

The Teachings of Jesus

The Holy Spirit

Lesson #3 for July 19, 2014

Scriptures: John 3:5-8; 14:16-18,26; 15:26; 16:8; Matthew 12:31-32; Luke 11:9-13.

1. Consider these words from the *Adult Sabbath School Bible Study Guide*.

Of the Three Persons of the Godhead, the Holy Spirit is the least understood. It is ironic that the Person who is closest to us, the Being who produces the new birth in us, who dwells in us and transforms us, is the One we know so little about.

Why? To begin with, the Bible is less explicit regarding the Holy Spirit than it is about the Father and the Son. There are many references to the Spirit in Scripture, but most are metaphoric or symbolic. The Bible gives us ample information about the work of the Spirit, but it says little about His nature.

Another reason arises from the ministry of the Holy Spirit. He is constantly trying to focus our attention on Christ, not on His own Person. In the plan of salvation, the Spirit plays a subordinated role, serving the Father and the Son, although this function does not imply inferiority in essence. *Adult Sabbath School Bible Study Guide* for Sabbath, July 12.

2. Jesus promised to send us the Holy Spirit. What is the Holy Spirit supposed to do for us? Have you ever wished that you could spend some time with Jesus? Do you wish that you could have seen and heard Him while He was here on this earth? Everything that Jesus did for His disciples in His day while here on this earth, the Holy Spirit can do for us today.
3. Read John 14:16-18; 15:26. The primary work of the Holy Spirit is the same work that Jesus came to do, that is, to reveal the truth about God. Shouldn't that be our work also?
4. The Greek word used to describe the Holy Spirit is *parakletos*. It means someone called to assist a person who needs help. In 1 John 2:1, Jesus Himself is called a *parakletos*. Think of all the things that Jesus did for His disciples when He was here. The Holy Spirit wants to do all those same things for us. So, what does the Holy Spirit actually do for us? How does He work in our lives?
 - 1) He sustains our physical lives. Without Him, our hearts would not keep beating, and we could not breathe! (Acts 17:25,28)
 - 2) He constantly seeks to draw us or "woo" us to God. (Compare John 6:44; 12:32.)
 - 3) He convicts and converts those who are willing to listen to Him. (John 3:5-8; 14:6,17; 15:26; 16:13,18)
 - 4) He produces spiritual fruit in the lives of those who cooperate with Him (Galatians 5:22-23) and gives them spiritual gifts (1 Corinthians 12:1-11,28-29; Romans 12:6-8; Ephesians 4:7-16) so they can spread the gospel to others.
 - 5) His most important role has been to inspire prophets and apostles to give us the Scriptures.
5. Many people seem to be somewhat confused about the nature of the Holy Spirit.
6. Ellen G. White wrote: "The nature of the Holy Spirit is a mystery. Men cannot explain it, because the Lord has not revealed it to them. . . . Regarding such mysteries, which are too deep for human understanding, silence is golden."—*The Acts of the Apostles*, p. 52. She also wrote: "...The Holy Spirit, who is as much a person as God is a person, is walking through these grounds...." (discourse given by E. G. White in the Avondale Church, March 25, 1899;

2SAT 136.6; *Evangelism*, 616.5) The entire Godhead is on our side. (Romans 8:26-34)

7. The Holy Spirit is not just some kind of influence or disembodied power. Consider the following passages that talk about the personality of the Holy Spirit. He teaches us and brings things to our remembrance (John 14:26). He testifies of Jesus (John 15:26). He convicts the world (John 16:8). His great hope is to guide us into all truth (John 16:13). Later, New Testament writers made it clear that the Holy Spirit has the essential characteristics of a Person: Will (1 Corinthians 12:11), intelligence (Acts 15:28, Romans 8:26-27), and emotions (Romans 15:30, Ephesians 1:13; 4:30). See *Bible Study Guide* for Monday, July 14.
8. If we invite Him in, the Holy Spirit will dwell in our hearts (Romans 8:9), transform our lives (Titus 3:5), and produce the fruits of the Spirit in our characters (Galatians 5:22-23). In how many ways is the Spirit just like Jesus? He is divine; He has the same goals in mind for us; and He is able to foretell the future far in advance (John 16:13) which only God can do. (Isaiah 46:9-11) Prophets in the Old Testament were inspired by the Spirit. (Psalm 110:1)
9. While He was on this earth, in cooperation with the Father and the Holy Spirit, Jesus planned every day and every activity. They did this together in seasons of prayer at night and in the early morning (COL 139; Luke 6:12). Jesus was anointed by the Spirit at His baptism (Matthew 3:16-17); He was led by the Spirit into the wilderness (Luke 4:1); and after His temptations, He returned in the power of the Spirit to Galilee (Luke 4:14); and His miracles were performed through the power of the Holy Spirit (Matthew 12:28). Surely, the fact that Jesus performed all of these mighty works by the power of the Spirit proves that the Spirit is divine! One more evidence of His divinity is in Matthew 28:19-20. Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are to be the active agents as we go to all peoples, teaching them and baptizing them.
10. Read Matthew 12:31-32. What is the "unpardonable sin"? (Hosea 4:17) If the Holy Spirit has been given to us as our means or agency to do all the things that we have mentioned above, what would happen if we reject His work? In effect, we are cutting ourselves off from God. Like the people in Jesus's day, if we are attributing His actions to the work of the Devil, how can the Holy Spirit bless us? How many times do we have to say, "No!" before God gives up and lets us go? (See Hosea 4:17; 11:7-8.)
11. Consider some of the things that we have been told about the work of the Holy Spirit if we are willing to cooperate with Him.

He who is trying to reach heaven by his own works in keeping the law is attempting an impossibility. **There is no safety for one who has merely a legal religion, a form of godliness. The Christian's life is not a modification or improvement of the old, but a transformation of nature. There is a death to self and sin, and a new life altogether. This change can be brought about only by the effectual working of the Holy Spirit.** (DA 172.1; FLB 55.2; AG 22.4; Mar 70.2; MYP 157.1)

Jesus revealed no qualities, and exercised no powers, that men may not have through faith in Him. His perfect humanity is that which all His followers may possess, if they will be in subjection to God as He was. (DA 664.4; AG 230.6; LHU 190.6; OFC 214.6)

In describing to His disciples the office work of the Holy Spirit, Jesus sought to inspire them with the joy and hope that inspired His own heart. He rejoiced because of the abundant help He had provided for His church. The Holy Spirit was the highest of all gifts that He could solicit from His Father for the exaltation of His people. The Spirit was to be given as a regenerating agent, and without this the sacrifice of Christ would have been of no avail. The power of evil had been strengthening for centuries, and the submission of men to this

satanic captivity was amazing. **Sin could be resisted and overcome only through the mighty agency of the Third Person of the Godhead, who would come with no modified energy, but in the fullness of divine power. It is the Spirit that makes effectual what has been wrought out by the world's Redeemer. It is by the Spirit that the heart is made pure. Through the Spirit the believer becomes a partaker of the divine nature. Christ has given His Spirit as a divine power to overcome all hereditary and cultivated tendencies to evil, and to impress His own character upon His church.** (DA 671.2)

We cannot use the Holy Spirit. The Spirit is to use us. Through the Spirit God works in His people "to will and to do of His good pleasure." Philippians 2:13. But many will not submit to this. They want to manage themselves. This is why they do not receive the heavenly gift. Only to those who wait humbly upon God, who watch for His guidance and grace, is the Spirit given. The power of God awaits their demand and reception. This promised blessing, claimed by faith, brings all other blessings in its train. It is given according to the riches of the grace of Christ, and He is ready to supply every soul according to the capacity to receive. (DA 672.1)

The very image of God is to be reproduced in humanity. The honor of God, the honor of Christ, is involved in the perfection of the character of His people. (DA 671.3) [Bold type is added.]

12. Changes of this magnitude do not happen overnight. This is no "once saved, always saved" kind of relationship. If we allow the Holy Spirit to come into our lives and if we renew that commitment every day, He will dwell with us forever. (John 14:16)
13. All of us are influenced by one spirit or another. Jesus Himself was "filled with the Holy Spirit." (Luke 4:1) "Daily He received a fresh baptism of the Holy Spirit."—Ellen G. White, *Christ's Object Lessons*, page 139.
14. So, how do we receive the Holy Spirit? Our Father-God is more than willing to give the Holy Spirit to all those who honestly ask for Him. What is the ultimate goal of the Spirit's relationship with His human associates? Read Acts 1:4-8. Every one of us is supposed to be a daily witness for Jesus.
15. So, what is the baptism of the Holy Spirit? Acts 1:5 is the only place where Jesus actually mentioned that. John the Baptist had announced it; (Matthew 3:11; John 1:33) but, the disciples were not ready until Pentecost. We too need to be filled with the Spirit. (Ephesians 5:18)
16. Why do you think the Holy Spirit takes such a subordinate, humble role? Haven't we seen that the Holy Spirit has a very important work to do?
17. There are some Pentecostal Christian groups who believe that one does not have the Spirit and, in fact, s/he is not even a Christian unless s/he has spoken in tongues (*glossolalia*). How should we respond to such people?
18. We believe that it is clearly taught in Scriptures and the writings of Ellen White that the latter rain is coming. In fact, in power and extent, it will far exceed the former rain at the time of the Pentecost. And who will be the Power behind the latter rain? Of course, it will be the Holy Spirit.
19. Today, what keeps the Holy Spirit from being active in the power of the latter rain? In what ways is the work of the Holy Spirit similar to and in what ways is it different from the work which Jesus did?

20. Repeatedly, we have seen in various circumstances the notion that God never uses force. The Devil loves force, but God never uses it. (*Desire of Ages* 22.1) Of course, this is also true about the Spirit. As you look around in the church today and in the world surrounding us, does it seem possible that the results mentioned above in the writings of Ellen White could actually happen in the lives of some of us?
21. As we have seen in recent news reports, the wind can have devastating effects. It is very powerful. The word for *Spirit* in the Bible is the same as the word for *breath* and *wind*. Think of all the things that are accomplished by the wind. What are the characteristics of the wind? In what ways do those represent the characteristics of the Holy Spirit?

Why do you think there is little mention of the work of the Holy Spirit in the Old Testament? As we know from the following, He was active.

Although our current investigation focuses on Christ's teachings regarding the Holy Spirit, no exploration would be complete without understanding the presentation of the Holy Spirit from the Old Testament forward. Genesis 1:1-3 indicates that God's Spirit participated in Creation. He equipped people for specific undertakings: (1) Bible writing (*1 Pet. 1:10, 11*), (2) tabernacle construction (*Exod. 31:3*), (3) leadership (Othniel, Jephthah, David—see *Judg. 3:10, 11:29, 1 Sam. 16:13*), and (4) prophetic utterance (*Luke 1:15, 41, 67; 1 Sam. 10:9-13*). Furthermore, the Holy Spirit oversaw and empowered Christ's earthly ministry: (a) Jesus was conceived by the Spirit (*Luke 1:35, Matt. 1:20*). (b) Jesus was likewise anointed with the Holy Spirit (*Isa. 11:1, 2; 42:1; Luke 3:22; 4:18; Acts 10:38*). (c) The Holy Spirit guided Jesus' earthly movements (*Luke 4:1, 2*), and (d) even facilitated Christ's sacrificial offering (*Heb. 9:14*). (e) Finally, Jesus was resurrected by God's Spirit (*Rom. 8:11*). *Adult Teacher's Sabbath School Bible Study*, p. 39.

22. This lesson has tried to focus on Christ's teachings about the Holy Spirit. But, Jesus is not physically present on our earth at the present time. So, in the physical absence of Jesus:

God's Spirit functions as the Divine Spokesperson (*John 16:13*). He also carries prosecutorial responsibilities for convicting the world regarding their unbelief (*vss. 8, 9*). He advocates in the sense of a defending attorney for Christ and Jesus' adherents (*John 14:15-17, 15:25-27*). He substantiates Christ's righteousness, demonstrated by Jesus' resurrection and ascension, and announces judgment against the world for its rejection thereto (*John 16:8-11*). The Spirit delivers humanity from sin's power (*Rom. 8:2*) and inscribes divine precepts upon believers' hearts (*1 Cor. 3:16; 2 Cor. 3:3*). God's Spirit effects spiritual regeneration, that process whereby the acceptance of Christ's substitutionary atonement internally transforms lives and produces new lifestyles (*John 3:3-7*). The Spirit invests believers with supernatural power (*Acts 1:5-8*) and dwells within them, imparting spiritual strength and authority (*Rom. 8:9-11; 1 Cor. 3:16, 17; 6:19*). **Finally, the Holy Spirit distributes spiritual gifts to believers for accomplishing Christ's mission (1 Corinthians 12).** *Adult Teacher's Sabbath School Bible Study*, p. 39. [Bold type is added.]

23. Are we ready for the outpouring of the Holy Spirit in the power of the latter rain?

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