


a study of the *Holy Spirit*



Lesson 1: The Godhead

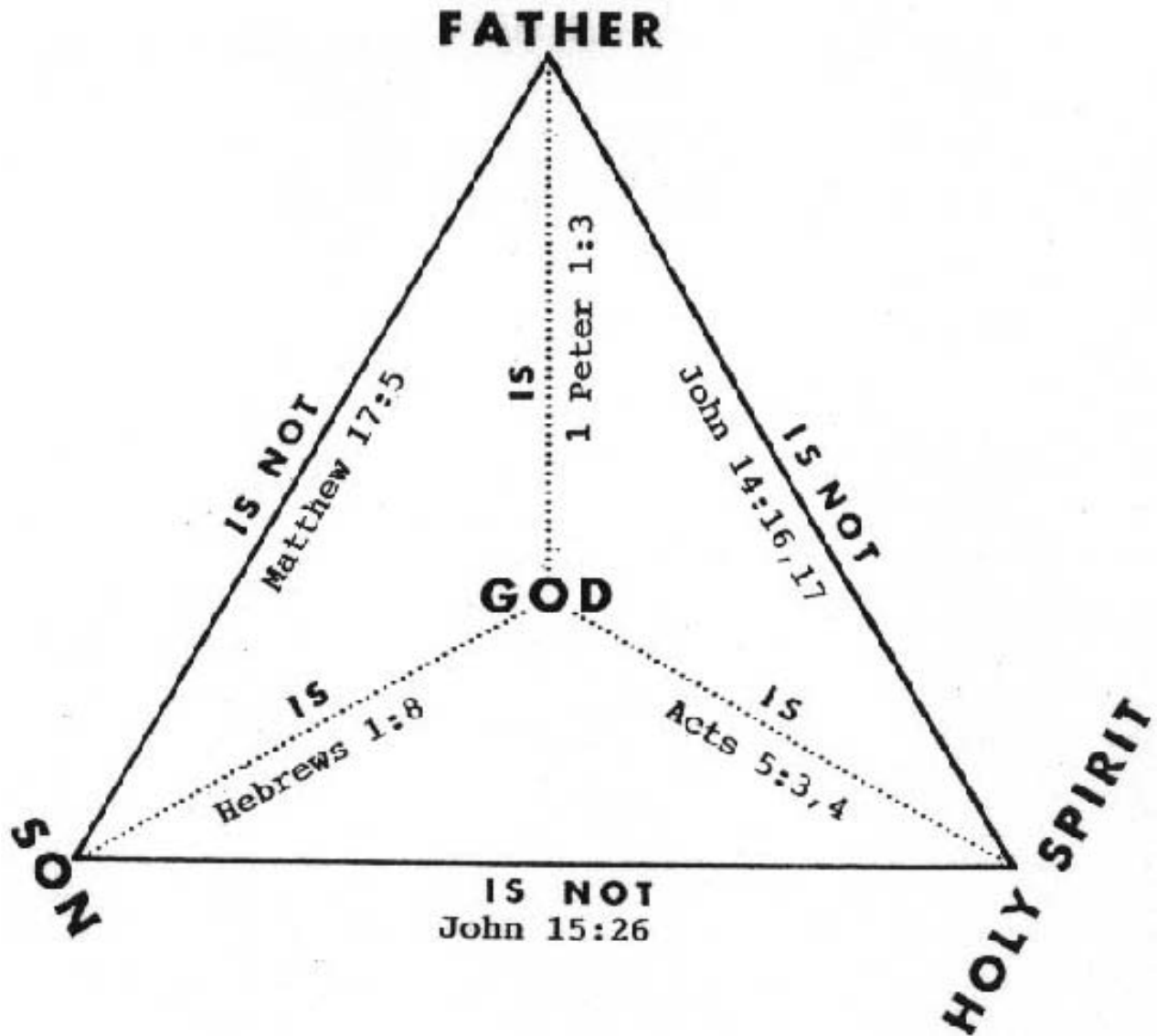
1. Introductory remarks about the lesson series.

- a. It is important to study the Holy Spirit because there is probably no other biblical topic that is more misunderstood in the religious world. No other topic is responsible for greater religious error than the Holy Spirit. However, there is nothing as distinctive as the teachings and beliefs regarding the Holy Spirit's Person and work.

"Christianity is differentiated from all other religions by the fact that it offers its followers a spiritual dynamic in living up to its precepts. That dynamic is the Holy Spirit, that sets the word of God on fire, warms the Church from coldness to enthusiasm, and strengthens the Christian with a power not his own in the great battle between the flesh and the spirit... The Holy Spirit is not obtained from the deductions of logic, the conclusions of philosophy nor from the investigations of science...It is solely and distinctly a matter of divine revelation." (Z.T. Sweeney, *The Spirit And The Word*, p. 5)

- b.  As we consider the Holy Spirit, let us begin by considering some "obvious" points:
 - 1) The Holy Spirit is treated with much superstition that has resulted from ignorance of the Bible.
 - 2) The Holy Spirit is often misunderstood. Some believe that mystical emotions or feelings affect one's heart and immediately they are convinced that they are being "led" by the Spirit.
 - 3) The Holy Spirit is rejected by some that discredit His existence because they cannot see, touch, or hear Him.
 - 4) The Holy Spirit is treated with an aura of mysticism. He is identified as the "Holy Ghost" and thus conjures up the images associated with the unseen world.
 - 5) The Holy Spirit is considered by many to be the "panacea" of spiritual matters. By this we mean that some trust only in their perception of the Spirit and reject the Church, Scripture, and any common sense approach of understanding God's will. They believe that if they "possess" the Spirit they cannot do any wrong regardless of what the Scripture states.
 - 6) The Holy Spirit is discussed with a number of conflicting opinions, even among the Lord's brethren. This has caused many to believe that the person and work of the Holy Spirit are incomprehensible.

- c. Obviously this series will not clarify all the confusion regarding the Holy Spirit.
 - 1) There are some questions about the Holy Spirit that are unknowable and have no earthly explanation (Deuteronomy 29:29).
 - 2) There are some questions about the Holy Spirit that are knowable and these we will discuss.
 - 3) The guiding rule—the Scriptures will dictate all thoughts. Only the Scriptures are able to give us information regarding the Holy Spirit. Thus, only the Scriptures will be studied.
 - 4) We need to try to eliminate any pre-conceived bias toward the Holy Spirit and His work as we begin. Let us take the Scriptures and allow them to speak. When a question arises, allow the Scriptures to clarify the answer. We can begin with the conviction that God has revealed sufficient information for us to know the important matters.
2. As we begin this critical study, we need to consider the authority of the Holy Spirit. We are commanded to heed and obey the Spirit (Revelation 22:17). This fact indicates that the Spirit occupies a position of authority. This authority comes because the Holy Spirit is a part of the "Godhead."
3. The doctrine of the Godhead undergirds the validity of the Scriptures.
 - a. "Godhead" is also "Godhood" and is a term that refers to the composition of "God." It is found three times in the King James' Version of the Bible (Acts 17:29; Romans 1:20; Colossians 2:9). In the American Standard Version, the Colossian reference is the only one retained. In Colossians 2:9 the term refers to the fact that Christ has the same essence as the Father and the Holy Spirit.
 - b.  There are three members of the "Godhead." Man is hard-pressed to describe the relationship within the Godhead (Isaiah 40:18).
 - 1) **God the Father**—He stands first and is often referred to as the Creator, and supreme in authority. He is the Father of our spirits and is always at the head of the list.
 - 2) **God the Son**—Jesus Christ occupies the second place in the Godhead.
 - 3) **God the Spirit**—The Holy Spirit is always third and is known by several different titles in Scripture.
 - 4)  The relationship shared by the three members of the Godhead has long been diagramed by this triangle.



🔗 There are “positive” characteristics of the Godhead (“IS”).

- **The Father IS God.** The Father is referred to as “God” (1 Peter 1:3)
- **The Son IS God.** In speaking to the Son, he is also called “God” (Hebrews 1:8).
- **The Holy Spirit IS God.** The Holy Spirit is also referred to as “God” (Acts 5:3,4).

🔗 There are “negative” characteristics of the Godhead (“is NOT”). Each of the members of the Godhead are also specifically separated and are not the same as each other.

- **The Father IS NOT the same as the Holy Spirit.** The Father specifically addressed that he was pleased with His Son, so they could not be the same person (Matthew 17:5).

- **The Son IS NOT the same as the Holy Spirit.** Jesus told the disciples that He would send the Spirit to them from the Father, so they are not the same person (John 15:26).
- **The Father IS NOT the same as the Son.** The Father sent the Son and there is no access to the Father except through the Son; so they cannot be the same person (John 14:5, 6).

Note: Raymond Lull, a well-known missionary to the Moslems used this triangle. He was martyred in 1315. He used it to explain the Godhead to the pagan intelligence. It has its inadequacies, but it has several features, which help us understand the doctrine. A triangle combines unity and distinctive three-fold nature without confusion.

c. Throughout the centuries several names have arisen to describe the Godhead.

- 1) 🕊️ **"THE TRINITY"** is the most common. This is a Latin word [TRINITAS], which comes from a root word meaning "a triad." It is never found in the Bible but it does describe the biblical composition of God.
- 2) 🕊️ **"THE DIVINE FAMILY"** is used to suggest the intimate union in the relationship of the Godhead; they are closely related; they are singularly embodied.
- 3) 🕊️ **"THE DEITY"** is a term, which expresses the divine nature that is shared—eternal, immortal.

d. 🕊️ The plurality of the Godhead is seen throughout the Bible.

- 1) **Genesis 1:26**—"Let Us" is a fact revealing that God was not talking to angels but someone who shared His essence.
- 2) **Genesis 11:7, 8**—"Let Us" is another reference that is not to angels.
- 3) 🕊️ **Deuteronomy 6:4**—Note three important points that are found in this text relative to the Holy Spirit and the Godhead.
 - a) **"ONE"** (from ECHOD) refers to a compound unity not an absolute one. Other biblical texts illustrate this compound unity as well (Genesis 1:5; 2:24; Ezra 2:64). An absolute oneness (YACHID) appears twelve times but never in reference to Jehovah God!
 - b) 🕊️ **"GOD"** is from the plural ELOHIM and literally means "GODS." The use of this Hebrew word reveals that God is one yet plural.
 - c) 🕊️ Thus we have a "plural oneness" that is obviously stated in the Bible.

- 4) **Matthew 3:16, 17**—All three Persons of the Godhead are specifically mentioned. If there are not three then this was a gigantic hoax!
 - 5) **Matthew 28:19**—The three members of the Godhead are specifically mentioned by Jesus. If there are not three then the Lord deliberately lied.
 - 6) **Isaiah 64:8; John 1:3; Job 26:13**—These Scriptures teach that the Father created, the Son created, and the Spirit created. Isaiah 44:24 states that Jehovah alone created. How can this be unless the Godhead exists?
4. 🙏 As clear as the Godhead is presented in Scripture there are some who reject this teaching. Especially, we often find vehement rejection that the Holy Spirit is an equal member in the Godhead.
- a. 🙏 Some claim there is only ONE Person in the Godhead and this ONE has been manifested in three different forms (the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit). This is especially true with the "Jesus Only" or "Oneness" doctrine.
 - b. 🙏 Some claim the Holy Spirit is only an active "Force," or "breath" from God.
 - c. 🙏 Some claim there are actually three gods instead of one God.
5. 🙏 The need for this study is evident from these opening points.
- a. As "God" the Holy Spirit must be understood by believers.
 - b. 🙏 As a mysterious figure in today's religious scene, we need to be prepared to give an answer to those in error.
 - c. 🙏 As information regarding Him is known only through Scripture and is found there in quantity, we must study so we will not be ashamed of biblical ignorance!