

Holy Spirit Series – Lesson 1

October 12, 2014

I. Introduction:

This is the first lesson of our new 6 week series on the Holy Spirit. During our study we will examine who the Holy Spirit is, His characteristics, and His role in our lives. This first lesson will center on the Holy Spirit as an indescribable force and as a person rather than an impersonal entity. Our goal for all of us to know the Holy Spirit in a more intimate and biblical way through 1) Understanding more of who He is and 2) How He can guide our lives.

III. Discussion and Application: Introductory Characteristics of the Holy Spirit

Characteristic #1: The Holy Spirit is an Indescribably Powerful Force

Throughout the entirety of Scripture we see the Holy Spirit moving and working. As His presence is revealed, His indescribable power is on full display in innumerable ways.

1. The Holy Spirit in Creation:

Genesis 1:1-2, 26-27

In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. 2 Now the earth was formless and empty, darkness was over the surface of the deep, and the Spirit of God was hovering over the waters.....26 Then God said, "Let us make mankind in our image, in our likeness, so that they may rule over the fish in the sea and the birds in the sky, over the livestock and all the wild animals, and over all the creatures that move along the ground." 27 So God created mankind in his own image, in the image of God he created them; male and female he created them.

In reading these two passages, we should notice several interesting aspects of the Holy Spirit:

1. In reading Genesis 1:1-2, we are not told what specific **ROLE** the Holy Spirit had in Creation – all we are told is that He was present and "hovering over the face of the waters."
2. In Genesis 1:26-27 God says this about Himself: "Let **US** make man in **OUR** image, after **OUR** likeness."
3. Holy Spirit is eternal, He is not just a New Testament entity, He is an equal member of the Trinity with the Father and the Son, and that He was working and moving long before being sent in Acts 2

2. The Holy Spirit in the Exodus:

Isaiah 63:7-14

7 I will tell of the kindnesses of the Lord, the deeds for which he is to be praised, according to all the Lord has done for us— yes, the many good things he has done for Israel, according to his compassion and many kindnesses.

8 He said, "Surely they are my people, children who will be true to me"; and so he became their Savior. 9 In all their distress he too was distressed, and the angel of his presence saved them. In his love and mercy he redeemed them; he lifted them up and carried them all the days of old. 10 Yet they rebelled and grieved his Holy Spirit. So he turned and became their enemy and he himself fought against them. 11 Then his people recalled the days of old, the days of Moses and his people— where is he who brought them through the sea, with the shepherd of his flock? Where is he who set his Holy Spirit among them, 12 who sent his glorious arm of power to be at Moses' right hand, who divided the waters before them, to gain for himself everlasting renown, 13 who led them through the depths? Like a horse in open country, they did not stumble; 14 like cattle that go down to the plain, they were given rest by the Spirit of the Lord. This is how you guided your people to make for yourself a glorious name.

Isaiah highlights the Holy Spirit's role in the exodus of the Israelites as a small illustration of the history of God's graciousness to the Israelites – even as they rebelled against Him. Specifically, Isaiah mentions the Holy Spirit in 3 contexts:

1. Verse 10, Isaiah laments that through their times of rebellion, the Israelites grieved the Holy Spirit.
2. Verse 11, Isaiah points out that God put Holy Spirit in the midst of the Israelites during the exodus.
3. Verse 13, Isaiah says that it was the Holy Spirit who gave the Israelites their rest along their journey.

If we consider that the Holy Spirit is eternal and has always been working in and through God's people, it should not be a surprise that He played a major role in the exodus of the Israelites out of Egypt. Throughout many other parts of the Old Testament, we read of how God used the Holy Spirit to move and work.

Characteristic #2: The Holy is a Person who has an Intimate Relationship with Believers

Now let us consider that the Holy Spirit is a person – just as God the Father and Jesus the Son are persons. Let's look at **THREE REASONS** the Holy Spirit is a Person who has an intimate relationship with His people.

1. The Holy Spirit has a MIND.

I Corinthians 2:9-11

9 However, as it is written: "What no eye has seen, what no ear has heard, and what no human mind has conceived", the things God has prepared for those who love him—10 these are the things God has revealed to us by his Spirit. The Spirit searches all things, even the deep things of God. 11 For who knows a person's thoughts except their own spirit within them? In the same way no one knows the thoughts of God except the Spirit of God.

In this passage Paul reminds us hear that no one can truly comprehend God. Additionally "no one comprehends the thoughts of God except the Spirit of God".

2. The Holy Spirit has a WILL.

I Corinthians 12:7-11

7 Now to each one the manifestation of the Spirit is given for the common good. 8 To one there is given through the Spirit a message of wisdom, to another a message of knowledge by means of the same Spirit, 9 to another faith by the same Spirit, to another gifts of healing by that one Spirit, 10 to another miraculous powers, to another prophecy, to another distinguishing between spirits, to another speaking in different kinds of tongues, and to still another the interpretation of tongues. 11 All these are the work of one and the same Spirit, and he distributes them to each one, just as he determines.

In verse 11, we read that the Holy Spirit apportions spiritual gifts "to each one individually as he wills."

3. The Holy Spirit has EMOTIONS.

Ephesians 4:30

30 And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, with whom you were sealed for the day of redemption.

Our prayer is that we would remember that the Holy Spirit is not an impersonal power inside of us – He is as intimate, loving, and personal as God the Father and Jesus the Son. We must believe that the Holy Spirit cares for us as an indescribable, and yet loving, force and that He "helps us in our weakness" and that He "intercedes for us with groanings too deep for words" and "intercedes for the saints according to the will of God." (Romans 8:26-28)

III. Small Group Discussion:

- 1. In reading Genesis 1, what can we learn about the Holy Spirit that He played an active role in Creation and that God refers to Himself as a plurality in using the terms "us" and "our"?*
- 2. What difference does it make in your life that the same Holy Spirit that guides, comforts, and resides in you has existed from eternity and played a role in creating all that exists?*
- 3. How does studying the Holy Spirit's role in the Exodus story and other Old Testament places factor into your thoughts of Holy Spirit?*
- 4. How does Isaiah's picture of the Holy Spirit compare with what is taught about the Holy Spirit in the New Testament?*
- 5. How does the fact of the Holy Spirit having a mind that comprehends the thoughts of God affect if any our understanding the Holy Spirit?*
- 6. Why is it important that the Holy Spirit has a will for which He makes choices that impact our daily lives? What can this aspect of the Holy Spirit's existence teach us about His character and nature?*
- 7. What is your reaction to the fact that the Holy Spirit has emotions and we can grieve Him? Does this notion reinforce or change what you believe about Him as a Person?*