

The Apostles' Creed: Week 11

...I believe in the Holy Spirit...

In the Scriptures:

1. Then afterward

I will pour out my spirit on all flesh;
your sons and your daughters shall prophesy,
your old men shall dream dreams,
and your young men shall see visions.

Even on the male and female slaves,
in those days, I will pour out my spirit.

I will show portents in the heavens and on the earth, blood and fire and columns of smoke. The sun shall be turned to darkness, and the moon to blood, before the great and terrible day of the Lord comes. Then everyone who calls on the name of the Lord shall be saved; for in Mount Zion and in Jerusalem there shall be those who escape, as the Lord has said, and among the survivors shall be those whom the Lord calls.

(Joel 2:28-32)

2. Nevertheless I tell you the truth: it is to your advantage that I go away, for if I do not go away, the Advocate will not come to you; but if I go, I will send him to you. And when he comes, he will prove the world wrong about sin and righteousness and judgment: about sin, because they do not believe in me; about righteousness, because I am going to the Father and you will see me no longer; about judgment, because the ruler of this world has been condemned.

I still have many things to say to you, but you cannot bear them now. When the Spirit of truth comes, he will guide you into all the truth; for he will not speak on his own, but will speak whatever he hears, and he will declare to you the things that are to come. He will glorify me, because he will take what is mine and declare it to you.

(John 16:7-14)

3. When the day of Pentecost came, they were all together in one place. Suddenly a sound like the blowing of a violent wind came from heaven and filled the whole house where they were sitting. They saw what seemed to be tongues of fire that separated and came to rest on each of them. All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues as the Spirit enabled them.

Now there were staying in Jerusalem God-fearing Jews from every nation under heaven. When they heard this sound, a crowd came together in bewilderment,

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because each one heard their own language being spoken. Utterly amazed, they asked: “Aren’t all these who are speaking Galileans? Then how is it that each of us hears them in our native language? Parthians, Medes and Elamites; residents of Mesopotamia, Judea and Cappadocia, Pontus and Asia, Phrygia and Pamphylia, Egypt and the parts of Libya near Cyrene; visitors from Rome (both Jews and converts to Judaism); Cretans and Arabs—we hear them declaring the wonders of God in our own tongues!” Amazed and perplexed, they asked one another, “What does this mean?”

(Acts 2:1-12)

As described by Christian writers:

4. The Holy Spirit renews us in baptism through his godhead, which he shares with the Father and the Son. Finding us in a state of deformity, the Spirit restores our original beauty and fills us with his grace, leaving no room for anything unworthy of our love. The Spirit frees us from sin and death, and changes us from the earthly humans we were, men of dust and ashes, into spiritual humans, sharers in the divine glory, sons and heirs of God the Father who bear a likeness to the Son and are his co-heirs and brothers and sisters, destined to reign with him and to share his glory. In place of earth the Spirit reopens heaven to us and gladly admits us into paradise, giving us even now greater honor than the angels, and by the holy waters of baptism extinguishing the unquenchable fires of hell.

– Didymus of Alexandria

5. Simple in himself, the Spirit is manifold in his mighty works. The whole of his being is present to each individual; the whole of his being is present everywhere. Though shared in by many, he remains unchanged; his self-giving is no loss to himself. Like the sunshine, which permeates all the atmosphere, spreading over land and sea, and yet is enjoyed by each person as though it were for him alone, so the Spirit pours forth his grace in full measure, sufficient for all, and yet is present as though exclusively to everyone who can receive him. To all creatures that share in him he gives a delight limited only by their own nature, not by his ability to give.

- Basil the Great, “The Work of the Holy Spirit”

6. It is not granted to every one to raise the dead, and heal the sick. What is most necessary is, to be sure, as to ourselves, that we are "passed from death unto life;" to keep our bodies pure and undefiled, and let them reap that health which flows from a

magnanimous patience, and the serene joys of devotion. The Holy Spirit has enabled men to speak with tongues, and to prophesy; but the light that most necessarily attends it is a light to discern the fallacies of flesh and blood, to reject the irreligious maxims of the world, and to practice those degrees of trust in God and love to men, whose foundation is not so much in the present appearances of things, as in some that are yet to come. The object which this light brings us most immediately to know is ourselves; and by virtue of this, one that is born of God, and has a lively hope may indeed see far into the ways of Providence, and farther yet into the holy Scriptures...

But I think the true notion of the Spirit is, that it is some portion of, as well as preparation for, a life in God, which we are to enjoy hereafter. The gift of the Holy Spirit looks full to the resurrection; for then is the life of God completed in us.

-John Wesley, "On the Holy Spirit"

Why we believe in the Holy Spirit:

- Jesus promised his disciples that after he departed from this Earth, he would send the Holy Spirit as an Advocate to help them. On the Day of Pentecost this promise was confirmed by a dramatic miracle of translation into other languages, as a sign of the Spirit's desire to be present in all nations. He also emboldened the disciples from fearful hiding, to bold proclamation of the Good News about Jesus.
- Even today, the Holy Spirit—the same one who inspired Creation, the Bible, and Jesus' ministry—continues to dwell inside of God's children, testifying to the true significance of what Jesus did, cleansing our hearts from sin, and equipping us to serve him. Sometimes the Spirit moves in dramatic, obvious ways, but for many people the voice is more subtle. While the Spirit comes on each person in a manner of his own choosing, we nevertheless trust that God is willing to give the Spirit to anyone who humbly asks him for it, in order to walk in love as Jesus did.