

Holy God, we give you thanks that your Spirit claims us and guides us in our lives. Let you Holy Spirit lead us into the world that we might shine a light on all the world in need. We pray this in the name of Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen.

In this lesson, we'll be looking at how God's Spirit is active in the New Testament.

Day 1 Read Mark 1:1-11

1. In verse 10 we are told that as Jesus was coming up out of the water he saw the heavens “torn apart” (or some translations say “opened.”) The word in Greek for “torn apart” or “opened” is *schizo*.
 - a. What are some words in English where the root *schizo* is used?

 - b. From those words, what sense do we get about what is happening to the heavens in Jesus Baptism as the Holy Spirit is coming down on him?

2. The Holy Spirit descends upon Jesus like a dove.
 - a. What does the voice say as the Spirit descends upon Jesus? What promise does that carry for us as well when we are baptized?

3. Notice, once again, we have water and Spirit together just like in last week's lesson on Creation and the Holy Spirit. The Greek word for Spirit in these verses is *pneuma*.
 - a. Where do we see that word *pneuma* in English? And from that usage, what might *pneuma* mean (think back to last lesson)?

 - b. With water and *pneuma* together again, considering what came in the Old Testament when those two got together . . . what might we expect comes from baptism?

Day 2 Read Matthew 4:1-11

4. Consider the claim that God makes about Jesus in Matthew 3:17. How might we understand the temptation that follows in light of the claim made in baptism?

5. What role then does the Holy Spirit have as we like Jesus are led out into the wilderness of the world?

Day 3 Read John 3:1-10

6. Nicodemus comes to talk to Jesus by night and they have a conversation about the Holy Spirit.
 - a. *Pneuma* (yes, that Greek word from before) rears its head again. How does John/Jesus speak about *pneuma* in these verses?

 - b. What do we seem to learn about God's *pneuma*/wind/breath/spirit in these verses?

7. So then this is interesting . . . the theology of the Gospel of John seems to be that the Holy Spirit is the one who leads us to faith and salvation. It is the movement of God's Spirit that causes salvation. We often think that we have to "accept" something or do something once that happens, but that is not what John seems to intimate. How do you tend to think about the movement of the Holy Spirit?

Day 4 Read Luke 1:26-38

8. We know this story very well . . . but in verse 35 who will come upon Mary that she will bear a child?
 - b. Again, we have God's Holy *Pneuma* doing some action upon an unsuspecting person, in this case a young woman, Mary. Why might we not be surprised (given the meaning of *pneuma* and what *pneuma* has been doing in these first two lessons) that a child, new life, is the result of this action?

Day 5 Read Mark 3:28-29; Matthew 12:31-32; Luke 12:10

9. Ah, the famous "unforgivable sin." What does each of these verses seem to say about the sin that will never be forgiven?

10. Given that the Holy Spirit seems to be the one bringing life, why might it be that blaspheming the Holy Spirit is "unforgivable."

Day 6 Re-read Matthew 12:31-37

11. It was once said by a biblical commentator that "a good rule of thumb is that anyone who is, themselves, worried about whether they have committed the unpardonable sin has not committed it." Why is that true?