

## **Back to the Basics**

### **The Most Powerful Person You've Never Seen**

I'd like to start out this morning with a public opinion poll. By a show of hands, how many people in this room are "in looove"? OK husbands, I have to tell you those hands may not have shot up fast enough there – you may need to work on that. Assuming you can recover composure now, would someone please tell me what love looks like? I mean, how tall is it? What color is it? What kind of sound does it make? Can you smell it? Can you taste it? No? You can't see it, hear it, taste it, smell it? How do you know it's there? Alright, I'm sorry; love may be too touchy-feely for you. How about Air? Now there's something solid (if you are in Los Angeles); something "real" – not an emotion. Shall we run through the diagnostic identification list again? No? How about electricity? There's something with a LOT of power; surely we can wrap our arms around that and describe it...hmmmm, I'm beginning to sense a trend here. Apparently, we are capable of readily accepting and heartily embracing some things which we can't see or lay our hands on but, not everything. Mr Spock may have had a point – human beings are not always logical creatures.

Today, I want to take a few minutes to introduce you to the most powerful Person you've never seen. The third and final Person of the Trinity – The Holy Spirit (HOLY SPIRIT). Similar to my opening examples of love, air, and electricity, The HOLY SPIRIT is real, not imaginary, He is invisible to us, and He holds great power. The HOLY SPIRIT is perhaps the most misunderstood member of the Trinity and the One whose power is least realized by the believer. In order to provide you a solid doctrinal foundation for your understanding of the HOLY SPIRIT, I want to explain three things this morning. First, I want to show you a

brief Biblical history of the HOLY SPIRIT to help you understand that He is a member of the Trinity; God the Father, God the Son, and God the HOLY SPIRIT. Next, I want to prove to you that He is a PERSON- not a ghost, not a “thing.” Finally, I want to briefly discuss some reasons why His work in the lives of believers is important.

Let’s start off with the origin of the HOLY SPIRIT. Quoting the wisdom of my grandma, there is no better place to start than the beginning. Look at Genesis 1. In the first two verses we see that God created the Heavens and the earth and the **Spirit of God** was moving over the surface of the waters.

*In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. <sup>2</sup> The earth was formless and void, and darkness was over the surface of the deep, and the **Spirit of God** was moving over the surface of the waters.*

Hebrew scholars state that there are three numbers in the Hebrew language: Singular, one; dual, two; plural, more than two. The word translated “God” in Genesis 1:1 is plural, indicating more than two. The Hebrew word here is *Elohim*. Matthew Henry and other noted theologians believe that signifies “the plurality of the persons of the Godhead” and confirms our faith in the trinity.

Then, starting in verse 26, we see God refer to Himself as *Us* and **Our**.

*Then God said, “Let **Us** make man in **Our** image, according to **Our** likeness...*

This theme is repeated again in Genesis 3:22 and 11:7 in the description of the Fall and the Tower of Babel respectively.

From time to time the HOLY SPIRIT took possession of certain men in order to deliver God’s people. For instance, in the book of Judges alone, He came upon Othniel (3:10), Gideon (6:34), Jephthah (11:29), and Samson (13:25).

There are numerous additional references to the HOLY SPIRIT being God in the Psalms and Isaiah. When we move from the OT to the NT we are struck with the HOLY SPIRIT being a part of the trinity by Jesus' last words before His ascension into Heaven. Matthew records Jesus' last command to His disciples in Chapter 28:

*<sup>19</sup> Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit,<sup>20</sup> teaching them to observe all that I commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age."*

Jesus' command to make disciples and baptize them in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit places the HOLY SPIRIT as equal to God the Father and God the Son. He is God the Holy Spirit. Along this same line the apostle Paul said, *The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the HOLY SPIRIT, be with you all.*" (2 Cor. 13:14). This benediction clearly indicates that the HOLY SPIRIT is one with the Father and one with the Son in the Godhead. It is not one plus one plus one equals 3. It is one times one times one equals one. The HOLY SPIRIT is one with the Father and the Son. If the Father is God, and Jesus is God, then the HOLY SPIRIT is also God.

The concept of the Trinity is a terribly difficult subject – far beyond the ability of our limited minds to grasp fully. Nevertheless, it is extremely important to declare what the Bible holds and be silent where the Bible is silent. God the Father is fully God. God the Son is fully God. God the HOLY SPIRIT is fully God. The Bible presents this as fact. It does not explain it and we must be careful not to create our own explanations. Sometimes a picture is worth a thousand words. This diagram provides a view which helps some people grasp the concept of the Triune God.

Having established the HOLY SPIRIT's place as deity in the trinity, we can now address the issue of the personhood of the HOLY SPIRIT.

The Bible teaches that the HOLY SPIRIT is a person. Jesus never referred to “it” when He was talking about the HOLY SPIRIT. In John 14, 15, and 16, for example, He spoke of the HOLY SPIRIT as “He” because He is not a force or thing but a person.

We see from the Bible that the HOLY SPIRIT has intellect, emotions, and will. In addition to this, the Bible also ascribes to Him the acts we would expect of someone who was not just a force, but a real person.

**He Speaks.** (Rev. 2:7) <sup>7</sup> He who has an ear, let him hear what **the Spirit says** to the churches. To him who overcomes, I will grant to eat of the tree of life which is in the Paradise of God.’

(Acts 13:2) <sup>2</sup> While they were ministering to the Lord and fasting, the **Holy Spirit said**, “Set apart for Me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them.”

**He Intercedes.** (Rom. 8:26) <sup>26</sup> In the same way the Spirit also helps our weakness; for we do not know how to pray as we should, but the **Spirit Himself intercedes** for *us* with groanings too deep for words;

**He Leads.** (Acts 8:29) <sup>29</sup> Then the Spirit said to Philip, “Go up and join this chariot.”

(Rom 8:14) <sup>14</sup> For all who are **being led by the Spirit of God**, these are sons of God.

**He Guides.** (John 16:13) <sup>13</sup> But when He, the Spirit of truth, comes, **He will guide** you into all the truth; for He will not speak on His own initiative, but whatever He hears, He will speak; and He will disclose to you what is to come.

The act in this next passage not only affirms His personhood, but also affirms His place in the Trinity.

**He can be lied to.** (Acts 5:3, 4) <sup>3</sup> But Peter said, “Ananias, why has Satan filled your heart to **lie to the Holy Spirit** and to keep back *some* of the price of the land?

<sup>4</sup> While it remained *unsold*, did it not remain your own? And after it was sold, was it not under your control? Why is it that you have conceived this deed in your heart? You have not **lied to men but to God.**”

**He can be grieved.** (Eph 4:30) Do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, by whom you were sealed for the day of redemption.

Each of these emotions and acts we have covered are characteristics of a person. The HOLY SPIRIT is not an impersonal force, like gravity or magnetism. He is a Person, with all the attributes of personality. But not only is He a Person; He is divine as well – and that is what makes Him uniquely qualified for His role in the lives of believers.

Over the past few months Holy Spirit I have stood here and openly confessed my personality quirks (humility is a good thing). One of my main quirks is my sense of orderliness, process, and functions. I like to have everything accounted for and know who is responsible for doing what. Back in the day (an expression old Soldiers use) the Army had a regulation, AR 10-1, which we lovingly called the O&F manual (Operations and Functions). It sung to my organized heart. It was filled with wire and block diagrams of each organization at every level with functions aligned neatly to each one so you knew who was responsible for what. It was a beautiful thing. But, if there was an organization or position which had no functions aligned to it, it would make you question the reason for its existence. This morning we find ourselves in a similar circumstance. Having now established

that the HOLY SPIRIT is a Person and that He is a divine member of the Triune Godhead, we still need to answer the question, Why? What does the HOLY SPIRIT do? That brings me to my final point this morning, reasons why the HOLY SPIRIT's work is critical in the lives of believers.

Man has two great spiritual needs. One is for forgiveness. The other is for goodness. Consciously, or unconsciously, his inner being longs for both. There are times when man actually cries for them, even though he may not know what he is crying for. God heard that first cry for help, that cry for forgiveness, and answered it at Calvary. God sent His only Son into the world to die for our sins, so that we might be forgiven. This is a gift for us – God's gift of salvation.

But God also heard our second cry, that cry for goodness, and answered it at Pentecost. God does not want us to come to Christ by faith, and then lead a life of defeat, discouragement, and dissension. Rather, He wants us to “fulfill every desire for goodness and the work of faith with power; in order that the name of our Lord Jesus Christ may be glorified in you” (2 Thes. 1:11, 12). To the great gift of forgiveness God adds also the great gift of the Holy Spirit. He is the source of power who meets our need to escape from the miserable weakness that grips us. He gives us the power to be truly good. If we wish to be men and women who can live victoriously, we need this two-sided gift God has offered us: first, the work of the Son of God **for** us; second, the work of the Spirit of God **in** us. In this way God has answered mankind's two great cries: the cry for forgiveness and the cry for goodness. As Billy Graham said, “I need Jesus Christ for my eternal life, and the Holy Spirit for my internal life.”

If you believe in Jesus Christ, a power is available to you that can change your life, even in such intimate areas as your marriage and your relationships with others.

Unfortunately, many believers have ignored, misunderstood or misused this power thus short-circuiting the power of the HOLY SPIRIT. Allow me to close today by listing just a few of the reasons believers need the power of the Holy Spirit.

**He Indwells the believer.** Every believer is indwelled by the Spirit at the moment of conversion (Rom. 8:9). This indwelling provides power and direction for life, provides guidance for developing as a disciple of Christ, and results in Christlike living.

**He leads the church.** The Book of Acts could be referred to as “The Acts of the HOLY SPIRIT” rather than “The Acts of the Apostles.” As we read Acts with the purpose of noticing the work of the Spirit, we are overwhelmed by the direction the Spirit gave to the early church. If we are open to His guidance and power, He reveals to us what gifts and ministries are needed, what fields of service to move into, and how to develop our gifts and our ministries to prepare for entering those fields.

**He is our counselor.** In John 14:16 and 26 the Bible describes the HOLY SPIRIT as our counselor. The greek word for counselor is *paraclete* and means *one who walks alongside*. The HOLY SPIRIT is with the believer always. He aids our ailing spirits and encourages us through times of difficulty. He helps us make day-to-day decisions. One Southern pastor noted that, “Jesus is our advocate with God, while the HOLY SPIRIT is God’s advocate with us.”

**He is our strength.** The HOLY SPIRIT provides the power for Christian life and service. It is in this context that some Christians discover the power of the HOLY SPIRIT. Having lived and worked in their own strength to the point of frustration and exhaustion, they finally discover that enormous power is available.

**He aids us in communicating with God.** He leads us in prayer, and even when we don't know what to say, He still communicates our feelings that are so deep we don't even have clear thoughts about them (Rom. 8:26-27).

**He is our teacher.** The HOLY SPIRIT does not teach about Himself but of Christ (1 Cor. 12:3). The HOLY SPIRIT is our teacher as we seek to learn more of Christ. The more we learn of Christ, the more we learn to live like Him.

The HOLY SPIRIT is the third person of the Trinity. He is all God. His role is to glorify Christ. He works in the lives of believers by providing us with counsel, enlightenment, strength, and the translation of our prayers and thoughts to God.

He is the believer's source of power to carry out God's will in our lives. He is the difference in believers living a defeated life or living a victorious life in Christ. He is the most powerful person you've never seen. Open the eyes of your heart and see the power available to you. Choose to live in victory – accept God's gift of goodness and watch the power of the Spirit of God work in your life.