

The Holy Spirit

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Lesson 1: Identifying The Holy Spirit

INTRODUCTION:

A. A study of the Holy Spirit is something that is often met with apprehension, if met at all!

1. When it comes to our recognition of God, the Holy Spirit really gets neglected!
 - a. How often we do sing, pray, study, and talk about Jesus Christ and the Father?
 - b. Do we do this with the Holy Spirit? Does the thought make us uncomfortable?
2. There are a couple of reasons why this is the case:
 - a. We may see reference to Him as charismatic and thus we shy away from it
 - b. It may be that we fear what we do not know and what we fail to fully understand
3. In regards to the Holy Spirit some have made the mistake of running to extremes:
 - a. Some have gone to the extreme of attributing everything to the Holy Spirit – One thing some say is He converts, transforms, and dwells in a man directly apart from man's will and God's revealed word!
 - b. But some good meaning Christians hear this & respond by going to the opposite extreme → Won't talk about the H.S. and pretty much denies any role today
 - c. We see the same done with emotions in worship, faith and works, & loving God

B. For whatever reason, the Holy Spirit remains a mysterious aspect of God's word to many!

I. FIRST OF ALL, THE HOLY SPIRIT IS A PERSON!

A. There are many misconceptions concerning the Holy Spirit:

1. Some view the Holy Spirit in a mysterious way, a mystical apparition that roams about:
 - a. This may be a result of being called: "Holy Spirit, Holy Ghost, or the Spirit of God"
 - b. But there's nothing different in nature between the Holy Spirit, Jesus, or the Father!
2. Others view the Holy Spirit as being nothing more than God's active force:
 - a. The Jehovah's Witnesses lead this misconception, though others certainly follow
 - b. Quote from their material...
 - c. **Illustration:** When I asked them if it was like "THE FORCE" on Star Wars they replied, "I hadn't thought of it that way, but that's exactly right!"
3. He is not the mind or disposition of God or Christ, but separate entities! **(Matt 28:18-20)**
 - a. They are seen as being present at the same time but in different forms
 - b. They are listed together, but separately! They have their own individuality!
4. The Holy Spirit is also not the same thing as the word of God **(2 Peter 1:21)**
 - a. Maybe this misconception results from the emphasis that the only way the Spirit works is through the word – Sometimes speaking of the two as equivalent!
 - b. **Illustration:** If I was to reveal to you my will (last will and testament) that would not make me be the will! I just was the one revealing it!
5. The scriptures never present the Holy Spirit as being an object or a force using phrases like "it," but always makes reference with words of personality! **(Luke 4:18; Jn 15:26)**

B. The Bible describes the Spirit using characteristics of a person:

1. What is the difference between a person and a force or an object?
 - a. Webster defines person as: "A being characterized by conscious apprehension, rationality, and a moral sense"
 - b. The Bible presents all of these characteristics & more as true of the Holy Spirit!
 - c. The Bible shows the Holy Spirit as a separate, distinct, individual Person! He's separate from the Father & the Son in His identity & to some degree His work!
2. Things the Holy Spirit does that testify of His personhood:
 - a. He hears **(John 16:13)**
 - b. He shows **(John 16:13-15)**
 - c. He speaks **(I Tim 4:1)**

- d. He bears witness with our spirits that we are sons of God (**Rom 8:16-17**)
 - e. He gives commandments (**Acts 13:2**)
 - f. He delivers law (**Rom 8:1-2**)
 - g. He gives life (**Gal 6:8**)
 - h. He leads and forbids (**Acts 16:6-7**)
 - i. He glorifies (**John 16:14**)
3. Things people can do to the Holy Spirit that testify of His personhood:
 - a. He can be lied to (**Acts 5:3-4**)
 - b. He can be vexed (**Isaiah 63:10**)
 - c. He can be grieved (**Eph 4:30**)
 - d. He can be insulted (**Hebrews 10:29**)
 4. There are also characteristics that show His personhood:
 - a. He has a mind which shows thought, feeling, and purpose (**Rom 8:27**)
 - b. He shows affection (**Rom 15:30**)
 - c. As part of having a mind, He also has knowledge (**I Cor. 2:10-11**)
 - d. He also shows goodness (**Neh 9:20**)
 5. Let's not DOWNSIZE the Holy Spirit by speaking or thinking of Him as an object or a force... as a thing or an it! Think of Him just as you think of the Father & the Son!

II. SECONDLY, LET'S NOTICE THE NATURE OF THE SPIRIT

A. The Holy Spirit is part of the Godhead:

1. There are three persons that the Godhead consists of (**Acts 17:29; Col. 2:9**)
 - a. "God" consists of three persons – God the Father, God the Son, God the Holy Spirit → Each person is equally God and together make up the Godhead
 - b. **Illustrations:** Though not a perfect analogy some describe the Godhead as a family of three and others describe the Godhead as a pie cut into three pieces
 - c. The term "God" means "the divine nature, divinity, the state of being God"
 - 1) Defines the essence, substance, or being of One who is God!
 - 2) It does not always refer to one particular member of the Godhead
2. There are a couple of occasions in scripture where all three are seen as present together:
 - a. During the creation (**Gen 1:1ff; John 1**): The term "Elohim" is in the plural form... all three are seen present! (Also notice the plurality of **Genesis 1:26**)
 - b. At Jesus' baptism (**Mark 1:10-12**) → Jesus is baptized, the Spirit descends from Heaven & drives Him into the wilderness, and the Father speaks from heaven
 - c. When one is baptized, they are to be baptized in the name of all three! (**Mt 28:19**)
3. Other passages which link all three together: (**I John 5:7; Eph 2:18; 2 Cor 13:14**)
4. Without any explanation Peter spoke of the Holy Spirit as being God! (**Acts 5:3-4**)
 - a. When Annanias lied to the Holy Spirit it was the same as him lying to God!
 - b. This is different than saying that a lie told to a man is a sin against God as well, for Peter said that it was not a lie to men but a lie to God! The Holy Spirit is deity!
5. Notice two parallel passages where His divine nature is observed (**Matt 12:28; Lk 11:20**)
 - a. Jesus is offering a defense concerning by what power He works miracles – Either of Satan or of God! If it was not by Satan, they would have to accept Jesus!
 - b. Only two options: Either the Holy Spirit is God or these passages contradict!

B. As part of the Godhead, He possesses the fullness of the divine nature!

1. The Holy Spirit is omnipresent: (**Psalms 139:7-10**)
 - a. This simply means that He is not restricted by time or space, but can be at any place without being restricted by time as we are!
 - b. While tough to grasp with a finite mind, His presence is always in every place!
2. The Holy Spirit is omniscient: With abilities that only is true of Deity!
 - a. He played an inextricable role in the creation of this world – When God created the world it was all three at work! (**Gen. 1:2; Job 26:13**)
 - b. He is responsible for miracles! The miracles men did in the Bible were not done by their own power, but the Holy Spirit gave them that ability!

- c. The Holy Spirit was responsible for the revealing of the scriptures – Men spoke, and wrote for that matter, by His direction! (**I Peter 1:9-12**)
- 3. He is also eternal in His existence (**Heb 9:14; Psalm 90:1-2**)
 - a. As an eternal being, the Holy Spirit has always been and always will be!
 - b. He has no day of birth and he will have no day of death – From eternity to eternity!

Conclusion: The subject and study of the Holy Spirit is not something we should run away from! Ignorance about the Holy Spirit has led to a fear of speaking of, praising, studying about, and being thankful for Him! It also leads people to error about what the Spirit is all about! This ignorance is unnecessary!