

Series: **1=3 - The truth about God and His nature – week 7**

CDOBC – beginning on 4/30/17

Today's Title: **"The Divine Nature of the Holy Spirit"**

*June 11, 2017 - Selected Passages*

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**OBJECTIVE:** To help people know the Holy Spirit is fully God - an equal member of the Triunity - and to live accordingly.

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Last Sunday was Pentecost - a day when many churches recognize and celebrate the birth of the Church and the pouring out of the Holy Spirit on the disciples who were hiding from the authorities, gathered in prayer. A few moments later, they were indwelt by the Holy Spirit, and as a result they went out into Jerusalem and boldly declared that salvation is found only in Jesus.

**Acts 2:1-4, 41**

"When the day of Pentecost arrived, they were all together in one place. 2 And suddenly there came from heaven a sound like a mighty rushing wind, and it filled the entire house where they were sitting. And divided tongues as of fire appeared to them and rested on each one of them. And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues as the Spirit gave them utterance."

41 "So those who received his (Peter's) word were baptized, and there were added that day about three thousand souls."

1900 years later...Bethel Bible College, in Topeka, Kansas - not a place you would normally think of as the origin of a worldwide movement. The college closed after only 2 years of existence, but it was the birthplace of the modern-day Pentecostal movement.

In Topeka, Kansas, on New Year's Eve night 1900, and into the first day of 1901, a gathering of students in this Bible College, under the direction of Pastor Charles Fox Parham, were reading the book of Acts and seeking the Holy Spirit to manifest His presence in their life through miraculous means. It was reported that 29-year-old Agnes Ozmen began to speak in Chinese, and for the next 3 days she spoke and wrote only in Chinese.

The next important event was in the first 2 weeks of April - 1914, in Hot Springs, Arkansas, the Assemblies of God denomination was established, *“to promote unity and doctrinal stability, establish legal standing, coordinate the mission enterprise, and establish a ministerial training school”* for those in the growing Pentecostal movement.

Some decades later, what became known as the Azusa Street Revivals in Los Angeles, a former student of Charles Parham - William J. Seymour, resided over the outbreak of a revival, which centered around manifestations of miraculous gifts of the Spirit, and lasted for about 3 years. This revival produced numerous Pentecostal evangelist, missionaries and ministers.

*“These Holiness churches emphasized the importance of Holy Spirit-produced second and even third works of grace. One group, for example, identified regeneration, sanctification, and baptism in the Spirit as three constituent outpourings of*

*the Spirit proper to the normal Christian life. Holiness Christians wrangled among themselves about the number, nature, significance, and proper sequencing of such experiences.*

*A distinctive and quite technical language developed among these Holiness Christians. Terms such as “second blessing,” “entire sanctification,” “being filled with the Holy Spirit,” “baptism of the Holy Spirit,” or “baptism by the Holy Spirit...” became their common language.*

(Source: <https://www.thegospelcoalition.org/article/where-did-all-these-pentecostals-and-charismatics-come-from>)

Since the events in Topeka, Kansas on January 1, 1901, many Christians have been confused about the Holy Spirit. Throughout American Christianity, the teaching about the Holy Spirit and the reported experience of believers varies widely depending on the church you’re attending - which certainly adds to the confusion.

Today, as we begin the final triad of sermons in our current series, we will look at the truth and the nature of God - regarding the person of the Holy Spirit.

Today I will talk about: *“The Divine Nature of the Holy Spirit”*

Next Sunday I’ll talk about: *“The Holy Spirit’s Work in the World”*

Then on Sunday 6/25 I’ll talk about: *“The Holy Spirit’s Ministry to Believers”*

***Opening Prayer***

This morning I want to share some basic, but vital truths about the Holy Spirit.

### **The Holy Spirit is God**

Turn/tap in your Bible to **Genesis 1:1-2**

The Holy Spirit is not some creation of the NT writers or the NT era - but the Spirit of God is present in the first 2 verses of the Bible.

“In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth.

2 The earth was without form and void, and darkness was over the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God was hovering over the face of the waters.”

The Holy Spirit existed prior to the creation of the universe, which points to one of the proofs for His deity: He is eternal - existing outside of the restraints of time. Time was created when God created the universe, and the Spirit of God existed before this, and He exists after this - and was involved in the creation of time!

The second thing we see in the first 2 verses of Genesis is the Holy Spirit is involved in creation - something only God can do. Only God can create *ex nihilo*.

We read of another creative work of God - through the Holy Spirit - in **Luke 1:35**:

And the angel answered her, “The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; therefore the child to be born will be called holy -- the Son of God.”

In both cases, the Spirit is directly involved in the creative work of God - and in both cases the manifestation of the Spirit is very similar - the “hovering” of the Spirit in **Genesis 1**, and the “overshadowing” of the Spirit in **Luke 1**.

There is certainly an element of mystery our finite minds experience when we speak of the Triune God - and the way in which the Bible speaks of the Holy Spirit doesn't solve the mystery.

According to Charles Ryrie, in his book Basic Theology:

*“...the divinity of the Spirit is revealed in the names given Him. Sixteen times He is related by name to the other two persons of the Trinity. Two examples are:*

**Acts 16:7** “And when they had come up to Mysia, they attempted to go into Bithynia, but the Spirit of Jesus did not allow them.”

**1 Cor. 6:11** “And such were some of you. But you were washed, you were sanctified, you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of our God.”

God the Father - and Jesus are clearly divine in nature - and these verses put the Spirit on equal footing as the Father and the Son.

Next, I want you to see what the Bible says about the attributes of the Holy Spirit.

Attributes...or inherent characteristics, can often tell you the nature of something or someone.

***If I describe someone*** who is good with numbers, is knowledgeable about tax law and can make sense of a business' financial ledger - you would probably conclude I'm talking about an accountant or CPA.

***If I describe someone*** who stays up late - and gets up late, is very creative and expressive, and they can play the guitar and sing, you would probably conclude I'm talking about a musician.

When we think about God - and list His attributes, it becomes obvious that He is divine, not human.

The same attributes which are credited to God throughout the Bible are also credited to the Holy Spirit.

- The Spirit is *all-knowing* (omniscience) - **Isaiah 40:13**; 1 Cor. 2:12  
"Who has measured the Spirit of the LORD, or what man shows Him his counsel?"

He knows everything...who is going to teach Him?

- *Present everywhere* (omnipresence) - **Psalms 139:7**  
"Where shall I go from Your Spirit? Or where shall I flee from Your presence?"

- *All-powerful* (omnipotent) - **Job 33:4**  
"The Spirit of God has made me, and the breath of the Almighty gives me life." (The power of the Holy Spirit in creation)

Like the Father and the Son, the Spirit is also unchanging - the theological term is *immutability*.

We change...sometimes for the better...sometimes for the worse.

Not only do we change, but our world is ever-changing.

God designed into the natural systems of the earth for the earth to change, and our society changes - today the change in our world seems to be occurring at a faster pace than ever before!

**Illus** - 2 pics of change:

**Halloween trick-or-treaters** and all the dietary restrictions which exist today

**Technology** - the multi-colored pen from 40 years ago - and today's cell phones which become outdated after a few years.

Thankfully, God doesn't change - and the Holy Spirit doesn't change - because perfection cannot be improved upon!

We also see the Spirit's deity in His actions. These are actions which only God can do, so they give evidence of the Spirit's deity. Three prominent work / actions of the Spirit are:

He was involved in creation (**Genesis 1:1-2**)

His involvement in the Virgin Birth (**Luke 1:35**)

He inspired the writers of Scripture (**2 Peter 1:21**)

**The Holy Spirit is a person.**

One of the common points of confusion is a belief that the Holy Spirit is a 'power' or 'force' for good.

The same error is made regarding Satan, where many believe Satan is a representation or personification of evil.

Throughout church history, some have denied the personhood of the Spirit, but the Bible gives us a great deal of evidence which proves His personhood.

So, let's consider this question: *What makes up personhood? How do we know the Spirit is a person, like the Father and the Son?*

The Spirit has intelligence

**Romans 8:27**

“And He who searches hearts knows what is the mind of the Spirit, because the Spirit intercedes for the saints according to the will of God.”

The Holy Spirit possesses thoughts - an ability to think and understand - an ability to teach.

The Spirit has feelings

**Ephesians 4:30**

“And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, by whom you were sealed for the day of redemption.”

You “grieve the Holy Spirit” when you reject the truth of Christ, when you embrace sinful thoughts and practices. In context, Paul is telling the Ephesians to make sure they are getting rid of all the attitudes and actions which are rooted in their sinful nature. If you are a Christian and you embrace your sinful nature in attitude and action - this grieves the Holy Spirit.



The Spirit has the ability to speak

**Acts 13:2**

While they were worshiping the Lord and fasting, the Holy Spirit said, "Set apart for Me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them."

An impersonal 'force' or 'power' has no capacity or ability to speak and communicate.

The Spirit has a will

**1 Cor. 12:11**

"All these are empowered by one and the same Spirit, who apportions to each one individually as He wills."

'Will' testifies to personhood because it reveals the ability to think and to plan - to have a goal...to have the resolve to move toward an objective.

The Spirit should be obeyed

**Acts 10:19-21**

And while Peter was pondering the vision, the Spirit said to him, "Behold, three men are looking for you. 20 Rise and go down and accompany them without hesitation, for I have sent them."

Just as you are to obey God the Father and God the Son - you must obey the Spirit of God when you sense His leading in your life.

The Spirit can be lied to

**Acts 5:3**

But Peter said, "Ananias, why has Satan filled your heart to lie to the Holy Spirit..." (4b - "You have not lied to men but to God.")

The Spirit can be blasphemed

**Matthew 12:31-32; Mark 3:29**

“Therefore I tell you, every sin and blasphemy will be forgiven people, but the blasphemy against the Spirit will not be forgiven.”  
Anyone who speaks a word against the Son of Man will be forgiven, but anyone who speaks against the Holy Spirit will not be forgiven, either in this age or in the age to come.”  
“...but whoever blasphemes against the Holy Spirit will never be forgiven; they are guilty of an eternal sin.”

Why not? Why can't this sin of blasphemy be forgiven? Because the only way a person can become a Christian is through the work of the Holy Spirit in their life (we'll look more at this next week). So, this unique sin is when you “blaspheme” the Holy Spirit by claiming the Holy Spirit's work is foolish and evil. If you do this, it will be impossible for you to repent and confess your sin, and therefore outside the forgiveness of God.

“Blasphemy against the Spirit” results in you being closed off to the Spirit's work in the salvation process.

The Spirit can be *insulted*

**Hebrews 10:29** (NIV)

“How much more severely do you think someone deserves to be punished who has trampled the Son of God underfoot, who has treated as an unholy thing the blood of the covenant that sanctified them, and who has insulted the Spirit of grace?”

You can't insult a 'force'.

These are all things which relate to and identify *personhood*.

These (8) things cannot be said of a mere 'power' or 'force'.

The Holy Spirit is not the Christian version of the 'force' in Star Wars.

The Holy Spirit is God...

The Holy Spirit is a person - an equal member of the Triune Godhead.

The *teaching* of Jesus about the Spirit

One final part of the personhood of the Holy Spirit is seen by Jesus' teaching in **John 16:7-8, 13-14** (Take note of Pronouns!)  
"But very truly I tell you, it is for your good that I am going away. Unless I go away, the Advocate will not come to you; but if I go, I will send Him to you.

**8** When He comes, He will prove the world to be in the wrong about sin and righteousness and judgment...

But when He, the Spirit of truth, comes, He will guide you into all the truth. He will not speak on His own; He will speak only what He hears, and He will tell you what is yet to come.

**14** He will glorify Me because it is from Me that He will receive what He will make known to you." (13 pronouns)

Jesus made it clear...the Holy Spirit is not a 'force' or 'power' - but a person - a full and equal member of the Triune Godhead.

### **Apply it...**

The truth of God - about God - should always lead to a change in our thinking...and our actions.

When we realize the truth about the Holy Spirit - that He is God - He is a person...

**Include the Holy Spirit in your worship**

Worship must involve the Spirit of God.

Allow the truth of God and the Spirit of God to lead, guide, motivate and enrich your worship of God.

Jesus told the Samaritan woman at the well:

**John 4:23-24**

“Yet a time is coming and has now come when the true worshipers will worship the Father in the Spirit and in truth, for they are the kind of worshipers the Father seeks.

**24** God is spirit, and His worshipers must worship in the Spirit and in truth.”

You see the balance? It’s not just the “truth” which should inform your worship - but the Spirit along with the truth of God.

### **Obey the Holy Spirit’s leading in your life**

**Acts 8:29-30**

And the Spirit said to Philip, “Go over and join this chariot.”

So Philip ran to him and heard him reading Isaiah the prophet and asked, “Do you understand what you are reading?”

We’ll see this in the coming weeks, but the Holy Spirit is active in your life today - working to draw you to Christ - working to keep you obedient to Christ. He does this by taking the Word of God and impressing it on your mind - in your thoughts - through other believers speaking Biblical truth into your life - through your conscience which should be formed and molded by the Word of God.

When the Spirit is prompting you, and leading you, and you have determined His leading is in line with the Word of God - follow His lead!

If you want a boring Christian life...ignore the Spirit's leading.

If you want a fulfilling and exciting Christian life...grab hold of something and follow His lead!

### **Live by the power of the Holy Spirit**

**Galatians 5:16, 25**

“...walk by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the flesh.”

25 “Since we live by the Spirit, let us keep in step with the Spirit.”

Once again...the Christian life is not simply a cognitive life. It certainly involves growing in your knowledge and intellect of the truth and nature of God and His commands - but there's another key element...the power of the Holy Spirit!

“...walk by the Spirit” ... “...live by the Spirit” has an intellectual component...but's it's not limited to your knowledge of God and His Word. Living by the Spirit is certainly informed by the Word, but so many Christians live by theology books and sermons - and they never live by the promptings of the Spirit!

The Holy Spirit is God...He is a person - may this reality and these truths help us commit each day to Christ.

Close in prayer