

The Holy Spirit Sweeps Into History

1. I want to tell you a story... and it begins “in the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth.” Shortly thereafter, we find that what had been created was in chaos – darkness and void. And then we meet someone for the first time.

2. The Spirit of God moved upon the face of the deep. The word for “Spirit” also means “wind” or “breath.” It is a mysterious word for a mysterious being!
 - a. Just as the wind goes where it wants without asking us and without us being able to understand it fully, the Spirit goes where He wants and does what He does.
 - b. Just as our breath is life... but we can't even define life... the Spirit is beyond our definitions.
 - c. And He is now here, hovering over the water.
 - d. And then... LIGHT! Order, design, a safe place for God's garden and the two people he is going to put in it.
 - e. So... who is this Spirit?

3. No other religion has anything like the Spirit . Many religions believe in this or that god and some of them even have a son – or many sons – of God. But no other religion has a person in the universe known as the Spirit of God, the Holy Spirit, or – as we used to call him in the KJV – the Holy Ghost (or guest).

4. He is the presence of God with us. (and the word for him is often a female term) He is mentioned 88 times in the Old Testament and yet he remains, to most of us, a mystery. He is, as Francis Chan called him, the Forgotten God.

5. Remember our discussion about God and boxes two weeks ago. The Father plans, the Son executes, and the Spirit brings the power. Usually...
6. In Genesis 1:2, He is involved in creation. The order that we see in the universe came through Him. (Fibonacci, structure, design – where the Spirit lives there is the opposite of chaos) [SLIDE ONE]
7. In Genesis 6:3, we find the Spirit trying to bring people back to morality and reason, but they refused him – they resisted him – and so descended into chaos triggering the flood of Noah.
8. In Exodus 35:30ff we see the Spirit giving people artistic gifts. [SLIDE TWO] See the beauty in the world? Hear beautiful music? See art that moves you, colors that lift you up? The Spirit gives voice to a part of us that would otherwise remain silent – even in our prayers, he interprets for us. (Beethoven, depressed people, seeing the world in a different way)
9. As I said before, life is complicated and hard to define. We know that God said that Jesus created all things and that “in him all things hold together.” (2nd grade question about life) In Psalm 104 and Isaiah 40:7 we see that the presence of the Spirit brings life while his absence spins us down into death. [remember – God breathed into Adam and Eve and they became living souls]
10. When people needed extra wisdom to guide them through difficult times, the Spirit came to them [on judges, priests]. In fact, Numbers 24:2 tells us that He gives us the words we need when we need them. It is, of course, up to us to use them. And thereby lies a really important lesson to us. We have the gift of the Spirit but gifts are of little use to us if we refuse to open them and use them. That is why Paul told baptized people who had already received the Spirit to pray daily to be filled with Him.

11. Skipping forward to the Christmas story, we find that Jesus was placed in Mary's womb by the Holy Spirit. He did not place an entirely miraculous egg in her but rather placed the male half of the equation in an egg she already had – so that Jesus was always human and always God. The Spirit did that.
12. Before Jesus grew up and started his ministry, the Spirit went out to his cousin, John the Baptist, and gave him words, a mission, and a passion to prepare the way for Jesus.
13. And one of the greatest mysteries of history is what did Jesus know and when did he know it? I believe that Jesus was God and has been here since the beginning with the Father... but I'm pretty sure Jesus didn't completely understand that when he was three years old. So how was he guided in his speech and behavior? The Holy Spirit gave him the words he needed and moved him around when he needed to move. So much so that Jesus refused to engage the devil except with scripture – he would only use the words given by the Spirit.
14. When Jesus tossed out demons, guess who gave him the power to do that? And when you need a gift or a clear path, it is the Holy Spirit who brings that to you (see **Luke 11:1-13**).
15. The Holy Spirit is everywhere in the New Testament. Remember I said he was mentioned 88 times in the Old Testament? In the New Testament he is mentioned in every book except three – Philemon, 2 and 3 John.
16. Know some important things about the Spirit as a personal being.
 - a. **Every attribute that the Father and Son have, he has. (Romans 15:16; 1 Thess. 5:23)**

b. He is a personal, sentient being who can be grieved. (Eph. 4:30; 1 Thess. 5:19)

c. He can inhabit our personal lives. (1 Cor. 6:19)

d. He can be resisted. He strives with us and wants to convict our hearts. (Jn. 16:18; Acts 7:51; Gen. 6:3) And you don't want him to give up on you for that way lies chaos and death.

17. He is the Spirit of Christ (Rom. 8:9), a letter from God written in our hearts (2 Cor. 3:3). To have Christ is to have the Spirit and to have the Spirit is to have Christ.

18. In the centuries since the New Testament was completed, what has the Spirit done? What He has always done – guided every Christian who let him guide them. He has given us wisdom, moved us along the road, and helped us to bring a bit more heaven into this dark, chaotic place.

And so we say: (from the Nicene Creed as we've studied it so far...

We believe in one God,
the Father, the Almighty,
maker of heaven and earth,
of all that is, seen and unseen.
We believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ,
the only Son of God,
eternally begotten of the Father,
God from God, Light from Light,
true God from true God,
begotten, not made,
of one Being with the Father.
Through him all things were made.

For us and for our salvation
he came down from heaven:
by the power of the Holy Spirit
he became incarnate from the Virgin Mary,
and was made man.
For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate;
he suffered death and was buried.
On the third day he rose again
in accordance with the Scriptures;
he ascended into heaven
and is seated at the right hand of the Father.
He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead,
and his kingdom will have no end.
We believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life,
who proceeds from the Father and the Son.
With the Father and the Son he is worshiped and glorified.
He has spoken through the Prophets.