

The Holy Spirit

The Person of the Holy Spirit

Lesson 2

Introduction:

- I. The Holy Spirit is one of the most misunderstood persons of the Godhead.
 - A. Most of the misunderstanding comes from a lack of study.
 1. This has led to many false assumptions and outright false teaching about the person, the work, the indwelling, and the gift of the Holy Spirit.
 - a. If we do not know what the Bible teaches on a given subject, we leave ourselves open to being influenced by false teaching.
 - b. False teaching about the person, nature, and work of the Holy Spirit may not always be intentional, but simply believing that we've heard from others and accepting it as truth without taking time to investigate what the Bible actually says.
 2. Since there is a tremendous amount of error taught on the subject of the Holy Spirit, it is imperative that we search the scriptures to find the truth and be willing to set aside our personal beliefs when they are in conflict with that truth.
- II. The work of the Holy Spirit and how He accomplishes that work is even hotly debated among brethren.
 - A. Some of those differences comes from a misunderstanding of the divine nature of God in general, and the divine nature of the Holy Spirit specifically.
 1. Until we can grasp a basic understand of the divine nature of God, we will not understand the nature of the Holy Spirit.
 - a. This is crucial to understanding such complex issues as the indwelling of the Holy Spirit and how He functions in our lives today.
 2. More specifically, we need to understand the difference between the *person* of the Holy Spirit and the *presence* of the Holy Spirit.
 - a. There is a significant difference between the two.
 - b. Failing to understand the difference will cause us to confuse one with the other and lead us to make erroneous conclusions about the work of the Holy Spirit in our lives.
 - B. Therefore, this lesson will focus on the divine nature and character of the Holy Spirit.
 1. More specifically, we will attempt to understand the important difference between the *person* and the *presence* of the Spirit.

Body:

- I. The divine person of the Holy Spirit.
 - A. The Bible teaches that God the Father, Jesus Christ the Son, and the Holy Spirit are divine persons.

1. Defining the meaning of "person."
 - a. The word "person" is defined as "an individual, indivisible character... a sentient being characterized by conscious awareness (meaning we are aware of our own existence and the significance of what that means), rationality (which means we have the ability to think and reason, to solve complex problems and make sound, rational decisions), and a moral sense (meaning we have a sense of right and wrong, or good and evil based on moral and ethical convictions)."
 2. As a person (an individual, indivisible, sentient being with awareness, rationality, and a moral sense), we are different from every other living life-form.
 - a. We are different from plants and animals, no matter how simple or sophisticated those plants or animals may be.
- B. From a Biblical standpoint – especially with regard to Deity – the term person also means, "the essential or basic nature of a living entity... a real being that which has actual existence..."
1. This simply means the term "person" can also describe the basic nature or character of a living entity (such as being good, righteous, holy, or divine), while at the same time describing an entity that is a distinct individual (separate from all other persons), and indivisible (meaning whole and complete and incapable of being divided or subdivided into parts).
 2. This latter point – about being a distinct individual, indivisible entity – will be crucial to our understanding the person of the Holy Spirit.
- C. The Holy Spirit is everything the term "person" implies.
1. This means there are specific characteristics and attributes that define the Holy Spirit as a person.
 - a. He is an individual character that has actual existence as a sentient being and possesses conscious awareness, rationality, and a moral sense.
 - b. The Spirit is a real being – an individual, indivisible entity.
 2. This also means there are several things the Holy Spirit (as a person) is not:
 - a. He is not a mystical, indefinite, undefinable, ethereal substance that enshrouds and permeates the universe.
 - b. He is neither God the Father nor Jesus Christ the Son, since the Holy Spirit is a separate entity apart from other persons in the Godhead.
 - c. The Holy Spirit is not a mere "influence" or some vague, undefinable "power" or "force" released in response to human need.
 - (1). While the Holy Spirit has influence, power and force, He is not merely an influence, power or force of God or Christ.
 - d. The Holy Spirit is not the Bible, or the New Testament, or the written Word of God.

- (1). The Spirit revealed the word of God, and the word of God is the product of the Spirit, but the word of God is not the Spirit.
- II. The Bible speaks of the Holy Spirit in terms of attributes and actions commonly associated with the definition of a person.
- A. The Holy Spirit has the attributes of:
 1. Understanding and knowledge (1 Cor 2:9-11).
 2. Free will – the power and ability to choose (1 Cor 12:11).
 3. Judgment – the ability to evaluate and arrive at a sound, rational, reasonable conclusion (Acts 15:28-29).
 - a. These attributes are all associated with an individual, indivisible character... a sentient being characterized by conscious awareness, rationality, and a moral sense.
 - b. The Spirit thinks, reasons, understands, knows, chooses, evaluates and concludes – all the attributes of a person – a real, living entity with substance and nature.
 - B. The Holy Spirit also performs specific actions:
 1. Guides, speaks, hears, and glorifies (John 16:12-15).
 2. Bears witness, testifies or affirms (Rom 8:16-17; 1 John 5:6).
 3. Gives commandments (Acts 13:2; 16:6-7).
 4. Grieves, or experience grief (Eph 4:30; Isa 63:10).
 - a. These actions are all associated with an individual, indivisible character... a sentient being characterized by conscious awareness, rationality, and a moral sense.
 - b. The Holy Spirit guides, speaks, hears, glorifies, gives commands, and grieves – all the actions of a person – a real, living entity with substance and nature.
- III. A person, according to the definition of person, requires individuality, and individuality demands separation and distinctiveness.
- A. As a person, we must understand that the Holy Spirit is separate and distinctive from the Father and the Son.
 1. The Holy Spirit is a separate, individual personality in the Godhead – He is a divine entity that is neither the Father or the Son.
 2. This truth is established by two specific passages we have already examined.
 - a. Three distinct persons of the Godhead are present on the same occasion (Matt 3:16-17).
 - b. Three distinct persons of the Godhead are mentioned in connection with the same act – baptism (Matt 28:19-20).
 3. Therefore, the Holy Spirit is a separate, individual, indivisible entity (person) who is distinguished from both the Father and the Son, just as much as the Son is a separate, individual, indivisible entity (person) who is distinguished from the Father and the Spirit.
 - a. Even though all three are God (deity, or divine entities), they are three distinct divine entities who comprise the Godhead.

- B. Another important aspect of the word "person" we must consider is the concept of locality.
1. This simply means a person – as a distinct, separate individual, indivisible entity – is only in one location or place at a time.
 - a. Concerning God, the Father, He is in heaven (Psa 115:3; Eccl 5:2; Matt 5:16).
 - b. Concerning Jesus Christ, the Son, He came down from heaven, lived on earth in the form of a man, and ascended back to heaven to sit at the right hand of God (John 1:1-3, 14; 6:38-39; Acts 1:9-11; Col 3:1).
 - c. Concerning the Holy Spirit, He descended in the form (likeness) of a dove at the baptism of Jesus, was sent from heaven to be a "helper" to the apostles and speaks from heaven (Mark 1:9-11; Luke 3:21-22; John 1:32; 14:26; 15:26; 16:7-8; 1 Pet 1:12; Rev 14:13).
- C. What does this teach us about "locality" when speaking of the "person" of God the Father, Jesus Christ the Son, and the Holy Spirit?
1. The person of God the Father is in heaven – has always been in heaven and will always remain in heaven.
 2. The person of Jesus Christ the Son, was in heaven with God from the beginning, but left heaven to take upon Himself the form of man, to live and to die, and returned to heaven to sit at the right hand of God until He comes again to receive us unto Himself.
 3. The person of the Holy Spirit was in heaven with God at the beginning of creation, descended in the bodily form of a dove at the baptism of Jesus, was sent from heaven to the apostles as the helper (comforter) to guide them into all truth, and now that the work of inspiration is completed is once again in heaven.
- D. Yet, there are numerous passages in the Old and New Testament that speak of the Holy Spirit being "in" or "dwelling in" individuals, or of certain individuals being "filled with the Spirit."
1. How is it possible for the Spirit to be "in" or "dwelling in" us while at the same time the Spirit is in heaven?
 2. The question has never been "Does the Holy Spirit dwell in us?"
 - a. The Bible is filled with numerous references concerning the Spirit "in" us.
 - b. The Bible also affirms that God the Father, and Jesus Christ the Son, dwell in us – not just the Spirit.
 - c. So, it's not a question of whether the Spirit dwells in us.
 3. The question is "How does the Spirit dwell in us?"
 - a. Does the Spirit dwell in us in the same way as the Father and the Son dwell in us?
 - b. Or does the Spirit dwell in us some other way?

- IV. To clear up any confusion, we must understand one of the most misunderstood attributes of God (deity) – the divine attribute of omnipresence.
- A. Omnipresence is simply defined as the fact of being present or having an effect everywhere throughout the universe at the same time.
1. In reference to God, it means the present of God being everywhere at the same time.
 2. In fact, the Bible teaches we cannot escape the presence of God (Psa 139:7-10).
- B. However, there is a significant difference between the "presence" of God, and the "person" of God.
1. The "presence" of God is inescapable because it is everywhere throughout the universe at the same time, while the "person" of God is in heaven, has always been in heaven, and will always be in heaven.
 2. The attribute of "omnipresence" is one of the "omni's" shared equally with all persons of the Godhead – the Father, Son and Holy Spirit.
 - a. Omniscience – all knowing.
 - b. Omnipotence – all powerful.
 - c. Omnipresence – always present everywhere.
 3. What is the difference between the "person" of God (deity) and the "presence" of God (deity)?
 - a. Recall that the "person" of God is defined as "an individual, indivisible character... a sentient being characterized by conscious awareness (meaning we are aware of our own existence and the significance of what that means), rationality (which means we have the ability to think and reason, to solve complex problems and make sound, rational decisions), and a moral sense (meaning we have a sense of right and wrong, or good and evil based on moral and ethical convictions)."
 - b. The "presence" of God (deity) is "the power, influence, and authority of God that extends everywhere throughout all creation... the power, influence, and authority God exerts through laws (both the laws of nature as well as divinely ordained laws and commandments given to humankind)."
 - (1). The power, influence, and authority of God extends to the visible work of creation as well as to the invisible work of redemption.
 - (2). The power, influence, and authority of God extends throughout all creation wither directly through divine power, or indirectly through divine agents (such as angels who operated under God's authority and power).
- C. We must not confuse the presence of God, Christ, or the Holy Spirit with the person of God, Christ, or the Holy Spirit.
1. The Bible teaches that deity is omnipresent – not omni-person.
 2. This is especially true of the third member of the Godhead – the Holy Spirit.
 - a. The person of the Holy Spirit is an individual, indivisible entity.

- b. The presence of the Holy Spirit – His power, influence, and authority – extends everywhere throughout all creation.
- 3. Understanding the difference between person and presence will also help us understand how God, Christ, and the Holy Spirit dwell in us.
 - a. The Bible does not teach that the Godhead literally and physically dwell in each of us.
 - b. However, the Bible does teach that the power, influence, and authority of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are everywhere – including in us.

Conclusion:

- I. A study of the nature, character, and work of the Holy Spirit is complex and difficult, and requires an honest, mature, objective examination of the Scriptures.
 - A. Therefore, we need to remember these basic truths:
 - 1. The Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are three divine persons characterized by conscious awareness, rationality, and a moral sense.
 - a. The Father, Son and Holy Spirit are living, divine entities – three distinct indivisible individuals comprising the Godhead.
 - 2. The Holy Spirit exhibits the same attributes and actions we would find in any separate, distinct, living entity or person.
 - a. The Spirit thinks, reasons, understands, knows, chooses, evaluates, and concludes.
 - b. The Spirit also guides, speaks, hears, and glorifies, testifies, or affirms truth, commands, and grieves.
 - 3. The Holy Spirit (as an individual, indivisible person) has locality.
 - a. The person of the Holy Spirit is in heaven.
 - b. The presence of the Holy Spirit (His power, influence, and authority) is everywhere.
 - c. While the Bible teaches the Holy Spirit is omnipresent (present everywhere), the Bible does not teach that the Holy Spirit is omniperson (meaning His person is everywhere).
 - B. The greatest work of the Holy Spirit has been providing us with the divinely inspired Word – the Bible.
 - 1. It not only reveals everything we need to know about the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, it also reveals everything we need to know to please God.
 - a. It reveals God's immense love in sending Jesus Christ to the world to bear our sins on the cross and provide us with the hope of a home in heaven throughout all eternity.
 - 2. Therefore, to be led by the Spirit is to be led by the divinely inspired Spirit-given word of God.