

The Holy Spirit

First Baptist Church Dandridge
Winter 2026

Session One: Who Is the Holy Spirit?

Bibliography

- Akin, Daniel L. *A Theology for the Church*. Nashville: B&H Academic, 2007.
- Cole, Graham. *He Who Gives Life: The Doctrine of the Holy Spirit*. Wheaton: Crossway, 2007.
- Chan, Francis. *Forgotten God: Reversing Our Tragic Neglect of the Holy Spirit*. Colorado Springs: David C. Cook, 2009.
- Ferguson, Sinclair. *The Holy Spirit*. Leicester, England: Inter-Varsity, 1996.
- Frame, John. *Systematic Theology: An Introduction to Christian Belief*. Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R Publishing Company, 2013.
- Hamilton, James. *God's Indwelling Presence: The Holy Spirit in the Old & New Testaments*. Nashville: B&H Academic, 2006.
- Graham, Billy. *The Holy Spirit: Activating God's Power in Your Life*. Nashville: Word Publishing, 1988.
- Grudem, Wayne. *Systematic Theology: An Introduction to Biblical Doctrine*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1994.
- Warrington, Keith. *The Message of the Holy Spirit*. Downers Grove, IL: Inter-Varsity Press, 2009.

1. The Mysterious Nature of the Holy Spirit

"Do not marvel that I said to you, 'You must be born again.' The wind blows where it wishes, and you hear its sound, but you do not know where it comes from or where it goes. So it is with everyone who is born of the Spirit." – John 3:7-8

- a. **Quote:** "Wind suggests something of the mysterious, invisible, dynamic power of God" – John Goldingay
- b. **Quote:** "To profess to know a great deal about the Spirit of God is contrary to the nature of the Spirit of God. There is a hiddenness to the Spirit that cannot be uncovered. There is an immediacy of the Spirit that cannot be shoved into vision. There is an invisibility of the Spirit that cannot be forced into visibility. There is a reticence of the Spirit that cannot be converted into openness. For these reasons one feels helpless, inadequate, and unworthy to write a line about the Spirit." – Bernard Ramm
- c. **Point:** But while the Holy Spirit is mysterious and unpredictable and uncontrollable, God has revealed much about him in the Bible.

2. What Scripture Reveals About the Holy Spirit

a. The Identity of the Holy Spirit

- The English word “spirit” is a translation of three ancient words, “*ruach*” (Hebrew), “*pneuma*” (Greek), and “*spiritus*” (Latin). These words are considered “onomatopoeia,” because the pronunciations sound like air in motion. In general, these words describe wind, breath, and airflow. There are five uses of these words in Scripture.
 - The natural use: e.g., “wind.”
 - The human use indicating the inward capacity to know the Lord: e.g. human spirit/soul.
 - The personal use indicating attitude: e.g., “a spirit of love.”
 - The angelic use: e.g., “an evil spirit.”
 - The divine use: e.g., “the Spirit of God” or “the Holy Spirit.”
- **Point:** Not every use of the word “spirit” in the Bible refers to the Holy Spirit, but most English translations are sensitive to capitalize the word “Spirit/Holy Spirit” in the appropriate context. However, each of these earthly uses are reflective of the Holy Spirit’s nature and work.

b. The Divinity of the Holy Spirit

- **Trinity:** The Bible indicates that God is one (Duet. 6:4; Mark 12:29; James 2:19), yet three persons: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.
 - Matthew 28:19 – “*Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit,*” (Great Commission)
 - 2 Corinthians 13:14 – “*The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ and the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all.*” (Benediction)
 - Acts 5:3-5 – “*But Peter said, “Ananias, why has Satan filled your heart to lie to the Holy Spirit....You have not lied to man but to God.”*”
 - Old Testament passages concerning Yahweh are applied to the Holy Spirit in the New Testament (ex. Isa. 6:8/Acts 28:25; Jer. 31:31-34/Heb. 10:15-17).
 - The Holy Spirit is described as having the divine attributes of eternity (Heb. 9:14), omnipresence (Ps. 139:7), omniscient (1 Cor. 2:10, 11), and omnipotence (Luke 1:35).
 - The Holy Spirit is credited with the divine works of creation (Gen. 1:2; Col. 1:16-17), providence, miracles, and resurrection.

- **Point:** The Holy Spirit is fully God, along with the Father and Son (Jesus). The Spirit is not merely an attribute of God (power, force, influence, etc.), but God himself (contra: Islam; Judaism; Jehovah's Witnesses; etc.).

c. The Person of the Holy Spirit

- **Problem:** Since the Bible describes the Spirit in terms of "fire," "water," "wind," "firstfruits of harvest," a "seal," and other metaphors, it leads people to see the Holy Spirit as a force, power, energy, or substance. In this sense, the Holy Spirit is more like an item that God uses rather than being God himself.
- **Personhood:** The best way to understand the divine nature of the Holy Spirit is to see him as a person, like the Father and Son. The Bible describes his nature using personal language.
 - **Personal Pronoun "I"** – When speaking about the Holy Spirit, Jesus never referred to "it," but always used the personal pronouns "He" or "Himself" (e.g. John 14-16). Therefore, not only is the Spirit understood as a person, but he is referenced in the masculine sense.
 - **He Comforts:** "And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Helper ("parakletos") to be with you forever..." (John 14:16)
 - **He Speaks:** "While they were worshiping the Lord and fasting, the Holy Spirit said, 'set apart for me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them.'" (Acts 13:2; cf. Rev. 2:7).
 - **He Intercedes:** "Likewise the Spirit helps us in our weakness. For we do not know what to pray for as we ought, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us with groanings too deep for words." (Romans 8:26)
 - **He Testifies:** "But when the Helper comes, whom I will send to you from the Father, the Spirit of truth, who proceeds from the Father, he will bear witness about me." (John 15:26).
 - **He Leads:** "And the Spirit said to Philip, 'Go over and join this chariot.'" (Acts 8:29; cf. Rom. 8:14)
 - **He Commands:** "And they went through the region of Phrygia and Galatia, having been forbidden by the Holy Spirit to speak the word in Asia. And when they had come up to Mysia, they attempted to go into Bithynia, but the Spirit of Jesus did not allow them." (Acts 16:6-7)

- **He Guides:** "When the Spirit of truth comes, he will guide you into all the truth, for he will not speak on his own authority, but whatever he hears he will speak, and he will declare to you the things that are to come." (John 16:13)
- **He Can be Lied to:** "But Peter said, 'Ananias, why has Satan filled your heart to lie to the Holy Spirit...'" (Acts 5:3)
- **He Can be Outraged:** "How much worse punishment, do you think, will be deserved by the one who has trampled underfoot the Son of God, and has profaned the blood of the covenant by which he was sanctified, and has outraged the Spirit of grace?" (Heb. 10:29)
- **He Can be Grieved:** "And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, by whom you were sealed for the day of redemption." (Eph. 4:30) [Milne writes, "One can resist a power, but grieve only a person."]
- **He Can be Blasphemed:** "Therefore I tell you, every sin and blasphemy will be forgiven people, but the blasphemy against the Spirit will not be forgiven." (Matt. 12:31)