

Other Studies Available at www.DrNichols.org

**STUDIES
IN
DOCTRINES**

**THE PERSONALITY
OF THE
HOLY SPIRIT**

Ed Nichols

Copyright 1997 by Ed Nichols

CONTENTS

I.	PERSONALITY	· · · · ·
II.	DEITY	· · · · ·
III.	ATTRIBUTES	· · · · ·
IV.	ACTIONS	· · · · ·
V.	FRUITS OF THE SPIRIT	· · · · ·
VI.	SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY	· · · · ·

PERSONALITY

Present day literature concerning the Holy Spirit reveals that little attention has been paid to this important part of the God head. The Holy Spirit is as much a part of the God head as is the Father and the Son. Much can be learned by a study of the Holy Spirit in terms of His personality. A little insight can be gained by looking at some aspects of His personality. For this paper these aspects are His Deity, attributes, actions and the fruits of the Spirit. All of what is known concerning the Holy Spirit is derived from the Bible and is only present in the Christian faith.

We sometimes confuse personality with visibility. Personality is not an attribute of a body; it is the attribute of a spirit. You yourself have never been seen; you are not a body, but a spirit having a body.¹

When one deals with the personality of the Holy Spirit it is likely that they will use "it" to describe Him. The title Holy spirit when replaced by a pronoun is generally masculine. The Holy Spirit is God the great "I AM" and therefore the Holy Spirit can not be "it".

Some confusion surrounding the name of the Holy Spirit may be His lack of a name. He is only known at this time by His title "Holy Spirit". It is purposed that His personality and personal name has been diminished to allow the exaltation of the Son. This in no way diminishes His role as God the Holy Spirit.

According to Chafer,

This is because the Spirit does not now speak from Himself or of Himself; rather, He speaks whatsoever He hears... and He is said to come into the world to glorify Christ.²

DEITY

The Holy Spirit is a gift of God to every believer. The unmerited indwelling of the Holy Spirit is just another exhibit of God's grace to man. Christians are set apart as the Holy Spirit touches their lives at salvation to begin their change to a new and spirit filled life. What a treasured gift is the salvation experience and the indwelling Holy Spirit at the same instant you believe on God's Son as Savior.

The Holy Spirit is recognized as being God. He is as much a part of God as is the Father and Son. Peter quickly defined the deity of the Holy Spirit when he pointed out to Ananias that He lied to the Holy Spirit. Acts 5.4 states "Thou hast not lied to men, but unto God."

¹Mark G. Cambron, Bible Doctrine (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1954), 117.

²Lewis Sperry Chafer, Major Bible Themes (Grand Rapids: Academie, 1974), 87.

Many of the same attributes of God are contributed to the Holy Spirit. Perhaps, the most significant attributes are those of omnipresence, omniscience and omnipotence.

The work of the Holy Spirit significantly proclaims Him as God since no one but God is capable of the works performed by the Holy Spirit.

ATTRIBUTES

The many attributes of the Holy Spirit are those which are exhibited by the other members of the God head. He possesses wisdom and knowledge which He shares with the saved. The wisdom and knowledge which He possesses exceeds that of human comprehension. In addition to intelligence, He has a will. His will is to testify of Jesus. (John 15:26) He certainly has power, since it is by His power that many mighty signs and wonders took place at His bidding. Paul was extremely aware of the power of the Holy Spirit as He gave evidence of that power while Paul preached the gospel of Christ. (Rom 15:13,19).

The Bible tells us that it is the spirit of God which reveals knowledge to us. If we are to have knowledge, even knowledge concerning the Holy Spirit then we must receive that knowledge through knowing the Holy Spirit.

Now we have received not the spirit of the world, but the spirit which is of God; that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God." (1 Cor 2:12).

Further indications of His intelligence is given in Isaiah 11:2:

The spirit of the Lord shall rest upon him, and the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the Lord.

The personality of the Holy Spirit is described as emblems and symbols in the Bible. Some of these symbols are the dove, water, oil, wind, and fire.

The Dove is a symbol of the Holy Spirit as related to us in John 1:32. "John bare record, saying, I saw the Spirit descending from heaven like a dove, and it abode upon him". The dove which was sent from the ark by Moses may be considered as evidence of the Holy Spirit according to Chafer.³ (Gen 8:8-11)

Water is a symbol of the Holy Spirit and His indwelling of believers. John 7:37-39. describes how "living waters flow from within" the believer. In these verses Jesus spoke of this living water as he spoke of the ministry of the Holy Spirit. Other uses of

³Lewis Sperry Chafer, Chafer Systematic Theology 2 Vols. (Dallas: Dallas Seminary Press, 1948), 1:253.

water are noted as cleansing and as being within the believer. Both of these references speak of the work of the Holy Spirit. (Ex 29.4; John 7.37-39) John 4 also is referred to by Jesus to indicate that water is a representation of the Holy Spirit.

The symbol oil when used is represented as many different occurrences of deity. As oil is representative of the work of the Holy Spirit, one example would be the use of oil by the Holy Spirit in the cleansing of the leper (Lev 14.10-32). Many other uses of oil as a symbol of the Holy Spirit can be sighted. However, one of the very important uses of the oil was in the setting aside for service of priest, prophets and kings. Oil was used extensively in the Old Testament and numerous times in the New Testament to indicate that the Spirit was upon Christ. (John 3.34; Col 1.19). In the Book of Leviticus reference is given to the placement of the oil on the body for cleansing purposes. Cambron states,

When the priest was anointed with oil, it took place in this manner: first, his ear - he was always to hear God's Word; his thumb - his actions were to be for God's Glory; his big toe - he was to walk with God.

It is good to know that when one is touched by the oil of the Holy Spirit that one is completely anointed and cleansed by the power of God.

Wind is used to signify the filling of the Holy Spirit or the breathing of God on the disciples and at Pentecost "as a rushing mighty wind" when all present were filled with the Holy Spirit. (Acts 2.2-4)

Fire is used in different ways throughout the Bible but when used in connection with the Holy Spirit it is used to represent purification and sanctification. When a believer is being tried by fire as indicated in 1 Peter 1.7 they are cleansed that they might appear before Jesus Christ filled with the Holy Spirit and purged of all sin.

ACTIONS

Actions of the Holy Spirit describe His personality. Some of these actions are: leads, teaches, reproves, appoints, and ministers.

Numerous New Testament scriptures indicate that the Spirit leads. Gal 5.18 speaks of "led of the Spirit" as does Acts 8.29 which specifically states "Then the Spirit said..." Romans 8.14 explains how this leading of the Spirit can be possible. "For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God."

In John 14.26 Jesus explains that the Comforter will "teach you

all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you". 1 John 2.27 describes the teaching of the Holy Spirit as an anointing which you receive from the Holy Spirit that is in you. "But the anointing which ye have received of him abideth in you and...but as the same anointing teacheth you of all things".

The Bible is quite clear on the Holy Spirits action to reprove the world. "And when he is come, he will reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment:" (John 16.8)

The appointments of the Holy Spirit seem to be to specific task of ministry. A good example of the Holy Spirit as He appoints men to serve God is: "The Holy Ghost said, Separate me Barnabas and Saul for the work whereunto I have called them." (Acts 13.2; Acts 20.28).

Of the many ways which the Holy Spirit ministers, some are that He baptizes, fills, regenerates us and seals us to the end. These occurrences can be noted in Eph 4.30, 5.18; John 3.6; and 1 Cor 12.13.

Names also express His personality. The Bible mentions two names in particular to describe the personality of the Holy Spirit. They are Comforter and Spirit.

Before Jesus departed this earth He told us that He would not leave us with out a "Comforter". He also once again points out the this Spirit will be "within" us providing us with the truth.

And I will pray the Father, and he shall give ye another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever; Even the Spirit of truth; whom the world can not receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him; but ye know him; for he dwelleth with you, and shall be in you." (John 14. 16-17).

The Holy Spirit being God is also Spirit just as God the Father and Son are also Spirit. "God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth." (John 4.34)

FRUIT OF THE SPIRIT

Fruit of the Spirit is "love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness temperance: against such there is no law." (Gal 5.22-23).

What a wonderful scripture which describes how the Spirit can indwell in us to produce a Christ like spirit in us. If we as Christians can live as God would have us to do, we would be able to demonstrate the fruit of the spirit as a product of His filling. It would be difficult for one to exhibit the fruit of the Spirit by doing any work. These gifts appear to be a result of a Christian life not an action which any Christian could purposefully set out to accomplish through himself. The Amplified Bible translation of this text reads like this:

But the fruit of the (Holy) Spirit, [the work which His presence within accom-plishes] - is love, joy (gladness), peace, patience (an even temper, for-bearance), kindness, goodness (benevo-lence), faithfulness; (Meekness, humili-ty) gentleness, self-control (self-restraint, continence). Against such things there is no law [that can bring a charge]. (Gal 5.22-23).

This amplified version points out that the fruit is "of the Holy Spirit" and any work accomplished is due to "the work which His presence within accomplishes". Of all the descriptions listed as representations of the personality of the Holy Spirit, these two verses seem to add much of what may have been lacking in the other references.

SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY

Cambron, Mark G. Bible Doctrines Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1954.

Chafer, Lewis S. Major Bible Themes Grand Rapids: Academie, 1974.

_____. Systematic Theology. 2 vols. Wheaton: Victor Books, 1988.

Hobbs, Herschel H. Fundamentals of Our Faith. Nashville: Broadman Press, 1960.

_____. What Baptist Believe. Nashville: Broadman Press, 1964.

The Ryrie Study Bible. Chicago: Moody Press, 1976.

Strong, Augustus H. Systematic Theology. Old Tappan, NJ: Revell, 1970.

Thiessen, Henry C. Lectures in Systematic Theology. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1979.

Ed Nichols a retired university administrator, is an author, teacher and pastor. Nichols holds two earned doctorates. His degrees include a Doctor of Ministry from Luther Rice Seminary, Doctor of Philosophy from Saint Louis University, Master of Education and Bachelor of Arts from University of Missouri at St. Louis

Other writings;

Discipleship: An Evangelistic Approach.

The Decree of God.

The Deity of Christ.

Personality of the Holy Spirit.

The Ministry of Angels.

The Creation and Fall of Man.

The Dilemma of Sin.

Salvation and Security.

The Church.

End Times or Last Things.

Systematic Theology Synopses.

The Birth of Christ.

Church History AD 31 to AD 1517.

Church History AD 1517 to 20th Century.

Evangelism Then and Now.

Selected Methods of Expository Preaching.

Personal Evangelism.

How to Claim a Victorious Christian Life.

Church Staff Administration.

Brief Studies in the Old Testament.

The Old Man and Flesh.

The Return of Christ.

The Right Foundation.

Dispensational Perspective.

Biblical Inerrancy.

Evangelism Program: From Policy to Procedure.

Pastoral Placement Process.

A Study of Philippians.

A Pastor's Calendar.

The Sinless Christ.