

Study Theme Overview: **Holy Spirit**

Summary:

- As God's personal, animating presence, the **Holy Spirit** works in creation to bring life, beauty, and order out of chaos.
- Humanity then re-introduces chaos into God's good world, causing corruption and death.
- But through Israel's prophets, God reveals that the Spirit is renewing creation and transforming human hearts.
- This is so people can return to true life, know real love, and be free to love God and others.
- In our study of the **Holy Spirit**, we will not attempt to look at all of the important Holy Spirit content in the Bible.
- Instead, we'll trace the biblical theme along key points in the narrative to see how the **Holy Spirit** shows up in the biblical narrative.

Who is the Holy Spirit

The Holy Spirit is one of the three persons of the Trinity, alongside the Father and the Son (or Word).

- As the invisible, personal presence of the creator God, the Holy Spirit brings about and sustains all creation, embodying God's active presence in the world.

The Big Picture

Chaos to Creation

- If we want to understand the Holy Spirit, we have to start on page one of the Bible.
 - Here, the uncreated world is depicted as a dark, chaotic place.
 - But above the chaos, God's Spirit hovers, ready to bring about life and order and beauty.
- The Hebrew word for "Spirit" is *ruakh*, and it's how the biblical authors talk about God's personal presence.
 - *Ruakh* can refer to a number of different things, but what they all have in common is energy.

The Big Picture (continued)

Creation all around us

- But what do we mean by energy?
 - Think of the invisible energy that makes the clouds move or the tree branches sway.
 - Or the vitality we feel in our bodies when we take a deep breath.
 - All of that is *ruakh*—and this is the same word used in the Bible to describe God's personal presence.
 - Just like wind and breath are invisible, God's Spirit is invisible.
 - Wind is powerful and God's Spirit is powerful.
 - And just as breath keeps us alive, God's Spirit sustains all of life.

Empowering Humans

- So, what is the purpose of this personal presence of God?
 - As we study about the Holy Spirit in the Bible, we see God's *ruakh* giving special empowerment to people for specific tasks.
 - First, God's Spirit enables Joseph to understand and interpret dreams (Gen. 37:5-11).
 - Then the craftsman/artist Bezalel is empowered by God's Spirit with wisdom, skills, and creative genius to make beautiful things in the tabernacle (Ex. 31:1-11).

New Chaos to New Creation

God's Spirit also empowers the prophets to see what's happening in history from God's point of view.

- And the prophets see a problem: While God's *ruakh* created a really good world, humans unleashed chaos into it through evil and injustice.
- But that's not the end of the story as the prophets see it.
- The Spirit will act again, just like in Genesis 1, but now to transform the human heart, to empower people to truly love God and others.

Empowering Jesus to Begin New Creation

- How will this new act of God's Spirit happen?
 - Centuries after the prophets, we are introduced to Jesus.
 - The Bible depicts a scene where Jesus is baptized in the waters of the Jordan River; the sky opens up and God's Spirit comes and rests on Jesus like a dove.
 - And in this event, we are meant to see God's Spirit empowering Jesus to begin the new creation.
 - After this moment, whenever he heals people or forgives their sins, Jesus is creating life where there once was death.

Disciples Continue the New Creation

- Now Israel's religious leaders oppose Jesus, and they eventually have him killed.
 - But still, God's Spirit is at work.
 - The earliest disciples of Jesus, who see him alive from the dead, say it is God's energizing Spirit that raises Jesus.
 - This is the beginning of new creation.

The New Creation continues

- And it's still going!
 - When Jesus appears to his closest followers, he breathes on them and says, “Receive the Holy Spirit.” (John 20:22)
 - Soon after that, the Spirit powerfully comes to rest upon and to fill all of his disciples, so they can become part of this new creation, share the good news, and learn how to live by the energy and influence of God's Spirit. (Acts 2)

The New Creation today

- Today, the Spirit is still hovering in dark places, pointing people to Jesus, transforming and empowering them to love God and others.
- And the Christian hope is that God's Spirit will finish the job.
- The story of the Bible ends with a vision of a new humanity living in a new world that's permeated with God's love and life-giving Spirit.

You and I are Jesus' new disciples!!!

Reflect

- Why do you think God's Spirit partners with regular people to bring about a new creation?

Hint: By using ordinary, flawed individuals, God proves that new creation comes from His strength (energy) rather than human agency.

Diver Deeper

So far, we've just skimmed the surface.

- Over the next few weeks, we're going to take a deeper dive into how the Holy Spirit contributes to the whole story of the Bible.

Hovering, Designing, and Creating Life (9/10)

Genesis 1:1-5, 2:7; Job 34:14-15

Empowering Humans (9/17)

Genesis 41:37-40; Exodus 31:1-5; Judges 3:9-10; Micah 3:8

We Need a New Spirit (9/24)

Ezekiel 36:24-30

Still Creating New Life (10/1)

John 1:1-5, 29-34

Restoration Through the Spirit (10/8)

Isaiah 61:1-3; Luke 4:16-21

The Spirit as Helper (10/15)

John 14:16-17, 25-27; 15:26-27; 16:5-15

Spirit and Flesh Unite (10/22)

Acts 2:1-21

Spirit-Empowered Gifts (10/29)

1 Cor. 12:4-11, 12:27-13:3

Spirit-Empowered Gifts (11/5)

Galatians 5:13-26

- **Next Study Theme (11/12): Love in the Bible**