

Sunday, July 24, 2022 am

CLOSER TO GOD (22)

The Holiness of the Holy Spirit

We are continuing to examine our 2022 theme, “Closer to God”. As a subcategory, we have been addressing holiness. Thus far we have defined what holiness is and we have examined the object of our holiness, addressing both God and Jesus. Today, I want to address the holiness of the Holy Spirit.

NOTE: The subject of the Holy Spirit is complex. In this lesson I cannot address everything about Him, nor can I fully develop many of the points that will be mentioned.

I. Who is Holy Spirit?

- a. Holy Spirit is the third person of the triune Godhead. He is NOT merely a force or the spiritual essence of God and Jesus. Instead, He is His own person. He is introduced in Genesis 1:1, and is found in Revelation 22:17 and often in between.
- b. Holy Spirit is a common usage of the word “holy” in NT. 92 times in the NT, more than half in Luke’s writings. And according to one Logos source (clause search – Holy Spirit), He is referred to some 278 times in the NT.
- c. He is God –
 - i. He is a person – John 14:16-17 – Jesus referred to Him as a “He” not an “it”. Furthermore, He possesses personal traits and actions (e.g. He has a mind – Rom. 8:27, Knowledge – 1 Cor. 2:11, He teaches and testifies – Jn. 15:26-27, can be grieved and lied to – Ephesians 4:30, Acts 5:3, etc.)
 - ii. He is described as God – John 16:13, 1 Corinthians 2:10-11, Acts 5:3-4 – lied to God.
 - iii. He has the qualities of God – Eternal – Hebrews 9:14, Everywhere – Psalm 139:7ff; etc.
- d. Being God alone makes Him holy

II. The holy work of the Holy Spirit

- a. He renews us – Titus 3:4-6 notes that we are saved through the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Spirit. When we speak of being “born again” (as we are baptized our sins are “washed away” – Acts 22:16; we are “raised to walk in newness of life” – Romans 6:3-4), we realize we are new creatures when we obey the gospel. 2 Corinthians 5:17 notes in Christ we are a new creation. The Holy Spirit has a part in our being made new. THUS, He has a part in our salvation.
- b. He sanctifies us – He has a part in making us pure. Recall that sanctification is about being set apart (e.g. holy).
 - i. 2 Thessalonians 2:13 – we are chosen for salvation through the sanctification of the Holy Spirit.
 - ii. Acts 2:38, for many, “the gift of the Holy Spirit” is the gift He provides for us – our salvation. I strongly lean toward this, rather than it being the Holy Spirit, himself dwelling in us.
 - iii. 1 Peter 1:2 – Peter is writing to saints who were sanctified of the Spirit.
 - iv. Note also 2 Timothy 2:21 – we take part in this process. We do our part as will be noted as this lesson develops.
 - v. He seals us for the day of redemption - Ephesians 4:30, 1:13, etc. This “sealing” meaning that He has done His part to save us.
- c. He intercedes for us – Romans 8:26. In our prayers, He ensures that what is prayed is what is meant.
- d. He dwells within us – that is something that cannot be disputed.
 - i. Numerous passages show He dwells within us - Romans 8:9-11, 1 Corinthians 6:19-20, 2 Timothy 1:14, etc.

- ii. However, HOW He dwells within us is a subject of discussion. There are 2 ways this is interpreted – He directly and personally dwells within us or He indirectly influences us. I believe scripture teaches the latter of these for many reasons.
- iii. **He does NOT indwell us directly** –
 - 1. One reason being a direct influence would involve miraculous action. The Holy Spirit would be acting through supernatural means to influence us – either in thought or action. While time will not permit a discussion of this, scripture clearly teaches that the age of miracles is complete – cf. 1 Corinthians 13:8-13, Jude 3, 2 Peter 1:3 – we have “all things that pertain to life and godliness through the knowledge of Him...”; also Acts 8:18 – receiving gifts of the Holy Spirit required the laying on of the apostles’ hands, etc.
 - 2. Also, if He influences us in this way, how can we know it is Him? How do you know it is not Satan at work in us – Romans 7:17 speaks of sin dwelling in us. The point being it is POSSIBLE for sin to dwell within us. Satan will use whatever means he can to deceive and influence us – cf. 2 Corinthians 2:11 – we must not be ignorant of his devices.
- iv. Indirect indwelling means His person is not directly within us, but His influence impacts who we are and what we do.
 - 1. This is consistent with other examples of “dwelling” – such as
 - a. God – 1 John 4:15 – Whoever confesses Jesus, “*God abides in him, and he in God.*”
 - b. Christ – Ephesians 3:17 - He dwells in us through faith,
 - c. The love of God - 1 John 3:17
 - d. Philippians 1:7, “...because I have you in my heart.” While not using the word “dwelling” we see the idea of indirect influence.
 - 2. That is accomplished through the word of God.
 - a. Truth can abide in us – 2 John 2
 - b. Colossians 3:16 – the word of Christ is to dwell within us richly. Cf. 1 John 2:14 – the word of God can abide in us.
 - 3. Also note John 8:31, “If you abide in My word” – we abide in the teachings of Jesus (His word) the same way His word abides in us. Do we directly “indwell” words, or does it have to do with influence. John 15:7, we abide in Jesus AND His words abide in us. The point is, we make our home in Him and His teachings. (See also 1 John 4:15 again).

III. The word – the work of the Holy Spirit

- a. This is the primary way of His work for us today. Again, this is a complex subject, but here we summarize a few points.
- b. He is the reason God’s word is inspired –
 - i. John 14:16-17, 26 – He guided the apostles into all truth;
 - ii. 2 Peter 1:19-21 – no prophecy is of any private interpretation.
 - iii. Ephesians 3:3-5 further illustrates this – by revelation God made known “the mystery”, “revealed by the Spirit to His holy apostles and prophets”
 - iv. 1 Corinthians 2:7-16 – the entire context addresses this. We know what God wants because the Holy Spirit has revealed it to us
- c. Thus, He reveals God and His will to us THROUGH the writings of inspired men. Cf. 1 Corinthians 14:37.
- d. Ephesians 6:17 describes the word of God as “the sword of the Spirit”.

- e. In whatever way He might work and dwell within us, it is related to that which is in His word. The point, He is NOT going to give us some new revelation or something that contradicts or is outside of scripture. That is why we reject ALL modern day revelations – both oral and written.

IV. **How should I respond to the Holy Spirit?**

- a. I must respect and reverence Him as God – in the same way I reverence God the Father and Jesus.
 - i. I need to view him as deity. As such, He is entitled to all the respect and reverence that God is due.
 - ii. I should not grieve Him (Ephesians 4:30), quench him (1 Thessalonians 5:19), insult Him (Hebrews 10:29). These are all the product of our sinful lives, and they show a lack of reverence and honor for Him.
 - iii. I need to be careful how I talk about Him, including to others. While Matthew 12:31-32, which speaks of blaspheming the Holy Spirit being an unpardonable sin (another discussion), we ought to be reminded in this to give the Holy Spirit honor and godly fear.
- b. I must respect the Bible – if it is His word (and it is) – i.e. the word of God - I need to give it the reverence it is due. James 1:16-18, 21 – receive His word with meekness, for it is able to save our souls. I need to let His word abide in me – Colossians 3:16, John 17:17 – we are sanctified by His word (which is truth). That means that I will study it carefully and reverently and I will strive to obey its teachings.
- c. I must walk by the spirit – Galatians 5:16. This is the product of understanding what His indwelling means. In so doing, I do not fulfill the lusts of the flesh. This means I follow His leading as He teaches me in His word. Romans 8:4. 1 Corinthians 6:19-20. I need to be filled with the Spirit – Ephesians 5:18.
- d. I must strive to produce His fruit – Galatians 5:22-23. When I appreciate the Holy Spirit, it will produce godly qualities so desperately needed.
- e. I should strive for the unity He demands – Ephesians 4:3 – we endeavor to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond on peace.
- f. I need to let Him make me more holy – by heeding the message he has left for me to follow. Galatians 5:18 speaks of being “led by the Spirit”. We have briefly addressed what this means – His word is our guide in all we do.

And thus, we can see the holiness of the Holy Spirit and how it will impact the way we live our lives. In coming weeks, I want to discuss the pursuit of holiness by examining what God THROUGH His word has revealed to us, and how it will affect every area of our lives. What have you learned from Him? Is He leading you closer to God?