

The Spirit and the Word

1. Introduction.

- a. There's a false dichotomy between being Word-filled and Spirit-filled.
- b. The Word and the Spirit can never be at odds.
- c. **Main Idea:** The Spirit never works apart from the Word. Indeed, He always works through His Word.

2. Brief primer on the nature of the Trinity and person of the Holy Spirit.

- a. We worship One God existing in three persons (Father, Son, and Spirit)—this is mystery.
- b. God has not taken on three different forms throughout the ages.
 - i. This is an ancient heresy known as modalism.
 - ii. All three person (Father, Son, and Spirit) of the one God have eternally existed together in unity. There was never a time when one of these three persons of the Trinity did not exist.
 1. Matt. 3:16-17.
 2. Matt. 28:19.
- c. The Holy Spirit must be understood as a divine person.
 - i. The Spirit possesses personhood.
 1. The Spirit is referred to with personal pronouns (e.g., He, His, Him, etc.) throughout Scripture.
 2. Eph. 4:30 – You can grieve the Spirit.
 3. Acts. 5:3 – You can lie to the Spirit.
 - ii. He is fully God.
 - iii. He is to be fully worshiped as God.

- d. While all three persons make up the one Godhead of the Trinity, they each have differing roles within the intra-Trinitarian relationship.
 - i. They each relate to the other members of the Trinity in unique roles.
 - ii. They each operate in creation in unique ways.
 - 1. Jn. 1:14 — It was the Son Who took on flesh.
 - 2. 1Jn. 4:14 — It was the Father Who sent the Son into the world.
 - 3. Rom. 8:11 —The Spirit indwells believers.
- e. While all three persons have unique (and differing) roles within the Trinity, they each function in complete unity to carry out the one desire of God.
 - i. Rom. 8:11 – The resurrection: The Father raised the Son by the power of the Spirit.
 - ii. Gen. 1:2-3 – Creation: The Father called creation into being by His Word (i.e., the Son—cf. Col. 1:16-17), yet the Spirit was the One present to bring animating life, shape, and form to creation.
 - iii. The point to know is all three members of the Trinity make up the one Godhead, as such, they work in complete unity and harmony to bring about the single desire and purpose of the one God.

3. A Theology of the Word and the Spirit.

- a. Throughout the Bible, God’s Word never represents mere knowledge or intellect, but is closely linked with God’s power.
 - i. The Word of God expresses, indeed embodies, God’s perfect will. So while it does bring knowledge, it also brings forth the very idea it expresses.
 - ii. God’s Word is never seen in Scripture as mere desire, or powerless thoughts, but a commanding force that calls reality into being.
- b. Genesis 1 – the Creation account.
 - i. God performs a creative act, but He creates by means of His Word (v. 3).

1. He performs a divine speech act that commands nothingness to be.
 2. His speech pattern frames out the creation account (i.e., “And God said...”).
- ii. When God speaks, His Word functions as the outward expression of His inward desire. Unlike humans, God’s words never fails. It always brings about the very reality it expresses.
 - iii. The creative act of God is the first demonstration in Scripture of God’s absolute sovereignty. However, this sovereignty works itself out by means of God’s Word.
 - iv. The Trinity is completely present in the creation account.
 1. The Father speaks, expressing His will to create (v. 1).
 2. The Father’s speaking (i.e., His Word) is the Son (v.3) [c.f., Jn.1:1, 14; Col. 1: 16-17].
 3. The Spirit brings life and shape (v. 2).
 - a. The Spirit works in a specific way.
 - b. The Spirit is poised and ready to do His life-giving work (v.2), but He’s unable to yet do anything until something vital comes into play—the Word (v.3).
 - c. The point, then, is the Word can accomplish nothing without the power of the Spirit, and the Spirit can accomplish nothing without the presence of the Spirit.
 - d. This sets the pattern for how God works throughout the rest of Scripture—it’s bound up with His very essence and nature.
 - i. Rom. 10:14.
 - ii. 1Thess. 1:5.
- c. Some other relationships between the Word of God and the Spirit of God.
 - i. The Spirit is the divine author of the written Word.

1. 2Tim. 3:15.
2. 2Pet. 1:19-21.

ii. The Spirit is the divine illuminator of the written Word (1Cor. 2:1-5).

4. Some implications:

- a. When the Spirit is present, the Word of God always accomplishes exactly what it expresses.
 - i. Indeed, when the Spirit is present, it is impossible for God's Word to fail. The Spirit always brings life through the Word. As such, this also means nothing can resist the Word.
 - ii. When the Spirit is absent, the Word of God will still accomplish what it expresses, but in a different way. The Word expresses both life and judgement. If the Spirit is absent, judgment is what comes about.
 1. God's word does not return to Him void (Isa. 55:10-11).
 2. If the Spirit is present, the Word will bring life (Jn. 3:1-8). On the other hand, if the Spirit is absent, the Word will harden (Rom. 9:18).
- b. We must always be faithful to preach and teach the Word. For it is only by means of the Word that the Spirit will ever work. He goes where His Word goes.
 - i. It is not our job to persuade, but to preach.
 - ii. There's much encouragement when you understand the Spirit is the One Who brings life. There's freedom in understanding that our only responsibility before the Lord is to be faithful to speak the Word.