

S T U D Y G U I D E



WHO is the  
HOLY SPIRIT?

SINCLAIR B. FERGUSON



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# Who is the Holy Spirit?

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LIGONIER MINISTRIES

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# Order from Chaos

## MESSAGE INTRODUCTION

Many Christians have either heard, or even muttered, the phrase, “The Holy Spirit is the forgotten person of the Trinity.” This assertion misses the real problem in the church today, a problem not extant in generations past. Christians know about the Holy Spirit, but, unlike the Father or the Son, they don’t really know who the Holy Spirit is. In this lecture series, Dr. Sinclair Ferguson purposes to remove this ignorance by exploring the questions of the identity of the Spirit, the nature of His character, how we, as Christians, may come to know and have fellowship with Him, and more.

## SCRIPTURE READINGS

Genesis 1:1–2, 26; 2:7; Exodus 31:1–11; Luke 1:8–17, 26–38; John 16:4–15; 1 Corinthians 6:19–20; 2 Corinthians 13:14; Revelation 22:17

## LEARNING OBJECTIVES

1. To introduce the aims of the lecture series:
  - a. What person is the Spirit?
  - b. What kind of character does He have?
  - c. How can we come to know Him and have fellowship with Him?
  - d. How is it to our advantage that the Lord Jesus has gone away and that the Holy Spirit has come to the church?
2. To explain how the Spirit is the expression of the inner drive and desire of God
3. To illuminate the Spirit’s role in the shaping and filling of creation
4. To demonstrate how the Spirit works in bringing man into fellowship with God

## QUOTATION

*Nevertheless, I tell you the truth: it is to your advantage that I go away, for if I do not go away, the Helper will not come to you. But if I go, I will send him to you.*

—John 16:7

## LECTURE OUTLINE

### I. Who is the Holy Spirit?

#### A. The etymology of the word “spirit”

- i. The Hebrew word “ruah” and the Greek word “pneuma,” which mean “spirit,” are onomatopoeic.
- ii. Both these words describe the wind, or even a gale.
- iii. These words point to expressions of great effectiveness. In other words, they point to the driving energy or the characteristics of an individual as that individual expresses himself or herself to others in personal contact and personal communication.

#### B. The revelation of God in the Holy Spirit

- i. The Holy Spirit expresses the inner drive and desire of God in creation and in redemption and communicates God to us.
- ii. God reveals Himself in the Holy Spirit.
  1. He reveals Himself in an accommodating manner.
  2. He does so in order that His creation might have communion with Him.

### II. The Presence of the Holy Spirit in Scripture

#### A. All of Scripture reveals the Holy Spirit and His work in redemptive history.

#### B. The very beginning of Scripture points to the Spirit’s activity.

- i. Genesis 1:2 describes the Holy Spirit as hovering over the original created mass.
  1. The original created mass is formless and empty.
  2. The Spirit hovers over the water in order that He might bring form and fullness to the formlessness and emptiness.
    - a. The Spirit performs this same activity in salvation.
    - b. The Spirit brings form and shape to formless lives dead in sin.
- ii. The Spirit brings shape and fullness to creation in order to make a temple, a meeting place, for God to meet with and have fellowship with His creation, particularly man.
  1. Psalm 19:1: the Spirit brings order and fullness in order that creation might receive the knowledge of God and worship Him.
  2. Genesis 1:27 and 2:7: These verses contain expressions of what God means to do through the power of the Spirit.
    - a. God desires man to lead the worship of the Lord in His creation

- b. The work of the Spirit, as recounted in numerous passages (e.g. Exodus 31:1–11; Luke 1:8–17, 26–38; John 16:4–15; 1 Corinthians 6:19–20; 2 Corinthians 13:14; Revelation 22:17), serves to lead God’s people to a place where they may worship and glorify Him.

## STUDY QUESTIONS

1. The Hebrew word “ruah” and the Greek word “pneuma,” apart from meaning spirit, also mean \_\_\_\_\_ .
  - a. wind
  - b. fire
  - c. water
  - d. earth
2. God personally expresses Himself, His character, and His power to us through His Spirit.
  - a. True
  - b. False
3. God created everything simultaneously and the days of creation are pictures to help us understand the different elements of creation.
  - a. True
  - b. False
4. The Holy Spirit, by forming and filling the shapeless, empty mass, is creating a temple, a meeting place, for God to have fellowship with His creation.
  - a. True
  - b. False
5. The Spirit has brought order and fullness into the creation so that we might \_\_\_\_\_ .
  - a. adore Him
  - b. worship Him
  - c. know Him
  - d. all of the above

## BIBLE STUDY AND DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. What does Dr. Ferguson mean when He describes the Spirit as God’s inner drive and desire? What does this reveal about God’s self-revelation?
2. Why must God accommodate His revelation to human beings? How does this fact demonstrate the mercy and grace of God?

3. Do you struggle to maintain a proper understanding of God in the fullness of His Trinitarian character, focusing instead on one Person of the Godhead at a time? Why do you think this occurs? How will you remedy this difficulty?
4. What role does the Spirit of God, described as hovering over the waters in Genesis 1:2, play in the creation account of Genesis? How does He interact with the formlessness and emptiness? How does this parallel salvation?
5. How does the Holy Spirit's work in the forming and filling of creation establish a meeting place between God and His creation, especially man? What places in Scripture point to this reality?



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