

The Holy Spirit

The word “spirit” is used in the Bible to describe God’s invisible power which radiates from Him throughout the universe to sustain all His wonderful Creation. The basic meaning of the word “spirit” is “breath” or “wind”. We know both of these things to be very real, but we cannot see them. However, we can see their effects in the sustaining of life in all living creatures with the breath of life and in the rustling of leaves on a tree with the wind.

We learn from the Bible that God is Spirit. He is a glorious Spirit-Being and His Spirit Power radiates from Him just as light radiates from the sun, or heat from a fire. It fills the heavens and the earth, and by His Spirit, He is able to be everywhere at all times by this spirit. The prophet Jeremiah records these words... *“Can any hide himself in secret places that I shall not see him, saith the LORD. Do not I fill heaven and earth? saith the LORD”* Jer.23:24.

Among many Old Testament miracles, the wonderful work of God’s Creation is included. Genesis 1:2, 3... *“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. And God said, Let there be light: and there was light.”* This was recognised by Job when praising God, he said... *“By his spirit he hath garnished [adorned] the heavens”* Job 26:13. Here Job is talking about the Creation of the heavenly bodies, the sun, moon and stars.

The Holy Spirit is the power of God set apart for special purposes. Holy just means set apart and so this power is used by God to perform miraculous events. An example from the Old Testament is that of Samson... *“And the Spirit of the LORD came mightily upon him, and he rent him [a lion] as he would have rent a kid [goat]”* Judges 14:5, 6. [The phrase “Holy Ghost” in the King James translation of the Bible should always be read as “Holy Spirit”. It is so rendered in this pamphlet.]

In the New Testament, one of the first uses of the Holy Spirit is the miraculous way in which Jesus was conceived by his mother, Mary, who was a virgin... *“And the angel answered and said unto her, The Holy Spirit shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee; therefore also that holy thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God”* Luke 1:35.

Jesus was given the power of the Holy Spirit by God his Father... *“And the Holy Spirit descended in a bodily shape like a dove upon him”* Luke 3:22. Jesus used this power of the Holy Spirit to perform the many miracles recorded in the Gospel records which demonstrated that his teachings were approved by God... *“Jesus of Nazareth, a man approved of God among you by miracles and wonders and signs, which God did by him in the midst of you”* Acts 2:22.

In the first century, Christ’s apostles and others were also given the gift of the Holy Spirit to show the power of God through miracles and signs for the preaching of the Gospel. This purpose included the writing of the New Testament scriptures which has become vitally important to all succeeding generations, including our own. Christ’s followers now have the Bible, the Word of God, given by the Holy Spirit to guide and teach them. *“From a child thou hast known the holy scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation For the prophecy came not in old times by the will of man: but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Spirit”* 2 Timothy 3:15-16.

People today do not have the gift of the Holy Spirit as the need for it has been fulfilled. Once the apostles, who possessed the power to pass on the Holy Spirit died during the first century, the Holy Spirit gradually ceased to be possessed by man. One major function as used by the apostles was the writing of the New Testament. Once this was complete there was no need to pass it on to other people, as the teachings of Jesus and the Apostles was available to all Christians