

Supplemental images and narrative to
Is Your God Big Enough? Close Enough? You Enough?
Jesus and the Three Faces of God
by Paul Smith



CHAPTER 3
Beyond “God the Spirit” to the
Marvel of Infinite Consciousness
(pages 69-93)

Is “God the Spirit” of the Trinity like a ghost at Halloween?

No, but there is a close, personal face of spirit which we explore in Chapter 8. Here we are looking at spirit that is big enough to be a dimension of the Infinite Face of God. What is “God the Spirit”





Artists depict God's spirit as a dove because spirit descending on Jesus at his baptism is described that way in the New Testament.



FOUR CLUES TO UNDERSTANDING GOD AS SPIRIT

God is spirit and we must worship God in spirit and in truth. John 4:24

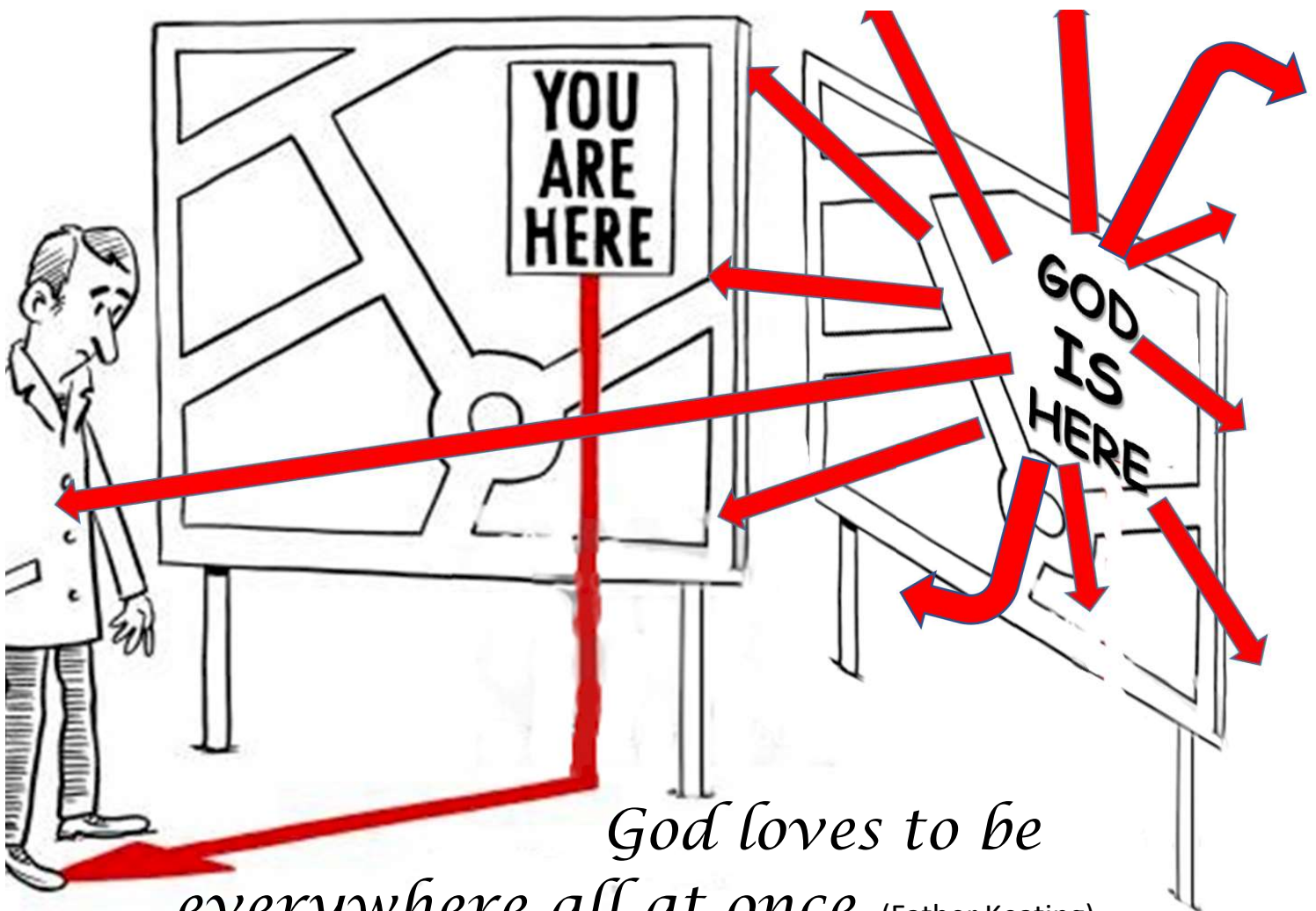
If God is spirit, how can we "worship in spirit"?

Clue #1
God is Infinite Spirit

(See the biblical passages quoted on page 71.

God is spirit, not *a* spirit somewhere but spirit everywhere.

How can we picture God as Infinite Spirit? How about:



*God loves to be
everywhere all at once.* (Father Keating)

Clue #2:
God is both human and divine.

(See pages 71-75)

The Old Testament word *ruach* has several meanings. It can mean **spirit**. It is used of divine spirit or human spirit.

It also means **breath**,
We should not be surprised that the word for *breath* come to refer to the breath, wind, and the “real, living you” inside the body? What is the first thing you notice about a dead person? They are not breathing. Their breath has left. Therefore, it is understandable that early on “breath” came to be the vital life force in living things.



Spirit (*ruach*) also mean **wind**.
Breathing seemed a small version of wind blowing. So the word for breath also became the word for wind.

Ruach by Lucy Sync



When my friend, Lucy Sync, discovered that *ruach* in Hebrew was a feminine word, she painted this image of God as Mother breathing the breath of life over the earth. *Ruach* in Genesis 1:2 is translated as “wind” in the NRSV.

Ruach (spirit) also means **life** or **life-force**. When spirit came, life came. The first and most observable difference between a dead body and a living body is that one is breathing while the other is not. This was why *breath* was equated to life. When the breath ceased, life ceased. It was a small leap to think that the real person left the body when the breath left, and hence the spirit was somehow different than the body.



Clue #3
Spirit is given to all living people.

(See pages 75-78)

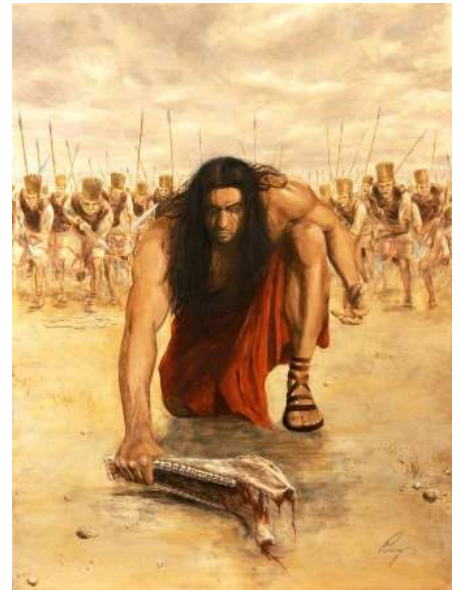
All living people are alive by virtue of *ruach*. God's spirit in the Old Testament fills everyone. I call this normal, everyday spirit-breath or life-force.

At times the Old Testament describes an extra endowment of spirit that would allow certain people to have special abilities such as leadership or craftsmanship. I call this awakened spirit-breath or intensified life-force.



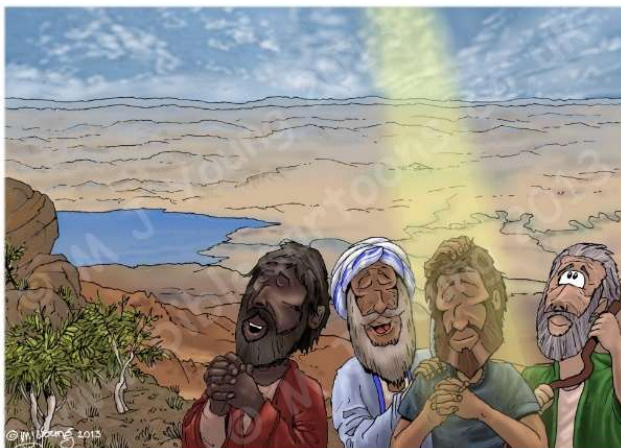
“The spirit of the Lord rushed on Samson and he tore the lion apart barehanded.” (Judges 14)

“The spirit of the Lord rushed on Samson and he killed a thousand men with the jawbone of a donkey.” (Judges 15:14-15)



“I have filled Bezaleel with the spirit of God with ability and intelligence, with knowledge and all craftsmanship to devise artistic designs. (Ex. 31:2-4)

Samuel anoints David and “The spirit of the Lord came mightily upon David.” (1 Sam.16:13.



“Joshua was filled with the spirit” Deut. 39:4

Joel predicts everyone will have this awakened spirit-breath or intensified life-force. (Joel 2:28)



Basic, everyday spirit was in everyone in the Old Testament. A few people had awakened intensified spirit. However, in the New Testament spirit is only referred to in its awakened form, not the basic dimension that everyone had.



When Jesus was baptized in water, holy spirit-breath, looking like a dove, descended upon him.

At Pentecost they were all filled with the spirit (awakened spirit-breath).



Spirit-breath fills Paul when Ananias prays for him. (Acts 9)

Spirit-breath comes on the Gentiles while Peter is speaking. (Acts 10)



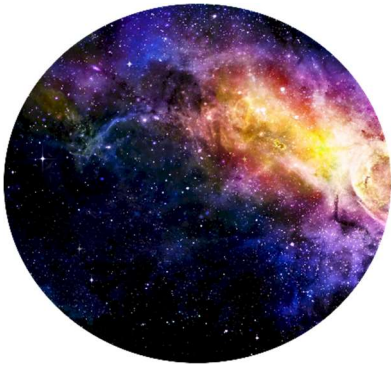
At Ephesus Paul prayed for some disciples and holy spirit-breath came on them. (Acts 19)

In the New Testament, the writers seem to have forgotten that everyone already had spirit-breath because they were alive. Entering awakened, intensified spirit-breath was so powerful and dominant that it appeared to them to be the real coming of spirit-breath into people. An integral view includes both:

Everyone has the basic, normal spirit of God and some come into an awakened transcendent dimension at some point in their lives. It is important to see this so that we can affirm both spirit in all, and awakened transcendent spirit available to all.

Clue #4
Spirit is consciousness in the Bible

The ancient biblical metaphors and descriptions of spirit are today contained in our word “consciousness.” This opens new ways to see divine-human spirit permeating life. How can we image this presence of the divine infinite spirit-breath-consciousness in all its forms present in the finite?



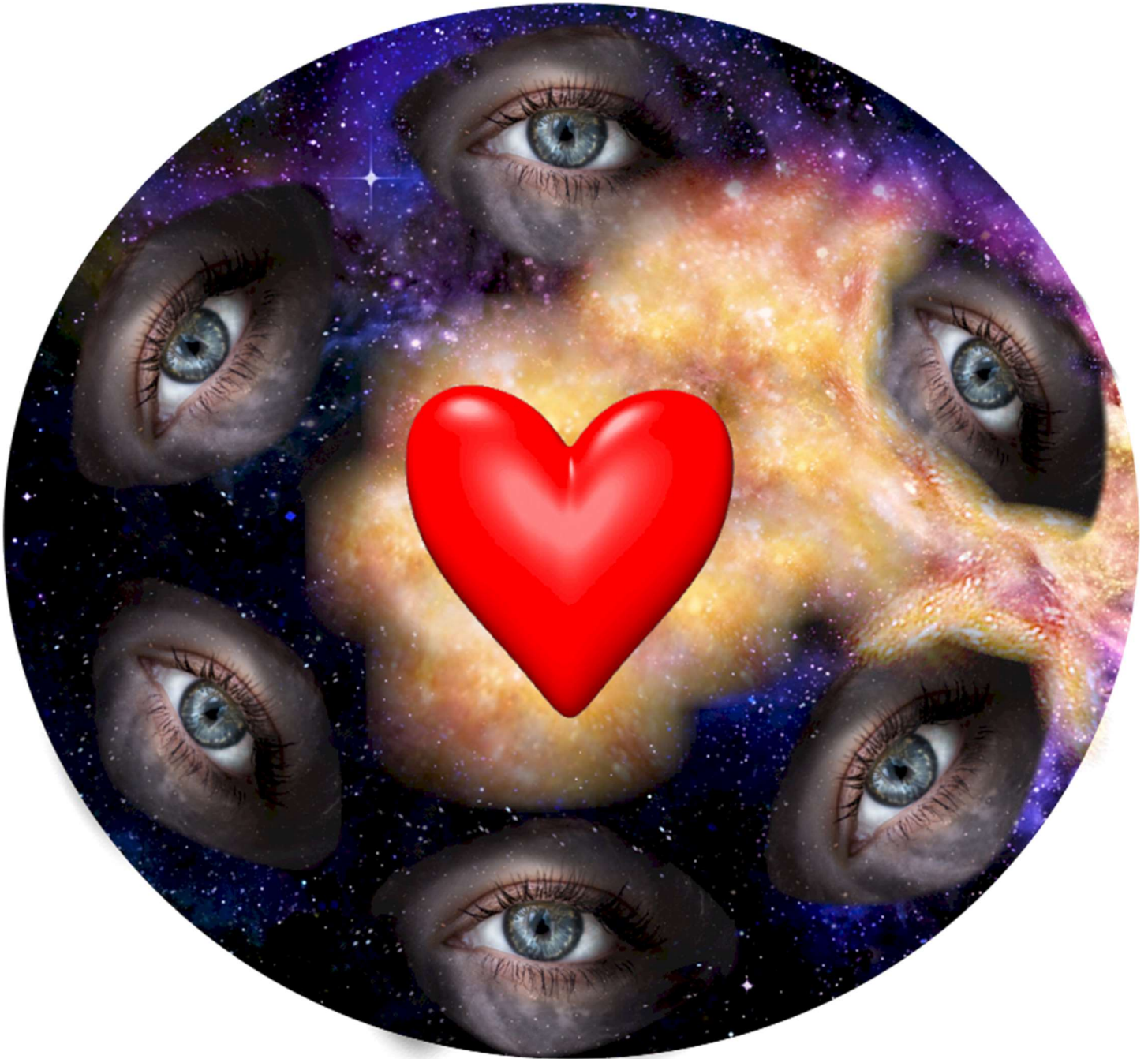
Let's begin with the infinite part, using the cosmos as a metaphor for infinity.

Consciousness is awareness. All five senses and more could represent consciousness. But “seeing” is often used by artists as a symbol for awareness or consciousness. God sees you and knows your name.



Spirit-breath-consciousness is not empty awareness. It is filled with the evolutionary impulse of creative love. We represent that with a heart.

Let's put these three symbols together to represent spirit as infinite consciousness.
(as seen on page 90)



Spirit as Infinite Consciousness

Spirit is the infinite radiance of divine energy and life that is the field of consciousness itself.

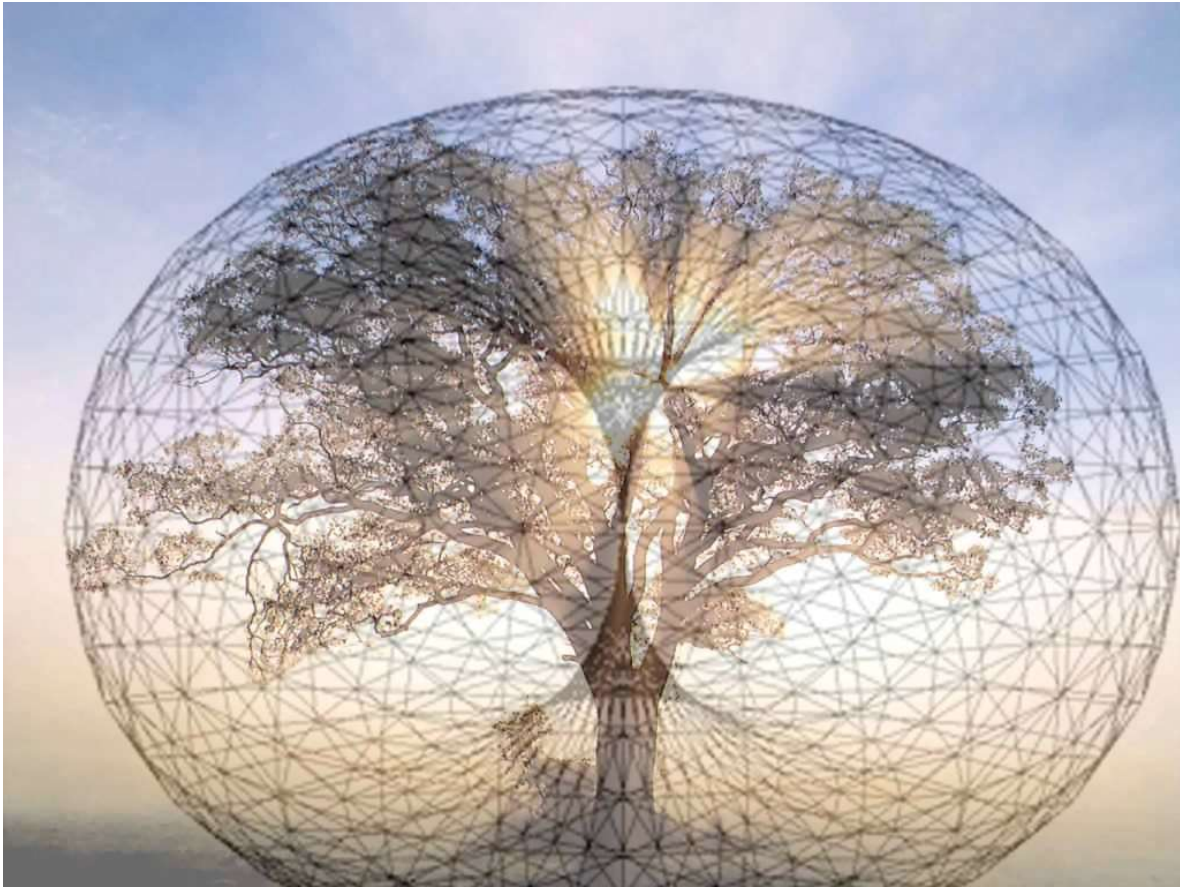


Spirit is the face of God that is pure consciousness making itself conscious in humankind through the long process of evolution.



Infinite consciousness is present in us and as us as the Divine Light that shines in every mind and heart.





All things are a part of the web of divine-human consciousness.
Some are aware of this, while others are not.

Breathe spirit in and out.



Here are the three symbols for Trinity, Father, Son and Spirit as Infinite Being, Cosmic Christ, and Infinite Consciousness. This is God Beyond Us.



TRINITY

Father



Infinite
Being

Son



Cosmic
Christ

Spirit



Infinite
Consciousness

BEYOND US