

a study of the *Holy Spirit*

Lesson 2: The Personality of the Holy Spirit

Most will say that the image they associate with the Holy Spirit is mysterious and vague. This is because most do not picture the Holy Spirit as a Divine Person; rather He is thought of as a divine force or energy. The concept of considering the Holy Spirit as a Person will dramatically alter the way one understands the working of the Holy Spirit. Perhaps most of the confusion surrounding the Holy Spirit arises because the personality of the Holy Spirit is not understood. The Holy Spirit is seldom viewed as a **PERSON**. There are two broad views about the Holy Spirit:

1. He is an impersonal abstract force, or power, or influence that emanates from God the Father.
2. He is a Divine Person with life, thought, volition, action, individuality, character, and influence.

The Holy Spirit is a PERSONAL God!

- References using personal **PRONOUNS** indicate that He is a Person (John 14:26; 16:13, 14).
- His **WORKS** indicates that He is a Person.
 - 1) **Speaks** (1 Timothy 4:1; John 16:13; Matthew 10:20; Acts 4:25; 8:29; 10:19)
 - 2) **Testifies** (John 15:26)
 - 3) **Teaches** (John 14:26; 1 Corinthians 2:10)
 - 4) **Guides** (John 16:12, 13; Acts 8:29; 16:6, 7)
 - 5) **Searches** (1 Corinthians 2:10)
 - 6) **Comforts** (John 14:16, 17; Acts 9:31)
 - 7) **Determines** (1 Corinthians 12:11)
 - 8) **Intercedes** (Romans 8:26, 27)

NOTE: These eight works are all impossible unless a *Person* is performing them. These works require wisdom, action, ability, and understanding that are far beyond the scope of some impersonal force or an impulse sent from God.

- His **CHARACTER** indicates that He is a Person.
 - 1) He possesses **intelligence** (Romans 8:27; 1 Corinthians 2:11)
 - 2) He possesses **emotions** (Romans 15:30; Ephesians 4:30; Isaiah 63:10; 2 Corinthians 13:14; Philippians 2:1)
 - 3) He possesses **a will** (1 Corinthians 12:11; Acts 16:7; 21:11-14)
 - 4) He possesses **goodness** (Psalm 143:10; Nehemiah 9:20)
- His **IMPACT** upon others indicates that He is a Person.
 - 1) He can be grieved (Ephesians 4:30; Isaiah 63:10)
 - 2) He can be despised (Hebrews 10:29)
 - 3) He can be blasphemed (Matthew 12:31, 32)
 - 4) He can be lied to (Acts 5:3)
 - 5) He can be obeyed (1 Thessalonians 1:5, 6; 2:7, 12, 13; 2 Thessalonians 2:14)
 - 6) He can be resisted (Acts 7:51; Genesis 6:3).

- His **NAMES** indicate that He is a Person.

In the Old Testament He is named eighty-eight times; in the New Testament He is named 262 times. The names are indicators of a Person and not a force.

The Holy Spirit is a Person—“What Kind of Person is the Holy Spirit?”

- There are three groups or types of "Persons" in all of creation—(1) those to Whom the word "deity" alone applies; (2) the angelic world (Hebrews 1:14); and (3) the human race (Genesis 2:7).
- The Holy Spirit manifests certain traits which belong only to Deity—Eternal (Hebrews 9:14; Psalm 99:2); Omniscient (1 Corinthians 2:10, 11); Omnipotent (Micah 3:8; Luke 1:35; Romans 15:19); Omnipresent (Psalm 139:7ff; Jeremiah 23:24).
- The Holy Spirit manifests certain works that belong only to Deity— Creation (Genesis 1:2; Job 26:13; Psalm 33:4, 6); providential working (Psalm 104:30); salvation from sin (John 3:5); resurrection (Romans 8:11); inspiration (2 Peter 1:21; 2 Timothy 3:16)
- The Holy Spirit manifests associations which belong only to Deity (1 Corinthians 2:11).

Many have "De-Personalized" the Holy Spirit.

- **The equating of the Holy Spirit with the Bible only**

There have been those who claimed that the Holy Spirit is only what we have in the Bible. They contend that the Holy Spirit does not exist outside of the written page.

Note: We must recognize that the Holy Spirit cannot exist in our lives apart from the Word, but we must not say the Holy Spirit is limited to the Word. The Bible cannot do Romans 8:26...But without the Bible the Holy Spirit cannot do Romans 8:26 either!

- **A radical reaction to Calvinism and Pentecostalism**

In reaction to these two broad errors, which make the Holy Spirit solely an emotional experience ("better felt than told"), many taught an intellectual Spirit that was void of all feelings. This indirectly taught that the Holy Spirit was emotionless and unfeeling; an empty void of Christianity.

- **"Magical" claims about the Holy Spirit**

Some to seek the Holy Spirit for new revelations, miraculous healings, instant spirituality, and a "healthy, wealthy, and wise" expectation of religion. These "boasts," urged upon gullible minds from a perverse greed, depreciate the Holy Spirit and eventually placed Him on a purely materialistic level.

Looking Ahead

Lesson 3: The Holy Spirit in the Old Testament

Suggested Reading: Gen. 1; Job 26; Ps. 104;
Matt. 22:43-44; Jdg. 16