

Lesson Seven

Before he returned to his rightful place in heaven, Jesus promised to send the Holy Spirit to his disciples. In this lesson, we will study the Holy Spirit and his work on our behalf.

In the previous lessons we have seen that—

1. All people are sinful.
 - A. *Psalms 51:5* “Surely I was sinful at birth, sinful from the time my mother conceived me.”
 - B. *Romans 3:23* “For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.”
2. Our sins separate us from God, who is holy (perfect, sinless).
 - A. *Isaiah 59:2* “But your iniquities have separated you from your God; your sins have hidden his face from you, so that he will not hear.”
 - B. *Psalms 5:5* “The arrogant cannot stand in your presence; you hate all who do wrong.”
3. We can do nothing to earn God's love or forgiveness for our sins.
 - A. *Isaiah 64:6* “.all our righteous acts are like filthy rags.”
 - B. *Ephesians 2:8,9* “For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God—not by works, so that no one can boast.”
4. Out of his great love for us, God sent his Son, Jesus, to suffer and die in our place.
 - A. *2 Corinthians 5:21* “God made him (Jesus) who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.”
 - B. *1 John 2:2* “He (Jesus) is the atoning sacrifice for our sins, and not only for ours but also for the sins of the whole world.”

This still leaves us with a question. If Jesus is “the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world (John 1:29)”, are everyone's sins forgiven?

God says:

1 Corinthians 5:19 “God was reconciling the world to Himself in Christ, not counting men's sins against them.”

From this we know:

Jesus Christ paid for the sins of the world. On the basis of what Jesus has done God has forgiven the sins of the world. This is sometimes called objective or general justification.

God says:	From this we know:
<p><i>Romans 5:18-19</i> “Consequently, just as the result of one trespass was condemnation for all men, so also the result of one act of righteousness was justification that brings life for all men. For just as through the disobedience of the one man the many were made sinners, so also through the obedience of the one man the many will be made righteous.”</p>	
<p><i>John 3:16-18</i> “For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life. For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through him. Whoever believes in him is not condemned, but whoever does not believe stands condemned already because he has not believed in the name of God’s one and only Son.”</p> <p><i>Acts 16:31</i> “They replied, “Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved—you and your household.”</p> <p><i>Mark 16:16</i> “Whoever believes and is baptized will be saved, but whoever does not believe will be condemned.”</p> <p><i>Romans 4:3</i> “What does the Scripture say? “Abraham believed God, and it was credited to him as righteousness.”</p>	<p>Only those who take God at his word (believe Him) receive the benefit of the forgiveness won by Jesus. This is sometimes referred to as subjective or individual justification. Those who reject Jesus as their Savior are refusing God's forgiveness.</p>

So faith is necessary for us to have our sins forgiven. But, do we have the ability to believe in Jesus Christ on our own?

God says:	From this we know:
<p><i>Ephesians 2:1</i> “As for you, you were dead in your transgressions and sins.”</p>	<p>Because of my sin I am “dead” toward God. I can do nothing.</p>
<p><i>Romans 8:7</i> “The sinful mind is hostile to God. It does not submit to God’s law, nor can it do so.”</p>	<p>My sinful nature fights against God.</p>
<p><i>1 Corinthians 2:14</i> “The man without the Spirit does not accept the things that come from the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him, and he cannot understand them, because they are spiritually discerned.”</p>	<p>On my own I cannot understand what God says.</p>

This makes it clear that there is no way for us to just decide by ourselves to believe in Jesus. If forgiveness of sins only comes through faith, but we do not have the ability to believe, how can we be saved?

God says:	From this we know:
<p><i>John 14:16-17</i> "And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Counselor to be with you forever—the Spirit of truth. The world cannot accept him, because it neither sees him nor knows him. But you know him, for he lives with you and will be in you."</p>	<p>Jesus promised and sent the Holy Spirit, the third person of the Triune God. He is God. He is the only one who can give us faith in Jesus as our savior.</p>
<p><i>Acts 5:3, 4</i> "Then Peter said, 'Ananias, how is it that Satan has so filled your heart that you have lied to the Holy Spirit...? You have not lied to men but to God.'"</p>	<p>The Holy Spirit is God, he is the third person of the Trinity.</p>
<p><i>Acts 2:1-4</i> "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."</p>	<p>The Holy Spirit was always active in both Old and New Testament times, but Jesus gave His disciples a special promise of the Holy Spirit. This promise was fulfilled on Pentecost. However, Jesus continues to send the Holy Spirit to us today.</p>
<p><i>1 Corinthians 12:3</i> "Therefore I tell you that no one who is speaking by the Spirit of God says, "Jesus be cursed," and no one can say, "Jesus is Lord," except by the Holy Spirit."</p>	<p>I cannot believe in Jesus as my Lord and Savior without the Holy Spirit.</p>

Now we know that the Holy Spirit is the one who brings us to faith. But how does the Holy Spirit lead us to believe in Jesus?

God says:	From this we know:
<p><i>2 Thessalonians 2:13-14</i> "But we ought always to thank God for you, brothers loved by the Lord, because from the beginning God chose you to be saved through the sanctifying work of the Spirit and through belief in the truth. He called you to this through our gospel, that you might share in the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ."</p>	<p>The Holy Spirit works through the Gospel message as it comes to us in God's word. The Gospel is the Good News that God forgives us for Jesus' sake. The faith that the Holy Spirit creates in our hearts using the Gospel is a gift from God.</p>
<p><i>Romans 1:16</i> "I am not ashamed of the gospel, because it is the power of God for the salvation of everyone who believes: first for the Jew, then for the Gentile."</p>	

God says:	From this we know:
<p><i>Romans 10:17</i> “Consequently, faith comes from hearing the message, and the message is heard through the word of Christ.”</p>	
<p><i>Ephesians 2:8-9</i> “For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God—not by works, so that no one can boast.”</p>	

2 Corinthians 5:17 tells us that “if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has gone, the new has come!” Miraculous changes take place when we are brought to faith (converted) by the Holy Spirit. What are these changes?

God says:	From this we know:
<p><i>Ephesians 5:8</i> “For you were once darkness, but now you are light in the Lord.”</p>	<p>We live in light. We understand God's Word (enlightenment). We “get it!”</p>
<p><i>Ephesians 2:5</i> “He made us alive with Christ even when we were dead in transgressions—it is by grace you have been saved.”</p>	<p>We are spiritually alive and are able to serve God by doing good works.</p>
<p><i>Ephesians 2:10</i> “For we are God's workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do.”</p>	<p>A good work in God's eyes is anything that a believer does out of love for God and in accordance with God's will.</p>
<p><i>John 14:15</i> “If you love me, you will obey what I command.”</p>	

The subject of good works causes a great deal of confusion. Let's pause a moment to look at this subject in more detail. Many teach that when we do good works, we are “doing our part” in our own salvation. But, we have seen in earlier lessons that Jesus has done everything necessary to save us, so we have no “part” to “do”. Then what place do good works have in the life of a Christian?

God says:	From this we know:
<p><i>John 15:5</i> “I am the vine; you are the branches. If a man remains in me and I in him, he will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing.”</p>	<p>Good works serve as a “thank you” to God by giving Him glory and serving others. “Good works don't make Christians; Christians make good works!”</p>
<p><i>1 Corinthians 10:31</i> “So whether you eat or drink or whatever you do, do it all for the glory of God.”</p>	

God says:	From this we know:
<i>Galatians 5:13</i> "You, my brothers, were called to be free. But do not use your freedom to indulge the sinful nature; rather, serve one another in love."	

What other blessings does the Holy Spirit give us?

God says:	From this we know:
<i>Galatians 5:22, 23</i> "But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control. Against such things there is no law."	The Holy Spirit works in our lives to strengthen Christian characteristics.
<i>1 Peter 1:5</i> "...who through faith are shielded by God's power until the coming of the salvation that is ready to be revealed in the last time."	The Holy Spirit keeps us in faith until the Lord takes us home.
<i>Luke 11:13</i> "If you then, though you are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father in heaven give the Holy Spirit to those who ask him!"	We can pray to God to bless us with the Holy Spirit.
<i>Ephesians 5:18, 19</i> "Do not get drunk on wine, which leads to debauchery. Instead, be filled with the Spirit. Speak to one another with psalms, hymns and spiritual songs." <i>Romans 10:17</i> "Consequently, faith comes from hearing the message, and the message is heard through the word of Christ."	We can be filled with the Holy Spirit through daily contact with God's Word.

Now we have met the Holy Spirit, the third person of the Trinity. He plays a very important role in our lives. He is the one who brings us to believe in Jesus as our savior. He is also the one who works to change our hearts so that we can live lives that are pleasing to God.

All Bible passages are from the New International Version.