

Receive the Holy Spirit

Key Verse: “*When he had said this, he breathed on them, and saith unto them, Receive ye the Holy Spirit.*”
—John 20:22

Selected Scripture:
John 20:19-23

THE TEACHING OF THE

Trinity has confused many by distorting the individual personality of the God of the Bible. To us the Scriptures clearly teach that the *Logos*—Greek for “word” or mouthpiece of God—was the first and only direct creation of God, being his only begotten Son. (John 1:14; Rev. 1:8) The Creator sent his Son to

earth in the form of a man for the purpose of redeeming mankind from the curse of death brought about by Adam’s disobedience. (John 3:16,17; I John 4:9; I Cor. 15:22) A perfect man’s life was given—by Jesus—to redeem the first man’s life forfeited because of sin—that being Adam, and all his posterity. (Rom. 5:12,15-19) Teaching that Jesus is part of a “triune” God is to make null the efficacy of the ransom price, and its necessity in order to satisfy God’s perfect justice.

The Greek word “*pneuma*” appears in our Key Verse and is properly translated in most versions as “spirit.” The word *pneuma* literally means a “current of air, or breath,” and has no suggestion of “ghost,” which is how the word has been erroneously translated in the *King James Version* in many instances. The Holy Spirit is also not part of a triune God, but is his invisible power and influence—

well-symbolized by the blowing of wind, air, or breath.

In connection with the verses of our lesson, we find the disciples gathered in a room after hearing of Jesus' resurrection with the doors shut "for fear of the Jews." (John 20:19) Their fear no doubt came as they recalled the Master's earlier words of warning that "they shall lay their hands on you, and persecute you, delivering you up to the synagogues, and into prisons, being brought before kings and rulers for my name's sake."—Luke 21:12

Now standing in their midst and sensing their fear, the risen Lord quickly calmed them with words he had spoken before, "Peace be unto you." When he showed them his pierced hands and side, they recognized him and were glad. Jesus repeated the words, "Peace be unto you," and added, "as my Father hath sent me, even so send I you." After speaking the words of our Key Verse, Jesus continued, saying, "Whose soever sins ye remit, they are remitted unto them; and whose soever sins ye retain, they are retained."—John 20:21-23

Prior to his death, Jesus had told the disciples he needed to leave them, but had promised he would provide another "Comforter" in his absence. Now he stood before them to confirm that they would indeed soon "receive . . . the Holy Spirit," the Comforter he had promised, and which would come to them just a short time later, on the day of Pentecost. He also delivered to the disciples the commission, "so send I you" to preach the Gospel message, just as he had.

As ambassadors for Christ, we too are to be engaged in the same work as our Lord and his disciples. Before the work of blessing all the families of the earth in the kingdom, we, as his "brethren," are to follow in the Master's steps and share his suffering. Paul tells us of this privilege—to "fill up that which is behind of the afflictions of Christ." (Col. 1:24) With joy in our hearts, and having received the begetting of God's Holy Spirit, let us be faithful to our commission of preaching the beautiful message of the Gospel of Christ. ■