

FOUNDATION OF FAITH!
THE HOLY SPIRIT
PART 1

This morning in our series Foundation of Faith we are embarking on a very exciting and controversial subject and that is the Holy Spirit! As you well know there are all kinds of ideas out there about who the Holy Spirit is and what the Holy Spirit does. The problem is that most of them go contrary to what the Scriptures are teaching us. Then why do people listen to these false teachings? Why do people believe in these false teachings regarding the Holy Spirit?

There are many reasons out there from people just being lazy and not looking at what the Scriptures are teaching to those who hold on to traditions and this is what they have been taught and it doesn't matter what the Bible may say, this is what it means. And believe me there are many extreme views out there and people will fight and argue over these things and I don't believe that is honoring to God. My prayer as we get into this study of the Holy Spirit over the next several weeks is you would clearly see what the Scriptures have to say regarding the Third Person of the Holy Trinity, God the Holy Spirit! You don't have to believe what I am telling you but I pray that you will see what the Scriptures are teaching and apply that to your life.

Let me give you an example of some bizarre ideas of what the Holy Spirit is about, what He does in people's lives and then I will expound on this foolishness. These are excerpts from an article in Local.com from July 11, 2008 and this was the headline: "Man Sues Church Over God Injury" and this is some of what was written,

A man said he was so consumed by the Spirit of God that he fell and hit his head while at a Knoxville church. Now he wants Lakewind Church to pay 2.5 million dollars for medical bills, lost income and pain and suffering. He said he's endured from his injuries. Matt Lincoln, 57, said he decided to sue the church after its insurance company denied his claim for medical bills. Lincoln has had two surgeries since the June 2007 incident, but said he still feels pain in his back and his legs. The Severe County man said he was asking God to have a real experience while praying at church. He said he has fallen from the force of the spirit before, but has always been caught by someone. Lawyers for the church said other congregates saw him on the floor laughing after his fall. They said he failed to look out for his own safety.

- local.com, July 11, 2008, Man Sues Church Over God Injury

I am not sure why he is suing the church; it would seem that God the Holy Spirit is at fault here! How ridiculous this is, it is amazing what God the Holy Spirit gets blamed for. Is that really the way we look at the Holy Spirit? I hope not because it is not Scriptural. In fact, Paul tells us in I Corinthians 14:32, "**And the spirits of the prophets are subject to the prophets.**" The Amplified Bible puts this verse like this, "**For the spirits of the prophets (the speakers in tongues) are under the speaker's control [and subject to being silenced as may be necessary].**" And The Living Bible puts it like this, "**Remember that a person who has a message from God has the power to stop himself or wait his turn.**"

And yes, this verse is talking about speaking in tongues, which we will dig into when we talk about these gifts the Holy Spirit gives out, but I think this applies to all that we do under the Holy Spirit's control. The Holy Spirit does not come upon us and we have no control of ourselves anymore! That is just wrong and not Scriptural and thus, this man, falling to the ground like he was hit by some force, is not of God, it is not of the Holy Spirit. Again, we will deal with being slain in the Spirit and holy laughter and the other false teaching regarding the Holy Spirit as we move on, but what I want you to see is that we are in control of what the Holy Spirit is doing in us. For Paul, he told the Corinthians that the gift of tongues does not force people to speak whenever they want, but they can control it for the appropriate time and place!

Also, many times what we see in the church is confusion as people are running around like warriors in the Spirit, they are barking like dogs, they are slain in the Spirit and the list goes on. If it is weird, the ultra-charismatic church loves to do it, even if it is not found in the Word of God! Now think about the confusion here and that is not of God. What do I mean by that? Remember what Paul said in I Corinthians 14:33. Paul tells us, "**For God is not the author of confusion but of peace, as in all the churches of the saints.**"

And yet when it comes to the Holy Spirit, the work of the Spirit, the gifts of the Spirit, there seems to be much confusion and misunderstanding. And the reality of that confusion is God does not bring it upon us, but we bring it upon ourselves because we are not students of the Word of God and/or we are following the ways of man. And think of it like this. If it is not of God then where is it from? It is from the Devil and thus, these false teachings are nothing more than doctrines of demons that have brought much confusion into the church today. Again, I realize that some of you might be offended by that, but there is no middle ground on this issue. It is either from God found in the Word of God or it is not!

Now when Christians see this bizarre behavior what they do many times is gravitate in the opposite direction and they negate the gifts of the Spirit. They say that these sign gifts are not for today but the early church needed them as the church was getting started. Hey, I don't know about you, but I need all the gifts that God has for me today as I believe we are that generation that will be closing out the Church. Look at how dark, how evil this world is now and we don't know or don't use all that God the Holy Spirit has for us? That is just crazy, but many believe that because of those on the opposite end of the spectrum that abuse the gifts of the Spirit!

And here's the thing. If you negate the gifts of the Spirit you are dead in your orthodoxy, there is no real spiritual life in you! You are saved, I am not saying that you are not, but your orthodoxy prevailing attitude has made you dead! On the other end of the spectrum, those that abuse the gifts of the Spirit are also wrong and they are not honoring God or building up the body of Christ. Then what is the answer to all of this? The answer is very simple. There is a balance, a beautiful balance in regards to the working of the Holy Spirit in our lives. And you know what, when we live like that, using those gifts that God has given to us, there is no confusion but people are drawn to the Lord by it!

And so, like we have done with our previous Foundation of Faith studies we will do with this one on the Holy Spirit. We will lay down a firm foundation in regards to the Holy Spirit before we start getting into the gifts of the Spirit. You see, without a firm foundation the structure is weak, unstable, and will eventually come crashing down. You can see this taking place in those churches that are abusing and misusing the Holy Spirit like He is some kind of force to control. They have no firm foundation on who the Holy Spirit is and they use Him as they please, like some kind of toy! And those that negate the work of the Holy Spirit, the gifts of the Spirit for today, they too are abusing and misusing the Holy Spirit and in this case, it is like the Spirit of God is dead, not active, at least not the way the Scriptures say that He is! So we need that solid foundation and from that we will build upon this foundation and see how the gifts of the Spirit are for today and what they are to accomplish.

And once again, this is a very important doctrine for us to understand. It is not something we should negate or put on the backburner! Think about this for a minute if you are not too sure about what I have said so far. From the book of Genesis on through to the book of Revelation, from the creation of the Heavens and Earth to the creation of the New Heavens and the New Earth, we see the work of the Holy Spirit! Thus, this is an important doctrine because the average church members understanding of the Holy Spirit is so vague it is nearly non-existent!

Let me show you what I mean. As you look at the Old Testament the Holy Spirit is mentioned some 90 times with at least 18 different titles that are assigned to Him. And in the New Testament we see that He is mentioned more than 260 times with 39 different names and titles that are assigned to Him. In fact, out of the 27 New Testament books, only the books of II John and III John do not mention the Holy Spirit. Is this an important subject? You bet it is for God took the time to mention the Holy Spirit in 25 of the 27 New Testament books! And if God feels that way then we need to take the time to understand who the Holy Spirit is and what He has for our lives!

The first topic we are going to focus on as we look at the Holy Spirit is The Person of the Holy Spirit. You see, for many, they see the Holy Spirit as some kind of force or power but not a person and that is wrong as you will see. How come so many are confused regarding this issue of the person of the Holy Spirit?

Some of the confusion regarding this issue comes from the fact that the Old Testament Hebrew word for “spirit” is “RAUCH” and it means “breath.” Then, as we get to the New Testament the Greek word for “spirit” is “PNEUMA” and it also speaks of “wind” or “air.” Now if that is all we were told of the Holy Spirit, if that is all the information we had, we too may come to the conclusion that the Holy Spirit is some kind of “power” or “force” and not a person at all. But, as we will see this morning, the Scriptures speak much more in regards to the Holy Spirit and they will clearly show us who He is, that He is the Third Person of the Holy Trinity.

Also, there is another reason so many are confused today and it is because of what has been said in the past regarding the Holy Spirit. One of the early church scholars, Arius, who lived around 280 - 336 A. D., taught that only the Father was the true God. He said that Jesus was a created being and that the Holy Spirit was an essence. This doctrine is known as the Arian heresy, and many still hold it as being true, and you can clearly see that many of the cults have picked up on this idea. In fact, the Nicæan Counsel stripped Arius from his position and branded his teachings as heresy! And yet, as we will see, many still believe this idea but clearly the Scriptures don’t support this theory and that is why we call it a heresy!

Also, the Jehovah Witnesses teach, “The Bible use of ‘Holy Spirit’ indicates that it is a controlled force that Jehovah God uses to accomplish a variety of His purposes. To a certain extent, it can be likened to electricity, a force that can be adapted to perform a great variety of operations.” Again, they are agreeing with what Arius taught and he was wrong and so are the Jehovah Witnesses!

Listen to what the official web site of the Jehovah Witnesses has to say regarding the Holy Spirit and if you go there you will see that the “holy spirit” is not capitalized because they do not believe that the Holy Spirit is God, He is not even a person but some kind of force like electricity. This is what their web site says,

WHAT is God’s holy spirit? In its opening words, the Bible speaks of the holy spirit - also rendered “God’s active force” - as “moving to and fro over the surface of the waters.” (Genesis 1:2) In the account of Jesus’ baptism, while God is described as being in “the heavens,” the holy spirit appears “descending like a dove” upon Jesus. (Matthew 3:16, 17) Additionally, Jesus spoke of the holy spirit as a “helper.” - John 14:16.

These and other Bible passages have led some to conclude that the holy spirit is a person, just as God, Jesus, and the angels are individual spirit persons. In fact, for centuries some of the most influential religions of Christendom have attributed personality to the holy spirit. Despite this long-standing doctrine, many church members remain confused, and some even disagree with their religious leaders. For instance, according to a recent survey, 61 percent of those interviewed believe that God’s spirit is “a symbol of God’s presence or power but is not a living entity.” What, though, does the Bible say?

In the Bible, God’s holy spirit is identified as God’s power *in action*. Hence, an accurate translation of the Bible’s Hebrew text refers to God’s spirit as “God’s active force.” (Genesis 1:2) This concept is well supported throughout the Bible. - Micah 3:8; Luke 1:35; Acts 10:38.

- Is The Holy Spirit a Person?

http://www.watchtower.org/e/200607a/article_01.htm

Again, we will see what the Scriptures have to say regarding the person of the Holy Spirit and we will clearly see that the Holy Spirit is not a force, but He is the Third Person of the Holy Trinity, He is a person!

Also, Catholic theologian, Fortman was reported as saying, “The Jews never regarded the Spirit as a person; nor is there any solid evidence that any Old Testament writer held this view . . . The Holy Spirit is usually presented in the synoptics [Gospels] and in Acts as a divine force or power.” Sounds like what the Jehovah Witnesses are saying and it is also what Arius believed!

And in the New Catholic Encyclopedia we read: “The O[ld] T[estament] clearly does not envisage God’s Spirit as a person . . . God’s Spirit is simply God’s power. If it is sometimes represented as being distinct from God, it is because the breath of Yahweh acts exteriorly . . . The majority of N[ew] T[estament] texts reveal God’s Spirit as something, not someone; this is especially seen in the parallelism between the Spirit and the power of God.”

And lastly, a Catholic Dictionary says: “On the whole, the New Testament, like the Old, speaks of the Spirit as a divine energy or power.”

Now listen carefully to what I am going to say, please don’t misunderstand this. I really don’t care what various organizations, cults, theologians or even church history has to say. But, as you can see, there is much confusion out there and I wanted you to see that this is a hot topic. And really, the bottom line is this. The only thing I am truly interested in is what God has to say and that is found in His Word. I am going to trust in God’s Word over men every time. Remember what David said in Psalm 119:105, “**Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path.**”

You see, if you want to know the truth then follow the light of God's Word and He will show you the truth. Don't look to man, for in their wisdom we find only foolishness, confusion and darkness! As Isaiah 8:20 says, "**To the law and to the testimony! If they do not speak according to this word, it is because there is no light in them.**"

We are now going to be looking at several Scriptures that speak very clearly on the Holy Spirit being a person and not some impersonal force, like electricity or wind! And understand this, the Holy Spirit is not called "it" or "thing" but personal pronouns are used when the Holy Spirit is spoken of. Yes, the word, "spirit" is in the neuter, and because of that many have come to the wrong conclusion that the Holy Spirit is a force and not a person, but let's examine the evidence for ourselves so that we might come to our own conclusion based on the Word of God! Also, in regards to this neuter issue listen to what Don Stewart wrote, "Does this mean the Holy Spirit is impersonal? Not at all. This is because grammatical gender is not the same as personal gender. The fact that a word is spoken in the neuter has nothing to do with its personal gender." (Don Stewart, What Everybody Needs To Know About The Holy Spirit, p. 25). I hope that clears that up for you.

Let me say one more thing and then we will look at the Person of the Holy Spirit this morning. These words are from J. Oswald Sanders who wrote,

Viewing the testimony of the Scripture as a whole, we cannot but concede consistent, and clear testimony to the fact that the Holy Spirit is a Divine Person, working with intelligent consciousness, infinite love and independent will. This fact and truth is of fundamental importance to Christian experience. If He is merely a power or influence, our dominant aim would be, "How may I obtain more of His power and influence?" But if He is a Divine Person, our consistent attitude should be "How can He more fully possess me so that I may become the vehicle of His power and influence?"

- J. Oswald Sanders

Again, I think that is where the church gets it wrong as we grab for the power instead of the Person. We should want Him to have more of our life and as we surrender to Him then we will become the vehicle that He can work through to touch the lives of others. I think all of us want to have that encounter, a relationship with the Holy Spirit and you can only do that if He is a person, and He is! Think about this for a minute. You can have raw power without personality. A good example of that is electricity. But, in saying that, it is difficult to have an intimate, close relationship to such an impersonal power. If you try to have an intimate relationship with electricity, you may be shocked at what you find! Sorry, but I think it does drive home the point. May we learn these lessons as we study the Person of the Holy Spirit this morning!

1. THE PERSON OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

As you look at the Scriptures you will see that they show us that the Holy Spirit is a person, the Third Person of the Holy Trinity. Now please understand that when we speak of the Holy Spirit being a person we are talking about Him having His own identity or individuality as a rational being. He is conscious of His own existence. As you will see, the Holy Spirit has the characteristics of a person. The Holy Spirit acts like a person. The Holy Spirit is treated as a person. And He is God, the Third Person of the Holy Trinity and therefore, is personal!

PERSONAL PRONOUNS USED OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

We are going to begin looking at the personal pronouns that are used when the Scriptures speak of the Holy Spirit and as we look at these you will see that the Holy Spirit is a person. As you read through the New Testament you will see over 16 times the use of the Greek pronoun for the Holy Spirit, EKEINOS (ek-i'-nos), which means "he" and is a pronoun in the masculine gender. We see that used in the following verses.

In John 16:13 we see Jesus speak of the Holy Spirit who is going to come after His departure and Jesus tells us, "**However, when He, the Spirit of truth, has come, He will guide you into all truth; for He will not speak on His own authority, but whatever He hears He will speak; and He will tell you things to come.**" Now I think that is pretty clear. How many times do you speak of electricity with a masculine pronoun? You don't, at least I hope you don't. You speak of something that is real, that is personal; you are speaking of a person here!

Also, in John 15:26, as Jesus is once again speaking of the coming of the Holy Spirit and He tells us, **“But when the Helper comes, whom I shall send to you from the Father, the Spirit of truth who proceeds from the Father, He will testify of Me.”** Who is going to testify of Jesus? It will be **“He”** the Holy Spirit and not some force like the wind or electricity!

We are told by Jesus in John 14:26, **“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 things that I said to you.”** Who is going to teach us all things? The force will be with us? No, **“He”** will teach us all things, the person of the Holy Spirit!

I hope you are seeing how clear the Scriptures speak on the person of the Holy Spirit. That to deny this you have to deny what the Scriptures are saying! Look at John 14:16-17 where Jesus said, **“And I will pray the Father, and He will give you another Helper, that He may abide with you forever - the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees Him nor knows Him; but you know Him, for He dwells with you and will be in you.”** This helper that Jesus is praying to the Father to come and help us is a person, it is the Holy Spirit! And if you deny that the Holy Spirit is a person, you have an even bigger problem. You see, in verse 16 we are told that **“He”** the **“Father”** is going to give to us another Helper. Thus, if you say that the **“He”** spoken of the Holy Spirit is not speaking of Him being a person, then you also have to say that God the Father is not a person but just some kind of force. And, obviously we know that this is not true, which means that the Holy Spirit is also a person. You can't say that one is and the other isn't, that is not correct.

And lastly, if these four are not enough, Jesus tells us in John 16:7-14, **“Nevertheless I tell you the truth. It is to your advantage that I go away; for if I do not go away, the Helper will not come to you; but if I depart, I will send Him to you. And when He has come, He will convict the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment: of sin, because they do not believe in Me; of righteousness, because I go to My Father and you see Me no more; of judgment, because the ruler of this world is judged. I still have many things to say to you, but you cannot bear them now. However, when He, the Spirit of truth, has come, He will guide you into all truth; for He will not speak on His own authority, but whatever He hears He will speak; and He will tell you things to come. He will glorify Me, for He will take of what is Mine and declare it to you.”** Once again you can’t read these verses and come away thinking that the Holy Spirit is some kind of impersonal force. It is easy to see that the Holy Spirit is a person!

I think that you can see that by the use of the personal pronouns, God is showing us that the Holy Spirit is a person, the Third Person of the Holy Trinity, but there is much more if you are still in doubt.

THE HOLY SPIRIT IS TREATED AS A PERSON

Again, if we are going to understand who the Holy Spirit is we must not approach this topic with our preconceived ideas. We need to be open to what the Holy Spirit is showing us through the Word of God. And here's the thing as we look at this topic of the Holy Spirit being treated as a person. There are certain acts that are done upon others that cannot be done by some impersonal force, such as electricity. That is what we are going to be looking at next in the following verses.

Listen to what we are told in Ephesians 4:30, “**And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, by whom you were sealed for the day of redemption.**” Here we can see that the Holy Spirit can be grieved. And Paul has been speaking of unwholesome talk here that will grieve the Holy Spirit. Yes, all sin is painful to God but when His children sin it breaks His heart, it grieves Him! Now this must be speaking of the person of the Holy Spirit. It can't be speaking of some impersonal force like electricity or wind because how do you grieve those impersonal forces? You can't. They can grieve you by what they do because we are a person but they can't be grieved because they are not a person. That clearly tells me the Holy Spirit has to be a person. But there is more.

We are told in Acts 5:3, “**But Peter said, ‘Ananias, why has Satan filled your heart to lie to the Holy Spirit and keep back part of the price of the land for yourself?’**” Another thing that a person can face is that they can be lied to and that is what we see here with the Holy Spirit. Again pointing us to the fact that He is a person!

Also, listen to what we are told in Matthew 12:31, **“Therefore I say to you, every sin and blasphemy will be forgiven men, but the blasphemy against the Spirit will not be forgiven men.”** And again we are told in Mark 3:29 with this same thought, **“but he who blasphemes against the Holy Spirit never has forgiveness, but is subject to eternal condemnation.”** The Holy Spirit can be blasphemed! And what the Scriptures are speaking of here is the hardening of yourself to the work the Holy Spirit is doing, drawing you to Christ. And if you blasphemy the Spirit you are eternally separated from God! How can some impersonal force be blasphemed? It can’t and again, that points to the Holy Spirit being a person!

I like this one. In Hebrews 10:29 we are told, **“Of how much worse punishment, do you suppose, will he be thought worthy who has trampled the Son of God underfoot, counted the blood of the covenant by which he was sanctified a common thing, and insulted the Spirit of grace?”** How can you insult some impersonal force! What are you going to say to electricity, “Hey, your momma was a battery?” I mean, really!

Let me give you a few more examples to kind of seal the case here. We are told in I Thessalonians 5:19, **“Do not quench the Spirit.”** Here we see that the Holy Spirit can be quenched. And please understand what Paul is speaking of here. He is talking about the process of progressive sanctification as the Lord, by His Spirit is making us more like Him. And Paul warned them not to quench this work of the Holy Spirit in their lives. This word, **“quench”** means to extinguish or retard the work that the Holy Spirit was trying to do in them. And again, you can’t do that with some impersonal force, but with the person of the Holy Spirit it can be done. That is the warning!

Not only can the Holy Spirit be grieved and quenched but in Acts 7:51 we are told that the Holy Spirit can be resisted. Listen to what we are told, **“You stiffnecked and uncircumcised in heart and ears! You always resist the Holy Spirit; as your fathers did, so do you.”** Stephen says that they are stubborn in their ways, the religious leaders who have him on trial for his faith in Christ and that their hearts are hard and cold to the things of God, their ears are insensitive to hearing the Words of God and they are no different than their fathers, resisting the Holy Spirit and living a life of pious religiosity and not one surrendered to God. Again, resisting something speaks of a person and not a thing or force!

And lastly, in Isaiah 63:10 we are told, **“But they rebelled and grieved His Holy Spirit; so He turned Himself against them as an enemy, and He fought against them.”** We can rebel against what the Holy Spirit wants to do in our lives, which again means that the Holy Spirit is a person and not some kind of force!

In saying that I think you can clearly see that only a person can be grieved, lied to, blasphemed, insulted, quenched, resisted, and rebelled against. These things can not be said of some impersonal force. I don't think electricity cares much if it is lied to and-so-on. But a person surely does! Thus, the Holy Spirit is treated as a person! And even with all this, there is more!

THE HOLY SPIRIT HAS THE CHARACTERISTICS OF A PERSON

As we look at the Holy Spirit having the characteristics of a person we again are going to let the Scriptures speak for themselves. And as we do you are once again going to see how clear they are in regards to this point.

In I Corinthians 2:10-11 Paul tells us, **“But God has revealed them to us through His Spirit. For the Spirit searches all things, yes, the deep things of God. For what man knows the things of a man except the spirit of the man which is in him? Even so no one knows the things of God except the Spirit of God.”** Here we see the Holy Spirit has intelligence and thus, He must be a person for impersonal forces do not have intelligence. Then what about a computer? The intelligence they have has been given to them by a person and they are responding to what has been put in them. It is artificial and keep in mind that the Holy Spirit is not some computer, He is the Third Person of the Holy Trinity!

The next two verses we will look at will show us that that Holy Spirit has a will. Look at what Paul tells us in I Corinthians 12:11, **“But one and the same Spirit works all these things, distributing to each one individually as He wills.”** And in Acts 16:6-7 we are told, **“Now when they had gone through Phrygia and the region of Galatia, they were forbidden by the Holy Spirit to preach the word in Asia. After they had come to Mysia, they tried to go into Bithynia, but the Spirit did not permit them.”** How can some impersonal force have a will and direct us? It can't and again, this points to the Holy Spirit being a person!

I am going to share with you three verses here to let you see that the Holy Spirit has emotion, something that impersonal forces do not have. In Romans 15:30 we are told; **“Now I beg you, brethren, through the Lord Jesus Christ, and through the love of the Spirit, that you strive together with me in prayers to God for me.”** Then in Ephesians 4:30 we are told, **“And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, by whom you were sealed for the day of redemption.”** And lastly, in Isaiah 63:10 we are told, **“But they rebelled and grieved His Holy Spirit; so He turned Himself against them as an enemy, and He fought against them.”** We see the Holy Spirit can love, he can be grieved and thus, He is a person and not some force!

Here is another one that is difficult to understand if you see the Holy Spirit as some kind of force or power and that is the Holy Spirit testifies of Jesus and exalts the Father and the Son over Himself. We see this in John 15:26, **“But when the Helper comes, whom I shall send to you from the Father, the Spirit of truth who proceeds from the Father, He will testify of Me.”** And again in John 16:13-14, **“However, when He, the Spirit of truth, has come, He will guide you into all truth; for He will not speak on His own authority, but whatever He hears He will speak; and He will tell you things to come. He will glorify Me, for He will take of what is Mine and declare it to you.”** I think that is pretty clear!

And lastly, in John 14:16-17 we are told, “**And I will pray the Father, and He will give you another Helper, that He may abide with you forever--the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees Him nor knows Him; but you know Him, for He dwells with you and will be in you.” Here we see that the Holy Spirit will help us and yes, electricity and even wind do help us, but they are impersonal. The idea here is that the Father is going to send us another helper, like Jesus, God the Holy Spirit and He will help us in our daily lives because He is personal!**

Again, these things can not be spoken of by anything else but a person. You can't speak of the wind having intelligence, a will, emotions, testifying of things or even helping us by its own will. Thus, the Holy Spirit has the characteristics of a person. But there is still more!

PERSONAL ACTS THAT HAVE BEEN ATTRIBUTED TO THE HOLY SPIRIT

In this last section that we are going to look at this morning we will see that there are personal acts that have been attributed to the Holy Spirit and there is no way that an impersonal force can do these things. And so, I believe that the Scriptures are very clear as they show us that the Holy Spirit is a person!

Listen carefully to what we are told in Acts 13:2, “**As they ministered to the Lord and fasted, the Holy Spirit said, ‘Now separate to Me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them.’**” Did you notice that the Holy Spirit speaks? Now again, we can say that computers speak so are they personal? No because they are only responding to what has been put into them. When the Holy Spirit speaks He is speaking out of His own heart, in accordance with the rest of the Trinity and He is giving us direction and not like a GPS system that is pre-programmed!

We are told in Genesis 6:3, “**And the LORD said, ‘My Spirit shall not strive with man forever, for he is indeed flesh; yet his days shall be one hundred and twenty years.’**” In other words, God’s Spirit will not strive with men forever in that He will not plead the cause, He will not execute judgment, He will not contend with men forever, there is a day of reckoning that is coming. Again, this is speaking of a person and not an impersonal force!

In Acts 16:6-7 we see that the Holy Spirit guides us. We are told, “**Now when they had gone through Phrygia and the region of Galatia, they were forbidden by the Holy Spirit to preach the word in Asia. After they had come to Mysia, they tried to go into Bithynia, but the Spirit did not permit them.**” That is our God, He is concerned for our lives and He will direct our lives by His Spirit!

Listen to these two verses that show us that the Holy Spirit teaches us all we need to know. In John 14:26 we see Jesus tell 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 things that I said to you.”** Also, in Nehemiah 9:20 we are told, **“You also gave Your good Spirit to instruct them, and did not withhold Your manna from their mouth, and gave them water for their thirst.”** There is no computer that can teach us like the Holy Spirit because He teaches us the deep things of God, things man cannot know on his own!

I like this next one for in Romans 8:26 Paul tells us that the Holy Spirit intercedes for us, **“Likewise the Spirit also helps in our weaknesses. For we do not know what we should pray for as we ought, but the Spirit Himself makes intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered.”** There are times that we just don’t know how to pray in a situation or what to pray for and the Holy Spirit will intercede and pray for us! And I can tell you with 100% certainty that when I pick up my power tools at home they do not intercede for me because if they did, then I would not have to do the project over and over again or call 911!

Notice what Paul tells us in Romans 15:19 regarding the work of the Holy Spirit in our lives, **“in mighty signs and wonders, by the power of the Spirit of God, so that from Jerusalem and round about to Illyricum I have fully preached the gospel of Christ.”** The Holy Spirit works miracles because He is a person, He is God! And we will deal with this issue of the Holy Spirit being God in our next study.

And lastly, the Holy Spirit communes with us. That is what Paul tells us in II 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. Amen.”** You can’t commune with electricity or wind, but you can with a person and thus, we can commune with the Holy Spirit because He is a person!

Once again these attributes can be spoken of in regards to a person and not some impersonal force. To try and say that the church has come up with this doctrine, and to call it a false doctrine or that we have twisted the Scriptures to fit our bias, is a smoke screen to hide the truth. The Scriptures clearly teach that the Holy Spirit is a person, is alive, the Holy Spirit is the Third Person of the Holy Trinity and not some impersonal force like the wind or electricity!

As I bring this study to a close I hope you have clearly seen that the Holy Spirit is a person. We have seen the personal pronouns that are used of the Holy Spirit, like He, His and Him. We have seen that the Holy Spirit is treated as a person in that He can be grieved, He can be lied to, He can be blasphemed, He can be insulted, He can be quenched, He can be resisted and we can rebel against Him. We have seen the characteristics of the Holy Spirit pointing to Him being a person in that the Holy Spirit has intelligence, the Holy Spirit has a will, the Holy Spirit has emotion, the Holy Spirit testifies of Jesus and exalts the Father and the Son over Himself, and the Holy Spirit helps us. And lastly, we looked at the personal acts that have been attributed to the Holy Spirit and they were; the Holy Spirit speaks, the Holy Spirit strives with man, the Holy Spirit guides us, the Holy Spirit teaches us, the Holy Spirit intercedes for us, the Holy Spirit works miracles and the Holy Spirit communes with us.

I think that is very clear. As I close let me leave you with these words from R. A. Torrey because he ties this all up for us. He wrote,

Before one can correctly understand the work of the Holy Spirit, he must first of all know the Spirit Himself. A frequent source of error and fanaticism about the work of the Holy Spirit is the attempt to study and understand His work without first coming to know Him as a person.

It is of the highest importance from the standpoint of worship that we decide whether the Holy Spirit is a divine person, worthy to receive our adoration, our faith, our love, and our entire surrender to Himself, or whether it is simply an influence emanating from God or a power or an illumination that God imparts to us. If the Holy Spirit is a person, and a divine person, and we do not know Him as such, then we are robbing a divine being of the worship and the faith and the love and the surrender to Himself which are His due.

It is also of the highest importance from the practical standpoint that we decide whether the Holy Spirit is merely some mysterious and wonderful power, which we in our weakness and ignorance are somehow to get hold of and use, or a real person, infinitely holy, infinitely wise, infinitely mighty, and infinitely tender, who is to get hold of and use us. The former conception is utterly heathenish, not essentially different from the thought of the African fetish worshiper who has his god whom he uses. The latter conception is sublime and Christian.

If we think of the Holy Spirit, as so many do, as merely a power or influence, our constant thought will be, How can I get more of the Holy Spirit, but if we think of Him in the biblical way as a divine person, our thought will rather be, How can the Holy Spirit have more of me? The conception of the Holy Spirit as a divine influence or power that we are somehow to get hold of and use leads to self-exaltation and self-sufficiency. One who so thinks of the Holy Spirit and at the same time imagines that he has received the Holy Spirit almost inevitably will be full of spiritual pride and strut about as if he belonged to some superior order of Christians. One frequently hears such a person say, 'I am a Holy Ghost man,' or 'I am a Holy Ghost woman.' But if we once grasp the thought that the Holy Spirit is a divine person of infinite majesty, glory, holiness, and power, who in marvelous condescension has come into our hearts to make His abode there and take possession of our lives and make use of them, it will put us in the dust and keep us in the dust. I can think of no thought more humbling or more overwhelming than the thought that a person of divine majesty and glory dwells in my heart and is ready to use even me.

It is of the highest importance from the standpoint of experience that we know the Holy Spirit as a person. Thousands and tens of thousands of men and women can testify to the blessing that has come into their own lives as they have come to know the Holy Spirit, not merely as a gracious influence (emanating, it is true, from God), but as a real person, just as real as Jesus Christ Himself, an ever-present, loving friend and mighty helper, who is not only always by their side but dwells in their heart every day and every hour, and who is ready to undertake for them in every emergency of life. Thousands of ministers, Christian workers, and Christians in the humblest spheres of life have spoken to me or written to me of the complete transformation of their Christian experience that came to them when they grasped the thought -not merely in a theological, but in an experiential way - that the Holy Spirit was a person and consequently came to know Him.

- R. A. Torrey, *The Person And Work Of The Holy Spirit*, pp. 9-11

That is why I believe this is such an important study, the study of the Holy Spirit! Let me leave you with this. When it comes to matters of life are you going to trust the words of man or the Words of God? I pray that you search the Scriptures and believe what the Scriptures are saying over man. I don't care if it is the Pope or some religious leader that has all the degrees you can imagine, if what they are saying is not found in the Word of God, then it is not of God! Bring everything into the light of God's Word and you will not be hurt by that. Thus, in saying all that, I think we have clearly seen this morning that the Holy Spirit is a person, the Third Person of the Holy Trinity – ***GOD THE HOLY SPIRIT!***