

The Apostles' Creed

Lesson Guide

LESSON
FOUR

THE HOLY SPIRIT



THIRD MILLENNIUM

MINISTRIES

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CONTENTS

HOW TO USE THIS LESSON GUIDE	3
NOTES.....	4
I. INTRODUCTION (1:01)	4
II. DIVINITY (2:41)	4
A. Apostles' Creed (3:10)	4
1. Structure (5:05)	4
2. Jesus' Conception (8:15)	4
B. Biblical Basis (10:06)	5
1. Names (11:25)	5
2. Attributes (15:44)	6
3. Work (21:21)	7
4. Formulas (25:34)	8
III. PERSONHOOD (28:20)	9
A. Attributes (30:27)	9
B. Distinction (38:08)	10
C. Relationship (43:44)	10
IV. WORK (48:38)	11
A. Creative Power (50:04)	11
1. Natural World (51:48)	12
2. Spiritual Gifts (55:18)	13
3. Personal Renewal (1:01:02)	14
B. Sanctification (1:04:29)	15
C. Grace (1:08:52)	16
1. Common Grace (1:09:07)	16
2. Covenant Grace (1:11:46)	17
3. Saving Grace (1:16:20)	17
D. Revelation (1:19:39)	18
1. General Revelation (1:20:50)	18
2. Special Revelation (1:23:16)	18
3. Illumination and Inward Leading (1:25:39)	20
V. CONCLUSION (1:32:02)	21
REVIEW QUESTIONS	22
APPLICATION QUESTIONS	27
GLOSSARY.....	28

HOW TO USE THIS LESSON GUIDE

This lesson guide is designed for use in conjunction with the associated video. If you do not have access to the video, the lesson guide will also work with the audio and/or text versions of the lesson. Additionally, the video and lesson guide are intended to be used in a learning community, but they also can be used for individual study if necessary.

- **Before you watch the lesson**
 - **Prepare** — Complete any recommended readings.
 - **Schedule viewing** — The Notes section of the lesson guide has been divided into segments that correspond to the video. Using the time codes found in parentheses beside each major division, determine where to begin and end your viewing session. IIM lessons are densely packed with information, so you may also want to schedule breaks. Breaks should be scheduled at major divisions.
- **While you are watching the lesson**
 - **Take notes** — The Notes section of the lesson guide contains a basic outline of the lesson, including the time codes for the beginning of each segment and key notes to guide you through the information. Many of the main ideas are already summarized, but make sure to supplement these with your own notes. You should also add supporting details that will help you to remember, describe, and defend the main ideas.
 - **Record comments and questions** — As you watch the video, you may have comments and/or questions on what you are learning. Use the margins to record your comments and questions so that you can share these with the group following the viewing session.
 - **Pause/replay portions of the lesson** — You may find it helpful to pause or replay the video at certain points in order to write additional notes, review difficult concepts, or discuss points of interest.
- **After you watch the lesson**
 - **Complete Review Questions** — Review Questions are based on the basic content of the lesson. You should answer Review Questions in the space provided. These questions should be completed individually rather than in a group.
 - **Answer/discuss Application Questions** — Application Questions are questions relating the content of the lesson to Christian living, theology, and ministry. Application questions are appropriate for written assignments or as topics for group discussions. For written assignments, it is recommended that answers not exceed one page in length.

Notes

I. Introduction (1:01)

The Apostles' Creed directly addresses the subject of the Holy Spirit in the single line: I believe in the Holy Spirit.

II. Divinity (2:41)

A. Apostles' Creed (3:10)

The Apostles' Creed affirms the divinity of the Holy Spirit.

1. Structure (5:05)

The Trinitarian structure equates the Holy Spirit with the Father and the Son in important ways.

2. Jesus' Conception (8:15)

“Was conceived by the Holy Spirit”:

- does not explicitly declare the Spirit's divinity, but
- strongly implies that the Holy Spirit is fully divine
- alludes to Luke 1:35 (“the power of the Most High”)

B. Biblical Basis (10:06)

We value the Creed as a summary of Scripture, not as a replacement for Scripture.

1. Names (11:25)

The name that implies his divinity in the most implicit way is the name Holy Spirit.

The names that lie between implicit and very explicit on the continuum are:

- Spirit of the Lord
- Spirit of God
- Spirit of the living God
- Spirit of Jesus
- Spirit of Christ
- Spirit of your Father
- Spirit of his Son
- Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead

Acts 5:3-4 explicitly refers to the Holy Spirit by the name of “God.”

2. Attributes (15:44)

The Bible demonstrates the divinity of the Holy Spirit by ascribing divine attributes to him.

a. Communicable

Attributes which can be “communicated” or “shared in some way with God’s creatures:

- Reason

- Love

b. Incommunicable

Attributes that cannot be shared with his creatures:

- omniscience

- omnipotence
- omnipresence
- eternity

3. Work (21:21)

The Holy Spirit's works demonstrate his divinity.

The Holy Spirit performs many works that are appropriate to God alone:

- Regenerates our spirits
- Access to the Father
- Applies salvation
- Power behind the miracles

- Inspired the writing of Scripture

The word of the Holy Spirit is the word of God.

- Counselor
 - reveals truth
 - convicts the world of sin
 - testifies to Jesus

4. Formulas (25:34)

Trinitarian formula: a passage in Scripture that explicitly mentions all three persons of the Trinity on a relatively equal basis.

Examples:

- Matthew 28:19

- 2 Corinthians 13:14

III. Personhood (28:20)

The Holy Spirit is a true person and not simply a divine force or power.

The Creed's affirmation of the Holy Spirit as a member of the Trinity is an implied affirmation of his personhood.

A. Attributes (30:27)

Qualities the Holy Spirit possesses that are unique to persons:

- will

- intelligence

- emotions

- agency

B. Distinction (38:08)

The distinction between the Spirit and the other persons of the Trinity is not always entirely clear.

Distinctions between the Spirit and the other persons of the Trinity:

- John 16:7

- Romans 8:26-27

C. Relationship (43:44)

Two perspectives:

- Ontological Trinity
 - Focus on God's being and existence
 - Holy Spirit is equal in power and glory to the Father and the Son
 - All three: infinite, eternal, unchangeable, same divine attributes

- Economic Trinity
 - How God's persons interact with each other
 - Each person has different responsibilities, authority, roles
 - Spirit is subject to the higher authority of the Father and the Son
 - Spirit's role is to carry out instructions and glorify Father and Son

The Holy Spirit is called the "third person" of the Trinity.

IV. Work (48:38)

"I believe in the Holy Spirit" implied a number of beliefs about the work of the Spirit.

A. Creative Power (50:04)

Definition: ability to create new things, and to govern and to alter what has been created.

1. Natural World (51:48)

The Spirit exercised divine omnipotence to create the world from nothing.

- Genesis 1
- Psalm 33:6
- Job 33:4
- Psalm 104:30

The Holy Spirit empowered many miracles:

- Exodus 17:6 – Enabled Moses to get water from a rock.
- 1 Kings 17 – Multiplied the widow’s flour and oil.
- Matthew 14-15 – Enabled Jesus to multiply food.
- Romans 8:11 – Raised Jesus from the dead.
- Romans 15:18-19 – Empowered Paul’s miracles and ministry.
- Luke 1:35 – Caused virgin Mary to become pregnant with Jesus (the only work explicitly mentioned in the Apostles’ Creed).

The Holy Spirit has power to create, to renew, and to bring all of creation to the final state God intended for it.

2. **Spiritual Gifts (55:18)**

Definition: Abilities of supernatural origin that the Holy Spirit gives to individuals for the purpose of building up the church.

Natural gifts:

- Wisdom
- Knowledge
- Serving
- Teaching
- Encouraging
- Generosity
- Leadership
- Mercy

Supernatural gifts:

- Healing
- Miraculous powers

Gifts in between:

- Prophecy
- Speaking in tongues
- Interpreting tongues
- Discerning spirits

Nuanced views of spiritual gifts:

- Cessationist — Holy Spirit only gives gifts that resemble natural talents
- Continuationist — Spirit still gives all the same gifts
- Moderate — Holy Spirit can still give spectacular gifts when he wants to

The Holy Spirit continues to give at least some spiritual gifts to his people for the benefit of the church.

3. Personal Renewal (1:01:02)

The Holy Spirit creates new life in us by making our spirits live before God.

- Regeneration
- Born again

The Holy Spirit continues to work in us in order to make us the kind of people that love and obey the Lord.

On the last day, the Holy Spirit will use his creative power to resurrect the physical bodies of all faithful Christians.

B. Sanctification (1:04:29)

Definition: the act of making people and things holy to:

- Set people and things apart for God's use
- Purify them
- Make them fit to be near his unveiled glory

The church is holy or sanctified by the presence and ministry of the Holy Spirit.

The Holy Spirit sanctifies individual believers by indwelling them.

- Purifies us from sin
- Sets us apart for God
- We enjoy and benefit from the Spirit's influence

C. Grace (1:08:52)

1. Common Grace (1:09:07)

Definition: the forbearance that God shows and the benefits he gives to all humanity, regardless of their faith

The Holy Spirit does not give common grace to all people equally.

- Restrains sin

- Gives knowledge

2. **Covenant Grace (1:11:46)**

Definition: the forbearance and benefits that God gives to everyone that is part of his covenant people, even if they are not true believers.

God was very patient and merciful toward ancient Israel.

Everyone that is part of the church shares in those blessings that God grants to the church as a whole.

3. **Saving Grace (1:16:20)**

Definition: the application of the eternal benefits of Christ's perfect life, death, resurrection, ascension and glorious return to those who receive him as Lord and Savior

Blessings of the Holy Spirit's saving grace:

- Regeneration
- Repentance
- Forgiveness
- Justification
- Salvation

D. Revelation (1:19:39)

The Holy Spirit is the agent of revelation, testimony and understanding.

“The Spirit of truth”

1. General Revelation (1:20:50)

Definition: God’s use of the natural world and its workings to make his existence, nature, presence, actions and will known to all humanity

General revelation is delivered through the Holy Spirit’s works of creative power in nature.

2. Special Revelation (1:23:16)

Definition: God’s direct involvement, or his use of messengers, to make his existence, nature, presence, actions and will known to limited portions of humanity.

The Holy Spirit's special revelation includes:

- Scripture
- Prophecies
- Dreams
- Visions
- Angelic visitations
- Other unusual media

The greatest special revelation the Holy Spirit ever gave us was the incarnation of Jesus Christ himself.

The Holy Spirit's authorship of Scripture:

- Matthew 22:43
- Mark 12:36
- Acts 1:16; 4:25
- 2 Timothy 3:16-17
- 2 Peter 1:20-21

3. **Illumination and Inward Leading (1:25:39)**

The Holy Spirit given to the church will enlighten us to understand what he inspired in the prophets.

Illumination:

A divine gift of knowledge or understanding that is primarily cognitive.

Inward Leading:

A divine gift of knowledge or understanding that is primarily emotive or intuitive.

Illumination and understanding are not always clearly distinguished from each other in the Bible.

Illumination and inward leading are normal means the Holy Spirit uses to teach his people the truths he has revealed.

To benefit from this ministry in our lives:

- Commit ourselves to studying the Bible
- Dedicate ourselves to prayer
- Devote ourselves to righteous and holy living

V. Conclusion (1:32:02)

9. What are the three aspects of revelation, and how does the Spirit work through each to reveal his will?

Application Questions

1. How should an understanding of the divinity of the Spirit affect our prayer life?
2. In what ways are you tempted to think of the Spirit as an impersonal force or power?
3. What evidence have you seen in your own life that the Spirit has been applying salvation to you?
4. If one role of the Holy Spirit is to renew creation to the final state that God intended for it, how should we view or treat the creation around us now?
5. Take some time to write down your gifts and abilities. How might these be the Spirit's gifts to you for the building up of the church?
6. In what areas do you most need the Spirit's continuing sanctification in your life?
7. In what ways are Christians set apart for God?
8. How do you see the Spirit's grace in the world around you, even among unbelievers?
9. How might you make more use of the Spirit's illumination and inward leading in your life?
10. What is the most significant thing you have learned in this lesson?

Glossary

Calvin, John – (1509-1564) French theologian and key Protestant Reformer who wrote *Institutes of the Christian Religion*

cessationist – A person who holds the view that supernatural gifts manifested in the time of the New Testament, such as speaking in tongues, prophecy, and miraculous healing, were given only for the special spread of the gospel and the establishment of the church at the time of the apostles and these gifts have now ceased

common grace – God's benevolence shown to all people

communicable attributes – Characteristics of God that can be communicated to his creation in some measure (e.g., wisdom, power, goodness)

continuationist – A person who holds the view that supernatural gifts manifested in the time of the New Testament, such as speaking in tongues, prophecy, and miraculous healing, continue even today

covenant grace – The forbearance and benefits that God gives to everyone who is part of his covenant people, even if they are not true believers

economic – Term meaning "relating to household management"; used when speaking of how the three persons of the Trinity relate to each other

general revelation – God's use of the natural world and its workings to make his existence, nature, presence, actions and will known to all humanity

Hippolytus – (ca. A.D. 170 - 236) Theologian from Rome who wrote *Against the Heresy of One Noetus* in which he defended the Scriptures as the final authority in doctrine

holy – Morally pure; set apart for use in special service to God

illumination – Divine gift of knowledge or understanding, primarily cognitive, attributed to the work of the Holy Spirit

incommunicable attributes – Characteristics of God that cannot be communicated to man (e.g., omnipotence, omniscience, omnipresence, eternity)

invisible church – All people throughout time that have been united to Christ for salvation

inward leading – Divine gift of knowledge or understanding, primarily emotive or intuitive, attributed to the work of the Holy Spirit

ontological – Term meaning "related to being"; used to refer to the fact that all three persons of the Trinity possess the same divine attributes and essence

sanctification – The act of making people and things holy

saving grace – The blessings of salvation applied to true believers by the Holy Spirit

special revelation – God's disclosures of himself and his will to a select number of people through dreams, visions, prophets, the Scriptures, and other similar means

Spurgeon, Charles – (1834-1892) 19th century British pastor and writer; often called the "Prince of Preachers"

visible church – People that are regularly part of the gathered church; those who publicly profess faith in Christ but may or may not have true saving faith