

THE BIBLE

WHAT IS THE BIBLE?

The Bible is the holy scriptures of God, a message from Him for the human race. Because of sin, God cannot be with us in person. If we were in His presence and looked at His face, we would die. He gave the Bible to people so that they could get to know Him without seeing Him.

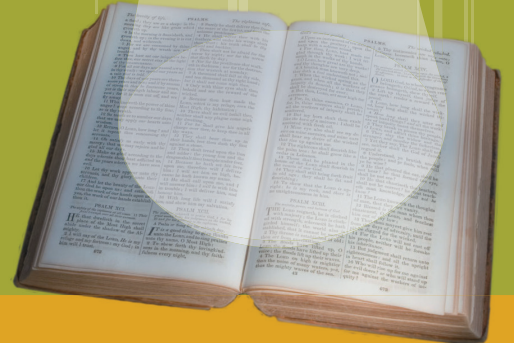
Names:

- The Holy Bible
- The Word of God
- The Holy Scriptures
- The Book of Books
- The Oracles of God

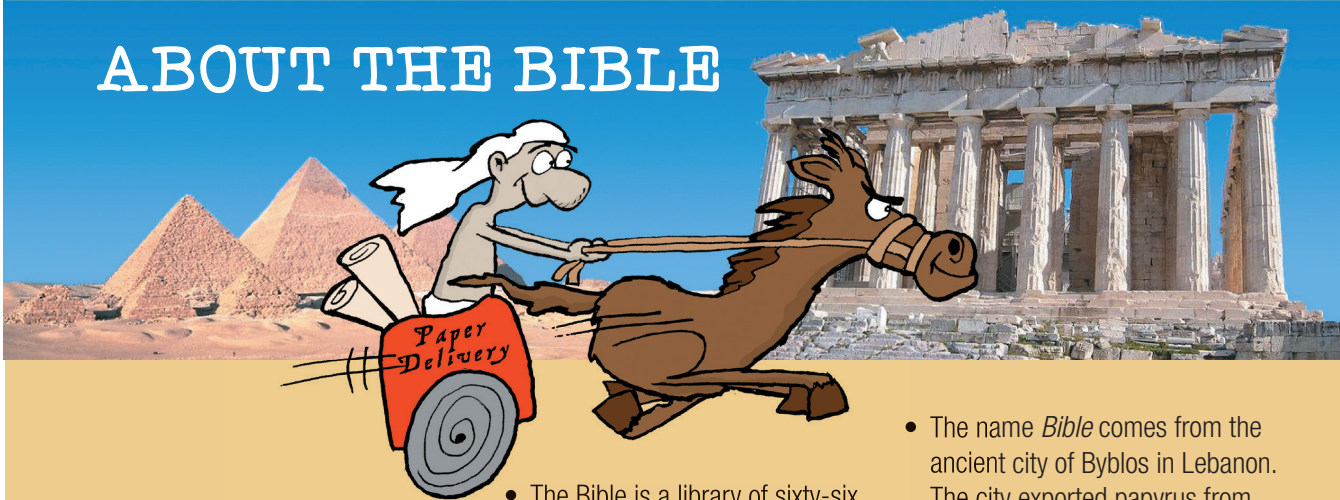
The Bible is:

- God's holy book
- A written picture of God
- The absolute truth about God
- The story of the rescue of human beings
- The only book with authority above all other books
- God's instructions to be obeyed by all people

Old Testament
+ New Testament
= The Bible



ABOUT THE BIBLE



• *Testament* means an agreement or contract between two people or groups. The Old and New Testaments are an agreement between God and people that He can and will save them from eternal death if they will accept Him as their God.

• The Bible is a library of sixty-six books. The Bible books were written over a period of about 1,500 years, from roughly 1450 BC to AD 90. The first author was Moses, and the last author was Jesus' disciple John. About forty different authors wrote the books of the Bible.

• The name *Bible* comes from the ancient city of Byblos in Lebanon. The city exported papyrus from Egypt to Greece. In Greek, the word Byblos became the name for paper in business and trade. Later the word came to mean "book." The plural word *Biblia* means books and ended up as the name for the collection of books we call the Bible.



The Bible is NOT

- A science textbook
- A guide to politics
- A joke book
- An ordinary book
- A book you can ignore

The Bible is the best-selling book of all time. Billions of copies have been sold or given away free.

THE BIBLE IS GOD'S TRUTH

King David said, "All your words are true; all your righteous laws are eternal" (Psalm 119:160).

The stories in the Bible really happened. Jesus accepted them as true. He said that Adam and Eve were the first people (Matthew 19:2-4); He told the Pharisees to remember Jonah in the big fish (Matthew 12:38-41); and He spoke about Noah and the Flood as a historical fact (Matthew 24:37-39).

Jesus Himself was written about by many people who saw Him in person. His life, death, and resurrection are undeniable historical facts.



HOW IT WAS WRITTEN

God did not write the Bible Himself. He did not dictate the exact words that His prophets and followers should say. Instead, He guided the thoughts and ideas of the men who wrote the books.

VISIONS AND DREAMS. Some Bible writers saw a vision or had a dream. For example, "The words of Amos, one of the shepherds of Tekoa—the vision he saw concerning Israel" (Amos 1:1). Seeing a vision is like having a dream when you're awake. Daniel heard God speak in a dream while he was asleep, after he asked to know the meaning of Nebuchadnezzar's dream.

INSPIRED THOUGHTS. The Holy Spirit put thoughts into the minds of some writers. Samuel heard the Spirit tell him something "in his ear" (1 Samuel 9:15). King David said, "The Spirit of the LORD spoke through me" (2 Samuel 23:2). Nehemiah said, "By your Spirit you warned them through your prophets" (Nehemiah 9:30). The prophets used their own words to write down the message from the Holy Spirit. The disciple John wrote the prophecies of Revelation when he was "in the Spirit" (Revelation 1:10).

THE BIBLE EXPLAINS

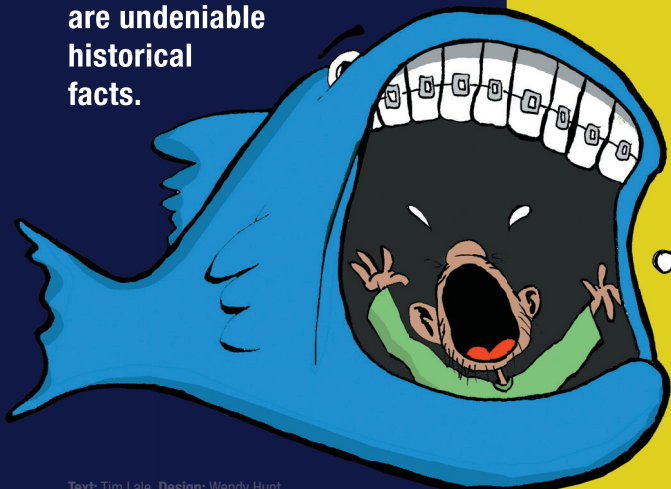
THE PROBLEM: sin

THE ENEMY: Satan

OUR RESCUER: Jesus

OUR MESSED-UP HOME: planet earth

OUR FUTURE, PERFECT HOME: the new earth



The Bible is the whole truth and nothing but the truth.



WHAT THE BIBLE IS FOR

"All Scripture is inspired by God and is profitable for teaching, for rebuking, for correcting, for training in righteousness, so that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work" (2 Timothy 3:15-16).

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Illustrations: Randy Fishell
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ONE GOD: Three Persons

IS GOD REALLY THERE?



How do you know God is there? Here is some evidence:

- Something or Someone made the world. "In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth" (Genesis 1:1).
- Even in a sin-filled, evil world, we see awesome things designed by God. "The heavens declare the glory of God; the skies proclaim the work of his hands" (Psalm 19:1).
- The world is built with design, pattern, and order. An Intelligent Mind created it. "The living God . . . made the heavens and the earth and the sea and everything in them" (Acts 14:15).
- We can think about what is true, good, beautiful, and loving, which comes from Someone who is good, true, beautiful, and loving. "Love comes from God. . . . God is love" (1 John 5:7, 16).
- People have a built-in sense of right and wrong—a conscience. "[Non-Christians] who do not have the law, do by nature things required by the law" (Romans 2:14).
- "The fool says in his heart, 'There is no God' " (Psalm 14:1).



THE GODHEAD'S CHARACTERISTICS

God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit are like this:

- **Immortal** – never born, have always existed, will never die. "From everlasting to everlasting you are God" (Psalm 90:2).



- **Infinite** – have no limits. "I am the Alpha and the Omega," says the Lord God, 'who is, and who was, and who is to come, the Almighty' " (Revelation 1:8).
- **All powerful** – can do anything. "With God all things are possible" (Matthew 19:26).
- **All knowing** – know everything happening in the universe. "The eyes of the LORD are everywhere, keeping watch on the wicked and the good" (Proverbs 15:3).
- **In charge of everything** – rule the universe. "To the LORD your God belong the heavens, even the highest heavens, the earth and everything in it" (Deuteronomy 10:14).
- **Always present** – are everywhere all the time. "Do not I fill heaven and earth?" declares the LORD" (Jeremiah 23:24).
- **Never change** – all three are perfect. "I the LORD do not change" (Malachi 3:6).
- **Source of life** – can put life into anything they choose. "The LORD God formed a man from the dust of the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life" (Genesis 2:7).

WE CAN KNOW GOD

We can't understand everything about God because we're not smart enough. But we can know who the Three Persons are.

God said, "Let us make man in our image" (Gen. 1:26).

Who is "us"? The three Persons of God.

God is the Father, Jesus the Son, and the Holy Spirit



You can find out who God is:

- **Learn from the Bible** "Beginning with Moses and all the Prophets, Jesus explained to them what was said in all the Scriptures concerning himself" (Luke 24:27).
- **Look at nature** "Since the creation of the world God's invisible qualities—his eternal power and divine nature—have been clearly seen, being understood from what has been made" (Romans 1:20).
- **Listen to the Holy Spirit** "The Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you all things" (John 14:26).

WHAT ARE THEY LIKE?

The Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit are:

Holy	Righteous	Just	Merciful	Kind	Gracious	Truthful	Pure	Loving
Psalm 99:9	Ezra 9:15	Revelation 22:12	Isaiah 55:7	Jeremiah 31:3	Titus 2:11	1 John 5:20	Habakkuk 1:13	1 John 4:8

HOW DO WE KNOW FOR SURE?

When Jesus was baptized in the Jordan River, all three members of the Godhead were there:

"As soon as Jesus was baptized, he went up out of the water. At that moment heaven was opened, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and alighting on him. And a voice from heaven said, 'This is my Son, whom I love; with him I am well pleased' " (Matthew 3:16–17).

Jesus gave instructions to the disciples about baptizing new believers:

"Go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit" (Matthew 28:19).

The Bible preacher named Paul often finished his letters this way:

"May the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all" (1 Corinthians 13:14).



WHAT ARE THEY DOING?

God the Father gave us Jesus to save us from sin and eternal death:

"God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through him" (John 3:17).

Jesus promised the help of the Father and the Holy Spirit for His disciples:

"I will ask the Father, and he will give you another advocate to help you and be with you forever—the Spirit of truth" (John 14:16–17).

Jude wrote down what all three Beings in the Godhead will do for us:

"Dear friends, by building yourselves up in your most holy faith and praying in the Holy Spirit, keep yourselves in God's love as you wait for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ to bring you to eternal life" (Jude 1:20, 21).

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GOD the Father

God the Father is one of the three Beings in the Godhead (see FUN-da-MENTAL #2).

FATHER OF EVERYONE

God the Father is in charge of the universe. He is the only true God.

- “For us there is but one God, the Father, from whom all things came and for whom we live” (1 Corinthians 8:6).
- “There is . . . one God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all” (Ephesians 4:4, 6).
- “[Jesus said,] My Father . . . is greater than all” (John 10:29).

WHAT GOD THE FATHER IS LIKE

Do you look like your dad? We all look like our heavenly Dad. At Creation, God said, “Let us make mankind in our image, in our likeness” (Genesis 1:26). When we look at each other, we see a little bit of what God the Father is like.

We don’t have a photo or painting of God the Father. No sinful human being has ever seen His face. If we were to look at Him as we are now, with our sinful nature, we would die. “You have never heard his voice nor seen his form” (John 5:37).

Is anyone perfect? The Son of God said, “Your heavenly Father is perfect” (Matthew 5:48).

Our Father in heaven is a loving Parent, “the Father of compassion and the God of all comfort” (2 Corinthians 1:3). He cares about you even more than your parents do! “I will be a Father to you, and you will be my sons and daughters, says the Lord Almighty” (2 Corinthians 6:18).

Even the Holy Spirit calls Him Dad. “God sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, the Spirit who calls out, ‘Abba, Father’” (Galatians 4:6).



GOD THE FATHER HAS A SON

“God [is] the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ” (Colossians 1:3).

The Father introduced His Son this way: “This is my Son, whom I love; with him I am well pleased” (Matthew 3:17).

He loves His Son with perfect love. “The Father loves the Son and shows him all he does” (John 5:20).

The Father gave up His Son to fix the sin problem in this world. “God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life” (John 3:16).

How much does the Father love you? “My Father’s will is that everyone who looks to the Son and believes in him shall have eternal life” (John 6:40).

What we know of God the Father comes from us knowing the Son, who said, “If you really know me, you will know my Father as well” (John 14:7).

God the Father was the One who brought the Son back to life after He died on the cross. “Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father” (Romans 6:4).

The Father sent the Holy Spirit to be with all of us after the Son left this world and returned to heaven. “The Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you all things” (John 14:26).

SHOULD WE FEAR GOD?

The Bible says, “Fear the LORD your God” (Deuteronomy 6:13) many, many times. What does that mean? The fear of the LORD God is respect for Him and recognition that He is in charge of us and that He is perfect and right. “Fear the LORD” does not mean we should have panicky terror and sweaty palms.

No one should be afraid of God unless they are rebelling against Him. “Your Father is merciful” (Luke 6:36).



The Father loves to reward the people who believe in Him and His Son. “Come, you who are blessed by my Father; take your inheritance, the kingdom prepared for you since the creation of the world” (Matthew 25:4). “Your Father has been pleased to give you the kingdom” (Luke 12:32).

WE PRAY TO THE FATHER

He hears our prayers and answers them. His Son told us to “pray to your Father, who is unseen” (Matthew 6:6). We pray, “Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name” (Matthew 6:9).

He forgives the sin of people who repent and confess. “Your Father in heaven forgive[s] you your sins” (Mark 11:25).

OUR ETERNAL REWARDS COME FROM THE FATHER

We do not have to die forever. “The Father raises the dead and gives them life” (John 5:21).

GOD THE FATHER deserves to be worshiped

As the one true God, the Father can and must be worshiped by His created beings. “The true worshipers will worship the Father in the Spirit and in truth, for they are the kind of worshipers the Father seeks” (John 4:23).

WHAT GOD THE FATHER DOES

God the Father creates all things and puts life into them. “The Father has life in himself” (John 5:26). He shared the work of this world’s creation with Jesus, the Son of God.

Everything and everyone alive came from God the Father.

- “Do we not all have one Father? Did not one God create us?” (Malachi 2:10).
- “You, LORD, are our Father. We are the clay, you are the potter; we are all the work of your hand” (Isaiah 64:48).

God the Father is working for our good ALL the time. The Son of God said, “My Father is always at his work to this very day” (John 5:17).

What is the Father’s work, anyway? He keeps the universe going. “Look at the birds of the air . . . your heavenly Father feeds them” (Matthew 6:26). God provides for every person’s needs. “Your Father knows what you need before you ask him” (Matthew 6:8).

God the Father sees everything that is happening. Nothing escapes His attention. “Your Father, who sees what is done in secret, will reward you” (Matthew 6:6). “Abba, Father,” [the Son] said, “everything is possible for you” (Mark 14:36).



Is He Your Father?

Since you know Jesus, then yes! Jesus said, “No one knows the Son except the Father, and no one knows the Father except the Son and those to whom the Son chooses to reveal him” (Matthew 11:27).

We keep on learning about our Father in heaven. “The glorious Father [gives] you the Spirit of wisdom and revelation, so that you may know him better” (Ephesians 1:17).

Where Is The Father?

Jesus called the temple in Jerusalem “my Father’s house,” but the Father lives in heaven: “You have one Father, and he is in heaven” (Matthew 23:9). Our “Father’s house has many rooms” (John 14:2).



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GOD the Son



ISN'T THAT JESUS?

God the Son is one of the three Beings in the Godhead (see Fun-da-Mental #2). We know Him as *Jesus Christ, the Savior of the world*.

Jesus is better known to us than God the Father and God the Holy Spirit. Why? Because Jesus came to earth and became a human being. Lots of people saw Him in person and knew Him as a Friend.

Jesus is God. He's not 50 percent God or 99.99 percent God. He is 100 percent God (John 1:1).

Jesus said about Himself: "Before Abraham was born, I AM" (John 8:58, NASB). Calling Himself "I AM" means that He never had a beginning. Sounds impossible, but it's true!

Jesus is close to His Father. He said to the Father, "You loved Me before the foundation of the world" (John 17:24).

In what ways is Jesus God?

No one created God the Son. "His goings forth are from long ago, from the days of eternity" (Micah 5:2).

The Son of God knows everything! "In [Him] are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge" (Colossians 2:3).

He never changes from what He was before. "Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever" (Hebrews 13:8).

Jesus has a special name—Immanuel. It means "God with us" (Isaiah 7:14).

Life comes from Jesus the Son. He said, "I am the resurrection and the life" (John 11:25).

Jesus is equal with God the Father. "The Son is the radiance of God's glory and the exact representation of his being" (Hebrews 1:3).

THE SON'S PAST JOBS

Creating the world

Jesus helped with Creation. "For by Him all things were created, both in the heavens and on earth, visible and invisible" (Colossians 1:16).

Running the world

Without Jesus, the world couldn't keep going. "He is before all things, and in Him all things hold together" (Colossians 1:17).

Encouraging people

God the Son sometimes took the form of an angel and visited people. For example, He came to Joshua as the commander of God's army (Joshua 5:13–15). He visited Abraham with two angels (Genesis 18:1–15). This has probably happened many times in our earth's history.



THE MOST IMPORTANT JOB IN THE WORLD

God the Son was born on this planet around 4 BC. He was born to be the sacrifice that is required to get rid of sin. That's why He's called the Lamb of God. He was offered like a lamb on the altar.

He came here to:

- be a human being like us
- show us what God the Father is like
- die for our sin so it doesn't kill us
- be resurrected by His Father and return to heaven.



JUST LIKE YOU AND ME

Jesus felt everything you feel. He was hungry, thirsty, happy, tired, and angry. He felt joy and pain. He laughed and cried (John 11:35).



You get tempted to sin every day. Jesus did too! He was "tempted in every way, just as we are—yet he did not sin" (Hebrews 4:15).

Why didn't Jesus use His divine powers while He lived on earth? It was a big temptation, but He chose not to. Instead, He lived the way we do, in surrender to God the Father.

TWO PEOPLE IN ONE

When Jesus was on earth, He was a man but also God. You can be a girl and be a volleyball player. You can be a boy and be a movie maker. Jesus had the same deal. He was God and human at the same time.

After He was born as a baby, nothing was missing from Jesus as God except that His human body took away His ability to be everywhere at once.



THE WORK OF JESUS

Prophet

Not only did Jesus give life-changing messages such as the Sermon on the Mount (Matthew 5–7) but He also predicted the future (Matthew 24).

Priest

As the One who offered Himself as the sacrifice for sin, Jesus was also a high priest, who did the work of presenting the sacrifice to get rid of sin. Now He lives in heaven and, every day, presents Himself as the offering to get rid of our sins.

King

When Jesus floated up in the air and went back to live in heaven, God the Father made Him the king of a new kingdom that will stay around forever. "Of the Son He says, 'YOUR THRONE, O GOD, IS FOREVER AND EVER' " (Hebrews 1:8, NASB).

Actually, Jesus has two kingdoms:

Kingdom of Grace	Kingdom of Glory
We live in the Kingdom of Grace now.	A kingdom that begins at Jesus' second coming.
It was created after Adam and Eve sinned.	The Judgment has already happened by then.
It's not a place. It is who we are.	Sinners are destroyed, and saints go into the Kingdom of Glory.
All of us are still alive and kicking while we're sinners, waiting for Jesus to come back again.	God the Father has already made Jesus the king of this perfect, sinless, awesome kingdom.
The Kingdom of Grace was fully put in place when Jesus died on the cross.	The Kingdom of Glory lasts forever.



God the Son is our Rescuer. His death and resurrection make it possible for us to be sons and daughters of God, happy forever.

GOD the Holy Spirit

THE ONE YOU CAN'T SEE

The Holy Spirit is a mystery. What do we know about Him?

The apostle Paul called Him "the Holy Spirit of God" (Ephesians 4:30). Jesus told us to baptize people in the name of God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit. So the Holy Spirit is God.

Isn't the Holy Spirit invisible to us? Yes! Jesus said He is like the wind. You know the wind is there and see the trees shaking. You can't see it, but it's real. The Holy Spirit has no body and doesn't need one.

The Holy Spirit is a person. Jesus' disciples knew this. The apostle Peter told Ananias, when he tried to cheat on his offerings, that he had not lied to a human being but "to the Holy Spirit" (Acts 5:3). And then Ananias fell over dead.

The Holy Spirit has special jobs to do.

- He tries to get people to listen and obey (Genesis 6:3).
- He teaches (Luke 12:12).
- He convinces people of what is true (John 16:8).
- He directs the church in what it should do (Acts 13:2).
- He helps (Romans 8:26) and inspires (2 Peter 1:21) people.

The Holy Spirit is everywhere and can go anywhere—yes, even through platinum and diamonds. No one can hide from Him (Psalm 137:7–10).



WHAT HAS HE BEEN DOING?

The Holy Spirit has been one of the three Beings in the Godhead forever

At Creation, the Spirit of God floated above the water and then started speaking. He made the land, the trees, and the animals to appear (Genesis 1:2). Hey, Jesus was at Creation too! All three members of the Godhead created the world.

After sin came into the world, one of the Holy Spirit's jobs was to deliver messages, using people as messengers. That's how we got the books of the Bible. The writers "spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit" (1 Peter 1:21).

The Holy Spirit helped certain men to do special things:

- Balaam spoke blessings on the Israelites (Numbers 24:2)
- Bezalel made art for the tabernacle (Exodus 31:3)
- Gideon called an army together (Judges 6:34)
- King Saul prophesied about God (1 Samuel 10:6)
- And many others.

Israel is blessed!

Why did I say that?



More recently, He caused Jesus to be born as a baby (Luke 1:35), visited Jesus at His baptism (Matthew 3:16), led Jesus through His ministry (Luke 4:1), and brought Jesus back to life after His crucifixion (Romans 8:11).

Jesus followed the directions of the Holy Spirit in His work on earth. Right at the beginning, "Jesus, full of the Holy Spirit, . . . was led by the Spirit into the wilderness" (Luke 4:1). He listened every moment for the Spirit's instructions.

NOW IT'S ALL DIFFERENT

The Holy Spirit was working in the world before Jesus' death, but until then, the "the Holy Spirit was not yet given [to everyone], because Jesus was not yet glorified [resurrected]" (John 7:39). After Jesus went back to heaven, He was able to send the Holy Spirit to live in all believers.



THE HOLY SPIRIT'S HOME

Believe it or not, when you accept Jesus as your Savior, you are the home of the Holy Spirit. "Do you not know that you are a temple of God and that the Spirit of God dwells in you?" (1 Corinthians 3:16).

THE PROMISE OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

When Jesus was about to take off from earth, He told His disciples, "I am sending forth the promise [the Holy Spirit] of My Father upon you." (Luke 24:49).

Fifty days after Jesus' death, the Holy Spirit came to the disciples with "a sound from heaven, like a rushing mighty wind, and it filled the whole house where they were sitting. They saw what seemed to be tongues of fire that separated and came to rest on each of them. All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit" (Acts 2:2-4). That's how the Christian church got started.

Ever since then, every person who accepted the death of Jesus to save them from sin and death has been cleaned up "through the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Spirit" (Titus 3:5).



WHAT HE DOES FOR YOU

- The first thing the Holy Spirit does is to convince you about Jesus. "No one can say that Jesus is Lord except by the Holy Spirit" (1 Corinthians 12:3).
- Then He helps you know how much trouble you're in, and how to fix it (John 16:8–11).
- After you're baptized in water, you are also baptized in the Holy Spirit (John 3:5). That makes a brand- new you, filled with the love and commandments of God.
- God's truth is the only truth, and "when the [Holy] Spirit of truth comes, he will guide you into all the truth" (John 16:13).
- The Holy Spirit can do many jobs all at once, including helper, counselor, comforter, intercessor, and advocate. "Intercessor" means the Holy Spirit defends you when you're in trouble.



THE UNPARDONABLE SIN

Matthew 12:32 has some harsh words for those who speak against the Holy Spirit. Most pastors believe this happens when a person decides they want nothing to do with God. If you're concerned that you may have committed this sin, then you haven't!



BIG THINGS A-COMING

This is epic. Near the end of this world's history, a time will come when the Holy Spirit's presence is stronger and more intense.

"In the last days, God says, I will pour out my Spirit on all people. Your sons and daughters will prophesy, your young men will see visions, your old men will dream dreams.

Even on my servants, both men and women, I will pour out my Spirit in those days, and they will prophesy" (Acts 2:17, 18).

How long will the Holy Spirit be with us on earth? Jesus promised, "I am with you always [through the Holy Spirit], even to the end of the age [the Second Coming]" (Matthew 28:20).

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