

Teaching Notes

The Person and Work of the Holy Spirit

- Pentecost Sunday (50 days after Easter-Passover)
Hebrew *Feast of Weeks* or *Shavuot* (giving of the Law - Pentecost giving of the Spirit)
- Ascension (40 days after Easter-Passover or 10 days before Pentecost)
- Holidays in Continental Europe – not celebrated in the main in NZ

To be filled with the Holy Spirit is not an optional extra but a *must* in every believer's life.

A.W. Tozer wrote,

“The Church without the Spirit is as helpless as Israel might have been in the wilderness if the fiery cloud had deserted them. The Holy Spirit is our cloud by day and our fire by night. Without Him we only wander aimlessly about the desert’

“The church can have light only as it is full of the Holy Spirit, and it can be full only as the members that compose it are filled individually.”¹

To be filled is to give the Holy Spirit access into our lives
Like manna in the wilderness – we need it fresh every day!

Introduction to seminar

This will be first message of a four-part teaching series on the Person and Work of the Holy Spirit.

The Seminar will cover the following areas:

- Who is the Holy Spirit?
- His role and function prior to his coming at Pentecost
- His role and function after Pentecost
- The Baptism of the Holy Spirit and the Gifts of the Holy Spirit

Prayer ministry – the laying on of hands – will be available at the conclusion of the Seminar.

¹ A.W. Tozer, *Keys to the Deeper Life*, (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House), 27
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MESSAGE 1

WHO IS THE HOLY SPIRIT?

Holy Spirit in Context

“God in three Persons – blessed Trinity” (Holy, Holy, Holy)

Until the mid-nineteen sixties, the Holy Spirit was probably the least mentioned member of the Trinity.

In the first half of the *twentieth century* we saw a strong focus on the *Person and work of Jesus Christ* culminating in the *Jesus Movement*. This was followed by the *Charismatic Movement*, which brought a renewed emphasis on the *Person and Work of the Holy Spirit* – including the *Baptism in the Spirit* and the *Gifts of the Spirit*.

It is important to state right from the beginning that we can never *overemphasise* any one member of the Godhead, but is possible to *underemphasise* one of the members of the Godhead.

It is important therefore, before we begin our teaching series on the *Person and Work of the Holy Spirit*, to highlight the rightful place of the first Person of the Trinity, *God the Father*.

For Scripture does not start with Jesus, his work on the cross nor the gifts of the Spirit. But rather with the Father who so loved the world that he gave his Son and then he gave us his Spirit.

The Father is the source of everything, both in creation and in redemption, so also he is the goal of everything. The mission of the Son and the Spirit is to advance the Father’s glory so that he may be *all in all*. Jesus mission was to reconcile men to the Father.

1 Corinthians 15:24-28

²⁴ then comes the end, when He hands over the kingdom to the God and Father, when He has abolished all rule and all authority and power. ²⁵ For He must reign until He has put all His enemies under His feet. ²⁶ The last enemy that will be abolished is death. ²⁷ For HE HAS PUT ALL THINGS IN SUBJECTION UNDER HIS FEET.... ²⁸ When all things are subjected to Him, then the Son Himself also will be subjected to the One who subjected all things to Him, so that God may be all in all.

Thomas Smail – *The Forgotten Father*

Thus we need a full orientation to the whole Trinity, to the Spirit and Son but also to the Father to remind us that man’s chief end is not to have his soul

*saved, or his body healed, or even the church revived – but is to glorify God and enjoy him forever.*²

We need a full and balanced picture of the *one* God of the Bible, whom we know in three Persons, that of *God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit.*

According to orthodox Trinitarian teaching

- the Father is the source of all authority and lordship
- the *equally* divine authority and lordship of the Son and the Spirit are nevertheless derived from the Father's authority
- The Son and the Spirit exercise their authority in obedience to the Father
 - Jesus will only speak and do what the Father shows him (John 5:30)

“And He who sent me is with Me; He has not left me alone, for I always do the things that are pleasing to him” (John 8:29).

“For I do not speak on My own initiative, but the Father Himself who sent Me has given Me a commandment as to what to say and what to speak (John 12:49).

- The Holy Spirit is in complete unity with the Father and the Son will never draw attention to himself or speak on his own initiative, but and will speak only those things given him by the Son,
“He will glorify Me, for He will take what is Mine and will disclose it to you” (John 16:14)
- Or the things revealed to him by the Father (1 Corinthians 2:10-11)

The Father is the integrating factor within the Godhead and the gospel.

His purposes give meaning to the coming of the Son and the sending of the Spirit.

It is in Christ that God has revealed himself to us as Father, as well as the Son and Spirit. Therefore, Christ position as King of kings and Lord of lords, as the head of the body - the Church, demands our worship and honouring so that he may have first place in everything

Baptism: in the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit (Matthew 28: 19). If any of them were not fully God, it would be idolatrous.

The biblical revelation of God of clearly reveals the oneness of God - *I am the first and I am the last, and there is no God besides Me* (Isaiah 44:6).

It is a mystery! But that makes God different from us humans. God is God – we are humans, and although created in the image and likeness of God, nevertheless we are very different from God.

² Thomas A. Smail. *The Forgotten Father* (Grand Rapids, William Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1980), 20
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THE INCOMPREHENSIBLE HOLY SPIRIT

In this teaching series, we will highlight the Third Person within the Godhead – *the Holy Spirit*. The Holy Spirit has the same qualities or attributes as the Father and the Son. There is only One God!

Our first introduction to the Holy Spirit (the Spirit of God) is within the first opening statement of the Old Testament,

“In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. The earth was formless and void, and the darkness was over the surface of the deep, and the Spirit of God was moving over the surface the waters” (Genesis 1:1-2).

The last mentioning (5th last verse of NT) of the Holy Spirit is in the last conclusive statement of the New Testament,

“And the Spirit and the bride say, ‘Come,’” (Revelation 22:17).

Within the incomprehensible Godhead - the Triune God - God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit, the Holy Spirit is probably the least understood.

While he is *the Spirit who proceeds from the Father* (John 15:26), he is at the same time called *“the Spirit of Christ”* (Romans 8:9; Philippians 1:19).

He is co-equal with both the Father and the Son. The Apostle Peter clearly viewed him as God when he said to Ananias, *“Why has Satan filled your heart to lie to the Holy Spirit? . . . You have not lied to men, but to God”* (Acts 5:3-4).

If the Father, the Son, and the Spirit all bear the names of God, possess the attributes of God, and perform the works of God, then there is no alternative but to acknowledge that our one God exists in three persons.

A. The Early Church Fathers

The early church fathers recognised the need for a clear statement of faith on what the Church believed regarding the Holy Spirit. This is what they stated about what they believed about the Person of the Holy Spirit in the Nicene Creed (statement of faith).

Nicene Creed

*We believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life,
Who proceeds from the Father and the Son.
With the Father and the Son he is worshipped
and glorified.
He has spoken through the prophets.*

B. Unbiblical belief about the Holy Spirit

New Age movements (pantheistic) and other religions (incl. American Indians, Polynesian/Maori animistic beliefs and also Jehovah Witnesses and Mormons) acknowledge the existence of a divine “spirit” but there is clear difference between their understanding and the Holy Spirit as revealed in the Bible.

Denial of his very personality

Jehovah Witnesses - “The holy spirit is the active force of God. It is not a person but is a *powerful force* that God causes to emanate from himself to accomplish his holy will” (*Reasoning from the Scriptures* 1985), 81).

Mormons - Parley Pratt, one of Mormonism’s original “apostles,” once described the Holy Spirit as a force like “*magnetism*” or “*electricity*.” He further spoke of the Spirit as “*a divine fluid*” and “*impersonal energy*” (see Jackson 1993, 26).

The Holy Spirit of the Bible is not:

- He is not some **impersonal power**
- He is not some **impersonal influence**
- He is not some **impersonal blob**
- He is not some **impersonal force**

⊗ **51.000 New Zealanders stated the Jedi the force as their religion in the last Census³**
⊗ **David Attenborough stated recently during a TV interview that he believed in a spirit power but not in a personal God**

- He is not some **impersonal “it”**
- He is not some **impersonal wind or breath**

C. The Bible reveals who the Holy Spirit is

The Bible reveals that he is Personal Deity and that he has all the characteristics of Personhood – he is certainly not an impersonal power!

How does the Bible reveal that the Holy Spirit is personal?

The following Scriptures undoubtedly reveal that the Holy Spirit is a Personal Being

(1) Titles of the Holy Spirit reveal his Personhood

- Counsellor – Comforter (John 14:16)
- Helper – Intercessor (John 14:16; Romans 8:26)
- Teacher (John 14:26)

³ Hawke’s Bay Today

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(2) The Holy Spirit acts in personal ways

- He thinks (Acts 15:28)
- He speaks (Acts 8:29)
- He leads (Romans 8:14)
- He guides (John 16:13)
- He teaches (John 14:26)
- He intercedes with groanings too deep for words (Romans 8:26)
- He reveals, searches all things, even the depths of God (1 Corinthians 2:10)
- He distributes spiritual gifts (Romans 12:6-8; 1 Corinthians 12)
- He creates (Genesis 1:2)
- He brings about new birth (John 3:8)
- Demons are cast out by the power of the Holy Spirit (Matthew 12:28)
- The Holy Spirit raised Christ Jesus from the dead (Romans 8:11)
- The Holy Spirit will also raise us from the dead (Romans 8:11)
- He is the Author of Scripture (Acts 1:16; Hebrews 10:15; Jeremiah 31:33; Hebrew 3:7 – Cf Exodus 17:7)

(3) The Holy Spirit has to be a personal Being because he clearly has feelings and experiences emotions.

- The Holy Spirit can be grieved (Isaiah 63:10; Ephesians 4:30)
- The Holy Spirit can be sinned against (Mark 3:28-29; Matthew 12:31-32; Luke 12:10; Hebrews 6:4-8; Hebrews 10:26-31)
- The Holy Spirit can be quenched (1 Thessalonians 5:19)
- The Holy Spirit can be resisted (Isaiah 63:10; Acts 7:51)
- The Holy Spirit can be lied against (Acts 5:3)
- The Holy Spirit experiences joy (fruit of the Holy Spirit – Galatians 5:22)

All this clearly indicates that the Holy Spirit is Personal Being

(4) The Deity of the Holy Spirit

- He is called God (Act 5:4)
- He is called Lord (2 Corinthians 3:17-18)
- He is called Eternal Spirit (only God is eternal) (Hebrews 9:14)
- Scripture reveals his co-equality with the Father and the Son (Matthew 3:16; 28:19; 2 Corinthians 13:14 Ephesians 2:18; Hebrews 9:14)
- What is said of God is also said of the Holy Spirit (Genesis 1:27; Exodus 16:7; Job 33:4; Jeremiah 31:31-31; Acts 28:25-27; Hebrews 3:7-9; 10:15-17)

(5) His attributes are the same as the attributes of God

Natural Attributes

- Omnipotence - (Genesis 1:2; Corinthians 12:11; Romans 15:19; Luke 1:35; 1 Corinthians 12:11)
- Omniscience – (1 Corinthians 2:10-11; Isaiah 40: 13-14 (cf Romans 11:34); John 14:26; John 16:12-13; 1 Peter 1:10; 2 Peter 1.21)
- Omnipresence – (Psalm 139:7-10; John 14:16-17; 1 Corinthians 12:13)
- Eternality – (Hebrews 9:14)

Moral Attributes

- Truth – (John 16:13; 1 John 5:6-7)
- Love – (Romans 15: 30; Galatians 5:22)
- Wisdom – (Ephesians 1:17)
- Goodness – (Galatians 5:22)
- Peace – (Galatians 5:22)
- Faithfulness
- Kindness
- Holiness (*Holy Spirit*)

(6) Jesus always refers to the Holy Spirit by using the personal pronoun *He*

(though the noun is neuter) (John 14:16,17; 15:26; 16:7,8,13,14; Acts 13:2).

It is not only non-Christians who have a mistaken view of the Holy Spirit, many Christians also do.

D. Why knowing God the Holy Spirit as a Personal Being is so important:

(1) It will affect our worship

As Jesus said, “*God is spirit, and those who worship Him must worship Him in Spirit and in truth*” (John 4:24)

(2) It will affect our relationship with God

If we know the Holy Spirit as a Personal Being (Gift of the Father) then we will want to relate to him. For it is by the Holy Spirit, through the Son that we have access to the Father.

- Liberty (2 Corinthians 3:19)

(3) It will affect how we live our daily lives

If we know the Holy Spirit as the Spirit of the Father and the Son then we learn how to:

- Hear God’s voice
- Be led by the Spirit (Romans 8:14; Galatians 5:16)
- Walk in the Spirit (in step) Galatians 5:25 – If we live by the Spirit, let us also walk by the Spirit or [keep in step with the Spirit] (NIV)

Definition: To “keep in step with the Spirit” means to be alert and responsive to the Spirit’s personal guidance in your life – get to know the Father and Son

- Pray in the Spirit
- Sing in the Spirit
- We will experience him as a loving friend, helper and comforter

Summing up

- The Holy Spirit is not an impersonal force
- The Holy Spirit is a *Person* who personally guides and comforts us to do God’s will 7
- He is the Father’s gift to us

- He is the Life-Giver
- He is that still small voice within us

Leon Morris writes in his book *Spirit of the Living God*⁴:

“The witness of the N.T. is clear enough. The Spirit is thought of consistently as a Person, and as a Person in some sense, distinct from, though closely related to, the Father and the Son. The Spirit must not be thought of as a vague force or effluence. Nor is He another name for one aspect of the Father or the Son. He is a Person in His own right, with His own functions.”

⁴ Leon Morris writes, *Spirit of the Living God*, Page 43