the post-resurrection appearances of Jesus in Jn 20:19-23 and with the Day of Pentecost in Acts 2.

The Catechism states that the church is holy “because the Holy Spirit dwells in it, consecrates its members, and guides them to do God's will” (BCP, p. 854).

The Council of Constantinople in 381 stated that the Holy Spirit is as truly God as the Son, both being of “one substance” with the Father. The Nicene Creed states belief “in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life, who proceeds from the Father and the Son. With the Father and the Son he is worshiped and glorified. He has spoken through the prophets” (BCP, p. 359).

In the relations of the persons of the Trinity, the Spirit is said to proceed from the Father by the mode of “spiration” or “breathing,” while the Son is said to proceed from the Father by the mode of “generation.” Western theology came to speak of the Spirit proceeding “from the Father and the Son.” The Episcopal theologian William Porcher DuBose stated in *The Soteriology of the New Testament* (1892) that “all God's operations in us as spiritual beings are by the word through the spirit” (p. 56). <https://www.episcopalchurch.org/glossary/holy-spirit/>

The work of God the Holy Spirit in creation, in the lives of God's people, in the ministry of Jesus, and in the Church can be seen throughout scripture.

Creation

The Holy Spirit moved over the waters when Earth was created

Genesis 1:1-2 In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth. ²And the earth was without form, and void; and darkness was upon the face of the deep. **And the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters.**

The Holy Spirit and God's Chosen People

Throughout the Hebrew Scriptures, the Holy Spirit is described as coming upon people and filling people so that they can answer God's call to service and ministry. Scripture teaches us that when we are filled with the Holy Spirit, anyone from the greatest to the least can do remarkable things. A few examples:

Exodus 31:1-5 1The Lord spoke to Moses: 2See, I have called by name Bezalel son of Uri son of Hur, of the tribe of Judah: 3and **I have filled him with divine spirit**, with ability, intelligence, and knowledge in every kind of craft, 4to devise artistic designs, to work in gold, silver, and bronze, 5in cutting stones for setting, and in carving wood, in every kind of craft.

Judges

3:10 **The spirit of the Lord came upon him [Othniel]**, and he judged Israel

6:34 **The spirit of the Lord took possession of Gideon**; and he sounded the trumpet, and the Abiezrites were called out to follow him.

11:29 Then **the spirit of the Lord came upon Jephthah**, and he passed through Gilead and Manasseh.

1 Samuel 16:13 Then Samuel took the horn of oil and anointed him in the presence of his brothers; and **the spirit of the Lord came mightily upon David** from that day forward. Samuel then set out and went to Ramah.

Isaiah 11:1-2

1A shoot shall come out from the stump of Jesse, and a branch shall grow out of his roots.

2The spirit of the Lord shall rest on him, the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge and the fear of the Lord.

Book of Ezekiel

Joel 2:28-29

28 Then afterward **I will pour out my spirit on all flesh**; your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your old men shall dream dreams, and your young men shall see visions. 29Even on the male and female slaves, in those days, I will pour out my spirit.

The Holy Spirit in Christianity

The Promise of the Holy Spirit

Jesus spent considerable time preparing his disciples for his death, resurrection, and their lives after his ascension. As we all might have been, they were sad, fearful, and worried about what would happen once Jesus returned to God the Father.

God the Trinity has never left God's people on their own.

- God the Father walked in the Garden of Eden with Adam and Eve
- God guided the Hebrew people out of Exodus
- God called and walked with the judges and prophets
- God the Father sent his only son, Jesus, for the forgiveness of our sins and our salvation
- God the Holy Spirit came from God the Father to God the Son at Jesus' baptism and continues to come to each person when they receive God
- Jesus promised his disciples he would ask God the Father to send the Holy Spirit to be with us after Jesus returned to the Father.
- The Holy Spirit came on the Day of Pentecost
- God the Holy Spirit continues to walk with us and abide in us today

John 14: 15-17, 25-26

15 "If you love me, you will keep my commandments. 16 And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Advocate, to be with you forever. 17 This is the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees him nor knows him. You know him, because he abides with you, and he will be in you.

25 "I have said these things to you while I am still with you. 26 But the Advocate, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you everything, and remind you of all that I have said to you.

Acts 1:4-5, 8 4 While staying with them, Jesus ordered them not to leave Jerusalem, but to wait there for the promise of the Father. "This," he said, "is what you have heard from me; 5 for John baptized with water, but you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days from now." 8 But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth."

Pentecost

Acts 2 1-4, 14-33

1 When the day of Pentecost had come, they were all together in one place. 2 And suddenly from heaven there came a sound like the rush of a violent wind, and it filled the entire house where they were sitting. 3 Divided tongues, as of fire, appeared among them, and a tongue rested on each of them. **4 All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other languages, as the Spirit gave them ability.**

14 But Peter, standing with the eleven, raised his voice and addressed them, "Men of Judea and all who live in Jerusalem, let this be known to you, and listen to what I say. 15 Indeed, these are not drunk, as you suppose, for it is only nine o'clock in the morning. 16 No, this is what was spoken through the prophet Joel: 17 'In the last days it will be, God declares, that I will pour out my Spirit upon all flesh, and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy,

and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams. 18Even upon my slaves, both men and women, in those days I will pour out my Spirit; and they shall prophesy. 19And I will show portents in the heaven above and signs on the earth below, blood, and fire, and smoky mist. 20The sun shall be turned to darkness and the moon to blood, before the coming of the Lord's great and glorious day. 21Then everyone who calls on the name of the Lord shall be saved.'

22“You that are Israelites, listen to what I have to say: Jesus of Nazareth, a man attested to you by God with deeds of power, wonders, and signs that God did through him among you, as you yourselves know— 23this man, handed over to you according to the definite plan and foreknowledge of God, you crucified and killed by the hands of those outside the law. 24But God raised him up, having freed him from death, because it was impossible for him to be held in its power...32This Jesus God raised up, and of that all of us are witnesses. 33Being therefore exalted at the right hand of God, and **having received from the Father the promise of the Holy Spirit, he has poured out this that you both see and hear.**

Receiving the Holy Spirit

When we receive the Holy Spirit we are in fellowship with God. The Holy Spirit shows us the glory of God, guides us to follow the teachings of Jesus, comforts us in times of need, brings us into communion and community with each other and with those outside of the church.

But that's not all. The Spirit is also given to us so that, with him dwelling in us, we are able to have fellowship with one another. It is the Spirit who distributes gifts from God “for the common good” of church communities (1 Corinthians 12:7–11). It is the Spirit who inspires us to address each other “in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs” and to “[submit] to one another out of reverence for Christ” (Ephesians 5:18–21). And it is only in the Spirit that we will experience together “unity . . . in the bond of peace” (Ephesians 4:3).

This is the great gift of the Holy Spirit: that in him we have fellowship with God and fellowship with one another (1 John 1:3). Paul simply calls it “the fellowship of the Holy Spirit” (2 Corinthians 13:14). <https://www.desiringgod.org/articles/receive-the-holy-spirit>

The Baptism of Jesus Matthew 3:16-17 – 4:1 16And when Jesus had been baptized, just as he came up from the water, suddenly the heavens were opened to him **and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and alighting on him.** 17And a voice from heaven said, “This is my Son, the Beloved, with whom I am well pleased.” 1Then Jesus was led up by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil.

John the Baptist speaking about Jesus John 1:32-34 32And John testified, “**I saw the Spirit descending from heaven like a dove, and it remained on him.** 33I myself did not know him, but the one who sent me to baptize with water said to me, ‘**He on whom you see the Spirit**

descend and remain is the one who baptizes with the Holy Spirit.' 34And I myself have seen and have testified that this is the Son of God."

Jesus gives the Holy Spirit to the Disciples after the Resurrection

19When it was evening on that day, the first day of the week, and the doors of the house where the disciples had met were locked for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood among them and said, "Peace be with you." 20After he said this, he showed them his hands and his side. Then the disciples rejoiced when they saw the Lord. 21Jesus said to them again, "Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, so I send you." **22When he had said this, he breathed on them and said to them, "Receive the Holy Spirit.** 23If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven them; if you retain the sins of any, they are retained."

The first converts after Pentecost Acts 2:37-38

37Now when they heard this, they were cut to the heart and said to Peter and to the other apostles, "Brothers, what should we do?" 38Peter said to them, "Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ so that your sins may be forgiven; and **you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.** 39For the promise is for you, for your children, and for all who are far away, everyone whom the Lord our God calls to him."

The Samaritans Receive the Holy Spirit Acts 8:14-17

14Now when the apostles at Jerusalem heard that Samaria had accepted the word of God, they sent Peter and John to them. 15The two went down and prayed for them that they might receive the Holy Spirit 16(for as yet the Spirit had not come upon any of them; they had only been baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus). **17Then Peter and John laid their hands on them, and they received the Holy Spirit.**

Philip and the Ethiopian Eunuch Acts 9:26-40

26Then an angel of the Lord said to Philip, "Get up and go toward the south to the road that goes down from Jerusalem to Gaza." (This is a wilderness road.) 27So he got up and went. Now there was an Ethiopian eunuch, a court official of the Candace, queen of the Ethiopians, in charge of her entire treasury. He had come to Jerusalem to worship 28and was returning home; seated in his chariot, he was reading the prophet Isaiah. 29Then the Spirit said to Philip, "Go over to this chariot and join it." 30So Philip ran up to it and heard him reading the prophet Isaiah. He asked, "Do you understand what you are reading?" 31He replied, "How can I, unless someone guides me?" And he invited Philip to get in and sit beside him

34The eunuch asked Philip, "About whom, may I ask you, does the prophet say this, about himself or about someone else?" 35Then Philip began to speak, and starting with this scripture, he proclaimed to him the good news about Jesus. 36As they were going along the road, they came to some water; and the eunuch said, "Look, here is water! What is to prevent me from being baptized?" 37 38He commanded the chariot to stop, and both of them, Philip and the eunuch, went down into the water, and Philip baptized him. 39When they came up out

of the water, **the Spirit of the Lord snatched Philip away**; the eunuch saw him no more, and went on his way rejoicing. 40But Philip found himself at Azotus, and as he was passing through the region, he proclaimed the good news to all the towns until he came to Caesarea.

Gentiles Receive the Holy Spirit Acts 10:44-48

44While Peter was still speaking, the Holy Spirit fell upon all who heard the word. 45The circumcised believers who had come with Peter were astounded that the gift of the Holy Spirit had been poured out even on the Gentiles, 46for they heard them speaking in tongues and extolling God. Then Peter said, 47“Can anyone withhold the water for baptizing these people who have received the Holy Spirit just as we have?” 48So he ordered them to be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ. Then they invited him to stay for several days.

1 Corinthians 12:7-11

7To each is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good. 8To one is given through the Spirit the utterance of wisdom, and to another the utterance of knowledge according to the same Spirit, 9to another faith by the same Spirit, to another gifts of healing by the one Spirit, 10to another the working of miracles, to another prophecy, to another the discernment of spirits, to another various kinds of tongues, to another the interpretation of tongues. 11All these are activated by one and the same Spirit, who allots to each one individually just as the Spirit chooses.

Ephesians 4:1-5

1I therefore, the prisoner in the Lord, beg you to lead a life worthy of the calling to which you have been called, 2with all humility and gentleness, with patience, bearing with one another in love, 3making every effort to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. **4There is one body and one Spirit,** just as you were called to the one hope of your calling, 5one Lord, one faith, one baptism, 6one God and Father of all, who is above all and through all and in all.

The Holy Spirit Abiding with and in Us Today

The Holy Spirit continues to be with us and in us each and every day. When we open our hearts, minds, and souls to the call and the wisdom of the Holy Spirit, we will experience the glory of God at work in our lives. At all times let us pray, “Come, Holy Spirit, Come,” with every confidence that the Holy Spirit is already walking with us.