

The Creeds

Part 4: I believe in the Holy Spirit

Old Roman Symbol (2 nd Century)	Apostle's Creed (3 rd – 7 th Centuries)	First Council of Nicaea (325)	First Council of Constantino-ple (381)
Who was born of the Holy Spirit and the Virgin Mary	Who was con-ceived by the Holy Spirit and born of the Virgin Mary	Who for us men, and for our salvation, came down and was incarnate and was made man;	who for us men, and for our salvation, came down <i>from heaven</i> , and was incarnate <i>by the Holy Ghost and of the Virgin Mary</i> , and was made man;
[...]	[...]	[...]	[...]
and in the Holy Spirit,	I believe in the Holy Spirit	And in the Holy Ghost.	And in the Holy Ghost, <i>the Lord and Giver of life, who proceedeth from the Father, who with the Father and the Son together is worshiped and glorified, who spake by the prophets.</i>
Blue: Old Roman Symbol	Red: Apostle's Creed Addition	Green: First Nicaea Addition	Orange: Second Nicaea Addition

“He,” “Him,” “His.” *Personal Pronoun*. The Pronoun used for a person, animal, or spiritual being.

“It.” *Impersonal Pronoun*: The Pronoun which describes any nonliving thing but not a person.

May the Force Be With You

Luke has found himself in the middle of the vast rocky desert surrounded by sand, caves, and the rather menacing local inhabitants. Suddenly, his head grows hot with searing pain. He loses consciousness. He’s alive but knocked old cold while all his immediate possessions are ransacked. Just as unexpectedly, a strange cloaked bearded figure appears out of nowhere, scattering the enemy with nothing but his ancient leathery cracked and weathered appearance.

“Ben? Ben Kenobi!” Luke says as he comes to. “Boy, am I glad to see you!” Ben knows the Sand People will be back soon, so they hurry off to his small, spartan hovel for protection and repairs. As the two become reacquainted, talk turns to Luke’s aunt, uncle, and father, whom Ben

apparently knew. The old man wanders over to a little chest and pulls out a short handle with a bunch of electronic gadgets attached to it. “I have something for you. Your father wanted you to have this when you were old enough, but your uncle wouldn’t allow it.”

“What is it?”

“Your father’s lightsaber. This is the weapon of a Jedi Knight.” He pushes a button, and a long beam of light shoots out about four feet, flickers and makes strange, electric noises. But Luke hasn’t really been listening. “How did my father die?” he can’t help but ask.

“A young Jedi named Darth Vader, who was a pupil of mine until he turned to evil, helped the Empire hunt down and destroy the Jedi Knights. He betrayed and murdered your father,” Ben answers, stretching the truth. “Now the Jedi are all but extinct. Vader was seduced by the dark side of the Force.”

“The Force?” Luke asks.

“The Force is what gives a Jedi his power. It’s an energy field created by all living things. It surrounds us and penetrates us. It binds the galaxy together.”

Later, Luke decides he wants to learn the ways of the Force. Ben tells him, “The Force can have a strong influence

on the weak-minded. You will find it a powerful ally.” As they begin training in the Millennium Falcon, Ben puts a blaster shield over Luke’s eyes so he can’t see and then tells him, “A Jedi can feel the Force flowing through him.”

“You mean it controls your actions?”

“Partially. But it also obeys your commands.”

The space cowboy Han Solo watches the training with amusement. “Hokey religions and ancient weapons are no match for a good blaster at your side, kid.”

“You don’t believe in the Force, do you?”

“Kid, I’ve flown from one side of this galaxy to the other. I’ve seen a lot of strange stuff, but I’ve never seen anything to make me believe there’s one all-powerful force controlling everything. There’s no mystical energy field that controls my destiny.” Of course, at the end of the movie, Han realizes his error and in the catch-phrase to end them all he tells Luke, “May the Force be with you.”¹

In these few short segments of dialogue from *Star Wars: A New Hope*, George Lucas managed to encapsulate ancient teachings that date as far back as Hinduism, Buddhism, and Taoism as well as in cultic and occult teachings found in such diverse groups as the Jehovah’s Witnesses, The Worldwide

¹ George Lucas, *Star Wars. Episode IV: A New Hope*, Lucasfilm Ltd. Revised Fourth Draft, Jan 15, 1976. <https://imsdb.com/scripts/Star-Wars-A-New-Hope.html>.

Church of God, Christian Science, The Word of Faith movement, The Unification Church (i.e. The Moonies, not to be confused with The Goonies), and some forms of the Kabbalah.² Much more important to me here is that there are, sadly, many self-professing Christians who either equate God's Holy Spirit with the Force or who at least refer to Him as "it" on a regular basis, and act as if he is some kind of spiritual force or energy that they can tap into at will and make do whatever bidding they so desire.

Saving Faith: *Fiducia*

Today, we are looking at what is the shortest of the Four Articles (if you break them up into the four components as

² Some sources I was looking at relating to this point include, Daniela Pizazrro, "The Force and its Ancient Origins," *The University of Sydney: Australian Archaeological Institute at Athens* (AAIA) (2021?), <https://aaia.sydney.edu.au/the-force-and-its-ancient-origins/#:~:text=%E2%80%9CThe%20core%20of%20the%20Force,wanna%20keep%20them%20in%20balance.%E2%80%9D&text=The%20Forces'%20ancient%20origins%20also%20trickles%20into%20the%20philosophy%20of%20Buddhism../>; Adam Afterman, "The Rise of the Holy Spirit in Sixteenth-Century Kabbalah," *Harvard Theological Review* 115.2 (April, 2022): 219-42. <https://www.cambridge.org/core/journals/harvard-theological-review/article/rise-of-the-holy-spirit-in-sixteenthcentury-kabbalah/F9DE6C7916C955E8281B8B71E7568D87>. Daniel Boyarin, "Is Metatron A Converted Christian?" *Judaïsme Ancien/Ancient Judaism* 1 (2013): 13-62; John R. Levison, *The Spirit in First-Century Judaism* (Boston, Brill, 2002); Peter Schäfer, *The Jewish Jesus: How Judaism and Christianity Shaped Each Other* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2012). Robert Velarde, "May the Force Bewitch You: Evaluating the Star Wars Worldview," *Christian Research Journal* 38.5 (2015). <https://www.equip.org/articles/may-force-bewitch-evaluating-star-wars-worldview/>. "What the Cults Believe," *Tabernacle Baptist Church*, Ithaca, NY (1999). <https://www.cs.uni-potsdam.de/ti/kreitz/Christian/Cults/all.html>. Walter Martin, *The Kingdom of the Cults*. Completely Updated for the 21st Century (Minneapolis, MN: Bethany House, 2003).

I'm doing in this series) in three of our four creeds. They simply say, “**And in the Holy Spirit**” (Old Roman Symbol), or “**I believe in the Holy Spirit**” (Apostles' Creed), or as he is called in the oldest English, the “**Holy Ghost.**” Only in the 2nd Nicene Creed do we find a longer statement about the Holy Spirit.

Now, we just noticed that the Apostles' Creed is the only one of the four that repeats “**I believe**” a second time. For it, there is no starting this Article with “and.” Rather, it says, “**I believe in the Holy Spirit.**” This causes us to think once more about Faith, since “**I believe**” is the essence of **faith and of the creeds** (*credo* = “I believe”).

In these three Articles of the Creed (Father, Son, Spirit), we have been looking at the **three components of faith**. The first we saw was basic knowledge (*notitia*) that must be had of God. Of course, we must have basic knowledge of all three Persons as well, but as the Father is the Source, it made good sense to look at this aspect with him. Then we saw that to knowledge must be added ascent and agreement (*assensus*). Given that Jesus Christ is the historical person of whom much proof of every kind is abundant, it made good sense to discuss this aspect with him, though again, we must ascent to all three Persons of the one Godhead. This leaves **the third**

component of faith to go with the Third Person of the Trinity, though yet again, we place this third component in all Three Persons in the one Godhead.

This component is called *fiducia* in the Latin. Sproul explains that this “**third element of saving faith ... involves a ‘plus’ to the cognitive elements**” of knowledge and ascent such that *fiducia* goes after “**the affective and volitional dimensions.**”³ In other words, *fiducia* is **a matter of the heart and soul.**

How to describe this? I’ll continue with **another illustration from climbing.** Imagine hanging 2,000 ft. above the ground on a vertical slab of granite on what would become the hardest big wall route ever attempted. Dangling on toe holds the width of the edge of a dime, pulling with all your might on finger holds that are but dimple like impressions of razor-sharp glassy rock that turn your fingertips into ground meat while your entire body hugs the gigantic wall in a kind of unrequited love embrace, for the wall itself is quite cold and unconcerned about you. Now you repeat this feat over and over, climbing all night and all day as you spend your downtime hanging by ropes to a portaledge that will be your home until you make it to the top.

³ **R.C. Sproul**, *Faith Alone: The Evangelical Doctrine of Justification*, electronic ed. (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 2000), 82.

This is what Estes Park’s own [Tommy Caldwell](#) and his climbing partner [Kevin Jorgeson](#) endured for 19 straight days in 2015 until they completed the impossible climb after working half a dozen years on the wall every spring and fall just looking for a way to even make an attempt on El Capitan’s Dawn Wall. Those years of trying to find “[the path through the maze,](#)” “[searching for a way to climb this section of the Wall,](#)” through a “[totally unknown](#)” route, “[analyzing the surface of the rock to see if there were any holds,](#)” looking “[for weaknesses in the rock,](#)” “[corners that you can wedge your body into,](#)” “[cracks for your hands and toes,](#)” “[little edges for your fingertips,](#)” “[anything that you could possibly grab onto that would make... this elusive thing that probably didn’t even exist ... climbable](#)”⁴ was the *notitia* part of the climb. It was learning the knowledge that it must take to move forward. The *ascensus* part was probably something only they of all people on earth could acquiesce to, as the rest of us would see it as literally ridiculous. They had to agree that it was climbable.

[But to put yourself through that?](#) There had to be [one final element](#) to this climb. Tommy says of it, “[I’ve totally fallen in love with that piece of rock.](#)” Only an emotional

⁴ [Tommy Caldwell](#), *The Dawn Wall* (Full Transcript), dir. Peter Mortimer and Josh Lowell, Red Bull Media House (2018).

attachment, a heart-devotion, could possibly move a person from pure knowledge and ascent to putting their faith in their abilities and in that kind of route to even begin to attempt it, let alone go through with the entire thing. **That's faith.**

You see, for **final faith** in really anything, but *especially* faith in God, it is not enough to know or even agree with a thing. “**You believe that God is one; you do well. Even the demons believe-- and shudder!**” (**James 2:19**). To believe “*that*” is a very different thing from believing “*in*.” To believe “in” God, you must **judge the gospel to be good and worthy of your love and desire**. You must **hunger and thirst** for him and come to him in an act of refuge. You must **embrace and adhere to him** in an act of reception and union. You must reflexively conclude that Christ **really has died for you** and that through faith you truly do belong to him. You must be consoled in the **joy, rhapsody, tranquility, peace, and delight** that Christ has possessed you simply because he loved you and it pleased him to do it.⁵

Jonathan Edwards explains it this way in his own testimony in coming to God's sovereignty.

⁵ These four ideas are a compilation of **Francis Turretin's** Seven Acts of Faith in *The Institutes of Elenctic Theology* 15.8. Cited in Sproul, 89.

From my childhood up, my mind had been full of objections against the doctrine of God's sovereignty ... It used to appear like a *horrible* doctrine to me. But I remember the time very well, when I seemed to be *convinced*, and *fully satisfied*, as to this sovereignty of God.

But never could I give an account, how, or by what means, I was thus convinced ... but only that now I saw further, and my reason apprehended the justice and reasonableness of it. However, my mind rested in it; and it put an end to all those arguments and objections.

There has been a *wonderful alteration in my mind*, in respect to the doctrine of God's sovereignty, from that day to this; so that I scarce ever have found so much as the rising of an objection against it, in the most absolute sense ... I have often since had not only a *conviction*, but a *delightful conviction*. The doctrine has very often appeared *exceeding pleasant, bright, and sweet*. Absolute sovereignty is what I love to ascribe to God. *But my first conviction was not so.*⁶

What could move a person from thinking it a “horrible doctrine,” to “a delightful conviction?” I assure you, not the will, for the will hates it. Rather, it is the same thing that would move him to such faith in God himself. He tells you

⁶ Jonathan Edwards, “Personal Narrative,” in *Jonathan Edwards: Representative Selections*, ed. C. H. Faust and T. H. Johnson (New York: Hill & Wang, 1962), 58–9. Cited in John Piper, *Desiring God* (Sisters, OR: Multnomah Publishers, 2003), 38.

that he came to understand that “**there was any extraordinary influence of God’s Spirit in it.**” The reason it is so appropriate to talk about *fiducia* with respect to the Spirit of God is that God gave his Holy Spirit to us to convict us, to console us, to comfort us, and to cause us to have new hearts and new **affections for God that** simply were not there before. Yes, he is the Mover sent from heaven to indwell the heart of each believer, doing all that is necessary to make this final act of faith possible.

I Believe in the Holy Spirit

Holy. Spirit.

Turning to the creeds and this discussion of the Third Person of the Trinity, we find a **noun** and an **adjective** at the start. **The noun** is “**spirit,**” or in the older translations, “**ghost.**” To understand what’s going on here, we must look at both the Hebrew and Greek terms.

The **Hebrew word is ruach.** It appears in the second verse of the Bible. There are two basic translations. Nearly all Christian translations read something like, “**And the Spirit of God was hovering over the face of the waters**” (**Gen 1:2**). But most Jewish translations, including the Targums, read

something like, “And a *wind* from God [was] sweeping over the water” (TNK). The word *ruach* can mean either *spirit* or *wind* or even *breath*. Spirits, of course, are personal entities--*he*. The wind is impersonal--*it*.

The Greek word is *pneuma*. Curiously, it also means *spirit* or *wind* or *breath*. In the NT, there are *wordplays* that take place between the Spirit and the wind. In **John 3:8**, Jesus tells Nicodemus, “The *wind* [*pneuma*] blows where it wishes, and you hear its sound, but you do not know where it comes from or where it goes. So it is with everyone who is born of *the Spirit* [*pneuma*].” You also find it in Acts 2. “And suddenly there came from heaven a sound like a mighty rushing *wind* [*pnoē*] ... And they were all filled with the *Holy Spirit* [*pneumatos hagiou*] and began to speak in other tongues as *the Spirit* [*to pneuma*] gave them utterance” (**Acts 2:2, 4**). So, the Spirit and the wind are *not identical*, but there is a kind of *analogy* that exists between them.

Now, our English word “spirit” refers to an “*animating or vital principle in man and animals*.” It derives from the Latin *spiritus* which is “*a breathing, breath*” or “*breath of a god*” and gives us ideas such as “*inspiration*.”⁷ When we say that the Scripture is inspired, we literally mean that it is

⁷ “Spirit (n.),” *Online Etymology Dictionary*, https://www.etymonline.com/word/spirit#etymonline_v_24031.

“God-breathed” (2Tim 3:16). Peter puts it in terms of the Spirit this way. “Men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit” (2Pe 1:21). Because the term is related to God like this, we can see that “spirit” also has implications in the spiritual world such that it refers to a “supernatural immaterial creature; angel, demon, an apparition, invisible corporeal being of an airy nature.”⁸

This is precisely where the English word “ghost” comes in. In fact, “spirit” is the Middle English word that came to be used for the Old English word *gast* (or *gæst*, *gaast*), which means “ghost.” In Wycliffe’s 1388 Middle English NT, he translates the Latin *Spiritus Sanctus* as *Halig Gast*. This made its way into the KJV. But because “ghost” increasingly came to be used of dead humans, “spirit” ended up almost totally replacing it in modern English Bibles. But they are virtual synonyms in the way the words originally were used, because “gast” also meant, “breath; good or bad spirit, angel, demon; person, man, human being.”⁹

It doesn’t particularly matter if you call him Spirit or Ghost, so long as you understand the adjective. “Holy.” Found in both Testaments, David says, “take not your Holy Spirit from me” (Ps 51:11). Isaiah says that Israel “Grieved

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ “Ghost (n.),” *Online Etymology Dictionary*, <https://www.etymonline.com/word/ghost>.

[God's] *Holy Spirit*" whom he had put "in the midst of them" (Isa 63:10-11). We've seen his appearance before in the creeds, at the birth of Jesus when they tell us, citing Matthew, that Jesus would be conceived "by the *Holy Spirit*" (Matt 1:18, 20).

This word "holy" (Heb. *qodesh*; Gk: *hagios*) means something totally other, set apart, special, uncommon, sanctified. We get our word "sanctification" (*hagiosmos*) from it. God is holy, meaning that God is totally other. He is separate from his creation. He is special among it. This is easily seen in Israel's very formal and vital ceremonial law-code which gives detailed, specific steps one must take to approach the Holy God who dwells in their midst. If they are not careful, they could die, because God is not like us and trespassing upon his property or nonchalantly moseying near to him is like trying to cozy up to a lion. It's dangerous because of the very nature of the thing.

But can you see? This means that God is not some unholy creature, some unclean thing like a demon. He is the opposite. God is not evil; he is holy. C. S. Lewis explains this very well in *The Lion, The Witch, and the Wardrobe* when Mr. Beaver tells Susan about Aslan, the ruler of Narnia. "Aslan is a lion." Susan is taken aback because she assumed he was a

man. She then tells Mr. Beaver, “I shall feel rather nervous about meeting a lion.” She asks Mr. Beaver if Aslan is safe, to which Mr. Beaver replies, “Safe? Who said anything about safe? ‘Course he isn’t safe. But he’s good. He’s the King.”¹⁰

The Lord and Giver of Life

But we are not just talking about God in general here. We are talking about the Holy Spirit. So, what exactly is it that we confess about him? Of the four creeds, the only one that gives any more detail (besides the title and his work as the “power of God” in overshadowing Mary) is the Second Nicene. “And in the Holy Ghost, *the Lord and Giver of life, who proceeds from the Father, who with the Father and the Son together is worshiped and glorified, who spoke by the prophets.*”

Right away you can see from this creed that the Spirit is not an “it.” The Spirit is a “he.” Specifically, he is *the Lord and Giver of life*. The word used for “Lord” (*Kurios*) is the very same word used of Jesus both in the creeds and throughout the NT. This is not something that the creed made up. Paul tells us, “We behold the face of Christ” because “this comes

¹⁰ C. S. Lewis, *The Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe* (New York: Collier Books, 1950), 75-76.

from *the Lord who is the Spirit*” (2Cor 3:18).¹¹ This is right after he says, “Now *the Lord is the Spirit*, and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom” (vs. 17).¹²

Just here, I want to turn to [the Athanasian Creed](#). We said in the introductory sermon that Lutherans accept this as one of the three ecumenical creeds. Indeed, it is highly orthodox and very beloved by the whole of the church. Nevertheless, its origin (attributed to Athanasius of Alexandria, the great defender of Nicene theology, by a medieval account) is highly questionable. Beginning with [Gerhard Johann Vossius](#) in 1642,¹³ with whom most scholars today find themselves in agreement, it does not appear that Athanasius wrote it for numerous reasons.¹⁴ This is a main reason I have not included it among the four creeds in this study. Nevertheless, what it says is important and illuminating.

¹¹ Literally this is *apo kuriou pneumatos* (from Lord Spirit). If we supply the article, it is “[from the Lord the Spirit](#).” Both Lord and spirit are genitives, so we could say, “[from of the Lord of the Spirit](#).”

¹² This is *o de kurios to pneuma estin* (Literally: “[Now the Lord the spirit is](#)”). Spirit and Lord are both nominative! Typically, spirit comes first and “lord” is genitive, as in [Acts 5:9](#), “[to pneuma kuriou](#)” (“[Spirit of the Lord](#)”).

¹³ His work is summarized in [Daniel Waterland](#), *A Critical History of the Athanasian Creed* (Toronto: Wycliffe College, 1906), 4-5.

¹⁴ 1. The creed originally was most likely written in Latin, but Athanasius composed in Greek. 2. Neither Athanasius nor his contemporaries ever mention the Creed. 3. It is not mentioned in any records of the ecumenical councils. 4. It appears to address theological concerns that developed after Athanasius died (including the filioque; see below). 5. It was most widely circulated among Western Christians.

The creed is essentially our most defined statement of the Trinity among all the early creeds. At one point it says,

For there is one Person of the Father; another of the son; and another of *the Holy Ghost*. But the Godhead of the Father, of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, is all one; the Glory equal, the Majesty coeternal. Such as the Father is; such is the Son; and such is *the Holy Ghost*. The Father uncreated; the Son uncreated; and *the Holy Ghost* uncreated. The Father unlimited; the Son unlimited; and *the Holy Ghost* unlimited. The Father eternal; the Son eternal; and *the Holy Ghost* eternal. And yet they are not three eternals; but one eternal. As also there are not three uncreated; nor three infinites, but one uncreated; and one infinite. So likewise the Father is Almighty; the Son Almighty; and *the Holy Ghost* Almighty. And yet they are not three Almighties; but one Almighty. So the Father is God; the Son is God; and *the Holy Ghost* is God. And yet they are not three Gods; but one God. So likewise the Father is Lord; the Son Lord; and *the Holy Ghost* Lord.

As you can hear, this ends precisely at the point of calling the Holy Spirit the Lord.

Returning to *the Second Nicene Creed*, it calls the Spirit *the Giver of Life*. This is found in places like **Genesis 2:7**, “Then the LORD God formed the man of dust from the

ground and breathed [*naphach*] into his nostrils the breath [*neshamah*] of life, and the man became a living creature.” Remember that the word *ruach* can also mean breath. Now, this word is not found in this verse. Nevertheless, it is a **word-play** on the word of the Spirit of God. This is seen in places like **Job 33:4**, “The Spirit [*ruach*] of God has made me, and the breath [*neshamah*] of the Almighty gives me life.” Spirit and breath are in poetic parallelism. Or **John 20:22** where it says that Jesus “*breathed* on them and said to them, ‘Receive the *Holy Spirit*.’”

The fact that the Spirit is the Giver of Life and Lord means exactly what the Athanasian Creed says—he is a **person**, not an it. Let’s think about **other things** about this **Person found in the Scripture**. The Holy Spirit has a mind and an intellect. “No one knows the mind of God except the Spirit of God who searches all things” (**1Cor 2:10-11**). He can **speak** (**Acts 8:29**). He **calls people** (**1Cor 1:9**). He **directs them** (**Acts 20:22**). He **has affections**. He **loves** (**Rom 15:30**). As we saw from Isaiah and again in **Ephesians 4:30**, he can be “**grieved**.” He has **desires** (**Gal 5:17-18**). He has a **will**. In **1Cor 12:11** he “**apportions [spiritual gifts] to each one individually as he wills**.” We can **be in fellowship** with him (**2Cor 13:14**).

He is all-powerful (1Cor 2:10) and all-knowing (11). He is omnipresent (Ps 139:7). He is our Intercessor (Rom 8:26). He illuminates (John 16:12-15). He warns (Acts 20:23). He assures (Rom 8:16). He guides (Rom 8:14). He convicts (John 16:8-11). He can be lied to (Acts 5:3), which is identical to lying to God (4). He is our teacher and our helper or counselor or comforter (*paraclete*; John 14:26).

Who Proceedeth from the Father

Concerning these last two ideas Jesus tells us, “But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom *the Father will send* in my name, he will *teach* you all things and bring to your remembrance all that I have said to you” (John 14:26), and “But when the Helper comes, whom *I will send* to you from the Father, the Spirit of truth, *who proceeds from the Father*, he will bear witness about me” (John 15:26). This takes us to the next thing the creed tells us about him. He “**proceedeth from the Father.**” This comes from the language of John 15:26. In fact, **the creed uses the very same word**: *ekporeuō*.

Now, in Latin, *ekporeuō* becomes *procēdit* (from *procedo*), and as you can hear, this is where we get the English word *proceed*. To proceed means **to go forth** (*pro* – “forth”; *cedo* = “I go”). The technical word that came to be used here is the

Latin *spiration*, which is intimately related to *spirit*. Its archaic meaning is “the act of breathing.” That’s interesting, given what we’ve seen about the Holy Spirit and breath.

In theology, *spiration* means the procession of the Holy Spirit. The word might sound strange, but you are used to hearing it with a prefix on it: *inspiration*, which is a blowing or breathing upon from God to give us the Holy Scriptures. The idea behind *spiration* is simply that God the Father eternally produces the Spirit but in such a way that the divine substance of God is not divided into parts (God is indivisible).¹⁵ It is quite similar in its paradoxical language to the Son being eternally begotten. The Spirit is eternally spirated or he proceeds from the Father.

If there were to be an analogy here that we could use to understand this, and I’m not certain that this works, but I use it because I think the metaphor is biblical, we can imagine a man talking. When he speaks, the word is produced.

¹⁵ Richard A. Muller, “Spiratio,” *Dictionary of Latin and Greek Theological Terms : Drawn Principally from Protestant Scholastic Theology* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Baker Book House, 1985), 286. Going Deeper. This will help in understanding the next section “from the Son.” Muller adds in his entry two points. First, it isn’t just the Father, but also the Son from whom the Spirit proceeds. Second, he adds that they eternally produce, “... and from within the one divine essence.” While this is a good definition as understood by the entire Western church (Roman and Protestant), the Eastern churches take great umbrage to them both. We will discuss this a little more below, but I put it in a note here as we talk about the definition of procession. For a discussion from the East, see Laurent Cleenewerck (ed.), “Appendix D: John 15:26—The Filioque Controversy,” *The Eastern/Greek Orthodox Bible: New Testament* (Laurent A. Cleenewerck, 2011).

But with that word, breath and wind are necessitated. In the Godhead, the Word is Christ, the Breath is the Spirit, and the Man is the Father. All three exist eternally, because there is never a time when the Father does not have fellowship and words, and there is never a time when the Son and Spirit--both God of God, are not. It is ok to not fully comprehend this. No mortal can. But this is what we confess.

And From the Son

At this moment, we must raise **an issue that has long been a problem** in the church. This problem became a long-standing controversy that became the initial thorn that eventually saw the Eastern and Western churches split many centuries later in **the Great Schism** of 1054 AD. It involves an addition to the 2nd Nicene Creed (381 AD) that came over 200 years later at the Third Council of Toledo (589 AD). Because this council was held in Spain and concerned more regional issues, it was not an ecumenical council, and the East was not represented. Nevertheless, the East soon began to charge the Latin churches of changing an ecumenical creed without their knowledge and even worse, breaking the agreement made at the third Ecumenical council at Ephesus (431) where they said, **“It is unlawful to bring**

forward, or to write, or to compose a different Faith as a rival to that established by the Fathers assembled in Nicaea.”

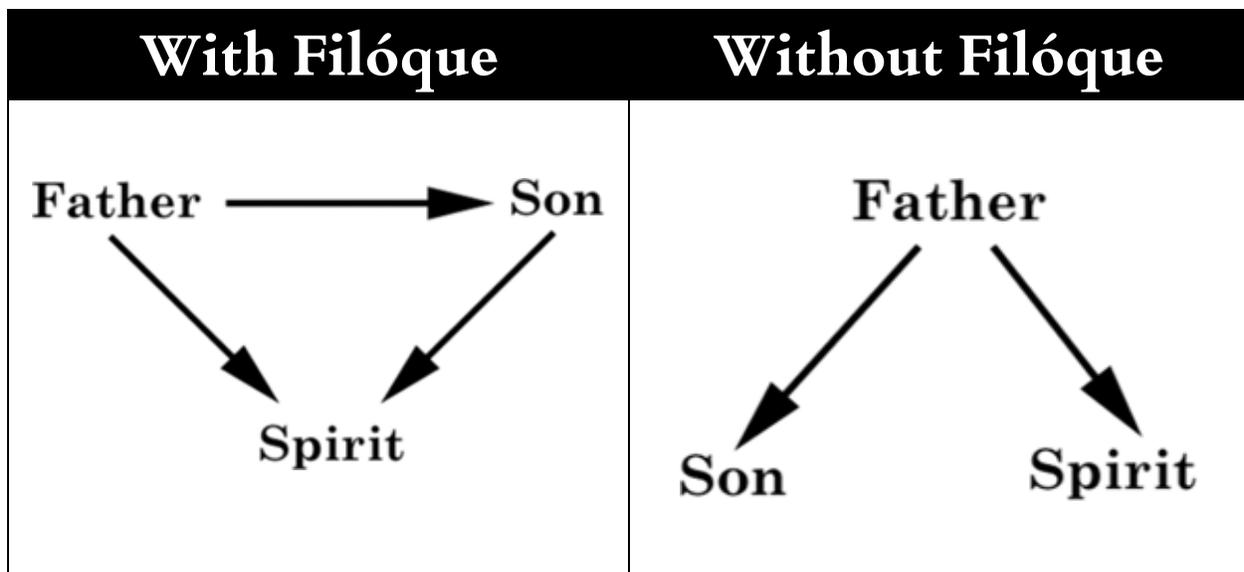
So what changed? The Latin churches added a small little phrase to help combat Arianism which was devastating the region. The phrase was “*and the Son.*” Originally, the creed said that the Holy Spirit “*proceeds from the Father.*” Now it read, “... *who proceeds from the Father and the Son.*” The English words “*from the Son*” is just one word in Latin: *filóque*. Thus, the controversy became known as the Filóque controversy.

To us, it may seem like a tiny little thing, justifiable given the circumstances, especially since Tertullian (160 – 220), Jerome (347 – 420), Ambrose (338 – 397), and Augustine (354 – 430) all spoke of the Spirit as proceeding from the Father and the Son long before this change was adopted.¹⁶ So it wasn’t a new teaching. As such, it was meant to show the co-equality of the Father and Son to those who denied Jesus’ deity.

Nevertheless, we’ve seen how just one iota can make a world of difference in theology, and the church has never fully agreed on this matter. Some of the stauncher (Eastern)

¹⁶ See F. L. Cross and Elizabeth A. Livingstone, eds., “Double Procession of the Holy Spirit,” *The Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church* (Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press, 2005), 508.

Orthodox believe(d) that it is not from the divine essence that the Spirit proceeds, but from *the Person* of the Father and that's why John puts it the way he does. As such, while **they certainly believe that the Son also sends the Spirit**, it is a very different matter to them to say that that Spirit *proceeds* from the Son. Besides, they say, Scripture is silent on the issue of the Son, but it most certainly is not silent on the issue of the Father. Should we bind consciences at the level of ecumenical creed (even if there wasn't evil intent) when it isn't in the Scripture? For this reason, I have chosen when we say this creed in our church to not incorporate the Filóque clause, even though it may be true. It just isn't necessary, and I find it unnecessarily divisive.



Early Creeds and the Holy Spirit

We've seen how the Scripture has much to say on the personhood of the Spirit and how the ecumenical creeds treat this Third Person of the Trinity. But since he is so important to our Faith, I thought it would be interesting to look briefly at how he is also incorporated into many of the earliest ante-Nicene creeds of the Fathers in ways that are not necessarily reflected our four creeds.

Irenaeus' creeds say quite a bit about the Spirit. In introducing the Son, he says that we believe also “in the Holy Ghost, who through the prophets preached the dispensations and the advent [of Christ]” (*Against Heresies* 1.10). He says we believe in “The firm persuasion also in the Spirit of God, who furnishes us with a knowledge of truth, and has set forth the dispensations of the Father and the son, in virtue of which he dwells in every generation of men, according to the will of the Father” (*Against Heresies* 4.33.7). These creeds are anxious to have you believe that the Spirit is there throughout the OT, as are others we will look at.

Tertullian confesses that we believe in the Son “sent in his place the power of the Holy Ghost, to guide the believers” (*Against Heretics* 13). **Novatian** professes that we believe “in the Holy Ghost, promised of old to the Church, but

granted in the appointed and fitting time,” referring to Pentecost onward. Origen affirms, “They [The Apostles] also delivered that that Holy Ghost was associated in honor and dignity with the Father and the Son” (*On the Principles* 1.4-6). Epiphanius, like Irenaeus, confesses, “We believe in the Holy Ghost, who spoke in the Law, and preached in the Prophets,” but continues one of the longest statements about him, “and came down at the Jordan, who speaks in Apostles, dwells in saints, and thus we believe in Him, that there is a Holy Spirit, a Spirit of God, a perfect Spirit, a Paraclete Spirit, uncreated, proceeding from the Father, and receiving from the Son, and believed” (*Ancoratus*). *The Apostolic Constitutions* teaches converts at baptism to confess, “The Holy Ghost, that is, the Comforter, who wrought in all the saints from the beginning of world, but was afterwards sent to the Apostles by the Father, according to the promise of our Savior and Lord, Jesus Christ; and after the Apostles, to all those that believe in the Holy Catholic (Universal) Church.”

Who With the Father and Son is Worshiped and Glorified

The attributes of the Holy Spirit, and especially that he is the Lord himself and the very Giver of Life, necessitate

that the Holy Spirit is **not a Force** or a mere power,¹⁷ but is himself the One True God. As such, the Second Nicene creed goes on to tell us this **very important fact**. **Along with**

¹⁷ **Going Deeper.** The idea of **God's "power"** is a fascinating one, especially in Jewish history. At the time of the NT, many Jews were arguing for "**two powers in heaven**." This comes from certain texts where there are two "Gods" or two "Yahwehs. For example, "**Then the LORD rained on Sodom and Gomorrah sulfur and fire from the LORD out of heaven**" (**Gen 19:24**). Or, "**And the angel of the LORD appeared to him in a flame of fire out of the midst of a bush ... When the LORD saw that he turned aside to see, God called to him out of the bush, 'Moses, Moses!' And he said, 'Here I am.'**" (**Ex 3:2, 4**). Or, "**Behold, I send an angel before you to guard you on the way and to bring you to the place that I have prepared. Pay careful attention to him and obey his voice; do not rebel against him, for he will not pardon your transgression, for my name is in him**" (**Ex 23:20-21**). "**I overthrew some of you, as when God overthrew Sodom and Gomorrah, and you were as a brand plucked out of the burning; yet you did not return to me,**' declares the LORD." (**Amos 4:11**). Or, "**I saw in the night visions, and behold, with the clouds of heaven there came one like a son of man, and he came to the Ancient of Days and was presented before him**" (**Dan 7:13**). There are many more of these.

Often times, this "Second Yahweh" or "second God" as he was sometimes called, is associated with words such as "**Name**" (**Isa 30:27**), "**Word**" (**Gen 15:1**), "**Face/Presence**" (**Dt 4:37**), "**Glory**" (**Ezek 1:26, 28**), "**Arm/Right Arm**" (**Ex 15:3, 5**), or "**Wisdom**" (**Prov 8:30-31**). Such words seemed to equate to a power rather than a person. In fact, he is even sometimes directly related to **power**: "**Your right hand, O LORD, glorious in power...**" (**Ex 15:6**).

Here's where it gets interesting. Since at least **Aristotle**, philosophers had been arguing for the divine being as inherently *simple*. This means that God is not divisible; he is not composed of "parts." You could not speak of God in terms of parts, but you could speak of him in terms of "**powers**." Aristotle as a Greek, Philo as a Jew, and many Fathers, including Tertullian, spoke this way. But going back to the Biblical texts, it was also undeniable that this Power of God was at the very least anthropomorphized, if not hypostatized (A hypostasis is the essence of a thing. We speak of the hypostatic Union of Christ as two natures—divine and human—in one person. So a hypostasis of, say, the Name and God would mean that there are two natures in one person. One nature is divine, the other is a kind of created thing). Hence, Power becomes a *Divine Person*.

It is into this that we can read a text such as **Luke 1:35**, "**The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you.**" Epexegetically, Power equals Holy Spirit. Other passages may be similar. "**But as for me, I am filled with power, with the Spirit of the LORD...**" (**Micah 3:8**). "**God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and with power**" (**Acts 10:38**). "**My speech and my message were not in plausible words of wisdom, but in demonstrate of the Spirit and of power**" (**1Cor 2:4**), and so on. In this way, I would argue that there are **not just two powers**, but **three**. And these powers (or Persons) are **God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit**. All three are found in both Testaments. For more see **Alan Segal**, *Two Powers in Heaven* (Boston: Brill, 2007); **Douglas Van Dorn**, "Antecedents of the Angel: Tracing the Origins of Divine Simplicity to Divine Powers," *Academia* (2017), https://www.academia.edu/39252130/Antecedents_of_The_Angel_Tracing_the_Origins_of_Divine_Simplicity_to_Divine_Powers.

the Father and the Son, he is to be worshiped and glorified. The creeds have said nothing about worship until now. They do so here because now the Three Persons have all been confessed and seen as God. Therefore, we have nothing else to do but to worship and glorify them. If the creeds are tied up in faith, then worship is the first and highest expression of faith.

To worship in English means to ascribe worth or worthiness (from *weorð* “worthy” + *-scipe* (-ship)). Only God is worthy of worship. Worship must never be given to the creature, but only to the Creator, for he alone is worthy. Any passage that equates two or more of the Persons of the Godhead much mean that those Persons are each worthy of worship. For example, when Jesus tells us that we are to baptize “in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit” (Matt 28:19), we must assume that the three are equally worthy of worship.

In my estimation, this is precisely what is going on in a passage such as Isaiah 6:3, “*Holy, Holy, Holy is the Lord God Almighty.*” I believe Revelation 4:8 proves this, for in quoting this verse of worship from the Living Creatures in heaven, they are directing it towards the One sitting on the throne (2), the seven Spirits of God (5), and the Lamb (5:6).

Each “Holy” is directed towards one of the three Persons. Here are some others, particularly focusing on the Spirit.

When the early disciples praised God, the work of his Spirit was included in the anthem (**Acts 4:24ff**). Shedd said, “This act of worship on the part of the disciples terminated on the Holy Spirit.”¹⁸

Consider **2 Corinthians 13:14**. “The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit, be with you all.” Loraine Boettner calls this “a prayer addressed to Christ for His grace, to the Father for His love, and to the Holy Spirit for His fellowship.”¹⁹ Albert Barnes says that since this is so, “it is right to offer worship to the Lord Jesus and to the Holy Spirit.”²⁰

In the OT, Psalm 95 “erupts in praise for God”²¹ singing, “Oh come, let us sing to the LORD; let us make a joyful noise to the rock of our salvation! ... For the LORD is a great God, and a great King above all gods ... Oh come, let us worship and bow down; let us kneel before the LORD,

¹⁸ William Greenough Thayer Shedd, *Dogmatic Theology*, ed. Alan W. Gomes, 3rd ed. (Phillipsburg, NJ: P & R Pub., 2003), 269.

¹⁹ Loraine Boettner, *Studies in Theology* (Grand Rapids, MI: Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing Company, 1947), 92.

²⁰ Albert Barnes, *Notes on the New Testament: II Corinthians & Galatians*, ed. Robert Frew (London: Blackie & Son, 1884–1885), 274.

²¹ This entire section is inspired from the short little article Wayne Jackson, “Is the Holy Spirit Worthy of Worship?” Christian Courier, <https://christiancourier.com/articles/is-the-holy-spirit-worthy-of-worship>.

our Maker!” (Ps 95:1, 3, 6). It then rebukes Israel and tells them not to harden their hearts as they did in the wilderness when they tempted “me” (8-9). The thing is, Hebrews quotes this passage to those Christians, warning them that they were in danger of doing the same thing. It does so by saying that it was the Holy Spirit who said these things (Heb 3:7). Isaiah seems to agree says that “they rebelled and grieved his Holy Spirit” who he had put “in the midst of them” (Isa 63:10-11).

Therefore, the Holy Spirit is being worshiped throughout the Psalm. Therefore, the creed is telling us to do what the Scripture does and what Christians since the very beginning have been doing. As Polycarp, the disciple of John the Apostle said, “Wherefore also I praise you [God, the Father] for all things, I bless you, along with the everlasting and heavenly Jesus Christ, your beloved Son, with whom, to you and the Holy Spirit, be glory both now and to all coming ages. Amen” (Polycarp, *Epistle to Smyrna* 14).

Who Spoke by the Prophets

The last thing the creed says about the Spirit might seem almost anticlimactic after this. “Who spoke by the Prophets.” But it isn’t. In fact, it is the capstone to the Person we are dealing with.

We've seen the proof-text already in the context of inspiration and the meaning of "spirit." "For no prophecy was ever produced by the will of man, but men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit" (2Pe 1:21). We spoke there about how you must think of the Spirit as *Holy*. Hence, Holy is his title. But this is precisely what the prophets, who spoke by him, said. We just saw Isaiah call him "The *Holy Spirit*." David, prophetically spoke of him as the *Holy Spirit* (Ps 51:11), whom he did not want God to take from him.

It is in these two texts that you must understand something that relates directly to this last statement in the creed about the Spirit. Many hear what David says and think this means he can lose his salvation. This is not so. As we saw from the Apostolic Constitutions, the Holy Spirit has been working salvation "in all the saints from the beginning of the world." He has always been the regenerating power of God in conversion through the Gospel, even as far back as Adam. And they were always saved by faith alone in Christ, and never by works. But his presence was different. Isaiah says that God put his spirit "in the midst of them."

In those days, the Holy Spirit did not indwell the hearts of believers as he does NT saints. This does not mean he did

not regenerate them. It simply means that God's people had not had the necessary work done by Christ to **make them fit vessels** for his presence. So, God worked out a temporary plan that through the tabernacle and God's dwelling in that Holy Place, that **they could come to the Spirit** (The Glory-Cloud) to be cleansed from daily sins, even though their regeneration by faith was never in jeopardy (of course, many of them were never truly regenerated).

That ongoing activity of going to the tabernacle with an offering was the work of God **sanctifying, not regenerating or justifying** them, as he is in the midst of them. They came to God through a series of rituals to be daily and yearly cleansed, not saved. In fact, it was because they were already saved that they would ever want to go there to be cleansed!

When David is speaking, he is **not talking about salvation either**, but of the *kingship* (**Ps 51:13-15**). Recall that the Holy Spirit would come in power upon Saul. This the was the power that *anointed him as king* (**1Sam 11:6**; cf. **15:1; 16:12-14**). The Spirit gave him power to prophecy (**10:10-11**). This had nothing to do with his salvation and everything to do with his exalted position (whether he was saved or not, we do not know). David, as king, has just sinned a great sin and **he does not want God to leave him as he did**

Saul, destroying his rule and bringing the people into darkness that the king is supposed to illuminate.

But something new was about to happen. Ezekiel prophesied by the Spirit, “I will give you a new heart, and a new spirit I will put within you. And I will remove the heart of stone from your flesh and give you a heart of flesh” (Ezek 36:26). The “you” here is not singular, but *plural*—a group. It falls in a long line of plural exhortations to the nation to obey God’s law with a circumcised heart (Deut 10:6, etc.). But they couldn’t, because God has not yet made that possible (29:4). But God promised that one day *he would make that possible* (30:6). Not because he would finally regenerate someone and save them, but because the work of Christ would satisfy God’s wrath once-for-all, making it possible for the Spirit to dwell personally in a person without destroying them. Hence, the temple of God is no longer a place you go to because you are saved. It is your body and the church where you are present because you are saved. The difference is one of place.²² Therefore, to end on God speaking through the prophets about these amazing things takes us forward to the new era that has begun because of Christ and

²² As James Hamilton puts it, “Not in but with in the Old Testament.” See James M. Hamilton Jr., *God’s Indwelling Presence: The Holy Spirit in the Old & New Testaments* (Nashville, TN: B&H Academic, 2006), 21.

the Spirit's work in the NT. This provides a **great transition** into what we will look at in our last week on the creeds.

Saving Faith: *Has the Spirit Given You Delight?*

For now, it is important to return to what we looked at earlier. As we thought about the **three necessary components of saving faith**, I said to think of the last component, *fiducia*, with the Third Person especially. ***Fiducia* is this heart-warming delight, love, and affection** that one must have in God. You must have it of God the Father, of God the Son, and of God the Holy Spirit. Can there be any better Heart-Warmer than the Holy Spirit of Fire who inflames our desires and heats our passions by indwelling his people, convicting, consoling, and comforting us along the way?

Someone has put it this way,

The Holy Spirit is like fire when He comes into His temple—the body of the believer. He takes away the coldness that we once had toward the Lord and the things of God. He warms our hearts to the love of God. Then He gives light to our minds and hearts that were darkened by sin and Satan. He cleanses and purifies all the dross of our old nature, making it over like refined gold for the Lord's use. Then, to carry out the figure still further, the Spirit consumes all. He must

not be quenched by our indifference or coldness. He must possess every part of our life just as fire consumes everything in its path.²³

Therefore, you must pray a prayer like Henry Vaughan did long ago.

O God the Holy Ghost! The fire that enlightens, and warms our hearts. Shed into me your most sacred light, that I may know the true joys of heaven, and see to escape the illusions of this world. Ray yourself into my soul that I may see what an exceeding weight of glory my enemy would bereave me of for the mere shadows and painting of this world. Grant that I may know those things which belong to you, and nothing else; In flame me with your divine love that with a true Christian contempt I may tread upon all transitory pleasures, and seek only those things which are eternal.²⁴

May the Spirit Be With You

All this began by us thinking about **the Force**—that **energy field**, that great “**It**” of Eastern religions and

²³ Wick Broomall, *The Holy Spirit: A Scriptural Study of His Person and Work* (New York: American Tract Society, 1940), 151–152.

²⁴ Henry Vaughan, *The Mount of Olives: Or, Solitary Devotions. By Henry Vaughan Silurist. With an Excellent Discourse of the Blessed State of Man in Glory, Written by the Most Reverend and Holy Father Anselm Arch-Bishop of Canterbury, and Now Done into English*, Early English Books Online (London: Printed for William Leake at the Crown in Fleet-street between the two Temple-Gates, 1652), 4. [Spelling modernized.]

Christian cults. Han Solo said, “**May the Force be with you.**” St. Paul on the other hand said, “**The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ and the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you**” (2Cor 13:14). Don’t be seduced by the Dark Side. Come into the Light and see the works that the Person God has wrought so that you might be saved. Saved by the glorious, regenerating, sanctifying, glorifying work of God, the Holy Spirit.

Now that you are done, go back and read the sermon according to the outline I had in my mind when I wrote it:

Main Outline:

- A. May the Force Be with You
- B. Saving Faith: *Fiducia*
- C. I Believe in The Holy Spirit**
- B’. Has the Spirit Given You Delight?
- A’. May the Holy Spirit Be with You

Sub-Outline (Under “C. I believe in The Holy Spirit”):

- A. Holy. Spirit. (2Pe 1:21)
- B. Lord and Giver of Life
- C. Other Attributes of the Spirit from Scripture
- D. Proceedeth from the Father**
- D’. And from the Son**
- C’. Other Attributes of the Spirit from the Creeds
- B’. Who with the Father and Son is worshiped and glorified
- A’. Who Spoke by the Prophets (2Pe 1:21)

Appendix:

Luther's Smaller Catechism, The Third Article: Of Sanctification²⁵

John 14:16, 17–26. 1 Cor. 6:11.

I believe in the Holy Ghost¹; the² holy³ Christian⁴ Church⁵, the communion⁶ of saints⁷; the forgiveness of sins⁸; the resurrection of the body⁹; and the life everlasting¹⁰ Amen¹¹.

What is meant by this Article?

Answer. I believe that I cannot¹ by my own reason² or strength³ believe in Jesus Christ my Lord, or come to him⁴; but the Holy Spirit⁵ hath called me⁶ through the gospel⁷, enlightened⁸ me by his gifts⁹, and sanctified¹⁰ and preserved¹¹ me in the true faith¹²; in like manner as he calls¹³, gathers¹⁴, enlightens¹⁵, and sanctifies¹⁶ the whole¹⁷ Christian church¹⁸ on earth¹⁹, and preserves²⁰ it in union with Jesus Christ in the true faith²¹; in which Christian church²² he dail²³ forgives²⁴ abundantly²⁵ all my sins²⁶, and the sins of all believers²⁷, and will raise up me and all the dead at the last day²⁸, and will grant everlasting life²⁹ to me and to all who believe in Christ³⁰. This is most certainly true.³¹

²⁵ Luther has only three Articles, while I have divided his third into two parts.

¹ Acts 2:1–4. John 15:26.

² 1 Cor. 12:12, 13.

³ Eph. 5:25–27.

⁴ 1 Cor. 3:11.

⁵ Eph. 1:22, 23.

⁶ 1 John 1:3.

⁷ Eph. 2:19.

⁸ Eph. 1:7.

⁹ John 5:28, 29.

¹⁰ John 6:40.

¹¹ 2 Cor. 1:20.

¹ John 3:5, 6,

² 1 Cor. 2:14.

³ 2 Cor. 3:5.

⁴ John 6:44.

⁵ Gal. 4:6.

⁶ 2 Tim. 1:9.

⁷ Rom. 1:16.

⁸ Eph. 1:17, 18.

⁹ 1 Cor. 12:1.

¹⁰ 2 Thess. 2:13.

¹¹ 1 Thess. 5:23, 24.

¹² Eph. 4:14.

¹³ Eph. 5:14.

¹⁴ Eph. 2:20–22.

¹⁵ 2 Cor. 4:6.

¹⁶ Eph. 1:3, 4.

¹⁷ 1 Cor. 12:11.

¹⁸ 1 Tim. 3:15.

¹⁹ 1 Pet. 5:10.

²⁰ Phil. 1:6.

²¹ John 17:11, 20, 21.

²² Heb. 12:22–24.

²³ Ps. 86:3.

²⁴ 1 John 1:8, 9.

²⁵ Rom. 5:20.

²⁶ Col. 1:14.

²⁷ Acts 10:43.

²⁸ Rom. 8:11. Phil. 3:20, 21.

²⁹ John 3:16.

³⁰ John 3:36.

³¹ Rom. 8:38, 39.

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