

THE HOLY SPIRIT Chapter 3 The Deity of the Holy Spirit

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Transcript

THE HOLY SPIRIT

Chapter 3

The Deity of the Holy Spirit

In the last chapter we endeavored to supply from the testimony of Holy Writ abundant and clear evidence that the Holy Spirit is a conscious, intelligent, personal Being. Our present concern is the nature and dignity of His Person. We sincerely trust that our present inquiry will not strike our readers as being a superfluous one: surely any mind which is impressed with a due reverence for the subject we are upon will readily allow that we cannot be too minute and particular in the investigation of a point of such infinite importance. While it be true that almost every passage which we brought forward to demonstrate the Spirit's personality also contained decisive proof of His Godhead, yet we deemed the present aspect of our subject of such importance as to be justly entitled to a separate regard—the more so, as error at this point is fatal to the soul. Deity or Not Deity Having shown, then, that God's Word expressly and unequivocally teaches that the Spirit is a Person, the next question to be considered is, Under what character are we to consider Him? What rank does He occupy in the scale of existence? It has been truly said that, "He is either God, possessing, in a distinction of Person, an ineffable unity of the Divine nature with the Father and the Son, or He is the creature of God, infinitely removed from Him in essence and dignity, and having no other than a derivative excellence in that rank to which He is appointed in creation. There is no medium betwixt the one and the other. Nothing intermediate between the Creator and created can be admissible. So that were the Holy Spirit to be placed at the top of all creation, even as high above the highest angel as that angel transcends the lowest reptile of animated life, the chasm would be still infinite; and He, who is emphatically called the Eternal Spirit, would not be God" (Robert Hawker). We will now endeavor to show from the Word of Truth that the Holy Spirit is distinguished by such names and attributes, that He is endowed with such a plentitude of underived power, and that He is the Author of such works as to altogether transcend finite ability, and such as can belong to none but God Himself. However mysterious and inexplicable to human reason the existence of a distinction of Persons in the essence of the Godhead may be, yet if we submissively bow to the plain teachings of the Divine Oracles, then the conclusion that there subsists three Divine Persons who are co-essential, co-eternal, and co-equal is unavoidable. He of whom such works as the creation of the universe, the inspiration of the Scriptures, the formation of the humanity of Christ, the regeneration and sanctification of the elect, is, and must be, GOD;

or, to use the language of 2 Corinthians 3:17 "Now the Lord is that Spirit." Proofs of the Spirit's Deity 1. The Holy Spirit is expressly called God. To Ananias Peter said, "Why hath Satan filled thine heart to lie to the Holy Spirit?" and then in the very next verse, he affirms "thou hast not lied unto men, but unto God" (Acts 5:3, 4): if, then, lying to the Holy Spirit is lying to God, it necessarily follows that the Spirit must be God. Again, the saints are called "the temple of God," and the reason proving this is that, "the Spirit of God dwelleth in you" (1 Cor. 3:16). In like manner, the body of the individual saint is designated, "the temple of the Holy Spirit," and then the exhortation is made, "therefore glorify God in your body" (1 Cor. 6:19, 20). In 1 Corinthians 12, where the diversity of His gifts, administrations, and operations are mentioned, He is spoken of severally as "the same Spirit" (v. 4), "the same Lord" (v. 5), "the same God" (v. 6). In 2 Corinthians 6:16 the Holy Spirit is called "the living God." 2. The Holy Spirit is expressly called Jehovah, a name that is utterly incommunicable to all creatures, and which can be applied to none except the Great Supreme. It was Jehovah who spoke by the mouth of all the holy Prophets from the beginning of the world (Luke 1:68, 70), yet in 2 Peter 1:20 it is implicitly declared that those Prophets all spoke by "the Holy Spirit" (see also 2 Sam. 23:2, 3, and compare Acts 1:16)! It was Jehovah whom Israel tempted in the wilderness, "sinning against God and provoking the Most High" (Ps. 78:17, 18), yet in Isaiah 63:10 this is specifically termed, "rebelling against and vexing the Holy Spirit"! In Deuteronomy 32:12 we read, "The Lord alone did lead them," yet speaking of the same people, at the same time, Isaiah 63:14 declares, "the Spirit of the Lord did lead them." It was Jehovah who bade Isaiah, "Go and tell this people, hear ye indeed" (6:8, 9), while the Apostle declared, "well spake the Holy Spirit by Isaiah the Prophet, saying, Go unto the people and say, Hear ye indeed..." (Acts 28:25, 26)! What could more plainly establish the identity of Jehovah and the Holy Spirit? Note that the Holy Spirit is called "the Lord" in 2 Thessalonians 3:5. 3. The perfections of God are all found in the Spirit. By what is the nature of any being determined but by its properties? He who possesses the properties peculiar to an angel or man is rightly esteemed one. So He who possesses the attributes or properties which belong alone to God, must be considered and worshipped as God. The Scriptures very clearly and abundantly affirm that the Holy Spirit is possessed of the attributes peculiar to God. They ascribe to Him absolute holiness. As God is called "Holy," "the Holy One," being therein described by that superlatively excellent property of His nature wherein He is "glorious in holiness" (Ex. 15:1 1); so is the Third Person of the Trinity designated "the Spirit of Holiness" (Rom. 1:4) to denote the holiness of His nature and the Deity of His Person. The Spirit is eternal (Heb. 9:14). He is omnipresent: "Whither shall I flee from thy Spirit?" (Ps. 139:7). He is omniscient (see 1 Cor. 2:10, 11). He is omnipotent: being termed "the Power of the Highest" (Luke 1:35; see also Micah 2:8, and compare Isa. 40:28). 4. The absolute sovereignty and supremacy of the Spirit manifest His Godhead. In Matthew 4:1 we are told, "Then was Jesus led up of the Spirit into the wilderness": who but a Divine Person had the right to direct the Mediator? and to whom but God would the Redeemer have submitted! In John 3:8 the Lord Jesus drew an analogy between the wind which "bloweth where it listeth" (not being at the disposal or direction of any creature), and the imperial operations of the Spirit. In 1 Corinthians 12:11 it is expressly affirmed that the Holy Spirit has the distribution of all spiritual gifts, having nothing but His own pleasure for His rule. He must, then, be "God over all, blessed forever." In Acts 13:2-4 we find the Holy Spirit calling men unto the work of the ministry, which is solely a Divine prerogative, though wicked men have abrogated it unto themselves. In these verses it will be found that the Spirit appointed their work, commanded them to be set apart by the church, and sent them forth. In Acts 20:28 it is plainly declared that the Holy Spirit set officers over the church. 5. The works ascribed to the Spirit clearly demonstrate His Godhead. Creation itself is attributed to Him, no less than to the Father and the Son: "By the Spirit lie hath garnished the heavens" (Job 26: 13): "the Spirit of God hath made me" (Job 33:4). He is concerned in the work of providence (Isa. 40:13-15; Acts 16:6, 7). All Scripture is given by inspiration of God (2 Tim. 3:16), the

source of which is the Spirit Himself (2 Peter 1:21). The humanity of Christ was miraculously formed by the Spirit (Matthew 1:20). Christ was anointed for His work by the Spirit (Isa. 61:1; John 3:34). His miracles were performed by the Spirit's power (Matthew 12:3-8). He was raised from the dead by the Spirit (Rom. 8:11). Who but a Divine person could have wrought such works as these!? Reader, do you have a personal and inward proof that the Holy Spirit is none other than God? Has He wrought in you that which no finite power could? Has He brought you from death unto life, made you a new creature in Christ, imparted to you a living faith, filled you with holy longings after God? Does He breathe into you the spirit of prayer, take of the things of Christ and show them unto you, apply to your heart both the precepts and promises of God? If so, then, these are so many witnesses in your own bosom of the deity of the Blessed Spirit.

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