



Believe

JOHN

MESSAGE

STUDY GUIDE

GROUP MATERIAL

SONGS

Community Group Material:

Bible Reading: John 14:16, 26; 15:26; 16:7; 20:22; Acts 2:33

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?"I will ask the Father, and he [the Father] will give you another Counselor to be with you forever."
(14:16)

?"But the Paraclete, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you all things..." (14:26)

?"When the Paraclete comes, the one I will send to you from the Father — the Spirit of truth who proceeds from the Father— he will testify about me." (John 15:26)

?"...if I don't go away the Paraclete will not come to you. If I go, I [the Son] will send him to you."
(16:7b)

?"After saying this, [the Risen Jesus] breathed on [the disciples] & said, 'Receive the Holy Spirit.'
(20:22)

?Pentecost: "Since [Jesus] has been exalted to the right hand of God & has received from the Father the promised Holy Spirit, he [Jesus] has poured out what you both see & hear." (Acts 2:33)

?SUMMARY:

?In John's Gospel, Jesus' profound claims about himself, the Holy Spirit, and God the Father set the stage for the Trinity and Christian Creeds. The Son and Spirit are closely linked, with the Spirit sent by both the Father and the Son. The Nicene Creed states that the Spirit "proceeds from the Father," who also begets the Son. Hence the sole source of the Son and Spirit is the Father, matching Irenaeus' "two hands of God" metaphor. Despite its successes, the Nicene Creed overlooks John's crucial Spirit-Son relationship —a decisive oversight— allowing claims of direct spiritual access to God. The Western Church's addition, "and (proceeds) from the Son" (Latin: 'filioque'), was rejected by the East, leading to the East-West Schism. This impacts current issues like the validity of world religions. A growing chorus of postmodern scholars, rejecting 'filioque,' and appealing to Irenaeus, argue for an autonomous Holy Spirit operation, providing direct access to God the Father apart from Jesus Christ

via non-Christian religions. These dangerous developments undermine Christian mission and contradict essential truths in John's Gospel.

?QUESTIONS:

1. According to John 14:16, 26; 15:26; 16:7 (above) who sends the Spirit to the disciples?
2. Christian history placed great emphasis on the phrase saying the Spirit "proceeds from the Father" (15:26) – a clause in the Nicene Creed (325, 381 AD). Some Churches use this to assert that the Holy Spirit comes "from God the Father alone." Does John's Gospel support this view? Discuss
3. Later the Western Church added the phrase "and (proceeds) from the Son" to the Nicene Creed. (The Eastern Church rejects this.) Why is this important? What are the benefits from its inclusion? What are the dangers of its omission? Discuss.
4. What is Irenaeus' "Two Hands of God" metaphor? What are its advantages & disadvantages? Consider this: "The 'two hands' of God –the [Son] & the Spirit—are universally present & active in other religions... [and there are] other saviors who somehow participate in the mediation of Christ." — Jacques Dupuis
5. Some scholars propose that the Spirit's work is independent of the Son (Jesus') work and argue that the Holy Spirit is working in non-Christian religions providing alternative pathways to God & his salvation. Does the Bible & John's Gospel support such a view? Do you agree or disagree with this view?
6. Evaluate the following statements:
 - a. "It is the Christ, the Risen Lord, alone who is received as light when grace visits a Brahmin, a Buddhist or a Muslim reading their Scriptures [Quran, Bhagavad Gita] or performing their prayers." — Georg Khodr
 - b. 'The Spirit is present everywhere & fills everything by virtue of an economy distinct from that of the Son'. [Moreover,] 'all who are visited by the Spirit are the people of God.' —Georg Khodr
 - c. "The Holy Spirit has been... saving the peoples of Asia... before Christianity appeared on the scene." — Peter C. Phan
7. Evaluate the following statement:
 - a. "Could it...not be that...while Christians secure salvation through... God's Son incarnate in Jesus Christ, others receive it through the immediate autonomous action of the Spirit of God?" — Jacques Dupuis
8. An increasing number of Canadians identify as "spiritual, but not religious"; they practice meditation & study diverse eastern religions. Should we rest assured that they'll ultimately be saved by the Holy Spirit? Discuss.