

# Christ Describes The Holy Spirit

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[ 0 : 00 ] Imagine that you're in Jerusalem, in that chamber with the disciples on the day of the first Pentecost.

You're with the disciples. You see their response to what happened. Well, if you were there, you would see in the disciples and the other folk who made up the 120 people, you would have seen in their faces, in their words, in their actions, awe at what had happened.

Awe at the flame, the wind. Awe at the power that was manifested. But, at the same time, what you would not have seen would have been surprised.

They weren't the least bit surprised that the Spirit had come. And they weren't surprised because they expected the Spirit. And they expected the Spirit because Jesus, in his teaching, particularly in the last week or so before the crucifixion, had prepared them for that moment.

Had prepared them for the time when the Spirit would come. One such example of that teaching is found in your pew Bibles in the New Testament section on page 104.

[ 1 : 35 ] Excuse me. And it's in John chapter 14, beginning with verse 15.

Just let your eyes follow down the page. I'll read it so your ears can follow as well. Remember, this is Jesus teaching his inner circle of disciples, the 12.

He said, if you love me, you will keep my commandments. I will pray the Father, and he will give you another counselor, who will 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 desolate. I will come to you yet a little while, and the world will see me no more.

But you will see me. Because I live, you will live also. In that day you will know that I am in my Father, and you in me, and I in you.

[ 2 : 54 ] He who has my commandments and keeps them, he it is who loves me. He who loves me will be judged by my Father, and I will love him and manifest myself to him.

Judas, not Iscariot, said to him, Lord, how is it that you will manifest yourself to us and not to the world? Jesus answered, If a man loves me, he will keep my word, and my Father will love him, and we will come to him and make our home with him.

He who does not love me does not keep my words. The word which you hear is not mine, but the Father's who sent me. These things I have spoken to you while I am still with you.

The Counselor, Holy Spirit, from the Father will send in my name. He will teach you all things and bring to remembrance all that I have said to you.

This is one example of this sort of teaching. It's all through this particular section of John's Gospel. Teaching, preparing the disciples for the coming of the Spirit.

[ 4 : 16 ] Through the coming of the Spirit, for a whole different way of living and acting. A whole different way of responding to God. But just in this passage alone, I'd like you just to get a glimpse of what Jesus is trying to say through all of chapters 14, 15, 16 in his teaching about the Holy Spirit.

The first thing I'd want you to look for in this passage is who the Holy Spirit is, according to Jesus. You notice that it's who, not what.

It's not what, because the Holy Spirit is not some sort of divine power, something like a magnet that exerts a tremendous force over life, shuffling people around like those chess sets where you move the magnets under the board and move the pieces.

The Holy Spirit isn't an impersonal force in that sense. The Holy Spirit is not a walk in the sense of some sort of supernatural influence that colors lives, that forces lives into patterns from the beginning, the way an astrological sign does.

There's none of this idea of, you're born, you're stuck. You're stuck unless you're startled. There's none of that sort of impersonal power about the Holy Spirit.

[ 5 : 59 ] Rather, the power of the Holy Spirit is personal. You notice that Jesus uses the words, he, him.

The word, him. You refer to the Spirit. Because the Spirit is personal. The Spirit is a person and relates personally to people, to you and I.

The Spirit, indeed, is God. Okay, if you, just for example, look at verse 26.

The Counselor of the Holy Spirit and 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.

There is the Spirit doing, so to speak, some of the work of God, part of the work of God. So the Holy Spirit is God.

[ 7 : 07 ] And yet God distinct, as verse 26 makes clear from the Father. Distinct from the Son. And yet, united with the Father, united with the Son, so that together they make the completeness of God.

Together they do the complete work of God. So just briefly there, it's who the Holy Spirit is. Next thing I'd like you to notice in this passage is to whom the Spirit is given.

That, in the last 15 to 20 years in North American church circles, has become a contentious issue. Who gets the Spirit?

Under what circumstances? Well, that's all answered in this passage. There are two conditions under which people receive the Holy Spirit.

First of all, the Holy Spirit is given to people who love Jesus. Verse 23, for example, makes that very clear.

[ 8 : 28 ] If a man loves me. See the condition? The person loves Jesus.

Then the Spirit comes. There's also a second condition. Okay? That can be found, pointed to in verse 21.

And that condition is that the Spirit comes to those who not just love Christ, but receive and obey commands that Christ gives.

He who has my commandments and keeps them. He it is who loves me. The love of Christ is manifest in obedience to Christ.

And it's on the basis of those two conditions, and only those two conditions. People, ordinary human beings like each of us, receive the Holy Spirit.

[ 9 : 40 ] You might say that that's another example of the glorious grace of God in action. We don't have to jump through hoops.

We don't have to turn ourselves inside out and backwards. We receive the Holy Spirit merely by loving Christ, following and obediently.

Of course, that also means, and this counteracts much of the, dare I say it, heretical teaching that's been heard from time to time, the past few years.

See, it counteracts the idea that the Holy Spirit is given as a monopoly to a few Christians. That isn't the way it is at all. I hope you see that clearly.

The Holy Spirit is given as a common possession of all Christians. You don't have to go through any elaborate ceremonies.

[ 10 : 43 ] You don't have to be part of a special group. You don't have to be part of a special group. You only have to be someone who loves and obeys Christ. Another thing I'd like you to see in this passage, that is why the Holy Spirit is given to us.

Now, there's a certain train of thought that some people have that the Holy Spirit is given to us to compensate for the fact that Christ has been crucified and has risen from the dead and ascended it. Now he's totally absent. And so to make up for that absence, we need something else, and the Spirit of God fills that void.

But again, referring back to verse 23, you see Christ saying something different. See, if a man loves me, he will keep my words, and my Father will love him, and we will come to him and make our home with him.

You notice we. We. You see, the Spirit comes not because God the Father and Creator is absent from this world, not because the risen Christ has run off somewhere else.

[ 12 : 20 ] The Spirit comes to be with the Father and the Son and to carry out the particular function of assuring us that Jesus Christ is with us with the task of ensuring that we recognize Jesus'

presence within us.

It's not the case of you can have the Spirit but you can't have any other part of God. rather the fact that the coming of the Spirit pleads the presence, the working presence, of God in our life.

And I'd like you to look at one other thing, what the work of the Spirit is. In this passage, in differing ways, there's two things pointed to.

First of all, there are some titles used of the Holy Spirit. In verse 16, there's the word counsel.

Counselor. In 26, you see again the word counselor. Now, depending on how you want to translate that, if you look at different translations of the Bible, you'll get not necessarily always the word counselor.

[13:55] Sometimes you'll get the word comforter. Sometimes you'll get the word advocate. So, counselor, comforter, advocate, they're the most, the three most common words, English words used there.

And behind those English words lies one Greek word. That's the word periclete. In Greek, periclete is someone who comes alongside someone else to support them, to assist them, to help them.

periclete is like a partner who goes through a situation with you, not just to be with you, but to actively help you.

Well, that's what these English words translate, trying to get at, is that idea. So that whatever the word in English may be, the message message is the same.

That is that the Holy Spirit is given to us to strengthen us, to strengthen us by his presence, to be alongside us, be with us.

[15:14] So that as we live a life of service for God, as we live a life of following Christ, we're not alone. to have someone help us with that heavy task.

But we also get an idea of the work of the Spirit by looking at another title. In verse 17, for example, it appears. The Spirit of Truth.

The Holy Spirit is the Spirit of Truth. What does the Spirit of Truth do? Well, you'll find this amplified in other parts of Jesus' teaching in John's Gospel.

But basically, the Spirit is the Spirit of Truth because it is by the Holy Spirit that we are taught the truth of God. It's by the Holy Spirit that we're enabled to learn the truth.

The Holy Spirit is, if you like, our trainer. teaching us that we may know the Father. Teaching us that we may know the Son in as much and as fully as we're able to.

[16:39] Of course, as the Spirit teaches us more and more, we're able to comprehend more and more about God. through the world, through the agency of the Spirit and not through any particular brilliance on our own part.

It's emphasized very much in Orthodox Christianity, Orthodox, with a big old referring to a Greek, Orthodox, etc., who very much see the work, for example, of a theologian or the work of a biblical scholar as basically the work of someone who is an agent, an instrument of the Holy Spirit.

They would see the theologian, the biblical scholar, being the mouthpiece, if you like, of the work of the Spirit in any age, teaching that age what that age needs to hear about God.

So the Spirit is the Spirit of Truth. The Spirit of Truth by making the reality of God known, making the promises of God known, making the fulfillment of God's promises clear to us so that we can see them and respond to them.

All of that's the work of the Spirit of Truth, the Spirit who is our teaching. So just using this passage as one example, I do hope that maybe this week you sit down and read through chapters 14, 15, 16 of John's Gospel.

[18:31] Because there in a fullness that can't be found and just looking at one part of that three chapters alone, you'll find what Jesus promised us, promised us about the Spirit, promised us that the Spirit would do.

You might say that today, this is the day of Pentecost, we're celebrating the day when the teaching of Jesus about the Spirit of God began to be fulfilled.

Today, we're the living continuation of that fulfillment. We, too, are the people of the Spirit. Now, there's something for you to see.

that's invite God and the Holy Spirit into our world. Thank you.

Thank you.

[20:54] Thank you.

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[ 23 : 24 ] Thank you.

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[ 25 : 54 ] Thank you.

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