

Place: Lurgan Baptist 30:4:2017

Reading: John 14:1-17

THE HOLY SPIRIT OF GOD

1. WHO IS THE HOLY SPIRIT ?

A preacher was about to deliver a carefully prepared message when there came to him the conviction that it was not appropriate to the group of people before him. He reluctantly abandoned his notes, and seeking the Holy Spirit's guidance, decided to read John chapter fourteen. As he read, he was alert to discern the message for the occasion. Nor was he disappointed. On reaching verse seven, three words gripped his attention “ *Ye know Him,*” referring to God the Father. He read two more verses, and a second clause stood out, “ *Hast thou not known Me,?*” referring to God the Son. When he reached verse seventeen, a third sentence arrested him, “ *But ye know Him,*” referring to God the Holy Spirit. These words struck him with tremendous force. Did he really know Him ? “ *I know God the Father,*” he mused, “ *and have experienced much of His paternal love and care. I know God the Son, for is He not my Saviour with whom I daily commune ? But I cannot say that I know the Holy Spirit in any comparable and personal way.*”

The experience of this preacher led him to a more comprehensive study of the Scriptures relating to the ministry of the Holy Spirit, and resulted in the knowledge

of Him which had been previously lacking. I wonder of how many of us could it be said ‘ *Ye know him,*’ (14:17) You see for too long this doctrine has been the Cinderella of theology. In the history of the church long controversies have raged around the deity of Christ, the Trinity, but shorter around the Holy Spirit. In 1660 Thomas Goodwin commenced his work on the Holy Spirit with these words, ‘ *There is a general omission in the saints of God in their not giving the Holy Spirit that glory that is due to His person and for His great work of salvation in us, insomuch that we have in our hearts almost forgotten this third person.*’ The Holy Spirit has been called, ‘ *The neglected member of the Godhead.*’ He has been described as ‘ *The displaced person of the Godhead,*’ for the simple reason that in much of our teaching so little reference is made to Him. Perhaps many of us are in the same position as the twelve men at Ephesus who said ‘ *We have not so much as heard whether there be any Holy Ghost.*’ (Acts 19:2)

Incidentally, the word that you see in the Authorised Version ‘ *ghost,*’ is the old English term for ‘ *spirit.*’

‘ *We have not so much as heard whether there be any Holy Spirit.*’ Yet the Holy Spirit is referred to some 90 times in the Old Testament and some 260 times in the New Testament. Why here in three chapters of John’s gospel (14, 15 & 16) the Lord Jesus made 4 references to ‘ the Comforter.’ You see, Christ is now leaving His disciples. In a few hours He would die on the cross. In a few days He would return to His Father. *Have you ever had the experience of a good friend moving away ?* We can only imagine how it must have been for these disciples who

had been with the Lord for so long. But into that uncertain atmosphere, Christ made a promise to his disciples. Look if you will at (Jn 14:16) Now the Greek word for ‘ *Comforter,*’ is ‘ *paracletos,*’ the same word is used in (1 Jn 2:1) where John says ‘ *we have an advocate with the Father Jesus Christ the righteous.*’ Scholars tell us that ‘ **paracletos,**’ is really two Greek words put together. It is the word *kaleo* which means ‘ *to call,*’ and *para* which means ‘ *alongside of.*’ Put the two together and you get our English word *paraclete*. *A paraclete is one who is called alongside to help.* You see, the Holy Spirit **within** the disciples would take the place of the Saviour **beside** the disciples. *In fact did you know that the Christian now has two advocates ?*

One is the Holy Spirit within him, the other the Lord Jesus in heaven. You see, the Holy Spirit prays with us and the Lord Jesus prays for us. ‘ ***Another Comforter,***’ some translate it ‘ *Another Counsellor,*’ still others ‘ *Another Helper.*’ You see, so close is the relationship between Christ and the Holy Spirit that the disciples will hardly sense their loss when Christ departs from them physically. For he has given them ‘ ***Another Comforter.***’ Now this word ‘ *Comforter,*’ occurs four times in the New Testament, for example in

1. 14:15-18 we have the ***Comforter & the Saints:***
2. 14:25-26 we have the ***Comforter & the Scriptures:***
3. 15:25-26 we have the ***Comforter & the Saviour:***
4. 16:7-11 we have the ***Comforter & the Sinner:***

Now here is our question this ! **Who is the Holy**

Spirit ?

(1) THE PERSONALITY OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

Is the Holy Spirit a Person or a thing ? Is the Holy Spirit a Person or an influence ? Is the Holy Spirit a Person or some kind of power or energy emanating from God ? You see, during the 3rd century error crept into the church that the Spirit of God was not a person but only an influence some kind of power or energy flowing from God. And such an error has never left the church. I mean, do you ever hear Christians referring to the Holy Spirit as ‘ *it.*’ In prayer meetings believers who ought to know better in speaking of the Holy Spirit refer to Him as ‘ *it.*’ My the Holy Spirit is not an ‘ *it,*’ the Holy Spirit is a person. Now the Holy Spirit is unlike any person we know and there’s the rub. *You see, we think that a body is essential to personality, that one must have a body to be a person.* Well, there will come a time if Christ does not come when we will die. To die is to be absent from the body and to be present with the Lord. (2 Cor 5:8)

Tell me, are you going to cease to be a person when you’re absent from the body and present with the Lord, are you ? Of course not. ***Personality does not demand visibility.*** The real me is invisible. The real me is the person inside of me. My body is only the vehicle which expresses my personality. So you don’t have to have a body to have a personality. My because the Holy Spirit does not have a physical body as we do does not mean the Holy Spirit is not a person. The Holy Spirit is not some kind of influence as the Unitarians and the

Jehovah's Witnesses proclaim. The Bible teaches that the Holy Spirit is a definite person. He is not an 'it.' Look at,

(a) The Personal Pronouns that Proclaim Personality:

Look at (Jn 14:16-17) All these words are definite personal pronouns. Christ was referring to a real person. Look at (16:7-15) Thirteen times in this chapter our Lord refers to the Holy Spirit as 'He,' and 'Him.' My it is an insult to refer to any person as an 'it.' Suppose you are at the shopping centre with your little boy. Someone comes up and says, 'Is that your son?' 'Yes, that's my boy,' you reply. "Well, what a pretty little *it* you have there." Would you not be offended? My the Holy Spirit is not an 'it.' The Holy Spirit is a person. Do you see how Christ refers to the Spirit of God? "Another Comforter." (16:16) In Greek there are two words for "other," the first means allos, another of the same kind, the second is heteros, which means another of a different kind. When Christ speaks of 'Another Comforter,' He uses the word *allos* another of the same kind. In other words, the Holy Spirit is to be thought of as another like Christ. As Jesus Christ is a person so the Holy Spirit is a person. Do you grieve the Holy Spirit by referring to Him as 'it,'? (a)

(b) The Essential Elements that Prove Personality:

You see, the Holy Spirit possesses all the essential, elements of personality. What are the elements of personality? Well, we as persons can think, feel and act. In other words a person has intellect, emotion and will.

Now in the Scriptures all of these attributes of personality are ascribed to the Spirit of God. The Holy Spirit has,

1. INTELLIGENCE: An Ability to THINK:

Do you recall that the early church sought the mental ability of the Holy Spirit in making decisions. In the book of Acts the church was deliberating, praying, debating about a decision and then James said, "it seemed good to the Holy Ghost and to us." (Acts 15:28) In other words, they sought the mind of the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit has a mind, the Holy Spirit can make decisions, He can teach. He can think. He can search. He can call. The Holy Spirit possesses intellect. He's a person. (1 Cor 2:10)

2. FEELING: An Ability to FEEL:

Paul talks about the love of the Spirit. (Rom 15:30) We are familiar with the Father's love and Christ's love, but do you ever stop to think about the "love of the Spirit?" Paul says, 'And grieve not the Holy Spirit of God,' (Eph 4:30) My can you grieve an influence? Surely, you can only grieve a person, someone with whom you are intimate, someone who loves you. (1) (2)

3. WILL: An Ability to CHOOSE:

The Holy Spirit gives gifts to individual believers. Some believers have gifts of preaching. Others have gifts of helps. There is quite a variety of gifts. Paul speaking of these gifts says, "But all these worketh that one and the selfsame Spirit, dividing to every man severally as He

will.” (1 Cor 12:11) Do you recall that on his second missionary journey Paul wanted to go into Bithynia “ *but the Spirit suffered them not.*” (Acts 16:7) So the Holy Spirit is a person.

Our fellowship then, as Dr. Jowett reminds us ‘ *is not with a ' something,' but with a ' Somebody,' not with a 'force ' but with a ' Spirit,' not with an ' it, but with ' Him.'*’

Does this make any difference to us ? It makes a great difference. The Holy Spirit is a person, so that means when you receive Christ as your Saviour, the Holy Spirit as a person comes into your life. My possessing the Spirit is not like buying a car through hire purchase. *Now many think this.* They tell us that you get a little of the Holy Spirit when you are saved. Then on down the road, you receive a little more of the Holy Spirit. Do you know what that is ? That's a violation of the teaching of the personality of the Holy Spirit. When you came into the building this how did you come in ? Did you stand at the door and say, ‘ *I think I'll put a leg in first.*’ Then after a little while did you say, ‘ *I think I'll bring my head in next.*’ No.

When you enter a building, you enter in your totality. You are a person, and when you receive Christ as your Saviour, the Bible says the Holy Spirit of God enters your life in His totality. (Rom 8:9) He is a person, a real definite person. You see, if the Holy Spirit is just an *IT*, then the question becomes, ‘ *how can I get IT ? How can I use IT to do what I want to do ?*’ That appeals to pride. But if the Holy Spirit is a person, then the question is not how can I get **IT**, but how can **He** possess and control me.

Dr. Torrey said ‘ **if you think of Him as an influence you will be anxious that you might have more of it but if you think of Him as a person you will desire that He may have more of you.**’ (1)

(2) THE DIVINITY OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

The Holy Spirit is God. Now most understand that the Father is God and that Jesus Christ is God, but many fail to understand the truth that the Holy Spirit is God. Yet when you read the Bible, you find that,

(a) *His Different Tasks prove that He is God:*

For the Holy Spirit executes, tasks that are only possible to Deity. For example think of the Holy Spirit's role,

1. In the NATURAL CREATION:

At the beginning of our Bible's we read these words, “ And the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters.” (Gen 1:2) The Holy Spirit moved. It was He who made possible the beautiful world in which we live. Job says, “ *By His (God's) Spirit He hath garnished the heavens.*” (Job 26:13) The beauty of the earth, the glory of the sky, the wonder of the oceans came into being as the result of the Spirit's activity.

2. In the NEW CREATION:

For Paul says, “ *If any man be in Christ he is a new creation.*” (2 Cor 5:17) The new birth is that act of God

in which He bestows life on sinners who trust Christ. In physical birth there are two parents, in spiritual birth there are two parents, the Word of God and the Spirit of God. My who can impart spiritual life but God alone ? Is that not why we need to implore the Lord for those who are dead spiritually ? (Jn 3:7) (a)

(b) His Divine Attributes prove that He is God:

Now by attributes we mean those qualities and perfection's that are so conspicuous to Deity. Now let me give you three big words,

1. OMNIPRESENCE: Presence Everywhere:

You and I as humans can only be in one place at one given time, but the Holy Spirit has the power to be present everywhere at the same time. The psalmist says “ *Whither shall I go from Thy spirit ? or whether shall I flee from Thy presence ? If I ascend up into heaven, Thou art there: if I make my bed in hell, behold Thou art there.*”

(Psalm 139:7-8) Here we are in Lurgan sensing His presence but in every city throughout the globe where saints are gathering, they also are experiencing His presence.

2. OMNISCIENCE: Knowing All Things:

Do you recall Paul's words ? ‘ *For 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.*’ (1 Cor 2:10-11) My nothing is hid from the

Holy Spirit. He discerns your intents, judges your motives, and sees your hearts.

3. OMNIPOTENCE: Infinite Power:

Think of His role in Creation is He not omnipotent ? Think of His role in the Supernatural Conception of Christ ? (Lk 1:35) Is He not omnipotent ? Think of His role in regeneration. Is He not omnipotent ? My when will we grasp that it is ‘ *not by might (the might of trained workers) nor by power (the power of intellectual argument) but by my spirit saith the Lord of hosts.*’ (Zech 4:6) My (a) (b) and,

(c) His Definite Position proves that He is God:

Now let me ask you a question. Do you understand the doctrine of the Trinity ? Do you understand how there is only one God yet three distinct persons in the Godhead ? **What a mystery.** Yet this shouldn't prevent us from accepting this Bible truth. I don't understand how a brown cow can eat green grass and produce white milk and yellow butter. But I drink milk and I eat butter. Have you noticed how the Holy Spirit is put on the same level as the other two persons in the Godhead and therefore considered to be Divine ? Do you recall the words of the Great Commission ? “ *Go ye therefore and teach all nations baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost.*” (Matt 28:19-20) Notice, not in the *names* but in the **name** (singular) One God existing in three persons, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. My the Holy Spirit is God. Should this not affect **our**

Worship ? I mean should our worship not be Trinitarian in structure ? In true worship we come to God through the Son by the Holy Spirit. Paul says ‘ *For through him (Christ) we both have access by one Spirit unto the Father.*’ (Eph 2:8) My He is the Spirit of God (Rom 8:14) Should that not give us a spirit of reverence as we enter this place ? The Holy Spirit is God. Should this not affect **our Witness ?** We are great at introducing sinners to Christ, then some time down the road telling them they need an additional work of the Holy Spirit, a second blessing or something like that. Is this not splitting up the Godhead ? (Matt 28:19-20) The Holy Spirit is God, should this not affect **our Walk ?** Athanasius one of the great saints from the early church was known to have said ‘ *Wretch, know ye not that you are carrying God with you ?*’ Do you realise that ? That you are not alone for God indwells you by His Spirit. (Rom 8:9)

I mean have you ever thought of the vast resources placed at your disposal in Him ? The Holy Spirit is holy but so often we are sinful. He is all powerful, but we are so weak. He is so wise, but we are so ignorant. He is ever present yet we are ignorant of His nearness. My do we not act at times as though He does not indwell our hearts ? Yet surely because the Holy Spirit is God, should this not affect our walk ? (1) (2)

(3) THE ACTIVITY OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

For right now we are living in the day of the Holy Spirit. To some extent, the Old Testament was the age of the

Father. The New Testament was the age of the Son, and from the days of the apostles until now we are in the age of the Holy Spirit. In our day prominence is given to ‘ church work, social work, mission work, our work,’ but the apostles only knew one kind of work, ‘ the Spirit’s work,’ that’s why the Acts of Apostles is saturated with the presence and power of the Holy Spirit. Indeed it has often been referred to as ‘ The Acts of the Holy Spirit,’ for the Spirit of God acts. Indeed the Spirit of God has come,

(a) TO DWELL IN YOU:

Look at (Jn 14:17) Now add to that Paul’s statement ‘ *What ? Know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you.*’ (1 Cor 6:19) The word ‘ *dwell,*’ means He makes His home in you. My if you are saved, your heart is not a hotel where the Holy Spirit comes, stays, a few nights, and moves on. Your heart is His permanent residence. The Holy Spirit has come to make His abode in your heart and to live with you for ever. Do you see what the Lord Jesus says in (14:16) He will never leave us. Oh, we may ignore, grieve, quench, the Spirit of God but He is there, ready to bless, encourage, help, and strengthen us. Are you lonely ? Here is your cure. You have a Helper in your heart. Do you feel you are worth very little ? Do you feel unimportant and insignificant ? Then remember that the Holy Spirit lives in your heart. You are so important that God Himself has come to live in your heart. (a)

(b) TO SPEAK TO YOU:

For Christ says, ‘ *He shall teach you all things.*’
(14:26) For the apostles it meant helping them produce the New Testament Scripture, for us it will mean understanding the New Testament Scripture. My through the Word of God the Holy Spirit will teach you how to live the Christian life. He’ll teach you how to have victory over temptation. A little boy in school grew frustrated with a math’s problem. “ *It won't come out right,*” he complained. His teacher came to his aid and showed him how to find the right answer ! My the Holy Spirit via the Word of God is a cure for our ignorance. (a) (a) (b)

(c) TO WORK THROUGH YOU:

Look at (15:26) As the Holy Spirit comes into your life, changing your language and lifestyle, you become more and more like the Lord Jesus. People begin to see Christ in you. Then the answer dawns, ‘ *Its Christ. He has given His life to Christ.*’ For a changed life calls attention to the Saviour. (16:14) You see, the Spirit of God acts. Does He speak ? Then I must listen. Does He teach ? Then I must be willing to learn. Does He pray ? Then I must be found on my knees. Does He guide ? Then I must follow and obey. Who is the Holy Spirit ? (1) (2) (3)

Some years ago in Cowes harbour in the south coast of England there was a magnificent flying machine called a Princess Flyingboat. It was a picture of aeronautical engineering achievement. Unfortunately, it had one deficiency, the engines were not powerful enough to lift the plane off the water for a sustained flight. The Princess Flyingboat for all its promise, never went into service.

How like so many of our churches ? My we have all the outward paraphernalia, business efficiency, orthodox theology, pious platitudes, but we are grounded due to lack of spiritual power. We need afresh ‘ the power of the Spirit,’ (Lk 4:14) And ‘ Where the Spirit is Lord there is liberty.’ (2 Cor 3:7) The question is, are you yielded to Him ?