

Introduction

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His Person

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His Works

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His Indwelling

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His Baptizing

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The Holy Spirit—Our Helper

Bethany Bible Church, Adult Sunday School Class, April 17, 2011

The ‘Personhood’ of The Spirit

One of the most important things we can learn about the Holy Spirit from the Scriptures is that believers aren’t indwelt by an impersonal ‘force’ that they can ‘use’; but rather by a divine ‘Person’ who ‘uses’ them!

Did you know that the first few words of the Bible mention the Holy Spirit? In Genesis 1:2, we read that “The earth was without form, and void; and darkness was on the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God was hovering over the face of the waters.” And He’s also mentioned in the fifth verse from the end of the Bible. In Revelation 22:17, we read, “And the Spirit and the bride say, ‘Come!’ And let him who hears say, ‘Come!’ And let him who thirsts come. Whoever desires, let him take the water of life freely.” What is the nature, then, of the “Holy Spirit” that we find at the beginning, the end, and throughout all the Scriptures?

I. HE IS SAID TO HAVE THE ATTRIBUTES OF A ‘PERSON’.

At a very basic level, something is considered to be a ‘person’ rather than a ‘thing’ if it possesses such qualities as intellect, will, and emotion. The Bible tells us that the Holy Spirit displays:

- A. Intelligence--in that He has a mind (Romans 8:27), can “search” and “know” (1 Corinthians 2:10-11), and is able to teach and communicate (1 Corinthians 2:13; John 14:26; 16:13).
- B. Will--in that He makes choices (John 3:8; 1 Corinthians 12:11), and issues commands and prohibitions (Acts 13:2; 16:6-7).
- C. Emotions--in that He can be grieved (Ephesians 4:30), and that He yearns (James 4:5).

II. HE IS SAID TO DISPLAY THE ACTIONS OF A ‘PERSON’.

His actions are not those of an impersonal force; but are of a kind that can only be attributed to ‘personhood’:

- A. He convicts the world of sin, righteousness and judgment (John 16:8-10).
- B. He intercedes for believers according to God’s will (Romans 8:26-27).
- C. He testifies of of the Son of God (John 15:26).

III. HE IS SAID TO BE TREATED LIKE A ‘PERSON’.

Not only are His actions toward others those of a person, but the actions that are said to be done to Him are of a kind that can only be done to someone possessing personhood:

- A. Ananias and Sapphira lied to and tested Him (Acts 5:3, 9).
- B. The Jewish leaders were said to have always resisted Him (Acts 7:51).
- C. Those who treat the Gospel with contempt are said to have insulted Him (Hebrews 10:29).
- D. The Lord Jesus warned people not to blaspheme Him (Matthew 12:31)
- E. Peter heard Him give a command, and obeyed Him (Acts 10:19-21).

God is “revealed as Father, Son and Holy Spirit. We must tread softly here, for we are on holy ground. There are depths which we cannot fathom, but we can at least look and wonder, and confess and worship. A denial of either of these divine Persons is a denial of God. If it is shocking for a person to deny the divinity of Christ, it is none the less so for him to deny the personality of the Holy Spirit. Indeed, you will frequently find these two forms of unbelief together” (S. Ridout, *The Person and Work of the Holy Spirit* [Published by John Richie, n.d.], p. 8).