

*Greetings and welcome to the 6<sup>th</sup> study in the 'Discovering God' series.*

# WALKING WITH THE HOLY SPIRIT

PART TWO: NEW TESTAMENT

By

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# THE HOLY SPIRIT in the NEW TESTAMENT

In the first series of “WALKING WITH THE HOLY SPIRIT” (Old Testament) we saw God’s Holy Spirit affect the lives of patriarchs like Noah and Joseph, prophets like Elijah and Elisha, and ordinary people like Eldad and Medad.

In this second series (New Testament) we will see the Holy Spirit enter the lives of such as Elizabeth and her son John the Baptist, empower Jesus Christ, and learn how the Holy Spirit can effectively change your life.

**THE GOSPELS** give us the story of Jesus from birth to death, resurrection and ascension. We will not go through Matthew, Mark, Luke and John separately. We will combine the four accounts and follow the work of the Holy Spirit chronologically. We will read about the Holy Spirit filling and empowering individuals. We will hear Jesus teach on the person of the Holy Spirit – how to be born again; how to walk with the Spirit; how to live with the Spirit; and how to submit to the Spirit.

**THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES** has been called “The Acts of the Holy Spirit”. It is the story of “the life of Jesus in believers” after Jesus leaves the earth. His replacement is the Holy Spirit. The writer, Luke, travelled with Paul on his journeys of evangelism and kept a diary. The diary was published about 63 A.D. So the story of the Holy Spirit and the expanding new faith covers the thirty years after Jesus ascended.

**THE LETTERS** make up the third section of the New Testament. They are letters of encouragement and guidance to the new churches and to individuals scattered over the Mediterranean area. Most are by Paul, but Peter, James, John and Jude write too. In them is sound teaching about God’s Holy Spirit. They are divided into two sections:

1. From Romans to Philemon following and written primarily to Gentile Christians.
2. From Hebrews to 3 John primarily to Jewish (Messianic) Christians.

**THE BOOK OF THE REVELATION** points to the future. Despite evil in the world, God will finally triumph. The Holy Spirit is involved in the future.

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## THE HOLY SPIRIT PREPARES FOR JESUS

**Reading: Acts 1-5 LUKE INTRODUCES HIS SECOND PUBLICATION**

*“In my former book, Theophilus (Lover of God), I wrote about all that Jesus began to do and to teach until the day he was taken up to heaven, after giving instructions THROUGH THE HOLY SPIRIT to the apostles he had chosen.” Acts 1:1-2*

“Luke’s two-volume work, his gospel and the Acts of the Apostles, is the longest attributed to any one author in the New Testament, including Paul. And surely, **if we had to single out any one evangelist as the ‘Theologian of the Holy Spirit’, it would be Luke.** While the word ‘spirit’ occurs four times in Mark and five times in Matthew, the expression ‘Holy Spirit’ occurs thirteen times in Luke’s gospel, and forty-one times in Acts.” - Professor George Montague

### DISCUSSION POINT

1. Luke is the only gospel writer to go on to tell the story of the new “Christian faith”. This gives a clue to the question: Why is Luke called the ‘Theologian of the Holy Spirit’? And why the emphasis upon the Holy Spirit in Acts?

**Reading: Luke 1:5-25 JOHN THE BAPTIST**

*“He (John the Baptist) is never to take wine or other fermented drink, and he will be filled with the Holy Spirit even from birth.” Luke 1:15 NIV*

Verse 15 says that John the Baptist would never take wine or other fermented drink. The contrast and yet association between alcoholic drink and the Holy Spirit is intriguing. The verse says that he will “never” take fermented drink – but will be “filled” with the Holy Spirit from birth. This was the requirement for the Nazarite in the exercise of a special work for God. Nevertheless, we cannot escape the inference that suggests that for the fullest experience of the Holy Spirit and for the higher callings by God the two influences are mutually exclusive. Paul to the Ephesians (5:18) says: Do not get drunk on wine...instead, be filled with the Spirit.” While alcohol is not prohibited in Scripture being “drunk” is.

The point of Paul’s instruction is that both alcohol and the Holy Spirit are “influences”. The more alcohol, the more we come under its influence. The more we experience and are filled with God’s Spirit, the more our living mind and body absorbs the person and character of God. Thus the two influences are both similar and opposites. In the case of John the Baptist, his was a high calling of God. He had to be totally dedicated to the holy task of preparing for God’s messiah. He was filled with the Holy Spirit from birth and he was to take no alcoholic drink in his lifetime. (See the Nazarite vow - Numbers 6:1-4)

Verse 17 tells us that John the Baptist was to function in the “Spirit” and power of Elijah. Elijah was a preacher of repentance. Because of this, John was a fulfilment of Malachi 4:5-6 (See Matthew 11:14 and 17:10-13). Luke shows this in Chapter 3 verses 4-6.

### DISCUSSION POINTS

2. Some Christians take alcohol and some do not. What is the place of alcohol in a Christian's life? And the attitude of those who do, and don't, towards each other?
3. Are there cases in present-day Christianity, as in Samson's (Judges 13:4-7) Samuel's (1 Sam.1:11) and John's (Luke 1:15) where an alcohol-free life is required?

**Reading: Luke 1:26-38 "THE HOLY SPIRIT WILL COME UPON YOU."**

*The angel answered, "The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you. So the Holy one to be born will be called the Son of God." Luke 1:35*

I never cease to be thrilled and awe-struck by the sheer beauty, sensitivity and majesty of this true story. The virgin birth of Jesus Christ – the unique GOD-MAN – is clearly taught in this passage. It is equally clear in Matthew 1:18-25 and also in John 1:14 where it says, "the Word became flesh". Joseph served only as a foster-father to give Jesus legal parentage and His royal ancestry in the House and Line of David. The conception of Jesus was a creative miracle in the virgin womb of Mary.

### DISCUSSION POINT

4. Mary's words at the end of our reading (Luke 1:26-38) were, "I am the Lord's servant". May it be to me as you have said." Discuss Mary's feelings in the light of the preceding verses.

**Reading: Luke 1:39-56 ELIZABETH FILLED WITH THE SPIRIT**

*When Elizabeth heard Mary's greeting, the baby leaped in her womb, and Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit. In a loud voice she exclaimed..... Luke 1:41*

The Greek word for 'filled' is pletho (pronounced 'playtho') and simply means 'filled'. All of a sudden, as Mary burst into Elizabeth's home and called out in the Aramaic language (an everyday language the Hebrew people spoke) "Hi there Elizabeth!", Elizabeth was overwhelmed by an enveloping and inrushing of God's Holy Spirit. The baby John the Baptist in the womb of Elizabeth was affected by the greeting his mother heard, and noticeably moved – leapt – in excitement.

It seems from the Bible passage (Luke 1:41) that the baby's movement led to Elizabeth being filled with the Spirit. It all happened so quickly though. Mary rushed in and called a greeting; Elizabeth heard it but at the same instant the baby John leapt; and almost at the same time of Mary's entry and call and of the baby's movement, Elizabeth received a powerful visitation of the Holy Spirit. What a mighty moment we are privileged to read about.

### DISCUSSION POINTS

5. Discuss how the baby John the Baptist was so moved by Mary's call.
6. How do we explain the action of the Holy Spirit's working in this wonderful yet seemingly simple meeting of two expectant women?
7. Was this an unusual and unexpected work of God's Spirit? Can we expect unusual and unexpected experiences today and in what circumstances?

#### **Reading: Luke 1:57-79**

*His father Zechariah was filled with the Holy Spirit and prophesied: "Praise be to the Lord..."* Luke 1:67-68a

After John the Baptist was born, his father Zechariah was filled with the Holy Spirit (Luke 1:67). Under the anointing of the Holy Spirit he prophesied and gave thanks for the salvation about to be provided. This salvation would fulfil the promises given to Abraham and make it possible for God's people to serve Him without fear. John the Baptist would be called a 'prophet of the Highest' and would fulfil Isaiah's prophecy of the voice in the wilderness preparing the way of the Lord. (Isaiah 40:3)

See Luke 1:80. John's parents, old at birth, probably died while he was young. He apparently grew up in the Desert of Judea, which lies between Jerusalem and the Dead Sea, "until he appeared publicly". When John was ready to preach, he became highly visible to folk. They heard of his preaching and flocked to see him. What began with curiosity ended, often, with conversion. We can learn from this. We need to be bold in our witness. John the Baptist was about 30 years old when he began his public ministry.

### DISCUSSION POINTS

8. Explain why the Holy Spirit came upon Zechariah.
9. What do we learn about the Holy Spirit in this passage?

#### **Reading: Matthew 1:18-25a**

*Mary was pledged to be married to Joseph, but before they came together, she was found to be with child through the Holy Spirit.* Matthew 1:18

*An angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream and said, "Joseph son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary home as your wife, because what is conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit."*  
Matthew 1:20

Our passage tells about the birth of Jesus. The NIV says that Joseph was "pledged" to Mary. This pledging, or Jewish betrothal period, was more binding than our engagement custom. It could be broken only by divorce (see verse 9). In Deuteronomy 22:23 it speaks about a virgin "pledged to be married" yet in the following verse 24 it speaks of her as being a "man's wife". Matthew uses the terms "husband" (v 19) and "wife" (v 24) of Joseph and Mary before they were married. After the shock of

discovering his virgin “wife” pregnant, Joseph began to make discreet arrangements to “divorce her quietly”. He would sign the papers, but not have her judged publicly – which would result in her being stoned to death. (Deuteronomy 22:23-24). The Lord uses a dream to reach Joseph. He is not to be afraid to take Mary as his wife for she has not committed sin. For “what is conceived in her is through the Holy Spirit”. Only **God** could cleanse us from sin. Only a **human** could die on the cross as a sacrifice for our sin. Jesus was conceived through **God, the Holy Spirit** and born of a **human**, a woman, to fulfil the requirements.

#### DISCUSSION POINTS

10. Discuss the attitude of Joseph towards the seeming unfaithfulness of Mary and the qualities God required for the legal father of Jesus.
11. Discuss why it was necessary for Jesus to be both divine and human.

## JESUS: FROM BIRTH TO PUBLIC MINISTRY

**Reading: Luke 2:15-39 JESUS PRESENTED IN THE TEMPLE**

*“Now there was a man in Jerusalem called Simeon, who was righteous and devout. He was waiting for the consolation of Israel, and the **Holy Spirit** was upon him.” Luke 2:25*

We have a real insight into the workings of the Holy Spirit when we read about Mary and Joseph taking the baby Jesus to the temple. It was no coincidence that at the time Mary and Joseph went to the temple, the Holy Spirit “moved” in Simeon causing him to attend the temple. The Scripture puts it, “Moved by the Spirit he went into the temple courts.” There are three mentions of the Holy Spirit in the three verses 25-27.

1. The first says, “the Holy Spirit was upon him.”
2. The second says, “It had been revealed to him by the Holy Spirit that he would not die before he had seen the Lord’s Christ.”
3. And third, he went into the temple courts “moved by the Spirit”.

In verse 25, the underlying original meaning of the word “upon” was that the Holy Spirit was “continually upon” this faithful, elderly child of God.

Verse 26 says that **it had been revealed to him by the Holy Spirit** that he would not die before he had seen the LORD’s Christ/Messiah. This was a wonderful promise to a humble follower of the Lord.

Verse 27 says he came into the temple “moved” by the Holy Spirit. This means “under the control of the Spirit”. This “moving” also involves “insight” as he came expecting to see or learn something important. He saw the Lord’s Christ. He recognised the child as the Messiah with these identifications as spoken in verses 29 through 32:

- 1: “my eyes have seen **Your salvation**”
2. “which **You have prepared** in the sight of all people”
3. “a **light for revelation** to the **gentiles**”
4. “and for **glory** for **Your people Israel**.”

Simeon gave an inspired prophetic utterance that identified Jesus as the Light prophesied for the nations and for the glory of God’s nation of Israel. He also foretells the heartbreak that would come to Mary.

It would be a shame to not mention the name of Anna. While the Holy Spirit is not mentioned in connection with Anna, she was a godly lady who worshipped night and day, and also fasted and prayed. Anna was deeply receptive to Simeon’s insight.

### DISCUSSION POINTS

12. The Holy Spirit co-ordinated the automatic requirement of Mary and Joseph to go to the temple with a “moving” in Simeon. Comments on this please!
13. Why do you think the Holy Spirit singled out Simeon?
14. Why do you think Luke notes that Anna had (a) a brief marriage of seven years, (b) been widowed, and (c) mentions 84 years? [NOTE: The original Greek New Testament is not clear whether she was widowed for 84 years (e.g. KJV, RSV) or whether she had lived 84 years (Amp, NLT). This problem does not affect the question asked in number 14.]

### Reading: Luke 3:10-18 JOHN THE BAPTIST PREACHES

*“I baptise you with (or “in”) water, but one more powerful than I will come, the thongs of whose sandals I am not worthy to untie. He will baptise you **with the Holy Spirit and with fire.**”* Luke 1:16 NIV (Matthew 3:11 and Mark 1:8 also)

John the Baptist tells his hearers to be ready for a dynamic visitation of the Holy Spirit of God. The Holy Spirit will overwhelm them in a mighty spiritual baptism. To indicate the nature of this baptism, John uses the picture of fire. Fire burns up the dross – thus is purifying. It is a very powerful entity. The Holy Spirit will bring power also. For some, it will be the fires of purging and purifying. For others, the coming of the Holy Spirit will bring disablement and destruction. The fulfilment came at Pentecost. Lives were changed and the church “took off”! But it divided society also. Acts 2:3 (also written by Luke) notes “tongues of fire” accompanying the baptism. The tongues of fire authenticated the words of John the Baptist with his mention of “fire”.

Some people object to believers claiming a personal “baptism of the Spirit”. Such say that Pentecost was a once-only event – never to be repeated. On this basis, they object to a “personal Pentecost” in a believer. But wait a minute! Jesus dying on the cross was a once-only event – never to be repeated (Hebrews 6:6). Yet every time a sinner receives the salvation offered by God in Jesus Christ, the work of the cross is activated in that individual’s life. The Day of Pentecost was an event God intended, and created, to launch the age of the Holy Spirit. Here is someone’s comment on the Day of Pentecost:

“The transforming power of the Spirit so filled them that the timid became bold, the selfish self-denied, the arrogant humble; the ambitious aspirants after distinction ceased to seek great things for themselves. “

The “someone” was one of Scotland’s greatest professors of theology – George Smeaten (1819-1889) – writing in his book “The Doctrine of the Holy Spirit”. God wants to see us filled with the Holy Spirit and exhibit transformed lives to God’s glory.

### DISCUSSION POINTS

15. What do you think was in John the Baptist's mind when he preached a "baptism" of the Holy Spirit and of fire? Looking at it from his perspective, how do you think he thought it would happen?
16. An early American Bible teacher (Dr R.A. Torrey) believed that each believer could experience a personal "baptism of the Holy Spirit" for "service". Just as the Apostle Peter was emboldened, and empowered to preach so effectively, Torrey believes the "Baptism of the Spirit" is to enable the believer to be empowered for serving the Lord with supernatural ability, for witnessing etc. Please comment.

**Reading: Matthew 3:13-15 and Luke 3:21-23 JESUS BAPTISED**

*As Jesus was coming up out of the water, he saw heaven being torn open and the **Holy Spirit** descended on him in bodily form like a dove. And a voice came from heaven: "You are my Son, whom I love; with you I am well pleased."* Luke 3:22

We go back to the account of the birth of Jesus in Luke 1:35 where the angel says: "The Holy Spirit will come upon you and the power of the Most High will overshadow you. So the holy one to be born will be called the Son of God. Here in our passage we have the angel's words fulfilled: A voice from heaven said, "You are my Son....."

But what kind of relationship is it between the heavenly "Father" and "Son"? Jesus in Matthew 6 (the Lord's prayer) and in John 17 (the prayer of Jesus) calls his heavenly father "Father". The voice from heaven called Jesus "Son". Does this mean that Jesus as "Son" is inferior to the "Father" – or was created after the "Father"? Neither. Heavenly and "spiritual" truths often need to be expressed in an "earthly" way for us to understand. John 1:1-3 says the Father and the Son (the Word) were together at the "beginning" and are both God. In other words, co-equal and co-eternal. Yet in his earthly ministry, Jesus acted like an obedient earthly son by carrying out the wishes of the Father (Mark 14:36).

### DISCUSSION POINT

17. At Jesus' baptism we see the Trinity together. Jesus was in the water, the Father spoke from heaven, and the Holy Spirit in the form of a dove descended. Why do you think the Holy Spirit appeared in the form of a dove?

**\_Reading: Luke 4:1-13 JESUS: EMPOWERED BY THE SPIRIT**

*Jesus, full of the **Holy Spirit**, returned from the Jordan and was led (the Spirit sent him – Mark 1:12) by the Spirit in the desert...* Luke 4:1

A mighty surge of the Spirit's power pushed Jesus into those barren, desert hills. This was where Jesus was going to fight a major battle – a battle for life. Had he lost, God would have "died" and I believe our universe would have dissolved into nothingness. We – and God – and everything – would have been finished for eternity.

### DISCUSSION POINTS

18. Why do you think the Holy Spirit propelled Jesus into the wilderness to face testing at the hands of Satan? (Jesus was at his weakest physically and mentally with 40 days without food).
19. Do you think Jesus had a real battle against Satan on his hands? Or was the fact that he was God, and had all power, mean that Jesus could not possibly lose? How do you view this “testing”?

**Reading:     John 1:29-34                   THE TESTIMONY OF JOHN THE BAPTIST**

Then John gave this testimony: “I saw the Spirit come down from heaven as a dove and remain on him I would not have known him, except that the one who sent me to baptise with water told me, “The man on whom you see the Spirit come down and remain is he who will baptise with the Holy Spirit”. So I have seen and I testify that this is the Son of God. John 1:32-34 John’s testimony comes after Jesus was baptised (after John saw the Spirit come down in the form of a dove), and after Jesus had been forty days in the wilderness. John uses an interesting word twice in the above passage. (“I saw the Spirit come down from heaven as a dove and **remain** on him.” And, “The man on whom you see the Spirit come down and **remain** is he who will baptise with the Spirit.”)

The Greek word for “remain” is *menein*. It means “to **rest, remain, abide, stay with**”. There is an important Scriptural truth here: Jesus possesses the Holy Spirit and can impart the Holy Spirit to others.

### DISCUSSION POINT

20. John is emphatic about Jesus having the Holy Spirit “remaining” with him. Almost to the point of exclusivity. Comment on this exclusive possession.

## JESUS INTRODUCES THE HOLY SPIRIT

**Reading:      John 3:1-21                      NICODEMUS AND THE HOLY SPIRIT**

*Jesus replied, "The truth is, no one can enter the Kingdom of God without being born of water and the Spirit\* Humans can reproduce only human life, but the Holy Spirit\* gives new life from heaven. So don't be surprised at my statement that you\* must be born again. Just as you can hear the wind but can't tell where it comes from or where it is going, so you can't explain how people are born of the Spirit." (New Living Translation)*

In verses 3 and 7 "born again" can be translated "born from above". The "you" in verse 7 is plural – meaning that it didn't only apply to Nicodemus but that new-birth was for everyone.

Nicodemus was a Jew – a 'son' of the Lord already (Hosea 11:1). It would have come as a shock to him to be told that he needed to be 'born' into God's family a second time – as if he wasn't already part of it. Jesus said to Nicodemus that it was necessary for him to be born of "water" and the "Spirit". What is this water? There is no doubt what "Spirit" means ("you must be born again OF THE SPIRIT"). But water!!!

There are four main interpretations and several other suggestions:

- That "water" is physical birth. In this interpretation "water" represents the first, natural birth which is accompanied by the 'breaking of the waters'. The passage (verses 6, 12 and 13 especially) gives a strong contrast between natural and spiritual birth. "Flesh gives birth to flesh – but Spirit gives birth to spirit."
- That "water" is linked with "Spirit" to be one, not two, items. In other words, "born of the Holy Spirit water" or "born of Spiritual water" in contrast to anything else earthly. Jesus did promise to baptize in the Holy Spirit and the Holy Spirit can be the element into which we are baptized. And Jesus can fill us. (Acts 2:4).
- That "water" refers to baptism; washing; cleansing. Nicodemus would have known about John's baptism. In fact, the Jews were quite familiar with ritual washings. In fact when the Jews sent the priests and Levites to ask questions of John the Baptist it was not, "What is this rite?" but "Why do you baptize?" (John 1:25). Nicodemus came to Jesus with a good understanding of 'washings' and John's baptizing. Jesus was, in effect, saying: "You have seen John's baptism of repentance. To be born again (from above) you need both true repentance and the renewing action of the Holy Spirit.
- That the "water" is baptism and when the church administers baptism the 'sacrament' has the effect of bringing salvation to the baby (child or adult) and the recipient into the kingdom of God. This is the teaching of a major branch of Christianity.

#### DISCUSSION POINTS

21. Of these four interpretations, which one do you favour and why?
22. Yet there is a difference between the first three and the fourth interpretation. What is it and why is it important?

There are three important words in our study:

**“YOU”** (must be born again). “YOU”, according to the NIV notes, “applies to everyone, not just Nicodemus.

**“MUST”** There is an emphatic tone. There is warning. There is an urgency here. Not all will be born again. If you wish to enter the Kingdom of God – you **MUST** be born again.

**“BORN”** (again). The Greek can also mean “Born from above”. Both meanings apply. Being born “again” is being born “from above”. Our new birth originates in heaven.

#### DISCUSSION POINTS

23. Our second birth is quite distinct from our first birth. It is a supernatural birth experienced only by those who desire to have sins forgiven by Jesus Christ. That is my definition. What is your definition?
24. When Jesus told Nicodemus that he needed to be born again, did it mean that it was available then? Or was Jesus saying that Nicodemus had to wait until the resurrection had taken place? Try to give Scriptural reasons for your answers.
25. If so, where does John 14:17 fit in?
26. And where does John 20:22 fit in?
27. And where does Acts 2:4 fit in? Put your understanding together.

## JESUS AND THE HOLY SPIRIT IN ALL THE GOSPELS

So that we may see the relationship between JESUS and the HOLY SPIRIT we list the mentions of the Holy Spirit in the four gospels. We will list them in order of occurrence:

A.	The Holy Spirit will come upon Mary.	Luke 1:35
B.	Jesus was conceived through the Holy Spirit	Matthew 1:20
C.	Mary was carrying a child through the Holy Spirit.	Matthew 1:19
D.	John preached that Jesus “will baptize with the Holy Spirit”.	Matthew 3:11, Mark 1:8, Luke 3:16
E.	John baptized Jesus. The Holy Spirit descended like a dove.	Matthew 3:16, Mark 1:10, Lke 3:22
F.	John the Baptist’s testimony as to Jesus and the Holy Spirit.	John 1:32,33.
G.	Jesus speaks to Nicodemus about new birth.	John 3:5-8
H.	John Baptist: “God gives the Spirit (to Jesus) without limit.”	John 3:34
I.	Jesus tells the Samaritan woman, “God is Spirit...”	John 4:24
<b>J.</b>	<b>Jesus returns to Galilee in the power of the Spirit.</b>	<b>Luke 4:14</b>
K.	In the synagogue Jesus says, “The Spirit of the Lord is on me”	Luke 4:18
L.	Matthew says Jesus fulfilled Isaiah 42:1-4	Matthew 12:18
M.	Jesus declares he drives out demons by the Spirit of God.	Matthew 12:27
N.	Jesus warns about blasphemy against the Spirit.	Matthew 12:27-32 Mark 3:29
O.	Jesus says, “The Spirit gives life – the flesh nothing.”	John 6:63
P.	Jesus at the Festival of Tabernacles calls for the “thirsty”.	John 7:39
Q.	Jesus says that the Father will give the gift of the Holy Spirit.	Luke 11:13
R.	Jesus again warns against blaspheming the Holy Spirit.	Luke 12:10
S.	But positively teaches that the Holy Spirit can teach us.	Luke 12:12
T.	Jesus gives a parable about a father, a shepherd, and a woman.	Luke 15:1-32
U.	Jesus tells how David spoke about Him by the Holy Spirit.	Matthew 22:43-44. Mark 12:36
V.	Jesus prepares his disciples for the Counsellor to come.	John 14:16-17 and 26.
W.	Jesus teaches more fully on the Holy Spirit.	John 15:26, 16:13-15
X.	Jesus breathes on the disciples, “Receive the Holy Spirit.”	John 20:22
Y.	Jesus commands to baptize in the name of Father, Son, and Spirit.	Matthew 28:19

## JESUS CONTINUES TO TEACH ON THE HOLY SPIRIT AND REVEAL THE SPIRIT

**Reading: John 4:4-42 GOD IS SPIRIT**

*“Yet a time is coming and has now come when the true worshippers will worship the Father in spirit and truth, for they are the kind of worshippers the Father seeks. God is spirit, and his worshippers must worship in spirit and in truth.” John 4:23-24*

The account of Jesus and the Samaritan woman is a most wonderful one. It helps us understand how to lead a person to God. Notice the beautiful way Jesus dealt with this wayward woman from Samaria—a province of people despised by the Jews. Verse 24 tells us that our worship is not governed by externals or by physical surroundings or by geographical location. Our worship is by a meeting of spirits – God’s and ours. Our worship is not in make-believe, but in truth. Because God is a Spirit – our worship needs to be ‘on his wavelength’.

### DISCUSSION POINTS

28. Jesus was having quite an intense discussion with the woman and arrived at the point where he said, “God is spirit”. What is your understanding of God being “spirit”? How do you explain “God is spirit” and the “Holy Spirit”?
29. The woman was very surprised at Jesus’ remarkable insight into her life. At the end of the discussion what sort of understanding do you think the woman had of God being “spirit”?

**Reading: Luke 4:14-15 JESUS IN THE POWER OF THE SPIRIT**

*Jesus returned to Galilee in the power of the Spirit. Luke 4:14*

This verse on the power of the Spirit is ‘tucked in’ the Scriptures between all that is happening. Nevertheless, we can meditate upon it and savour its richness and depth.

- He had returned from the temptation, defeating Satan.
- He had begun to choose his disciples – John 1:35-51.
- He had performed his first miracle at the wedding in Cana, Galilee.
- He had cleansed the temple at Jerusalem – John 2:13-22.
- He had met and talked with Nicodemus – John 3:1-21
- It is thought that Jesus was baptizing (it was his disciples – John 4:2) in Judea at the same time as John was baptizing in Samaria – John 3:22-36
- Jesus had visited Samaria, where he met the woman – John 4:4-43

Our passage says that “news about him spread through the whole countryside”. Something must have been happening for news to spread. Luke also says that Jesus “taught in their synagogues” and adds, “everyone praised him”.

### DISCUSSION POINTS

30. Looking at the list above, how does each of them reveal Jesus as walking in the “power of the Spirit”?
31. The verse says that Jesus **returned** to Galilee “in the power of the Spirit”. What does this mean?

**Reading: Luke 4:16-30 “THE SPIRIT OF THE LORD IS ON ME”**

*“The Spirit of the Lord is on me, because he has anointed me to preach good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners and recovery of sight for the blind, to release the oppressed, to proclaim the year of the Lord’s favour.” Luke 4:18-19*

Jesus began his ministry in his hometown – Nazareth. In Old Testament times the central place of Hebrew worship was the tabernacle or temple. But when Jerusalem’s temple was destroyed, and the Jews went into captivity in Babylon, there was no central place of worship. So the Jewish people instituted synagogues as local centres of worship. Even when the Temple was restored, synagogue worship continued. Luke 4:16 notes that Jesus had been accustomed to attend synagogue services

regularly on the Sabbath. Members participated in the service, and were frequently asked to read the Scripture and make appropriate remarks. The synagogue followed a regular order of readings. Jesus probably took the passage that was usually read on that day. The synagogue custom was that the reader stood up to read (v16) and then sat down to comment upon the reading or teach (v20). Jesus read from Isaiah 61:1-2 declaring openly that this prophecy of the Spirit upon the unnamed person in the text was being fulfilled in and through him. From this point on Jesus was a marked man (see verse 29) but this did not stop his ministry. Before looking at the discussion points, here's an additional **Reading: Isaiah 61:1-2**

#### DISCUSSION POINTS

32. Look at Isaiah 61:1-2. In this Old Testament passage. Jesus said that the “me” referred to him. But who do you think Isaiah thought it was?
33. Jesus was attending his own home synagogue in Nazareth (“where he had been brought up”). Many listeners would know him as the “carpenter’s son”. At first, they were “amazed at the gracious words that came from his lips”. “All spoke well of him” – verse 22. But soon “all the people in the synagogue were furious” – verse 28. What factors changed their attitude?
34. Jesus gave five statements. Explain what each one means:  
“anointed to preach good news to the poor”,  
“to proclaim “freedom for the prisoners”,  
“to proclaim the recovery of sight for the blind”,  
“to release the oppressed” and to  
“proclaim the year of the Lord’s favour”.
35. In verse 18 Jesus says, “The Spirit of the Lord is on me, **because...**” And then goes on to state the above five elements in his mission. Again look at each of the five; explain why it was necessary for Jesus to have the Spirit of the Lord on him.

## JESUS MINISTERS IN POWER GOD'S SPIRIT IS ON HIM

Since our last passage (Luke 4:18-19) where Jesus proclaimed his purpose in the Nazareth synagogue, his ministry has been characterised by mighty power:

- There was the astonishing catch of fish (Luke 5:1-11)
- Jesus taught with authority (Mark 1:21-34, Luke 4:31-41)
- Simon's mother-in-law was healed (Mark 1:29-31 etc.)
- Many sick and demon-possessed were healed. (Luke 4:32-34 etc.)
- A leper was healed. (Mark 1:40-45 etc.)
- A Paralytic lowered through the roof was healed. (Mark 2:1-12 etc.)
- Jesus healed a man at a pool in Jerusalem (John 5:1-14)
- A man with a shrivelled hand was healed on the Sabbath (Luke 6:6-11)
- Multitudes were healed by the Lake of Galilee (Mark 3:7-12)

**Reading: Mark 3:7-12, Matthew 12:12-21      ISAIAH and GOD'S SPIRIT**

*But he gave them strict orders warning them not to tell who he was. This was to fulfill what was spoken through the prophet Isaiah: "Here is my servant whom I have chosen, the one I love, in whom I delight; I will put my Spirit on him, and he will proclaim justice to the nations. He will not quarrel or cry out; no one will hear his voice in the streets. A bruised reed he will not break, or a smouldering wick he will not snuff out till he leads justice to victory. In his name the nations will put their hope. (Mk 3:12 Matt 12:17-21)*

In this passage Matthew shows that Jesus is the fulfilment of the wonderful prophecies of the "Servant of the Lord" references in Isaiah (42:1-9; 49:1-7; 50:4-11; 52:13; 53:12).

Verse 18 proclaims that God has put his Spirit upon Jesus and Jesus will bring justice into a sin-torn world. Verse 15 tells us that Jesus did not want anyone to know at this early stage who he was. Matthew then quotes the words of Isaiah (42:1-4). Jesus would not be king by open, aggressive, military means. He would tenderly care for the "bruised reed" and would quietly bring to life again the "smouldering wick". He died that we might live. He lives that we might be lovingly cared for. We live as his extension to reach the needy.

### DISCUSSION POINT

36. Isaiah 42:1-4. We can understand how Jesus will "proclaim justice", care for the "bruised reed" and revive the "smouldering wick". But how do we understand "He will not quarrel or cry out; no one will hear his voice in the streets"?

**Reading: Matthew 12:22-32      DRIVING OUT DEMONS BY GOD'S SPIRIT**  
See also Mark 3:20-30.

*"And if I drive out demons by Beelzebub, by whom do your people drive them out? So then, they will be your judges. But if I drive out demons by the Spirit of God, then the kingdom of God has come upon you." Matthew 12:27-28*

The Pharisees were a defiant, critical lot! They would continually rail against Jesus, accusing him of casting out demons by the power and authority of Beelzebub (The name given to the ruler of demons). Beelzebub was the title and name of a Canaanite god adopted by the Philistines (2 Kings 1:16). Later, Satan was called by the name. The Pharisees were insulting, and blaspheming, the Holy Spirit by giving Satan the credit for the work of “driving them (the evil spirits) out” when it was not Satan, but the Holy Spirit of God. Jesus correctly pointed out that a household that fights against itself is useless and ineffective. It was quite ludicrous to imagine that the devil would work against his own demons. Jesus acknowledges the powerful work of the Holy Spirit by saying, “If I drive out demons by the Spirit of God, then the kingdom of God has come upon you.”

The evidence of the appearing of the kingdom of God is a mighty, definite, demon-expelling demonstration of the Holy Spirit.

#### DISCUSSION POINTS

37. How do you understand the words of Jesus, “So then, they will be your judges”?
38. What is your understanding of the kingdom of God coming among them?

*“And so I tell you, every sin and blasphemy will be forgiven you but the blasphemy against the Spirit will not be forgiven. Anyone who speaks a word against the Son of Man will be forgiven, but anyone who speaks against the Holy Spirit will not be forgiven, either in this age or in the age to come. (Matthew 12:31-32) Mark adds: “...(that person) is guilty of an eternal sin.” (Mark 3:29)*

My! How this passage has perplexed many. It has even deeply worried some. The difficult part in question is: “Anyone who speaks against the Holy Spirit will not be forgiven”. What does this serious statement mean?

I believe Jesus is saying that the evil ideas the Pharisees are broadcasting come from corrupt hearts. Those with evil, corrupt hearts are not destined for the glories of an eternity with God. When they ascribed the work of the Holy Spirit to “Beelzebub” they were revealing themselves as having fixed, unrepentant attitudes of mind that consistently rejected the wooing and overtures by the Holy Spirit. You need not worry about having committed the unpardonable sin. If you are a believer, but worried that you may have committed the unpardonable sin, you are not in danger. If you truly trust in Jesus Christ simply claim the forgiveness of Jesus Christ for the sin you have committed. He heals.

But before we leave this passage, there is a sin against the Holy Spirit that leads to an eternity without God. It is the sin of rejecting Jesus Christ as Saviour and of not being born of God’s Holy Spirit. One important function of the Spirit is to bring conviction and repentance, and to make a person receptive to the Lord Jesus Christ (John 16:8-9, 1:11-12, 3:5) Hearts that hate God and blaspheme Jesus Christ can come to God (1 Timothy 1:13). But the person who rejects every overture of the Holy Spirit removes himself or herself from the only means that can lead to forgiveness and salvation (John 3:36).

### POSSIBLE PRAYER POINT

39. If you are a believer, you have not committed the unpardonable sin. But if you are worried about a particular “sin” – ask forgiveness of God in the privacy of your own heart. [If you are in a study group, doing this study, you may wish to share your concern with the group and they can pray for you. If you are doing this study privately, write a comment about God's promise to answer the cry of his child.]

### Reading: John 6:47-66 THE SPIRIT GIVES LIFE – THE FLESH NOTHING

*“The Spirit gives life; the flesh counts for nothing.”* John 6:63

Jesus says in John 6:35 and 48, “I AM THE BREAD OF LIFE”. Not only has he life in himself but he is able to impart it to others. However, the person desiring the bread of eternal life must come to the “bread (Jesus) of life”.

### Reading: John 6:63-66 THE WORDS I HAVE SPOKEN TO YOU ARE SPIRIT

*“The words I have spoken to you are spirit\*.”* John 6:63b \* or “Spirit” (Holy Spirit)

### DISCUSSION POINTS

40. After Jesus said, “I am the living bread” he went on to talk of his flesh and blood being food and drink. What did he mean?
41. How do explain Jesus’ words: “The Spirit gives life; the flesh counts for nothing.”
42. The Greek word *pneuma* can mean “breath” “wind” “spirit” or “(Holy) Spirit”. What do you think was in Jesus’ mind when he used the word *pneuma*? (v63)

## JESUS PROMISES LIVING WATER

**Reading: John 7:14-46 JESUS PROMISES LIVING WATER (THE SPIRIT)**

*On the last day, the climax of the festival, Jesus shouted to the crowds, “If anyone is thirsty, come to me and drink. For the Scriptures\* declare that rivers of living water shall flow from the inmost being of anyone who believes in me.” (He was speaking of the Holy Spirit, who would be given to everyone believing in him; but the Spirit had not yet been given, because Jesus had not yet returned to his glory in heaven. John 7:37-39 TLB*

\* Scriptures could be Exodus 17:6; Isaiah 44:3-4; 58:11; Ezekiel 47:1-9; Zechariah 14:8

In John 4 Jesus said to the Samaritan woman that he could supply “living” water that would be a spring welling up into eternal life. But he did not, at that time, explain the nature of the water to her. The meaning is made clear in our passage today (John 7:37-39). The Feast of Tabernacles was a memorial to the forty years Israel spent in the wilderness. It was a feast held annually to remind them they were still as dependent upon God as were their ancestors in the days when God gave them water out of the rock and manna from heaven. At a certain point during the feast, the High Priest would pour water out of a golden pitcher to symbolize the water given by God.

On each day of the week-long celebration, a procession made its way to the fountain of Gihon, the stream that fed into the pool of Siloam, and there the priest would draw water in the golden pitcher as a choir chanted Isaiah 12:3 (“with joy you will draw water from the wells of salvation. In that day you will say ‘Give thanks to the Lord, call on His name...’”). The procession would then return through the Water Gate to the temple, around the altar of Holocausts, to the chanting of Psalm 118:25 (“O Lord save us; O Lord grant us success”).

On the final, and climactic day of the Feast, the procession circled the altar seven times. The priest would then pour out the water on the Southwest corner of the altar, the direction from which rain-bearing winds came. In the midst of all this imagery – “On the last and greatest day of the feast” – Jesus invites the thirsty to come to **him** and drink. Whoever receives Jesus receives the water he supplies and will, in turn, be suppliers to others. The Holy Spirit, mentioned twice in one verse, is that water. This was the promise by Jesus of the soon-coming era of the Holy Spirit.

Way back in **1551**, my namesake and role model JOHN HOOPER received from King Edward VI an invitation to become Bishop of Gloucester. Bishop John Hooper found his clergy in a terrible state! Their moral and pastoral lives left much to be desired. Ryle has written: “...many clergymen were unable to repeat the Ten Commandments, and could not tell who was the author of the Lord’s prayer...” So – before we launch into our next passage of Scripture can you answer the following questions?

43. Where in the Bible are the TEN COMMANDMENTS found?
44. Who is the author?
45. Can you say them – one to ten? (Not necessarily word perfect.)
46. Where in the Bible is the LORD’S PRAYER?
47. Who is the author?

## A GOOD FATHER GIVES GOOD GIFTS

**Reading: Luke 11:1-13 AND WILL GIVE THE HOLY SPIRIT TO US**

*And if even sinful persons like yourselves give children what they need, don’t you realize that your heavenly Father will do as least as much, and give the **Holy Spirit** to those who ask him? Luke 11:13*

In our passage (verses 1-13) Jesus first teaches a suitable prayer to our heavenly Father. Later, (5-10) Jesus emphasises the availability of God, and God’s readiness to answer prayer if we persist. Eastern homes did not have a separate bedroom. At bedtime the father of the family bolted the door, then unrolled mats on the floor for the children. He and his wife occupied the bed or space nearest the wall. If someone came late at night and knocked on the door, it would have been very difficult to reach the outer door without disturbing the children. At the end of the Scripture passage, Jesus climaxes his talk about fathers and our heavenly Father by saying that a good father gives good gifts and our Father in heaven is the very best of Fathers giving the Holy Spirit to his “children”.

### DISCUSSION POINTS

48. At the time Jesus taught his disciples to pray “OUR FATHER” would you consider the disciples “children” of their heavenly “Father”? Explain the nature of the disciples’ relationship with their heavenly father.
49. Assuming that the disciples were Father/God-loving believers – why were they encouraged to pray that God, their Father, would give them the Holy Spirit?
50. What was the nature of the gift of the Holy Spirit?

**Reading: Luke 12:11-12 THE HOLY SPIRIT WILL DEFEND YOU**

*“When you are brought before synagogues, rulers and authorities, do not worry about how you will defend yourselves or what you will say, for the **Holy Spirit** will teach you at that time what you should say.”*

We have discussed the blasphemy against the Holy Spirit in STUDY 5 (Matthew 12:31 and Mark 3:29 and 29). In brief, it is an ascribing the works of Jesus Christ to Satan. It is a rebellion against the salvation that comes through Jesus Christ alone.

The Holy Spirit comes to our aid when things are tough. And the Holy Spirit will teach us. Jesus words to his disciples (Luke 21:15) were: **“I will give you the right words and such logic that none of your opponents will be able to reply.”** (Living Bible)

### DISCUSSION POINTS

51. Take a look at Acts 4:8. In what way did the Holy Spirit help Peter?
52. How has the Holy Spirit given you the right words at a time of crisis?

## THE HOLY SPIRIT IN THE PARABLES

There are three parables that illustrate the work of: Father                  Son                  Spirit

- The Big Banquet                  Luke 14:16-24                  Man                  Servant
- The Wedding Banquet          Matt 22:1-14                  King                  Son                  Servants
- The lost: sheep coin son      Luke 15:1-31                  Father                  Shepherd                  Woman

The first two are very similar and should be looked at together. In both there is a big banquet planned by a man (or king). There is no “son” spoken about in the first – but it could be for his son. There is the king’s “son” in the second. In the first there is one “servant” and in the second story there are many “servants”. Nevertheless, we can use either one servant or many to illustrate the work of the Holy Spirit.

The third parable (Luke 15:1-31) is very explicit. Verse 3 tells us it is “one parable” but is actually three very similar stories. In verses 4-7 the Shepherd seeks the sheep, finds it, and everyone rejoices. In verses 8-10 the woman seeks her coin, finds it and calls for rejoicing. In verses 11-31 the father (who like our Father in heaven, stays home) waits for the lost son to come to him. As the Holy Spirit is the agency of “new birth” it is entirely appropriate that a woman – the facilitator of natural birth, illustrate the Holy Spirit.

### DISCUSSION POINTS

53. What are the characteristics of the lost soul? (Sheep, coin and lost son.).

**JESUS SAYS DAVID SPOKE BY THE SPIRIT**

**Reading: Matthew 22:41-46 JESUS SILENCES THE PHARISEES**

Jesus, quoting King David in his Psalm 110:1 says to the Pharisees:

*How is it then that David, speaking by the Spirit, calls him Lord for David says (quoting Psalm 110:1), "The Lord (God) said to my Lord (Heb: Adonai-Superior) Sit at my right hand until I make your enemies a footstool for your feet."*

Jesus then asked the following question: *If then David calls him 'Lord' how can he be his son? (Matt. 22:43-45 David himself speaking by the Holy Spirit declared...Mk 12:36)*

Jesus silences the Pharisees with an answer that they could not respond to!

Let's set it out as if it were part of a script of a play:

JESUS: "What do you think about the Messiah? Whose son is he?  
 PHARISEES: "The son (descendent) of David." [The Scribes taught the people that the Messiah was a descendent of King David. -Mark 12:35]  
 JESUS: "How is it then that David, speaking by the Holy Spirit, calls the Messiah 'Lord' (or Master) for David in Psalm 110 says, '**THE LORD JEHOVAH SAID TO MY LORD MESSIAH, SIT AT MY RIGHT HAND UNTIL I PUT YOUR ENEMIES UNDER YOUR FEET.** If then David calls him his 'Lord-master' - how can he be his son or descendent?"

The puzzle Jesus gave to the Pharisees is this:

"If you believe and teach that the Messiah is a descendent of David, how is it that David calls him his Lord-Master?" Jesus did not say that the Messiah was not David's descendent. However, he was pointing out that the idea that the Messiah was simply a conquering king and political ruler was an inadequate belief. The Messiah was not just an earthly descendent, a ruler, he was David's Lord and master. Jesus quoted Psalm 110:1 to prove it. He reinforced this by saying that David spoke by God's Spirit.

By silencing the Pharisees in public, Jesus pleased the public who enjoyed seeing the dogmatic Pharisees taken down. Mark (12:37 TLB) records the crowd's reaction as:

"This sort of reasoning delighted the crowd and they listened to Jesus with great interest."

**DISCUSSION POINTS**

54. Jesus cleverly corrected an erroneous teaching the Pharisees held about the Messiah. What was Jesus correctly teaching about the Messiah?

55. Why did Jesus say that David was speaking by the Holy Spirit?

## BELIEVERS WILL SPEAK BY THE SPIRIT

**Reading: Mark 13:1-11 JESUS SPEAKS OF THE END OF THE AGE**

*When you are arrested and brought to trial, do not worry beforehand about what to say. Speak what is given you at the time, for it will not be you speaking, but the **Holy Spirit**.*  
(Mark 13:11). Luke 21:15 adds “*For I will give you words and wisdom that none of your adversaries will be able to resist or contradict.*”

This passage in Mark goes on to verse 37 and is a most important teaching on end-time events. Jesus begins by teaching about his return to earth but also warns in detail about the coming destruction of Jerusalem (that occurred in A.D.70). Matthew (24:1-44) and Luke (21:5-36) have recorded this teaching of Jesus also. The reference to the Holy Spirit giving the believer words in a time of trial apply both to the persecution of Christians that occurred not long after Jesus ascended, but also prophetically, to the time of the end of the age – just before Jesus returns.

### DISCUSSION POINT

56. Discuss why the believer will be given words by the Holy Spirit – but also words and wisdom from Jesus. (How can Jesus give words when he has left the earth?) .

## THE FATHER WILL SEND THE HOLY SPIRIT

**Reading: John 14:12-26 JESUS PREPARES HIS DISCIPLES**

*If you love me, obey me; and I will ask the Father and he will give you another Comforter who will never leave you – the **Spirit of truth**.* John 14:16-17 (TLB)

*When the Father sends the Comforter – the Holy Spirit – you will be taught much, as well as reminding you of everything I myself have told you.* John 14:26 (BHP)

The word “Comforter” (KJV etc.) or “Counsellor” (NIV etc.) has the word PARACLETE behind it. This is the word from which our “parallel” comes. The Holy Spirit is one who is both within us and beside us – thus moving along parallel to our earthly pathway. The words “Counsellor” and “Comforter” both help to convey what the Holy Spirit is to us. The Holy Spirit is called “The Spirit of truth”. Truth here does not mean abstract or philosophical truth. It is said to be opposed to the “world” which cannot receive it. Thus it is God’s revealed and triumphant activity over evil. Dr John Rae says the passage could be translated “the Spirit of the truth”. God is totally truth and guides us in truth.

### DISCUSSION POINTS

57. If the Holy Spirit is both with us and in us, and yet we can choose to go and do whatever we like, what is the difference that the Holy Spirit makes?
58. How does the Holy Spirit teach us about Jesus?

## **THE RISEN JESUS BREATHES THE HOLY SPIRIT ON THE DISCIPLES**

**Reading:     John 20:19-23     “RECEIVE (TAKE NOW) THE HOLY SPIRIT”**

*And with that he breathed on them and said, “Receive the Holy Spirit. If you forgive anyone their sins, they are forgiven; if you do not forgive them, they are not forgiven.”*

John 20:22-23 NIV

Jesus “breathed on them”. This recalls the action of God in Genesis 2:7 where he breathed into a man’s body – and the man became a living soul. Also Ezekiel 37:9 where the call was made to the Spirit out of the four winds to breathe upon the slain bodies. By Jesus breathing on the disciples he is not setting aside any previous work of the Spirit in them, or to come as in Pentecost. But the event in our passage was not a promise of Pentecost; it was an actual impartation of the Holy Spirit to equip them for the task ahead. (The word 'receive' - Greek 'lambano' - means 'take now' as in Mk 14:22 "Take eat, this is my body." Lk 11:10, 22:17 etc.)

### **DISCUSSION POINTS**

59.     How does Genesis 2:7 and Ezekiel 37:9 help our understanding of John 20:22?
60.     How do you understand this impartation of the Holy Spirit by Jesus?

## **THE GREAT COMMISSION**

**Reading:     Matt 28:16-20     “GO AND MAKE DISCIPLES, BAPTIZING THEM”**

*“Therefore, go and make disciples of all nations baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them...”     Matthew 28:19-20*

This declaration by Jesus is called THE GREAT COMMISSION. Notice people are to be baptised in the name (singular) of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. This shows that although the Father, Son and Holy Spirit can be separately identified, God is one.

## THE ACTS OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

We come to that wonderful account of what happened after Jesus left this earth – THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES. This history of the coming of the Holy Spirit in power and of the growing church has been called “THE ACTS OF THE HOLY SPIRIT”.

### ACTS

- 1:2 Jesus instructed his disciples through the HOLY SPIRIT
- 1:5 Jesus promises a baptism with the HOLY SPIRIT
- 1:16 Peter says that the HOLY SPIRIT spoke through (King) David
- 2:4 **On the day of Pentecost the disciples and others were “filled with the HOLY SPIRIT”**
- 2:17-18 Peter quotes Joel 2; 28-31 that God would pour out his SPIRIT on all people.
- 2:33 Jesus received from the Father the promised HOLY SPIRIT and has poured out the Spirit
- 2:38 Peter preached “Repent and be baptised...and you will receive the gift of the HOLY SPIRIT
- 4:8 Peter, filled with the HOLY SPIRIT, speaks to the Sanhedrin of Jesus
- 4:25 In prayer, the believers acknowledge that David spoke through the HOLY SPIRIT
- 4:31 After they prayed, the place was shaken and they were all filled with the HOLY SPIRIT
- 5:3/9 Peter tells Ananias (3) he has lied to the HOLY SPIRIT and Saphira (9) she has tested the SPIRIT
- 5:32 Peter says that he and the apostles are witnesses and so is the HOLY SPIRIT
- 6:3-5 The Church chooses seven men full of the SPIRIT (3) – full of faith and the HOLY SPIRIT (5)
- 7:51/55 Stephen tells the Sanhedrin they are resisting the HOLY SPIRIT (51) Stephen filled with the HS.
- 8:15-19 The Samaritans receive the HOLY SPIRIT and Simon sees the SPIRIT given (5 mentions)
- 8:29/39 The SPIRIT directs Philip (29) to the Ethiopian and the SPIRIT takes Philip away suddenly (39)
- 9:17 Ananias\* prays for Saul (Paul) that he might be filled with the HOLY SPIRIT. \*another
- 9:31 The church grows – strengthened and encouraged by the HOLY SPIRIT
- 10:19 Peter has a vision of a big sheet full of creatures – after which the SPIRIT speaks to him
- 10:38 Peter, in Cornelius’ house, preaches that God anointed Jesus with the HOLY SPIRIT and power
- 10:44-17 While Peter is preaching the HOLY SPIRIT comes on Cornelius and the Gentiles
- 11:12-16 Peter returns to Jerusalem and explains about the HOLY SPIRIT descending on the Gentiles
- 11:24 Barnabas is said to be a good man, full of the HOLY SPIRIT and faith
- 11:28 Agabus, through the SPIRIT, predicts a severe famine to cover the Roman world
- 13:2,4 In Antioch church, the HOLY SPIRIT speaks – and Barnabas and Saul go by the HOLY SPIRIT
- 13:9 Saul (Paul), filled with the HOLY SPIRIT, looked straight at Elymas the sorcerer
- 13:52 The word of the Lord spreads in Pisidia - the disciples are filled with joy and the HOLY SPIRIT
- 15:8 Back in Jerusalem, the Council hears Peter tell how God gave the HOLY SPIRIT to the Gentiles
- 15:28 The Council write a letter to the Gentile believers: “It seemed good to the HOLY SPIRIT...”
- 16:7 The SPIRIT of Jesus would not allow them into Bithynia
- 19:2/6 Paul arrives at Ephesus where he meets some believers who receive the HOLY SPIRIT
- 20:22-23 Paul tells the Ephesian Elders that, warned by the HOLY SPIRIT hardship lies ahead of him.
- 20:28 Paul encourages the Ephesian elders and says that the HOLY SPIRIT has made them overseers
- 21:4 At Tyre, the believers there, through the SPIRIT, urge Paul not to go to Jerusalem
- 21:11 Agabus takes Paul’s belt and conveys that the HOLY SPIRIT says Paul will be bound
- 28:25 Paul at Rome under guard preaches to the Jews about the HOLY SPIRIT speaking in the past

## WALKING WITH THE HOLY SPIRIT IN ACTS

The Acts of the Apostles is the account of the new church WALKING WITH THE HOLY SPIRIT. You will be blessed if you read it right through from chapter 1 to 28. We will study the major events of the Holy Spirit for as you can see from the above references there are many mentions of the Holy Spirit in The Acts.

## THE HOLY SPIRIT COMES AT PENTECOST

**Reading: Acts 1:1-14 and Acts 2:1-4      AWAITING THE HOLY SPIRIT**

*Jesus said to them: "You will receive power when the **Holy Spirit** comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth."* Acts 1:8

*All of them were filled with the **Holy Spirit** and began to speak in other tongues as the Spirit enabled them.* Acts 2:4

"Jesus said to them you will receive power..." The 'them' are those who gathered in the upper room where Jesus breathed on them and said, "Receive the Holy Spirit". (John 20:22). Dr John Rae in his commentary of the Holy Spirit says that the "words of the risen Lord in Acts 1:4,5 prove beyond a shadow of a doubt that the baptism in the Holy Spirit, and not the new birth, is the fulfilment of the Fathers 'promise' (Luke 24:44-53)".

Acts 2:4 is climax of the earthly coming of Jesus! His birth was the curtain-raiser to God's work on earth. His death was the completion. His ascension was the celebration of God's wonderful work. But Pentecost was God commencing a new and exciting era of a life with God's Spirit! A new era was dawning. Joel's prophecy (2:28-31) was about to be fulfilled: "***I will pour out my Spirit...Your sons and daughters will prophecy, your young men will see visions, your old men will dream dreams. Men and women will prophecy.***"

### DISCUSSION POINTS

61. Many Christians see the Pentecostal experience as valid today in that the believer can have a "baptism of power" for service. The act of Jesus in John 20:22 of breathing on the disciples was their "new birth". Discuss these aspects.
62. Pentecost certainly made a difference to the early church believers. What place does Pentecost have in our Christian lives today?

**Reading: Acts 2:36-47      PETER SPEAKS AND MANY BELIEVE**

*Peter replied, "Each one of you must turn from sin, return to God, and be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins, then you also shall receive this gift, the Holy Spirit."* Acts 2:38  
TLB

A twofold response is required: **A turning from sin** and **water baptism**. The turning from sin means a roundabout-face from sinful ways and an acceptance of Jesus Christ as Lord of your life. Baptism is the public declaration of your turning to God. In the early church converts were baptized without delay. So being baptised and receiving the Holy Spirit were practically simultaneous.

#### DISCUSSION POINTS

63. The order seems to be: [1] Repent / turn from sin [2] Be water baptised [3] Then you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. What is the “gift of the Holy Spirit”? Is it new birth? Or if “water baptism” is second, does that not mean that the new birth occurred in [1] when there was a turning from sin? If that is the case, and [3] is not new birth, then is it a further empowering work of the Holy Spirit? Discuss.
64. How were the lives changed of those who believed (2:41-47)?

**OPTIONAL DISCUSSION POINT:** Water baptism is practised in different ways among churches. Some hold a baby can be baptised – and some hold that the baby inherits salvation when baptised. Others say an act of belief is required first.

**Reading: Acts 4:1-22 PETER SPEAKS TO THE SANHEDRIN**

*Then Peter, filled with the **Holy Spirit**, said to them, “Honourable leaders and elders of our nation, if you mean the good deed done to the cripple, and how he was healed, let me clearly state to you and all the people of Israel that it was done in the name and power of Jesus from Nazareth, the Messiah, the man you crucified – but God raised him back to life again. It is by his authority that this man stands here healed.” Acts 4:8-10*

Luke (1:41) writes that Elizabeth and Zacharias (1:67) were filled with the Holy Spirit. On the Day of Pentecost 120 were all filled with the Holy Spirit (Acts 2:4). “Filled with the Holy Spirit” and “Full of the Holy Spirit” are key descriptions in this Book of the Acts. Dr John Rae says: “In each case they were fully possessed or completely controlled by the Spirit, to manifest the power of the Lord in a situation and in a way completely beyond their own human capabilities”. The use of the word “filled” doesn’t usually mean a permanent condition. However, in Acts 9:17 where Ananias says he has been sent that Paul may regain his sight and be “filled” the circumstances seems to indicate a continuing state of fullness – or a “baptism” of the Spirit, which is a permanent gift to the recipient.

#### DISCUSSION POINTS

65. The Day of Pentecost was heralded as a “baptism” (Acts 1:5 and 8). However, when the “baptism” came it is said that they were all “filled” (Acts 2:4). Discuss.
66. Obviously, when Peter was “filled” on the occasion recorded in Acts 4:8 he was not being “born again” – he was already born again. So, discuss the meanings and effects of [1] “born again” by the Holy Spirit [2] “baptism with the Holy Spirit” and [3] “filled with the Spirit”. Give examples, from Scripture, of the differences.

## THE HOUSE SHOOK: THE SPIRIT FELL

**Reading: Acts 4:23-31 AFTER THEY PRAYED, THE PLACE WAS SHAKEN**

*After they prayed, the place where they were meeting was shaken. And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and spoke the word of God boldly. Acts 4:31 (NIV)*

Returning to the little community of Christians in Jerusalem, Peter and John joined them in prayer. They prayed, “Stretch out your hand to heal and perform miraculous signs and wonders through the name of your holy servant Jesus.” The meeting place was shaken by the power of God and they were all filled with the Holy Spirit.

### DISCUSSION POINTS

67. Montague, a Catholic writer, calls this “a little Pentecost”. Discuss.
68. What moved God to shake the place and fill the believers with the Holy Spirit?
69. What was the outcome of their being filled - and how did it help the church?

## YOU HAVE LIED TO THE HOLY SPIRIT

**Reading: Acts 5:1-11 “ANANIAS, SATAN HAS FILLED YOUR HEART”**

*Then Peter said, “Ananias, how is it that Satan has so filled your heart that you have lied to the Holy Spirit and have kept for yourself some of the money you received for the land?” Acts 5:3 Peter said to her, “How could you agree to test the Spirit of the Lord? Look! The men who buried your husband are at the door, and they will carry you out also.” Acts 5:9 Ananias (not the Ananias sent to Saul 9:17) “lied to the Holy Spirit” (3) and “lied to God” (4). Evidence, incidentally, that the Holy Spirit is God. For it said that it was a lie to the Holy Spirit. Satan filled the heart of Ananias to lie to the Holy Spirit. This was an attack against the church from within. God obviously didn’t want this to continue so stopped it quickly.*

### DISCUSSION POINT

70. What God did seems a drastic punishment when the couple did give a lot to the Lord. Dr Horton says, “Ananias and Saphira attempted to gain prestige in the church without love or faith.” What does this event say to our own hearts?

## SEVEN MEN – FULL OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

**Reading: Acts 6:1-7 THE BELIEVERS CHOOSE SEVEN GOOD MEN**

*“So choose seven men from among you who are known to be full of the Holy Spirit and wisdom. We will turn this responsibility over to them and will give our attention to prayer and the ministry of the word. This proposal pleased the whole group. They chose Stephen, a man of faith and of the Holy Spirit; also Procurus, Nicanor, Timon, Parmenas, and Nicolas from Antioch, a convert to Judaism. They presented these men to the apostles, who prayed and laid their hands on them. Acts 6:3-6*

What a tragedy when we choose church leaders because of their administrative abilities and not because they are filled with the Holy Spirit. The Apostles, guided by the Holy Spirit, directed the church to select seven men to administrate help to the needy of the church - food for the Greek speaking widows. Only one qualification was laid down. They must be full of the Holy Spirit coupled with wisdom. The need was among the (gentile) Greeks who had joined the new church. The Holy Spirit brought such love into the hearts of the majority group, that the men chosen were all from the Greek-speaking minority (we can tell that from their Greek names). This wise move by the apostles and Jewish majority was followed by another increase of the Word of God and the further multiplication of the church (v7).

“Initially, the gospel spread only among Jews, or those who were converts to Judaism. Even though the Old Testament does prophesy blessing and restoration for many from all nations, the Jews generally ignored this. Long-standing prejudices set up barriers that separated the Jews from the Samaritans on one hand, and from the Gentiles on the other. One of the most important works of the Spirit for the spreading of the gospel, was the breaking down of these barriers. **The first step came as a result of the death of Stephen. Instead of stopping the witness for Christ, the resulting persecution only spread the flame in all directions.** (Acts 1:8).” DR STANLEY HORTON.

#### DISCUSSION POINT

71. Discuss the importance of choosing “Spirit-filled” and wise church leadership. Most churches have two streams of leadership. The shepherding side and the serving side (1 Timothy 3:1-13). If you were in a position to have a free hand in organising the leadership of your particular church, how would you organise it?

### STEPHEN – PAYS WITH HIS LIFE

This is an important study. Luke recognises this by giving a lengthy account of Stephen’s speech to the Sanhedrin.

**Reading: Acts 7:1-60 STEPHEN, FULL OF GOD’S SPIRIT, PREACHES**

Stephen paid for his preaching with his life! And why did simple preaching about a crucified criminal mean death? Acts 1:8 has Jesus telling the believers that the Holy Spirit will come upon them giving them the “power” to be bold testifiers – or witnesses.

Acts 1:22-23 tells us that the replacement for Judas “must become a witness with us of His resurrection”.

Acts 4:23 is a prayer by Peter, John and the believers after Peter and John had been severely warned by the Jewish leaders not to speak about Jesus. Verse 30 asks God to “stretch out” His hand to “heal and perform miraculous signs and wonders through the name of Your (His) holy servant, Jesus”.

From these Scriptures we can see that the believers were going to disobey the established religion and speak about a crucified man who was really God, and who had risen from the dead! This Jesus, now alive, could work healings and miracles, even though in heaven.

This was through the Holy Spirit, who also gave the new Christians “power” to boldly testify. Stephen testified “boldly”. Stephen, “full of the Holy Spirit, looked up to heaven and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing at the right hand of God.” Because he said: “I see heaven open, and the Son of Man (Daniel 7:13; Mark 14:62; Revelation 1:13) standing at the right hand of God” he paid with his life.

#### DISCUSSION POINTS

72. The New International Version study notes on this passage link the words Stephen spoke with their comment on Acts 2:4 that says, “Their spirits were completely under the control of the Spirit; their words were his words.” Discuss the idea that Stephen was so filled with God’s Spirit that his words were God’s words.
73. We all value living and life. Discuss how you would feel in the face of such severe persecution that Stephen faced.
74. Notice the essential qualification for church leadership in Acts 1:22-23 is an unshakeable belief in the resurrection of Jesus Christ. There are Christian leaders today (and Christians) who do not believe in the resurrection. Discuss please.
75. The Holy Spirit was obviously with Stephen as he faced the reality of death. How may we be so empowered and possessed by God’s Holy Spirit as Stephen was?
76. On our WALKING IN THE HOLY SPIRIT, identify those steps that we need to take in order to walk in the Holy Spirit no matter what we face ahead in our lives.

### SAMARIA RECEIVES THE HOLY SPIRIT

#### **Reading: Acts 8:1-25 THE FIRE SPREADS BEYOND JERUSALEM**

The persecution that began with the death of Stephen served only to spread the fires of the new religion beyond the city limits of Jerusalem. Philip (Acts 6:5) was one of the many refugees who preached the gospel as they were scattered throughout the districts of Judea and Samaria. As Phillip preached “the Christ” (Messiah) in Samaria, accompanied by miraculous signs, the people listened intently, believed, and were baptized. Even a local celebrity magician made a profession of faith and was baptised. There was no obvious demonstration of the Holy Spirit falling upon the Samaritans as there had been at Jerusalem – but there is no doubt that the Holy Spirit had been birthed in their hearts. When the Jerusalem Church heard that the Samaritans had heard the good news of Jesus Christ and believed, they sent Peter and John to investigate this new development. It was obvious to Peter and John that the gift of the Holy Spirit had not come upon these new converts. So they laid hands on them and God poured out His Holy Spirit upon them. We do not know whether there were tongues of flame, or speaking in tongues etc. as in Acts 2:2-4 but there was some clear evidence of the Spirit’s work or Simon the sorcerer would not have been so impressed (Acts 8:18-19)

The Jerusalem Church was Jewish – and become Christians. God had dramatically endorsed this with the Spirit’s Pentecostal outpouring. The Jerusalem Jewish-Christians needed God’s approval on the Samaritans. When Philip preached in Samaria the church burst its Jewish bonds and moved toward a truly world-wide fellowship. It was necessary, though, for the apostles to be convinced that God was indeed breaking the barriers of racial prejudice and was including these half-breed people within the

fellowship of the Church. By the laying on of the apostles' hands, Samaria joined Jerusalem's outpouring.

#### DISCUSSION POINTS

77. Christians differ over how the Samaritan Pentecost applies to later believers. The Samaritans certainly received the Holy Spirit when they accepted the message of Jesus. Days later, when Peter and John laid hands on them, the Holy Spirit was poured out. Pentecostal and charismatic folk see in this that being "born again" and "baptised with the Holy Spirit" can be together or separated in time. Discuss.
78. What was the evidence of the Holy Spirit's outpouring on the Samaritans?

#### **Reading: Acts 8:26-40 THE ETHIOPIAN EUNUCH BELIEVES**

The reason the account of Philip and the Ethiopian follow on the Samaritan event is that as Philip was returning south from Samaria to Jerusalem (65 Ks), an angel (messenger) of the Lord told him to continue south beyond Jerusalem (probably a further 35 kilometres).

Philip's experience with the Ethiopian Eunuch gives us an outstanding example of how the Holy Spirit helps in soul winning. Philip was in close such close contact with God that he could get a message from an angel of God. (See Acts 5:19-20 and 12:7-10). Because he was obedient to the message, he soon met a man whose heart was already prepared for God's truth. The first mention in our reading of the Spirit is in verse 29:

*The Spirit told Philip, "Go to that chariot and stay near it."* Acts 8:29

The Holy Spirit somehow directed Philip to the chariot. The second mention of the Spirit is in 39, where it says that the Spirit of the Lord suddenly took Philip away.

*When they came up out of the water, the Spirit of the Lord suddenly took Philip away, and the eunuch did not see him again, but went on his way rejoicing.* Acts 8:39

Several early Greek manuscripts have a slightly different rendering of verse 39 that reads: *When they came up out of the water, the Spirit of the Lord fell upon the eunuch and the Angel of the Lord snatched Philip away.* Professor Bruce comments that this alternative rendering makes it clear that the Ethiopian's baptism was followed by the gift of the Spirit. However, even with the shorter version it is safe to infer that the Ethiopian received the Holy Spirit for he "went on his way rejoicing". Certainly, it was Holy Spirit joy that filled his heart (Romans 14:17, 1Thessalonians 1:6, Acts 13:52, 16:34).

#### DISCUSSION POINTS

79. Verse 37 (*Then Philip said, "If you believe with all your heart, you may." And he answered and said, "I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God."*) is not found in some very early manuscripts. It seems to be a very early addition. It certainly reflects the early church practice of baptizing a person immediately upon confession of faith in Jesus Christ. Please discuss.
80. What do we learn about the Holy Spirit in this passage?

## PAUL IS FILLED WITH THE HOLY SPIRIT

**Reading: Acts 9:1-19 ANANIAS LAYS HANDS ON PAUL TO RECEIVE**

*Then Ananias went to the house and entered it. Placing his hands on Saul he said, “Brother Saul, the Lord – Jesus, who appeared to you on the road as you were coming here – has sent me so that you may see again and be filled with the **Holy Spirit**.” Acts 9:17*

There is a certain “fluidity” about the workings of the Holy Spirit after Jesus rose. It was apostles who laid hands on the Samaritans to receive the Spirit. It was quite an ordinary believer, Ananias, who laid hands upon Paul. The Samaritans were empowered by the Spirit after they had believed and were baptized. Saul (whose name becomes Paul) is converted (born again) on the Damascus Road (See Acts 22 and 26:19), filled with the Spirit and then baptized in water. Paul lays hands on the Ephesians (Acts 19) after they believed in Jesus and had been water baptized and the Holy Spirit came on them. These early converts “spoke in tongues and prophesied”.

## THE HOLY SPIRIT FALLS ON THE GENTILES

**Reading: Acts 10:21-48 THE GENTILE PENTECOST**

*“While Peter was still speaking these words, the **Holy Spirit** came on all who heard the message. The circumcised believers who had come with Peter were astonished that the gift of the **Holy Spirit** had been poured out even on the Gentiles.” (Acts 10:44-45) Then Peter said, “Can anyone keep these people from being baptized with water? They have received the **Holy Spirit** just as we have.” (Acts 10:47).*

On the Day of Pentecost, Peter stood up and (quoting Joel 2:28) said, “In the last days I (God) will pour out my Spirit on all people.” Now, eight years later, Peter sees the outpouring of the Spirit, not on the Jews, but on the Gentiles – a Gentile Pentecost. Along with the work of the Holy Spirit, there is a place given to water baptism. Peter (v47) said, “Can anyone keep these people from being baptised?” The importance Peter attaches to water baptism is not because it is necessary for salvation. Their hearts had already been purified by faith (Acts 15:9). Peter’s call for the Gentiles to be water baptised, was an acknowledgement that their hearts had been “washed” already. Water baptism also declares that God has accepted the Gentiles – as well as the Jews – as members of His Church. The Holy Spirit had broken down the barrier between Jew and Gentile.

### DISCUSSION POINTS

81. In this “Pentecost” as on the Day of Pentecost (Acts 2:4) the gift of “tongues” was evident. In the Samaritan Pentecost ((Acts 8:17), in the case of the Eunuch (Acts 8:39) and in Paul’s case (Acts 9:17-18) there is no mention of tongues. Discuss.
82. Discuss the Holy Spirit’s outpouring on the Gentiles. Is this lost to us Gentiles?
83. Discuss why water baptism may declare that God had accepted the Gentiles.

**Readings: Acts 11:22-25 THE HOLY SPIRIT ALIVE IN BARNABAS**  
**Acts 11:27-30 THE HOLY SPIRIT SPEAKS THROUGH AGABUS**  
**Acts 13:1-4 THE HOLY SPIRIT SPEAKS TO ANTIOCH CHURCH**

One of the characteristics of the live, vibrant, growing New Testament church was the way the Holy Spirit moved in the lives of its people. Barnabas was a “good man, full of the Holy Spirit and faith” – Acts 6. The Holy Spirit gave Agabus a prophecy causing the church to respond to a need. The Holy Spirit spoke clearly to the Antioch Church leaders.

## THE HOLY SPIRIT IN THE LETTERS

The next section of the Bible after ACTS contains a grouping of LETTERS (epistles) that were written to the new churches by such as Peter, Paul, James, John and Jude. These letters to new Christians give important teaching on the person of the Holy Spirit. On this page are listed all the references to the Holy Spirit. However, because we are limited by space, our studies will focus on some key areas of the Holy Spirit's work in our lives. The references in **bold** will be subjects of our studies.

Romans	1:4	The LETTERS begin by declaring that the "SPIRIT of holiness" era has begun
	5:5	God has poured out his love into our hearts by the HOLY SPIRIT
	<b>8:1-39</b>	<b>This chapter describes our new life in the SPIRIT</b>
	9:1	Paul says his conscience is ruled by the HOLY SPIRIT
	<b>12:3-8</b>	<b>The "charismata" (Gifts of the Holy Spirit – 1 Corinthians 12:7-11)</b>
	14:17	The Kingdom of God is of righteousness, peace and joy in the HOLY SPIRIT
	15:13	May you "overflow with hope by the power of the HOLY SPIRIT"
	15:16	Paul desires the Gentiles to be God's - "sanctified by the HOLY SPIRIT"
	15:19	Paul says he has worked "with signs and miracles by the power of the SPIRIT"
	15:30	Paul needs the believers' prayers – and says the SPIRIT loves
1 Corinthians	2:4	Paul's preaching was "with a demonstration of the SPIRIT'S power
	2:10-14	The SPIRIT knows and teaches. Seven times the SPIRIT is mentioned here
	3:16-18	We are God's temple – and God's SPIRIT lives in us
	6:11	We were unclean before God – but now are washed clean by the SPIRIT
	<b>6:19</b>	<b>Again Paul says that our "body is a temple of the HOLY SPIRIT"</b>
	7:40	Paul's opinion is based on having the SPIRIT of God.
	<b>12</b>	<b>The gifts of the HOLY SPIRIT</b>
	13	Commonly called "The Love Chapter" - has a difficult verse (10) in it
	<b>14</b>	<b>(Continuing) with the gifts of the HOLY SPIRIT</b>
2 Corinthians	1:22	God has put his SPIRIT in our hearts
	3:3	Paul says we are a "letter" from Christ – written upon by the SPIRIT
	6:6	Paul contrasts hardships with enjoyable things. One is "in the HOLY SPIRIT"
	13:14	Paul closes with a triune blessing: "...and the fellowship of the HOLY SPIRIT"
Galatians	3:2-14	The SPIRIT and the law are contrasted. We receive the promise of the SPIRIT
	4:6	The SPIRIT calls out "Abba" (Father)
	4:29	Isaac, the son of promise, was "born by the power of the SPIRIT"
	5:5	The SPIRIT helps us wait for the Second Coming of Jesus Christ
	<b>5:16-25</b>	<b>The fruit of the SPIRIT (that grow in the believer)</b>
	6:8	We can sow to please the SPIRIT and thus reap eternal life from the SPIRIT
Ephesians	1:13	We were sealed by the promised HOLY SPIRIT
	1:17	The Father can give us the SPIRIT of wisdom and revelation
	2:18	Because of what Jesus did, the SPIRIT enables us to have access to the Father
	2:22	With Christ as the cornerstone, we are a body in which God lives by his SPIRIT
	3:5	Jesus Christ has been revealed by the SPIRIT to God's apostles and prophets
	3:16	The Father "may strengthen you with power through his SPIRIT..."
	4:3-4	"Make every effort to keep the unity of the SPIRIT through the bond of peace..."
	<b>4:30</b>	<b>"And do not grieve the HOLY SPIRIT of God..."</b>
	5:18	"Be filled with the SPIRIT"
	6:17-18	"Take the ... sword of the SPIRIT" "And pray in the SPIRIT"
Philippians	1:19	Paul received help "given by the SPIRIT of Jesus Christ"
	2:1	There is a "fellowship" in the SPIRIT among believers
	3:3	Our worship of God is through the SPIRIT of God
Colossians	1:8	The Holy SPIRIT is the source of all love.
1 Thessalonians	1:5-6	"our gospel came to you with power, with the HOLY SPIRIT, with conviction."
	4:7-8	We are called to live a pure life – God is pure – and so is the HOLY SPIRIT
	5:19	"Do not put out the SPIRIT'S fire"
2 Thessalonians	2:13	We become Christians through the "sanctifying" work of the SPIRIT.
1 Timothy	3:16	In many ways Jesus was validated and enabled by the SPIRIT

	4:1	The SPIRIT clearly speaks of the present and the future
2 Timothy	1:14	We must guard the gospel with the help of the HOLY SPIRIT who lives in us
Titus	3:5	Salvation “through the washing of rebirth and renewal by the HOLY SPIRIT
Hebrews	2:4	God confirmed the gospel message with gifts of the HOLY SPIRIT
	3:7	The HOLY SPIRIT says, “If you hear God’s voice, do not harden your hearts”
	6:4	A warning to those who have shared in the HOLY SPIRIT and backed off!
	9:8	This verse credits the HOLY SPIRIT as being the author of the Old Testament
	10:15	This verse credits the HOLY SPIRIT with authoring Jeremiah’s prophecy
	10:29	Insulting the HOLY SPIRIT
James	4:5	Does the SPIRIT who now lives in us take on our own envies and jealousies?
1 Peter	1:2	Chosen by the Father, set apart by the HOLY SPIRIT for obedience to Jesus
	1:11-12	The HOLY SPIRIT is called the SPIRIT OF CHRIST because Christ sent him
	3:18	Christ was put to death in the body, but made alive by the SPIRIT
	4:14	The SPIRIT of glory and of God rests on believers.
2 Peter	1:21	Prophets spoke from God as they were carried along by the HOLY SPIRIT
1 John	3:24	We know Jesus lives in us by the SPIRITHe gave us
	4:2	We recognize the SPIRIT of God because he acknowledges Jesus Christ
	4:6	We can recognize the SPIRIT of truth and the spirit of falsehood
	4:13	We know we live in God because he has given us of his SPIRIT
	5:6-8	The SPIRIT testifies, because the SPIRIT is truth. SPIRIT, water, blood.
Jude	v19-20	Those who follow natural instincts do not have the SPIRIT

## OUR NEW LIFE IN THE HOLY SPIRIT

### Reading:     **Romans 8:1-39**     **THE LAW OF THE SPIRIT OF LIFE**

*So now there is no condemnation to those who belong to Christ Jesus. For the power (law) of the life-giving **Spirit has freed you\*** through Christ Jesus from the power (law) of sin that leads to death.*

*\* Some manuscripts read **me**.     Romans 8:1-2   NLT*

*God destroyed sin’s control over us by giving his Son as a sacrifice for our sins. He did this so that the requirement of the law would be fully accomplished for us who no longer follow our sinful nature but instead follow the **Spirit**. Those who are dominated by the sinful nature think about sinful things, but those who are controlled by the **Holy Spirit** think about things that please the **Spirit**. Romans 8:3-5 NLT*

*But you are not controlled by your sinful nature. The Spirit controls you if you have the **Spirit of God** living in you. (And remember that those who do not have the **Spirit of Christ** living in them are not Christians at all.) Since Christ lives within you, even though your body will die because of sin, your spirit is alive because you have been made right with God. The **Spirit of God**, who raised Jesus from the dead, lives in you. And just as he raised Christ from the dead, he will give life to your mortal body by this same **Spirit** living in you. Romans 8:9-11 NLT*

*So, dear Christian friends, you have no obligation to do what your sinful nature urges you to do. For if you keep on following it, you will perish. But if through the power of the **Holy Spirit** you turn from it (your sinful nature) and its evil deeds, you will live. For all who are led by the **Spirit of God** are children of God. So you should not be like cowering, fearful slaves. You should behave instead like God’s very own children, adopted into his family – calling him “Father, dear Father.” For his **Holy Spirit** speaks to us deep in our hearts and tells us that we are God’s children. Romans 8:13-17 NLT*

This chapter 8 has many references to the Holy Spirit in it. Someone has said, “It is the greatest single chapter in the Bible about the inner working of the Holy Spirit in the life of the believer.” The Holy Spirit is mentioned no less than 17 times in the 39 verses.

In his letter to the Romans, Paul wrote his most comprehensive statement on living the Christian life. In his 6<sup>th</sup> chapter we see that we died with Jesus Christ to sin, but are alive to God in Christ Jesus (Romans 6:1-11). In his 7<sup>th</sup> chapter, Paul says we are released, and now serve God in the new life of the Spirit (Romans 7:6). Then in the 8<sup>th</sup> chapter, Paul goes on to describe the fierce, inner struggle that he, as a born again person, experienced between his old and fallen nature, and his new, regenerated mind. Although this conflict continues to exist throughout the present, earthly life of every Christian, a life of victory on earth is intended and can be attained. This is the work of the Holy Spirit.

#### DISCUSSION POINTS

84. There are 12 mentions of the Spirit in the Scriptures above. Read them and put each in a sentence describing the work of the Spirit. For example, in verse 2 the statement could be: “The life-giving Spirit has set me free from the power of sin.”
85. Verse 5 in the NLT says: “Those who are dominated by the sinful nature think about sinful things, but those who are controlled by the Holy Spirit think about things that please the Spirit.” The NIV says: “Those who live according to the sinful nature have their minds set on what that nature desires; but those who live in accordance with the Spirit have their minds set on what the Spirit desires.” Both translations are saying the same important truth. Discuss.
86. Verse fourteen says we can be led – or guided – by the Spirit of God. That is, if we are the “sons” and “daughters” of God. We can be led into truth (John 14:3,16; 16:13). We can be led in times of crisis and in times of decision (Acts 8:29; 10:19; 11:12; 11:28; 13:2-4; 16:7; 20:22; 21:11). Look at these Scripture references and explain how the Holy Spirit can lead believers.
87. Romans 8:23 also mentions the **Spirit**. Please comment on the following: Creation has been marred and devastated by sin. A shaft of light – a mighty earthquake – an upheaval - has occurred with the rising of Jesus from the dead. The Holy Spirit has been released upon the world and the scene changes. By the rising of Jesus, we can live again through his Holy Spirit, and thus become the **FIRSTFRUITS** of this new order. Resident in us now is the key to one more change. Life is implanted and glory is yet to be. So while we rejoice in our new life, we also groan inwardly as we await the final consummation of our salvation – Heaven. We wait eagerly for our adoption and the redemption of our bodies.

We now come to a major area of the Holy Spirit’s work in the believer and the church – the “charismatic” gifts of the Spirit. Dr John Rae Th.D. in his Commentary on the Holy Spirit in the New Testament gives a definition: “**A spiritual gift is a manifestation of the Holy Spirit, enabling one to minister to Christ’s body, the Church.**”

### SEVEN HOLY SPIRIT GIFTS IN ROMANS

**Reading: Romans 12:3-8 SEVEN CHARISMATIC GIFTS IN ROMANS**

Dr John Rae writes: “Romans 12:3-8 is one of the key passages in the New Testament describing the charismatic gifts. The Greek for ‘gifts’ in verse 6 is ‘charismata’ – the same as in 1 Corinthians 12:4,9,28,30,31; and 1 Peter 4:10.”

There is no mention of the Holy Spirit in our passage but 1 Corinthians 12:7-11 is clear that the ‘charismata’ are the product of, and are inspired by, the Holy Spirit. There are seven gifts of the Spirit listed in Romans 12. Dr John Rae explains them as follows:

1. PROPHECY is the ability to speak forth under divine prompting something the Spirit has revealed to the one having this gift. It is exercised in proportion to one’s faith.
2. SERVING or MINISTRY where the Greek word ‘diakonia’ can refer either the ministering of the temporal affairs of a local congregation (Acts 6:1-3) or to the dispensing of the word of life (Acts 6:4). There is surely a charismatic gift in operation when one can keep on ministering to the saints with love and hard work (Hebrews 6:10) until the ministry is fulfilled (Colossians 4:17).
3. TEACHING is not simply systematic instruction (2 Timothy 2:2), but is a manifestation of the Holy Spirit in the ability to make plain the meaning of the Word of God which he has inspired. One who has the gift of teaching may often manifest a word of knowledge, a flash of insight into truth that penetrates beyond the operation of his own unaided intellect.
4. EXHORTATION is the ministry of speaking words of comfort and encouragement (paraklesis) under the guidance and anointing of the Paraclete Himself. This gift usually accompanies preaching (of Acts 13:15, with Paul’s sermon); teaching (1 Tim 4:13, 6:2; Titus 1:9, 2:15), and prophesying (1 Cor 14:3).
5. GIVING is the exercise of private benevolence and sharing what one has. A ministry of giving needs wisdom and guidance from the Holy Spirit, so that one does not contribute to unworthy causes or to selfish, grasping persons. Giving should be done with generosity (2 Cor 8:2,11,13), and sincerity, with no self-seeking or ulterior motive.
6. LEADERSHIP is a gift, which implies ability to rule or manage or administer in a church. Every elder and deacon must have this ability, as proven first in his own household (1 Tim 3:4,5,12). Some elders were especially able along this line, and were worthy of double honour (1 Tim 5:17). The members of their congregation were to obey them, and submit to them (Heb 13:17) and show due appreciation (1 Thess 5:12). A ruling elder will often need a charismatic word of wisdom or knowledge in order to perform his task efficiently.
7. SHOWING MERCY (NIV) seems the same as “helping others” (1 Cor 12:28). Every Christian in the local church, whether a leader or not, should have and exercise this gift with cheerfulness. This special ministry may involve visiting the poor, the sick or the sorrowing. It may be helping behind the scenes. In any case, the task should be done cheerfully. A person of a grudging or despondent mood obviously does not have the charismatic endowment for showing mercy to others.

## **THE HOLY SPIRIT’S FRUIT AND GIFTS**

**Readings: Galatians 5:16-25 and 1 Corinthians 12:1-31    FRUIT AND GIFTS**

## DISCUSSION POINTS

88. After discussing the seven spiritual gifts above, which ones do you think are your gifts? [If in a group, ask others what they think are your spiritual gifts.]
89. Paul says elsewhere (1 Corinthians 12:31) that we can “eagerly desire” spiritual gifts. Which of the above would you like to have and why.

The difference between the FRUIT and the GIFTS is that the first needs believers devotedness to God over a period of time whilst the gifts are given by God complete – and in an instant. We are indebted to the late Dr. Edwin Orr (who visited New Zealand many times and who wrote the words “Search me O God” to the Maori tune “Now Is The Hour”) for the following and significant comparison:

	FRUIT	GIFTS
Towards God	Love, Joy, Peace	Wisdom, Knowledge, Faith
Towards others	Patience, Kindness, Goodness	Healing, Miracles, Prophecy
Towards oneself	Faithfulness, Meekness, Self-control	Discernment, Tongues, Interpretation

1. LOVE does not grow gradually out of the soil of our human flesh, but is the kind of love God showed us in Jesus when he gave Jesus to die for our sins (Romans 5:8). 1 Corinthians 13:4-7 describes it as patient towards those who provoke and injure us (long-suffering); returning good for evil (kind); free from envy (malice and ill will); never rude or discourteous; never rejoicing in the downfall of others. It bears up with faith and hope in every circumstance of life. The first fruit.
2. JOY is something the world does not know about. It is not the mad pursuit of pleasure. It is not a measure of happiness or satisfaction. It is a deep and continuing joy that comes as the Spirit makes Jesus and his work of salvation more and more real to our hearts.
3. PEACE. Real peace from the Holy Spirit includes a quiet spirit. It is the consciousness that we are in right relationship with God. It is a sense of spiritual well being.
4. PATIENCE (or “long-suffering) is having patience with people who deliberately try to upset us or harm us. (Ephesians 4:2; James 1:19; Romans 12:19)
5. KINDNESS is a kindness and generosity that tries to put people in the best light. It is sympathetic, and gives the soft answer that Solomon says turns away wrath, or avoids causing angry outbursts of temper (Proverbs 15:1). It has an element of “gentleness” and KJV / NKJV so renders it.
6. GOODNESS has the idea of the development of character that is truly good, upright, dependable, and yet still generous and good to others. It is being like Jesus.
7. FAITHFULNESS – not “faith” in God but “faithfulness” towards God and others with trust and obedience.
8. GENTLENESS – or “meekness” as the KJV puts it, is not a self-abasing or belittling of oneself. Rather, it is true humility that does not consider itself too good to do the humble tasks. It is not too big to be courteous, considerate and gentle with everyone. It is modest, yet willing to try when jobs need doing.
9. SELF-CONTROL is not mere moderation. It is self-control. It is part of God’s fruit that helps us control those desires, impulses, passions and appetites. The Spirit helps us to discipline ourselves (2 Timothy 1:7). We need to co-operate with the Spirit in his work. Only weeds will grow automatically.

## THE GIFTS OF THE SPIRIT 1 Corinthians 12:4-10, 28, 30, 31 and 14: 5, 13, 27

**Definition:** A spiritual gift is a supernatural capacity or power bestowed on a Christian by the Holy Spirit to enable him or her to exercise his or her function as a member of the Body of Christ. These gifts are not natural abilities, nor permanent possessions, but are supernatural and often sudden manifestations of the Holy Spirit (v7). A gift is not given primarily to benefit the one through whom it is manifested, but is for the “common good” (NIV). This means it is for the benefit and blessing of the whole congregation or assembly of Christians in a given locality.

1. **WISDOM:** This gift is mentioned only in 1 Corinthians 12:8 and is there described as a “word’ or ‘message’ of wisdom. Jesus manifested a word of wisdom when, to the Pharisees who were intent on trapping him with their question about paying a tax to Caesar, he gave this famous reply: “Render to Caesar the things that are Caesar’s, and to God the things that are God’s.
2. **KNOWLEDGE:** This gift is mentioned only in 1 Cor. 12 also. Dennis Bennett defines it as a “supernatural revelation of facts past, present, or future, which were not learned through the efforts of the natural mind”. Jesus knew the evil thoughts of the scribes (Matthew 9:2-6) and the marital history of the Samaritan woman (John 4:17-19). A word of knowledge enabled Peter to rebuke Ananias and Saphira for their lying wickedness (Acts 5:1-9).
3. **FAITH:** All Christians must obviously have faith but there is a special gift of the Holy Spirit that enables the possessor “to stand upon revealed truth and trust in a power that is beyond the sphere of human possibilities”. The gift of faith, according to Dennis Bennett, is “a sudden surge of faith, usually in a crisis, to confidently believe without a doubt, that as we act or speak in Jesus’ name, it shall come to pass:.. This is the wonder-working faith that Jesus said can move mountains (Matthew 17:20; 21:21 etc.)
4. **HEALING:** (1 Cor 12:9, 30) is really plural – “gifts of healing”. The plural form indicates that all miracles are in each separate case a supernatural operation of the Spirit. The plural noun also indicates the different kinds of diseases and afflictions requiring different forms of healing. Any believer can pray for the sick and see them healed by the power of Jesus. Mark 16:17-18.
5. **MIRACLES:** (1 Cor 12:10,29) or “deeds of power”. The working of miracles covers those wonderful works, which are not strictly healings. For example, the exorcising of demons and the restoring of persons from death, such as Dorcas and Euticus (Acts 9:36-41; 20:6-12). [Illust: Hayden Mellsop – rice 1949]
6. **PROPHECY:** “A communication of the mind of god, imparted to a believer by the Holy Spirit”. (NIV notes). It may be a prediction (Acts 11:28; 21:10-11) or an indication of the will of God (1 Cor 14:29-30, Acts 13:1-2). Prophecy is not the same as a God-given ability to preach and teach the Gospel effectively. Preaching is telling or explaining what one already knows. Prophesying is “directly proclaiming the mind of God, by the inspiration and prompting of the Holy Spirit, and not from one’s own thoughts.” (Dr Rae.)
7. **DISCERNMENT:** Or “distinguishing between spirits”. This spiritual gift does not come through training, but is imparted the moment it is needed. The Greek word for discernment – ‘diakrisis’ means a judging through – or a seeing, right through to the inner reality with a judgement based on that insight. When a church congregation opens itself up to the operation of spiritual gifts, there occasionally comes spurious manifestations. 1 Corinthians 14:29 says “Two or three prophets should speak, and the others weigh carefully what is said...” This gift is the gracious provision of the Head of the church to arm the church against the subtle deceptions of the enemy.
8. **TONGUES:** Frederick Tatford of the Open Brethren once wrote (“Workers Together” Aug. 1973) that this gift is a “supernatural manifestation of the Holy Spirit, enabling the individual to speak in a language he or she has never learned”. The gift of tongues are twofold: Private and public. Private tongues is prayer (1 Cor 14:2; this is beneficial 14:4) and is for private worship (14:4,16) but also for public worship (14:27).
9. **IINTERPRETATION OF TONGUES:** (1 Cor 12:10,30; 4:5, 13, 27) “Since this is a spiritual manifestation”, says Tatford, “the gift is obviously more than an ability to translate, acquired by learning. It is an imparted power to interpret without previous knowledge of the tongue being used...”

### DISCUSSION POINTS

90. There has been a view that spiritual gifts ended early in the church's history. How does this view sit with I Corinthians 1:7?
91. Explain your understanding of the FRUIT of the Holy Spirit
92. Explain your understanding of the GIFTS of the Holy Spirit.
93. The fruit are meant to grow together in a believer. What are your strongest?
94. The gifts arrive. What are your gifts? And do you function in certain ones?
95. Give an example of an occasion where you functioned in a certain gift.
96. Give your description of a believer **WALKING IN THE HOLY SPIRIT**.

### TWENTY-FIVE SPIRITUAL GIFTS

1. Word of wisdom (1 Cor 12:8; Luke 6:9)
2. Word of knowledge (1 Cor 12:8; Luke 18:22)
3. Faith (1 Cor 12:9; Acts 3:6)
4. Gifts of healing (1 Cor 12:9, 28; Acts 28:1-10)
5. Working of miracles (1 Cor 12:10; Acts 6:8)
6. Prophecy (1 Cor 12:10; 1 Thess 5:20-21; Eph 4:11)
7. Discerning of spirits (1 Cor 12:10; Luke 8:29)
8. Tongues (1 Cor 12:10; Acts 19:6)
9. Interpretation of tongues (1 Cor 12:10; 14:13-33)
10. Helping (1 Cor 12:28)
11. Administration (1 Cor 12:28; Acts 6:2-3)
12. Ministry/service (Rom 12:7; 2 Tim 1:16-18)
13. Teaching (Rom 12:7; Eph 4:11-14)
14. Encouragement (Rom 12:8; Heb 10:24-25)
15. Giving (Rom 12:8; 1 Cor 13:3; Acts 4:32-35)
16. Leadership (Rom 12:8; Acts 13:12)
17. Mercy (Rom 12:8; Luke 5:12-13)
18. Apostleship (Eph 4:11)
19. Evangelism (Eph 4:11; 2 Tim 4:5)
20. Pastoral guidance (Eph 4:11)
21. Grace (Rom 12:6; Eph 3:7; 4:7; 1 Pet 4:10-11)
22. Willingness to face martyrdom (1 Cor 13:3)
23. Intercession (Rom 8:26-27)
24. Hospitality (1 Pet 4:9)
25. Celibacy (1 Cor 7:8)

## THE HOLY SPIRIT IN THE REVELATION

The fourth and final section of the New Testament is the **REVELATION**. (THE GOSPELS, THE ACTS, THE LETTERS, THE REVELATION) This very special and final book of the Bible looks ahead and depicts – in visions – the conflict between good and evil, the progress of believers and the church, and the final consummation of things. An aged Apostle John wrote it from the Island of Patmos where he was exiled.

Here follows the references to God's **Holy Spirit** in the Revelation. The references in **bold** are four "in the Spirit" passages that will form Study 16; and the seven references in italics will form Study 17.

Revelation	1:4	"Grace and peace to you from (Jesus) and from the seven SPIRITS..."
	1:10	<b>John says: "I was in the SPIRIT on the Lord's Day..."</b>
	2:7,11	<i>"He who has an ear, let him hear what the SPIRIT says to the churches."</i>
	2:17	<i>"He who has an ear, let him hear what the SPIRIT says to the churches."</i>
	2:29	<i>"He who has an ear, let him hear what the SPIRIT says to the churches."</i>
	3:1	<i>These are the words of him who holds the seven SPIRITS of God..."</i>
	3:6	<i>"He who has an ear, let him hear what the SPIRIT says to the churches."</i>
	3:13	<i>"He who has an ear, let him hear what the SPIRIT says to the churches."</i>
	3:22	<i>"He who has an ear, let him hear what the SPIRIT says to the churches."</i>
	4:2	<b>At once I was in the SPIRIT, and there before me was the throne in heaven...</b>
	4:5	Before the throne, seven lamps were blazing... the seven SPIRITS of God.
	5:6	Then I saw the Lamb (with) seven horns and seven eyes... the seven SPIRITS
	11:11	But after the three and a half days a BREATH of life from God entered them
	14:13	"Yes," says the SPIRIT, "they will rest from their labour, their deeds following."
	17:3	<b>Then the angel carried me away in the SPIRIT into a desert.</b>
	19:10	"Worship God! For the testimony of Jesus is the SPIRIT of prophecy."
	21:10	<b>And he carried me away in the SPIRIT to a mountain great and high - Jerusalem</b>

### "I WAS IN THE SPIRIT" - JOHN

There are many suggested outlines of this remarkable book. May I suggest that each time John records that he was "**in the SPIRIT**" - that marks the beginning of a period as per:

#### "IN THE SPIRIT" John:

1.     **1:1-3:22**     **WRITES TO and describes the church on earth.**
2.     **4:1-16:21`**   **IS CAUGHT UP to heaven to view heaven's judgements.**
3.     **17:1-18:24**   **VIEWS the final battle (against the whore and Babylon) and**  
           **19:1-21:9**       **watches the triumph of the King of kings and Lord of lords.**
4.     **21:10-22:21**   **EXPERIENCES the holy city, and the heavenly realm.**

**Reading:     Revelation 1:10-20   I WAS IN THE SPIRIT ON THE LORD'S DAY**

The Lord's Day was the name of the first day of the week – and so named because Jesus rose from the dead on that day. After Jesus had ascended to heaven, Christians continued to meet on the Jewish Sabbath (Saturday) for a while but very quickly that changed to the Lord's Day (Sunday) as Acts 20:7 clearly shows. And 1 Corinthians 16:2 reveals that the Lord's Day was the day of worship when each

person brought a sum of money proportionate to his or her income to be collected. Justin Martyr, who wrote in A.D.150, says that offerings were brought to the church on Sundays.

Being “in the **Spirit**” is being in an elevated state of Holy Spirit intensity. It was not a dream but perhaps a fully awake vision like Peter’s in Acts 10:10. It seems that the Holy Spirit took full possession of John so that he was able to visualise the invisible world. “I was in the Spirit” or “He carried me away in the Spirit” occurs four times in Revelation.

The places are: Revelation 1:10, 4:2, 17:3, 21:10. This suggests four separate visions that John had. John’s experiences were very similar to those of the prophet Ezekiel. Both were carried by the Spirit (Ezekiel 3:12, 14; 8:3; Revelation 17:3; 21:10). Both books, along with Daniel, are apocalyptic – that is, contain detailed prophecies of the end time, and are full of figurative language and symbols.

The Life Application Bible says this about verses 13 -16:

Here Jesus appears as the mighty Son of Man. His white hair indicates his wisdom and divine nature (see also Daniel 7:9); his bright eyes symbolize judgment of all evil; the gold sash across his chest reveals him as the High Priest, who goes into God’s presence to obtain forgiveness of sin for those who have believed in him. The sword in Jesus’ mouth symbolizes the power and force of his message. His words of judgment are as sharp as swords (Isaiah 49:2; Hebrews 4:12).

#### DISCUSSION POINT

97. Revelation 1:10-20 tells of John’s first “in the Spirit” experience. Interpret his vision of the awesome, living Son of man.

#### **Reading: Revelation 4:1-4 I SAW A DOOR STANDING OPEN IN HEAVEN**

John makes it clear that he is a prophet (Revelation 22:9) and that what he is writing is a prophecy (Revelation 1:3; 10:11; 22:7; 22:10; 22:18). A prophet receives visions from God – as, for example, Ezekiel, and saw into the heavens as did Daniel (Daniel 7 etc.). John was transported in the Spirit, and saw a throne in heaven with someone sitting on it. This picture was not new, but was frequent in the Old Testament (e.g. Psalm 47:8). But what is new, in the sense that it is fresh, is that John has the special privilege of hearing a voice say: “Come up here, and I will show you what must take place after this.” And the special privilege of immediately being transformed in the Spirit – and of seeing!

#### DISCUSSION POINT

98. Revelation 4:1-4 gives John’s second vision of heaven – and of his being caught up into heaven. Read and discuss this passage. What is the vision’s purpose?

#### **Reading: Revelation 17:1-18 THE WOMAN ON THE BEAST**

The woman on the beast is said to be (verse 18) ‘the great city that rules over the kings of the earth’. In verse 9 it speaks of her sitting on seven hills. It was well known that Rome began as a network of seven hill settlements on the left bank of the Tiber River. In the time of John, Rome was the hub of the world’s secular power. It was relentless and cruel. Just as Babylon represented earthly, powerful,

worldly evil, so Rome did also. Thus it was called: “Babylon the Great”. The scarlet beast arose out of the sea (see chapter 13). The beast symbolizes the wicked Roman Empire, but also could easily represent the final, personal anti-Christ. The Spirit caused John to see the reality of evil, but the angel told John that the “Lamb will overcome” (verses 13-14).

#### DISCUSSION POINT

99. Revelation 17::1-18 has John’s vision of wicked Babylon represented by a woman and a beast. Why did the Spirit (v3) carry John away to observe this vision?

#### **Reading: Revelation 21:9-14 THE HOLY CITY - JERUSALEM**

The fuller reading, if you have time, is verses 1 –27. When the angel takes John “in the Spirit” to a high mountain, it reminds me of Jesus being taken by the devil to a high place. Here, however, the experience is quite different. It was very special! He saw the bride, the wife of the Lamb (verse 9). Everything about this wonderful city is symbolic of the beauties the bride displays for the glory of her husband – Jesus Christ. It shone with a glory that had its source in God (verse 11). It was as brilliant as a precious jewel, and as transparent as crystal. It had a high wall indicating that evil would never penetrate. The wall had twelve gates with angels, conveying that legitimate folk may enter, but that there were guardians. The wall (of both protection and entrance) had twelve foundations, representing the twelve founding apostles. To the early propagators of the gospel was the task of defeating evil by the message of Jesus, and walling-up believers. The apostles showed how to enter into eternal blessing through the name of Jesus. The city was made of all manner of precious substances showing the variety of believers which made the composite of blessing and an appropriate, purified bride for the lamb.

#### DISCUSSION POINT

100. Revelation 21:1-27. For the fourth time John is carried away (v10) to see something. This vision is the climax of the four visions. Interpret the symbols.