

**“WHO IS THE HOLY SPIRIT?” Part 1**

John 14:16-18; 16:7-15

Suppose you had someone living in your house that you did not know very well. You knew only their name but very little about that person. You did not know their background, their work, how long they are going to live there and what the benefits of their presence will be. That would be a very uncomfortable arrangement, wouldn't it? That would not only be uncomfortable but it would be very foolish and could be very dangerous.

That is the situation that many Christians live with year in and year out. And, to make matters worse, they seem to have no interest in learning about the Person Who lives in the house which is their body. In this series of messages it is my desire that we come to a fuller understanding of Who is living in our body-house and what this means to us.

Bible believers in general know something about God the Father and God the Son, but from my experience in ministry, the Person of the Divine Trinity that believers in general know the least about is God the Holy Spirit. And yet, He is resident within us.

James I. Packer, in his book “Knowing God” wrote: , “The doctrine of the Holy Spirit is the Cinderella of Christian Doctrines. Can we doubt that the present barrenness of the church's life is God's judgment on us for the way in which we have dishonored the Holy Spirit?” (Page 60 & 63).

The late Christian minister and author A.W. Tozer said, “The average Christian considers the work of the Holy Spirit to be elemental, but until the church recognizes that it is fundamental we will continue to limp along.”

Phillip Brooks, one of America's earlier preachers of renown said, “To attempt to live without the Holy Spirit is as if the engine had no room for the steam. It is as if the tree had said it had no room for the sap. It is as if the sky had said it had no room for the sun.”

In these studies on the Holy Spirit, it is my desire that we come to a fuller understanding of Who the blessed Holy Spirit is; what He means to us; and that we give to Him His rightful place in our lives.

In this study I will emphasize the truth that the Holy Spirit is a Person. Therefore, I want us to center our thinking on the Personality of the Holy Spirit by focusing upon two statements that Jesus made about the Holy Spirit in John chapters 14 and 16:

“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.” (John 14:16-18) And,

“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 judg-

ment: 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. All things that the Father has are Mine. Therefore I said that He will take of Mine and declare *it* to you." (John 16:7-15)

In these two passages we see that the Holy Spirit is referred to many times as a Person. However, there is not a little confusion about whether the Holy Spirit is a person, a force or some mysterious power or influence. Therefore, let us consider first:

### THE CONFUSION ABOUT THE PERSONALITY OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

I recognize that oftentimes people are confused about the Personality of the Holy Spirit. It is relatively easy to be confused about something or someone you cannot see. Therefore, some teach that He is simply a magical influence or mystical force. In fact, many of the cults deny the Personality of the Holy Spirit. There are at least two reasons why this is the case:

#### **First, Because Of Syntax.**

Syntax has to do with words, phrases and clauses. It is confusing to some when the Spirit is referred to as "Ghost." It is much more difficult to conceive of a spirit as a person, especially since in the old King James Version you have the term "Holy Ghost", and sometimes that gives almost an eerie feeling about the third Person of the Trinity to such an extent that some have questioned or denied His Personal Existence.

"*Spirit*" and "*Ghost*" are renderings of the same Greek word, "*pneuma*" which means "*spirit*". The only translation that uses "Holy Ghost" is the old King James. In 1611 "*spirit*" and "*ghost*" were used interchangeably. Not so today.

Another matter that may have contributed the confusion, especially to those who have read the King James Version, is that unfortunately in two places— in Romans 8:16 and in Romans 8:26, the Holy Spirit is referred to as "*itself*" rather than "*Himself*." Other versions and translations all make it "*Himself*." Also, in I Peter 1:11 in the KJV, the Holy Spirit is referred to as "*it*" – "*when it testified*." So, you can see how syntax has caused some confusion about the personality of the Holy Spirit. This is no attack on the KJV – I am simply explaining why some persons are confused about the Personhood of the Holy Spirit.

#### **Second, Because Of Symbols.**

There are certain symbols used in the Word of God in relation to the Holy Spirit that are rather impersonal. For example, in John chapter 7 The Holy Spirit is referred to as "*rivers of living water*". The Lord Jesus said, "If anyone is thirsty, let him come to me and drink. Whoever believes in me, as the Scripture has said, streams of living water will flow from within him." By this he meant the Spirit, whom those who believed in him were later to receive. Up

to that time the Spirit had not been given.” (John 7:37-39) Here He is symbolized as “*water*” — “*rivers of living water.*”

Another symbol: at Pentecost the presence of the Holy Spirit is described as “*like fire*”, in Acts 2:3. Yet another symbol: In John chapter 3 the Spirit is referred to as “*wind.*” Therefore, for many, these symbols have the meaning of impersonality. There are other examples but I think these are sufficient to make the point. For some, syntax and symbols have tended to contribute to confusion about the Personality of the Holy Spirit.

Let us move on now to clarify some misconceptions regarding the personality of the Holy spirit.

### **THE CLARIFICATION OF THE PERSONALITY OF THE HOLY SPIRIT**

The Personality of the Holy Spirit is clarified in the Word of God in several ways:

#### **First, By The Use Of Personal Pronouns.**

Personal pronouns are constantly and carefully used in the Bible referencing the Holy Spirit. In John 16:7-8 and 13-15 twelve times personal pronouns are used when referring to the Holy Spirit. John 16 beginning at verse 7 - “Nevertheless I tell you the truth; It is expedient for you that I go away: for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send Him unto you. And when He is come, He will reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment...”

Then down in verses 13-15, “Howbeit when He, the Spirit of truth, is come, He will guide you into all truth: for He shall not speak of Himself; but whatsoever He shall hear, that shall He speak: and He will show you things to come. He shall glorify me: for He shall receive of mine, and shall show it unto you. All things that the Father hath are mine: therefore said I, that He shall take of mine, and shall show it unto you.”

Twelve times in those verses the Holy Spirit is referred to as “He”, “Him” and “Himself”. Thus, there should be no question that He is a Person.

#### **Second, By Personal Activities.**

To further clarify the personality of the Holy Spirit, consider some of His actions:

- *He Speaks.* John 14:26 “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.” An impersonal influence or power does not testify, does not speak, but the Holy Spirit speaks! In Revelation 2 and 3, Jesus, in writing to the seven churches says, at the conclusion of each letter: “He that has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches.” Here the Spirit of God speaks to the churches.

- *He Gives Gifts.* In I Corinthians 12, the Holy Spirit is involved in the distribution of spiritual gifts. “For to one is given by the Spirit the word of wisdom; to another the word of knowledge by the same Spirit. To another faith by the same Spirit; to another the gifts of healing by the same Spirit.” (vs.8-9)

- *He wills.* I Corinthians 12:11, says that He gives these gifts, “as He wills.” Notice again, the emphasis upon the personality of the Holy Spirit in that He has a will. - “as He wills.”

- *He Prays.* Romans 8:26, indicates that the Holy Spirit makes intercession for believers: “the Spirit also helps our infirmities: for we know not what we should pray for as we ought: but the Spirit Himself makes intercession for us.”

All these and other scriptures clarify the personality of the Holy Spirit by emphasizing His personal activities.

### THE CONFIRMATION OF THE PERSONALITY OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

We have seen that the Holy Spirit’s personhood has been in doubt by some who have had the impression, either because of syntax or symbols, that the Holy Spirit was other than a person. However, such confusion can be cleared up by a careful study of the Scriptures which reveal that He is referred to by the use of personal pronouns and He engages in activities attributable to one possessing personhood.

Further, in order to give definite confirming evidence from Scripture that the Holy Spirit is a Person, the following are two of the many proofs that could be given:

#### **His Personhood Is Confirmed By His Divine Associations.**

There are numerous times that we read of the Holy Spirit operating in concert with God the Father and God the Son. Examples:

- *The Baptismal Formula.*

In Matthew 28 Jesus instructs the disciples to baptize converts “in the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.” (v.19)

- *The Apostolic Benediction.*

Paul, in concluding this Second Epistle to the Corinthians says, “The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit, be with you all.” (II Corinthians 13:14) Here is Divine association.

- *The Work of Salvation.*

One of several scriptures that speak of all the members of the trinity being involved in the work of salvation is I Peter 1:2 – ““Elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, through sanctification of the Spirit, unto obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ.”

That the Holy Spirit is associated with God the Father and God the Son establishes that He too possesses personhood.

#### **His Personhood is Confirmed By Direct Affirmation.**

- *Peter Affirms The Holy Spirit’s Personhood.* Peter said to Ananias, “You have not lied to men but to God.” (Acts 5:3) One does not lie to an impersonal “thing” or a mere mystical influence.

- *Paul Affirms The Holy Spirit's Personhood.* II Cor. 3:17 should be all the confirmation we need: "Now the Lord is that Spirit and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty."

### SUMMATION

In this study on the subject, "Who Is The Holy Spirit" it has been my aim to establish from scripture, not conjecture, that the Holy Spirit is a Person, not merely an impersonal influence, a mystical force or magical power.

Admittedly, there is much confusion about the identity and ministry of the Holy Spirit among the religiously inclined and genuinely Christian congregations as well. There has been and continues to be much confusion as to Who the Holy Spirit is and some of the confusion is, regrettably, the fault of well meaning but scripturally untaught and therefore unbalanced preaching and teaching.

I have tried to point out why there is confusion regarding the personality of the Holy Spirit and attempted to clarify from scripture that the Holy Spirit is a Person, giving biblical confirmations. Consequently, from clear Bible passages, we have seen that the Holy Spirit indeed is a Person, just as God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ are Persons.

### CONCLUSION

The Person of the Holy Spirit is resident in those who have received the Lord Jesus Christ. In Romans 8:9, Paul, speaking to believers, writes: "You are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you. Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of His."

The Holy Spirit is the Person of Jesus Christ living in us! Look again at Romans 8:9 which identifies the Holy Spirit as "the Spirit of Christ." Also I Peter 1:11 tells us that The Holy Spirit is "the Spirit of Christ."

To receive Jesus is to receive Jesus' Spirit. If you have not recognized your need of the Savior, the Lord Jesus, repent of your sins and receive Him as your Savior. Then the heavenly Guest, the Holy Spirit, will come to reside in you.

In the weeks ahead it is my prayer that all of us will get to know better this Heavenly Guest, as we continue to answer the question, "Who Is The Holy Spirit?"

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