



## The Holy Spirit and Spirituality 1Q 2017 Lesson 3 The Divinity of the Holy Spirit

### SABBATH

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Read second paragraph, “However, the deity...” What did you think of the last two sentences, “we should not make our human reasoning about God the standard of how the Holy Spirit should be understood. Instead, we should accept and testify to what Scripture affirms, no matter how hard some of the concepts might be for us to grasp fully.”

First—should we be affirming something we don’t grasp?

It almost sounds like they are encouraging us to affirm things that we don’t understand and don’t make sense?

It is this type of reasoning, taking the Scripture as authoritative without thinking, without comprehending, without truly understanding, that has led to so much abuse and destruction in God’s name throughout history.

The religious leaders did this in Christ’s day when dealing with Jesus, they constantly said that the Scriptures taught something and Jesus was constantly seeking to show they what they affirmed from Scripture wasn’t what it taught at all.

Did the Holy Spirit inspire the Isaiah to write, “Come let us reason together though your sins are like scarlet they will be white as snow?”

Is the Holy Spirit saying that God wants us to reason things out with our reasoning powers what is written in Scripture—with a heart open to truth of course?

Do wouldn’t those who disagree with us on some point of doctrine agree that we should accept and testify to what Scripture affirms? If essentially all honest-of-heart Christians would agree that we should accept and testify to what Scripture affirms, why is there so much division?

Because people think the Scripture affirms different things—why do they think this? Because they are exercising their minds to understand to the best of their ability what the Scripture is saying, and people have different perspectives, different assumptions, different blind spots, different capacities and honestly come to different conclusions yet all claiming they are following Scripture.

How do we determine which view is more accurate to the truth? What method do we use?

Here are some methods used throughout history and still used today:



- We pray long and hard until the Spirit convicts us in our spirit what is true—this is the preferred method in the Mormon tradition
- We ask for a sign or wonder, perhaps a message from the Spirit through tongues? Often in Pentecostal traditions
- We look for another human in a position of authority to tell us the right answer—Roman Catholic when Pope speaks ex-cathedra and many Christians who surrender their thinking to their pastors or conference leaders
- We surrender our judgment to someone with a theological degree, or accept what we read in a Bible commentary as the definitive answer
- We organize committees of theologians to investigate and come back to us with a theological paper—we might even make a Scripture research institute and create a tradition that a position coming from that group has some higher spiritual authority and is to be accepted as truth
- We cite proof texts to support our point
- We hold a meeting of church delegates and take a vote on what is truth

Any questions about any of these methods?

Has the Holy Spirit ever used any of them?

- We pray long and experience conviction—yes the HS sometimes does this—but can this be counterfeited? Yes! Then is it the best barometer to determine the movement of the Spirit?
- We ask for a sign or wonder, perhaps a message from the Spirit through tongues? Has the Spirit ever done this? Yes, but can it be counterfeited? Yes! Is it the best barometer to determine the movement of the Spirit?
- We look for another human in a position of authority to tell us the right answer. Has the Spirit ever done this? Yes—God’s prophets in the past. Can this be counterfeited? Is it the best method of determining truth? Can trusting what a spokesperson for God says sometimes be wrong? Remember the old and young prophet? Paul had to correct Peter. Do all people believe the writer of Hebrews correct when he wrote that immediately after the ascension Jesus entered the MH of the heavenly sanctuary?
- We organize committees of theologians to investigate and come back to us with a theological paper—Does the Holy Spirit ever use this method? Yes—can this be counterfeited?
- We cite proof texts to support our point—Does the Holy Spirit ever use this method? Yes, Christ quoted Scripture in response to Satan’s temptations. Can this be counterfeited? Yes, Satan quoted Scripture to tempt Christ.
- We hold a meeting of church delegates and take a vote on what is truth—Does the Spirit ever use this method? Yes, but can it be corrupted and misrepresent the Spirit? Yes!

What method is not represented here and which cannot be corrupted? The integrative evidenced based approach, which harmonizes Scripture, Science and Experience—understanding God’s testable laws and realizing how God actually runs things, then certain interpretations of Scripture are ruled out!



## SUNDAY

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Read Acts 5:1-4:

Now a man named Ananias, together with his wife Sapphira, also sold a piece of property.<sup>2</sup> With his wife's full knowledge he kept back part of the money for himself, but brought the rest and put it at the apostles' feet.

<sup>3</sup> Then Peter said, "Ananias, how is it that Satan has so filled your heart that you have lied to the Holy Spirit and have kept for yourself some of the money you received for the land?<sup>4</sup> Didn't it belong to you before it was sold? And after it was sold, wasn't the money at your disposal? What made you think of doing such a thing? You have not lied to men but to God."

Then read second paragraph, "If the Holy Spirit..." Do you find there argument compelling? The weakness I found throughout this entire lesson is not that they fail to make the case that Holy Spirit is God—but that they fail to make the case the Holy Spirit is a distinct individuality and not simply God the Father, God's Spirit. If the Holy Spirit is simply the Spirit of the Father then He would be fully God and the arguments to prove the Spirit is God are moot, because it is God. The position that many who deny the Trinity take in regard to the Holy Spirit is not that the Holy Spirit is some lesser being than God, but that He is the same being as God the Father. Those who deny the Trinity deny the idea that the Spirit is a separate individual to the Father. The lesson doesn't do a great job in addressing this idea and instead makes the point over and over that the Spirit is fully God—which is accepted by many who deny the Trinity because they accept it is God's Spirit.

We will see this problem on almost every page of this lesson.

The lesson uses this text to say that because Peter says that Ananias lied to the Holy Spirit and that he lied to God that the Holy Spirit is God. I can see the argument, I don't think it is wrong, but I don't find it most compelling either. In the same text Peter says that Ananias didn't lie to men—was that true, there were no men there—so what are Peter and the others to whom these two lied, angels? Should we conclude that because Ananias lied to Peter and Peter said that Ananias didn't lie to men that Peter was either an angel or a woman in drag?

And for those who believe that the Holy Spirit is the Father's Spirit using the terms interchangeably doesn't resolve their denial of the Trinity and the separate personality of the Holy Spirit.

Before we explore further the question of the individuality of the Holy Spirit, perhaps we might discuss what happened to Ananias and Sapphira, the lesson says: "Why such a harsh punishment for what these two people did?"

What is the lesson suggesting? Is the lesson suggesting that because they lied to God that God used His power to punish them by executing them?



Any concerns with this interpretation?

1. Does the Bible say they were punished? No! Remember in Sabbath's lesson they authors counseled us with these words, "we should not affirm less than what Scripture states, and we also should not 'exceed what is written.'" In suggesting they were punished, are they exceeding what the Scripture states?
2. What is the punishment for sin—sleep death from which there is a resurrection or eternal death? Which did they die? Then was it punishment?
3. For those who hold a legal view, and believe God inflicts punishment for sin, does the inflicted punishment for sin happen before the judgment? Did the great white throne judgment happen yet? Then was this punishment for sin?
4. Does the Bible say that they were killed by God? No
5. Does the Bible say they were killed by men or angels? No
6. What does the Bible say? That they fell down and died.

If we say God killed them because they lied would there be any problems with this?

- What would it say about how God runs His universe—what method would that be? Would it be coercive? Does God use coercive tactics? Why or why not?
- What happens when people are threatened, "do what I say or I will kill you—legally of course." "I am the king, I have made a law that you will bow down to this golden idol and if you don't I will kill you." All legal—does the fact some people claim that God is the rightful King and He has the right to demand our obedience and if we disobey it is legally right to kill us, avoid the destruction that would happen in God's universe if God acted this way? And what destruction would happen if God acted this way?
- Rebellion—it is a law that when a free being is coerced that love is damaged and eventually destroyed, rebellion is instilled in the heart, and if they stay rather than rebelling, then their individuality is destroyed. God would not do this—ever.

So we read things from one of the founders of the SDA church like this:

Rebellion was **not** to be overcome by force. **Compelling power is found only under Satan's government. The Lord's principles are not of this order.** His authority rests upon goodness, mercy, and love; and the presentation of **these principles is the means to be used.** God's government is moral, and **truth and love are to be the prevailing power.** E.G. White Desire of Ages 759 [what is the prevailing power? Truth and Love!]

God could have destroyed Satan and all his sympathizers as easily as one can pick up a pebble and cast it to the earth. **But by so doing he would have given a precedent for the exercise of force. All the compelling power is found only under Satan's government. The Lord's principles are not of this order. He would not work on this line... This principle is wholly of Satan's creation.** E.G. White Review & Herald, September 7, 1897 [Yet here we have people teaching that God does something that is wholly of Satan's origin.]



"Whereunto," asked Christ, "shall we liken the kingdom of God? or with what comparison shall we compare it?" Mark 4:30. **He could not** employ the kingdoms of the world as a similitude. In society He found nothing with which to compare it. **Earthly kingdoms rule by the ascendancy of physical power; but from Christ's kingdom every carnal weapon, every instrument of coercion, is banished.** E.G. White Acts of the Apostles 12

**A sullen submission to the will of the Father will develop the character of a rebel.** By such a one service is looked upon as drudgery. It is not rendered cheerfully, and in the love of God. It is a mere mechanical performance. **If he dared, such a one would disobey.** His rebellion is smothered, ready to break out at any time in bitter murmurings and complaints. Such service brings no peace or quietude to the soul. {ST, July 22, 1897}

Can God get love and trust by using might and power to kill those who don't love and trust? No! Never, this is Satan's method.

Then how do we understand what happened to Ananias and Sapphira—and Peter's words predicting she was going to die?

How did Jesus describe the Holy Spirit to Nicodemus? Like the wind—and what did we discuss last week? The wind is made of air—and air is ubiquitous and required for life. The Greek for Spirit is *pneuma* from which we get breath and breath of life. So, what would happen to a person if they chose to cut themselves off from earth's atmosphere, from air? Could we say: Why did you do this? And could we say with great confidence: Since you have chosen to no longer abide in the air, since you have chosen to separate yourself from the life-giving atmosphere the people who buried your husband are going to bury you also—because you can't live without contact with the atmosphere?

Can we live separated from God? And who is the member of the Godhead described in the role of the breath of life? The Holy Spirit—does this give insight into why we can't be forgiven for blasphemy against the Holy Spirit? Because the Holy Spirit is the physical conduit of life from the eternal God and the applier of the remedy to sin in our lives!

What kind of a law did I describe in operation in this circumstance? Design law—the law of love. This perspective allows us to have perfect harmony with the Scripture, and yet not put God in the role of acting with Satan's character and methods.

What is the message of the three angels? What is the message we are to take to the world? Do you see our church, the institution we love, has been compromised and good hearted people, with intentions to help, taking a message that continues to obscure the truth about God!

We must come back to understand God's character of love and how He actually constructed His reality to work. We must bring our understanding of Scripture to be in harmony with God's nature, character and principles and stop using human methods and laws in our interpretation of Scripture.



## MONDAY

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The lesson points us to four texts and asks us what attributes are ascribed to the Holy Spirit which are the exclusive prerogative of God—thus evidence that the Holy Spirit is God:

- 1Cor 2:10,11: The Spirit knows the mind of God
- Ps 139:7: Omnipresence
- Hebrews 9:14: Immortality
- Luke 1:35 wielding the power of the Most High

I do think the Bible provides abundant evidence to support the teaching that the Holy Spirit is fully God—little question to me about this. However, do these text address the interpretation critics of the Trinity make that references to the Holy Spirit are merely references to God the Father's eternal presence moving where the Father moves?

We see the same concern in **WEDNESDAY's** lesson when it refers to the Spirit as the one who cleanses us from sin, washes and regenerates us and transforms us. The critics of the Trinity would merely say that this again is the energy and presence of the Father being referred to as the Spirit to help us differentiate the action and role the Father is doing at that time. They would remind us that in the Bible God is called many names:

- ***El Shaddai***: “God Almighty.” (Gen. 17:1; 28:3; 35:11; Ex. 6:1; Ps. 91:1, 2).
- ***El Elyon***: “The Most High God (Gen. 14:19; Ps. 9:2; Dan. 7:18, 22, 25).
- ***El Olam***: “The Everlasting God.” (Gen. 16:13).
- ***Yahweh (YHWH)***: Comes from a verb which means “to exist, be.” This, plus its usage, shows that this name stresses God as the independent and self-existent God of revelation and redemption (Gen. 4:3; Ex. 6:3).
- ***Yahweh Jireh (Yireh)***: “The Lord will provide.” (Gen. 22:14).
- ***Yahweh Nissi***: “The Lord is my Banner.” (Ex. 17:15).
- ***Yahweh Shalom***: “The Lord is Peace.” (Jud. 6:24).
- ***Yahweh Sabaoth***: “The Lord of Hosts.” (1 Sam. 1:3; 17:45).
- ***Yahweh Maccaddeshcem***: “The Lord your Sanctifier.” (Ex. 31:13).
- ***YahwehRo'i***: “The Lord my Shepherd.” (Ps. 23:1).
- ***Yahweh Tsidkenu***: “The Lord our Righteousness.” (Jer. 23:6).
- ***Yahweh Shammah***: “The Lord is there.” (Ezek. 48:35).
- ***Yahweh Elohim Israel***: “The Lord, the God of Israel.” (Jud. 5:3; Isa. 17:6).
- ***Adonai***: The singular form means “master, owner.” (Gen. 18:2; 40:1; 1 Sam. 1:15; Ex. 21:1-6; Josh. 5:14).
- ***Theos***: Greek word translated “God.” Primary word in NT for God





- **Kurios:** Greek word translated “Lord.” but can be used for others besides God: sir (John 4:11), owner (Luke 19:33), master (Col. 3:22), or even refer to idols (1 Cor. 8:5) or husbands (1 Pet. 3:6)
- **Despotes:** Greek word translated “Master.” (Luke 2:29; Acts 4:24; Rev. 6:10; 2 Pet. 2:1; Jude 4)
- **Father:** (Matt. 7:11; Jam. 1:17; Heb. 12:5-11; John 15:16; 16:23; Eph. 2:18; 3:15; 1 Thess. 3:11).

God has many names in Scripture—what do we say to those that suggest *pneuma* used for the Spirit is just another name for the same eternal God, not another individuality who is also God?

Jesus taught there was a third member of the Godhead called the Comforter, Counselor or Spirit:

- “If you love me, you will obey what I command. And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Counselor to be with you forever—the Spirit of truth. The world cannot accept him, because it neither sees him nor knows him. But you know him, for he lives with you and will be in you. John 14:15-17
- But the Counselor, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you all things and will remind you of everything I have said to you. John 14:26
- “When the Counselor comes, whom I will send to you from the Father, the Spirit of truth who goes out from the Father, he will testify about me. John 15:26

Notice the way Jesus speaks here—this language is not Jesus saying that He will ask the Father to come Himself, but is talking about another entity, another individuality and refers to him as such. So, Jesus’ testimony makes a distinction between the Father and the Holy Spirit as separate individuals.

The Old Testament teaches God is a plurality, not a singularity:

- Then God said, “Let us make man in our image, in our likeness... Genesis 1:26

Even the text quoted by Jews and Muslims that “God is one” teaches a plurality, not a singularity:

- Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God *is* one LORD: DT 6:4
  - Notice the passage in English uses “Lord” and “God”. The reading of this passage with the Hebrew names for “Lord” and “God” would go like this: “Hear, O Isreal: *Yahweh* our *Elohim*, *Yahweh* is One.” Or,
  - What is interesting is that the word *Elohim* in Hebrew is plural and is the same word used for God in Genesis 1:26. Thus an accurate English reading might go like this: “The One is more than One yet is One”
  - In Hebrew there are two words for one, *Yacheed* and *Echad*. The first indicates singular unit as in one and only, the second indicates compound unity, as the oneness of two or



more. In this text *Echad* is used along with the plural name of God *Elohim* indicating the oneness of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

But, for me all the above evidence is not what is most compelling. The most compelling evidence for me that God exists in plurality rather than singularity is the nature and character of God Himself.

The Bible says, “God is love.” 1John 4:8. Further the Bible teaches that this love is “not self seeking.” 1Corinthians 13:5. Love is outward moving, other-centered. Therefore, God, being love, could not *be* love in isolation because love requires an object to pour itself upon. Love is other-centered! God’s nature and character of love, rightly understood, is the most powerful argument for the plurality of God. Therefore, when God created us in His image He created “them male and female” and the “two shall become one” united in a triune relationship – husband, wife and God indwelling their hearts via the Holy Spirit!

The minimum number for genuine other-centered love to exist and function is three—not two. In a relationship of two there can be narcissistic reinforcement—I have seen this in marriages where things were fine until the first child was born and the husband becomes jealous and hostile he no longer commands the supreme attention and affection of the wife.

EGW saw it this way:

There are three living persons of the heavenly trio; in the name of these three great powers--the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit--those who receive Christ by living faith are baptized, and these powers will co-operate with the obedient subjects of heaven in their efforts to live the new life in Christ.-- Evangelism, p. 615. {7ABC 441.9}

Back to the bottom of Monday’s lesson, it states “Jesus also says that blasphemy against the Spirit is unforgivable. (Mt 12:31-32). This is incomprehensible unless the Spirit is divine.”

What does it mean? Through which law lens do you hear this—rules imposed and legal pardon, or design law? And how would this fit with design law?

If the Holy Spirit is the agency from heaven which applies into the terminally sin-sick person the healing Remedy achieved by Christ and the person rejects the Holy Spirit, then what?

If a person rejects Jesus—because they have been told lies about Jesus—or have such strong cultural biases they cannot see Jesus in His true light, but their hearts remain open to the working of the Holy Spirit, and they value the principles of truth, love and freedom—what will happen in their heart?

If a person rejects a life-saving medicine because someone told them that the medicine is poison and will kill them—even though it is exactly what they need, but they accept the very medicine when it is given them in its generic form, rather than the brand name—what will happen?





But, if the person who is sick rejects the only doctor who brings and administers the medicine, then what?

Likewise if a person rejects God because they have heard only of the dictator views, a being who will torture them in hell for all eternity, but their hearts love truth and other people what will the Holy Spirit do for them?

But if a person finds the Spirit of truth and love reprehensible, such that they think honesty, fidelity, truthfulness is weak and despicable, and love for others is weak sentiment and they reject such motives and principles, but claim belief in God, what happens in them?

Blasphemy against the Holy Spirit is not merely saying one doesn't believe in the Trinity, or that one doesn't believe in God, but it is the functional rejection of the presence of the Holy Spirit and the presence of the Holy Spirit as the source, within our internal worlds, of truth, honesty, integrity, love, fidelity etc. Rejecting this and choosing evil is the true blasphemy.

## TUESDAY

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What lessons do we learn regarding the divinity of the Holy Spirit and the teaching of the Sanctuary? Where was the dwelling place of God in the OT times? In the Sanctuary, but who is to dwell in us? The Spirit and we are often called the Spirit temple—does this enlighten us on a variety of topics, like:

- The Holy Spirit is fully God
- The OT Sanctuary was all theater to teach the truth about what humans were created to be
- That the cleansing of the sanctuary is something quite different that a legal process in a building in heaven

## WEDNESDAY

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Read last paragraph, “The Bible states that the Holy Spirit raised Jesus from the dead...” The lesson is referring to Romans 8:11:

And if the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead is living in you, he who raised Christ from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through his Spirit, who lives in you.

What of Jesus' words?

The reason my Father loves me is that I lay down my life—only to take it up again. <sup>18</sup> No one takes it from me, but I lay it down of my own accord. I have authority to lay it down and authority to take it up again. This command I received from my Father.” Jn 10:17,18

Do you see any tension here? How do we harmonize these two statements?



It is evidence of the Trinity at work, the functional aspects of how love works in God's universe—the Trinity are always working together, never in opposition, never one against the other—like one pleading to the other, but are all involved together, in creation, in redemption, etc. Thus, it is the Father calling His Son, and the Spirit filling the Son and the Son choosing to exercise His own individuality to choose to rise again.

## **THURSDAY**

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Read first paragraph, “What would be lost...” The character of God as a being of love as discussed above.

Read the second paragraph, “The divinity of the Holy Spirit...” This is to me is more persuasive, to demonstrate not only that the Bible gives the attributes of God to the Holy Spirit, but lists the Holy Spirit as separate being in the same context as the Father and Son is much more persuasive and really undermines the position of those who would suggest the Holy Spirit is just the Spirit of the Father.

## **FRIDAY**

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Read and discuss questions



### **ANNOUNCEMENTS:**

**We need HELP! With what?** Well, after 10 years of ministry, this website has collected a huge number of articles, blogs, videos, podcasts, and notes that need to be categorized and indexed, so YOU can easily find all that's been said on a particular topic. The problem is, we don't have hundreds of eyes and ears on staff to search, read, listen, and find all these nuggets of truth. So, Come And Reason is calling on you, our faithful supporters, to help us with this task.

What do we need from you? Easy. Whenever you come across an article, blog, video, audio, or note that talks about a specific topic (like wrath, punishment, sanctuary, temple, mind, character, sin, death, etc., etc.), simply go to About > Contact Us and send us a note telling us where you found the information (page # in a document/note, time index in a video or audio file, the exact web address where you found the material, and the TOPIC the citation is talking about). We'll take those TOPICS and arrange them into categories and build a new menu entry to index all these resources.

Thank you, all, ahead of time for your participation and help in this rather significant endeavor!

**Calendar:** Come and Reason now has a Calendar of Events on our Website. If you would like to know what is coming up or where Dr. J is speaking or who is teaching a particular week, check out the calendar.

**January 20, 21, 2017:** Dr. Jennings will be speaking at The Haven in St. Helena, California

**April 27-29:** Dr. Jennings will be speaking at the AACC Event The Struggle Is Real at the Thomas Road Baptist Church at Liberty University at Lynchburg, VA. For more info visit <http://lynchburg.cmhcs summit.com/>

**May 6, 2017:** Dr. Jennings will be speaking at Summit Northwest Ministries, Post Falls, Idaho: for more info visit: <http://www.summitnorthwest.org/>

**June 8-10, 2017:** Dr. Jennings will be speaking at the AACC Event The Struggle is Real in Naperville, IL.

**September 15,16 2017:** Dr. Jennings will be speaking at the Church in the Valley, Aldergrove, British Columbia, Canada.

**October 12-16, 2017:** Dr. Jennings will be speaking at Garden Grove SDA church in Garden Grove, CA. This will be a multi-speaker event focusing on the atonement. For more information contact:

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**October 27, 28, 2017:** Dr. Jennings will speaking at the Arlington SDA church in Arlington, TX. For more information contact: <http://www.arlingtonadventist.com/>