

# CHRISTADELPHIAN BIBLE POSTAL COURSE



Tutor's Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Student's Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Ref No.: \_\_\_\_\_

## LESSON 16 • God's Holy Spirit

WEEKLY READINGS  
READING FOR STUDY PAPER

Exodus 1-6, 1 Peter 4-5  
Psalm 51

Power that cannot be measured

"In the beginning God created the heaven and earth." Think of all the work that has to be done in order to build a house. Think of all the planning and preparing; the need for men skilled in different trades, all working together. What a lot of thought and energy it takes!

How much thought and energy, then, must it have taken to create the heaven and the earth? Where did the power come from for this great work? We are told in the Psalms, "By the word of the Lord were the heavens made; and all the host of them by the breath of His mouth;... for He spake, and it was done; He commanded, and it stood fast" (Psalm 33, verses 6 and 9).

God's Spirit

The power of God, working out His purposes, is called in the Bible, His "Spirit". So we read in Genesis, chapter 1, verse 2, "The Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters"; and in Job, chapter 26, verse 13, "By His Spirit He hath garnished the heavens."

God's power was also used to direct the minds of the men who wrote the Bible. They did not write down their own ideas; but were used by God to write His words. So we read in II Peter, chapter 1, verse 21, "The prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Spirit."

(When we speak of "prophecy", we usually think of foretelling the future. But is the Bible the word "prophecy" means speaking God's words, whether they are about the past, the present, or the future.

You may notice in the words of Peter that the Spirit of God is called His "Holy Spirit". The word "Holy" means "set apart" for a special purpose. (In the Bible we read "Holy Ghost", but because the Greek word translated "ghost" is translated "spirit" in other places, and because the word "ghost" can be so easily misunderstood, it would be better perhaps to refer to this great power of God as "The Holy Spirit".)

The Holy Spirit and the Lord Jesus Christ

It was the Holy Spirit that brought about the birth of the Lord Jesus. So Mary was told by the angel, "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, chapter 1, verse 35).

You will see here that the "Holy Spirit" and the "power of the Highest" are one and the same thing.

At His baptism in the River Jordan, Jesus was given the Holy Spirit without measure. We read in John, chapter 3, verse 34, "He whom God hath sent speaketh the words of God: for God giveth not the Spirit by measure unto Him."

All power was given to Jesus. To other men of Old and New Testament times, God has given a portion of His power - but no other man has ever been fit to possess such power as God gave to Jesus.

The disciples were promised the Holy Spirit

Jesus promised His twelve disciples that they also would be given the Holy Spirit, after He had gone away from them. In John, chapter 14, verses 25-26, He says "These things have I spoken unto you, being yet present with you. But the Comforter, which is the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you."

Here Jesus speaks of the Holy Spirit as if it were a person; and some people actually think that it is a person - a God. But we have already seen quite clearly from the Bible that the Holy Spirit is the power of God; so we know this idea cannot be right. Why, then, in some places does Jesus speak of the Holy Spirit as if it were a person?

Just turn to Psalm 65, and read verse 13, which says,

"The pastures are clothed with flocks; the valleys also are covered over with corn; they shout for joy, they also sing."

Now when we read this, it gives us a beautiful picture of the ripe corn standing high in the valley; but we don't for one moment imagine that the valley is shouting and singing - that is just the Psalmist's way of describing the picture.

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So when Jesus speaks of the Holy Spirit as if it were a person doing this or that, He is just showing us what a very real thing this Spirit or power of God is.

The Spirit comes to the disciples

We have seen that Jesus promised power to His disciples, before He went into heaven. He told them to stay in Jerusalem, and "...wait for the promise of the Father." (Acts, chapter 1, verse 4)

and promised them that they should "...be baptised with the Holy Spirit not many days hence" (verse 5)

In Acts, chapter 2, we read how, as the disciples were waiting, the Holy Spirit came to them. Read verses 1-3. The Spirit came with a sound "...as of a rushing mighty wind", shaking the house where they were gathered together. Tongues of fire were seen over each one of them; and this was a sign that the Holy Spirit had been given to them. From then on, they were able to work many miracles, as Jesus had promised them.

The Spirit comes to us

We have seen that those who wrote the Bible did so by the power of the Holy Spirit. Furthermore, Jesus once said, "The words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life" (John, chapter 6, verse 63).

When we read the Word of God, we are in a sense receiving the Spirit of God. This can cause a wonderful change in our lives, helping us to grow more pleasing to God.

Let us, then, read the Word of God diligently and prayerfully, remembering the words of Peter in his first epistle, "As newborn babes, desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby" (I Peter, chapter 2, verse 2).

What have we learnt about the Holy Spirit?

1. The Holy Spirit is the power of God.
2. The Bible was written by the power of the Holy Spirit.
3. Jesus was born by the power of the Holy Spirit.
4. All God's prophets had a measure of His Spirit, but to Jesus it was given "without measure".
5. After Jesus had gone into heaven, the Holy Spirit was given to His disciples.