

100 BIBLE LESSONS

These lessons were originally given at Manila, Philippines, in 1958 and 1959 by former missionary to China, Alban Douglas. Give these lessons to people you visit, youth groups, hospital patients, church visitors and new members. Use them in Sunday School, bus ministry, jail services, nursing homes, Christian schools, small discussion groups and many other places. God's Word will answer your questions and help solve your problems.

LESSON 61 – THE PERSONALITY OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

INTRODUCTION

The Holy Spirit has been sent by the Father and Son to indwell and guide believers. Many people profess to believe in the Holy Ghost but actually they believe in God the Father, God the Son and the Holy Ghost as the servant or errand boy. This is false for the Holy Spirit is equal to and in no way inferior to the other two. Others reduce the Holy Spirit to an inanimate force such as electricity which is very powerful but completely devoid of being a living person, much less God. In this lesson we attempt to prove His personality and His deity in the next lesson. We believe that the Holy Spirit is a living Person, for He can be approached or shunned, trusted or doubted, loved or hated, adored or insulted.

I. THE IMPORTANCE OF THIS DOCTRINE

- A. If He is a living Person, the Holy God, equal to the Father and Son, then He ought to be worshiped as they are. Theoretically this is done in the Doxology and Gloria Patri. His name is linked with the Father and Son in the Benediction and the baptismal formula.
- B. If He is merely an influence or power we would refer to Him as "It" which is a heathenish conception, which leads to the error, "I want to get more of 'It'."
- If He is a Person, then we must address Him with proper pronouns.
- C. If He is a Person, then we must get to know Him more intimately and personally.

II. THE BIBLE USES PERSONAL PRONOUNS IN REFERRING TO THE HOLY SPIRIT

John 15:26, "But when the Comforter is come... He shall testify of Me."

John 16:8, "And when He is come, He will reprove the world..."

John 16:13, "Howbeit when He, the Spirit of truth, is come, He will guide you."

John 16:14, "He shall glorify Me: for He shall receive of Mine..."

In the Greek language the pronoun for "spirit" is originally in the neuter gender. The student of the Greek New Testament is startled at the masculine choice of pronouns.

In the passage, John 16:7, 8, 13-15, twelve times the Greek masculine pronoun (skeinos) "He," is used of the Holy Spirit.

One notable exception is Romans 8:16, "The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit." This is an unfortunate mistake which is corrected in the Revised Version. The same mistake is made in Romans 8:26, but the Revised Version says, "... But the Spirit Himself maketh intercession for us with groanings that cannot be uttered."

III. THE HOLY SPIRIT IS A PERSON FOR HE POSSESSES CERTAIN CHARACTERISTICS

A. Willpower. I Corinthians 12:11, "But all these worketh that one and the selfsame Spirit, dividing to every man, severally as He will." The Holy Spirit makes decisions.

B. Intelligence. Nehemiah 9:20, "Thou gavest also Thy good Spirit to instruct them." A power or influence does not have knowledge with which to teach.

Roman 8:27, "And He that searcheth the hearts knoweth what is the mind of the Spirit, because He maketh intercession." He searches and has the ability to know things.

C. Knowledge. I Corinthians 2:10-12, "What man knoweth the things of a man, save the spirit of man which is in him? even so the things of God knoweth no man, but the Spirit of God." The Holy Spirit has knowledge and knows things.

D. Power. Acts 1:8, "But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come unto you: and ye shall be witnesses unto Me." He powerfully changed Peter.

E. Capacity for love. Romans 15:30, "... for the love of the Spirit..."

F. Capacity for grief. Ephesians 4:30, "And grieve, not the Holy Spirit of God..."

The Holy Spirit is a Person because He thinks, feels, purposes, knows, wills, loves and grieves.

The Spirit is certainly not merely an influence for He has abilities of intelligence and emotions which are foreign to inanimate forces.

Let us never shun, doubt, hate or insult the Spirit. Let us continuously approach Him with faith, love and adoration.

IV. THE HOLY SPIRIT DOES THINGS THAT ONLY A PERSON CAN DO

A. The Holy Spirit searches the deep things of God. I Corinthians 2:10, "The Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God." Even a modern "IBM" machine would not be able to do this!

B. The Holy Spirit can speak. Revelation 2:7, "He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches."

C. The Holy Spirit can cry out. Galatians 4:6, "And because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of His Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father."

D. The Holy Spirit intercedes. Romans 8:26, "The Spirit Himself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered."

E. The Holy Spirit testifies. John 15:26, "But when the Comforter is come... He shall testify of Me."

F. The Holy Spirit teaches. John 14:26, "But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost,... He shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance." This ability is also mentioned in John 16:12-14; Nehemiah 9:20.

G. The Holy Spirit leads and directs Romans 8:14, "For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God." Do I personally know of this leading?

H. The Holy Spirit commands. Acts 16:6, 7, "... And were forbidden and of the Holy Ghost to preach the Word in Asia... but the Spirit suffered them not."

I. The Holy Spirit calls men to work and gives them tasks. Acts 13:2, "The Holy Ghost said, Separate Me Barnabas and Saul for the work here into I have called them." Also, Acts 20:28, "The Holy Ghost hath made you overseers."

J. The Holy Spirit proceeds on the mission to which He is sent. John 15:26, "... Whom I will send unto you from the Father, even the Spirit of truth, which proceedeth from the Father, He shall testify of Me."

V. THE HOLY SPIRIT HAS BEEN ASSIGNED A DEFINITE OFFICE

He is the official Comforter. John 14:16, "He shall give you another Comforter."

The Greek word here, "Parakletos," means "one alongside." He is a personal companion.

As a Person He becomes our best friend to guide us and comfort us.

Here, I strongly recommend that you read, "The Holy Spirit," by R. A. Torrey, pages 28 to 40.

He suggests that the application of this doctrine is most practical.

1. It is a cure for an abnormal fear of the dark. The Holy Spirit is with me.
2. It is a cure for insomnia. Try communing with the Spirit and you will fall asleep. 2 Cor. 13:14, "...and the communion (talking together) of the Holy Ghost..."
3. It is a cure for all loneliness. Develop this friendship with the Holy Spirit.
4. It is a cure for a broken heart. Let the Spirit occupied the aching void of the heart.
5. It is the greatest encouragement for power and a cure for helplessness.
6. It is an incentive in teaching and preaching. The Spirit is with me to guide me.
7. His presence is our authority in personal work-the living Spirit has directed me thus.

VI. THE HOLY SPIRIT HAS EMOTIONS

1. He can be grieved. Isaiah 63:10, "But they rebelled and vexed His Holy Spirit..."

2. He can be insulted. Hebrews 10:29, "... and hath done despite unto the Spirit of grace."

3. He can be lied to. Acts 5:3, "Why hath Satan filled thine heart to lie to the Holy Ghost?"

4. He can be blasphemed. Matthew 12:31, 32, "... but the blasphemy against the Holy Ghost..."

VII. THE HOLY SPIRIT IS A PERSON

We believe that He is a Person because He possesses all the necessary qualities of

intellect, emotions, will, knowledge and actions. Let us never insult Him by calling the Spirit “it” but always honor Him properly.

CONCLUSION

May we make much of the companionship of the living Person, the Holy Spirit.

Prayer: “Lord, teach me more of the communion of the Holy Spirit.”

Let the Holy Spirit be our companion, our partner and comrade with whom we have intimate fellowship moment by moment.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Give two wrong impressions of the Holy Spirit that people have.
2. Give three reasons why this subject is important.
3. Give three passages where the Bible (KJV) uses personal pronouns for the Holy Spirit.
4. Give two verses in the Bible (KJV) where the pronoun is mistranslated.
5. What is the meaning of the Greek word, “Parakletos”?
6. What six characteristics of a Person does the Holy Spirit possess?
7. List ten things that the Holy Spirit does, proving that He is a Person.
8. What is the office of the Holy Spirit?
9. List seven practical applications of the “Parakletos.”
10. Name four emotional qualities of the Holy Spirit.