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The Person & Work Of The Holy Spirit

We're studying Basics in this class, basic Bible doctrine and we're going through our doctrinal statement point by point. This class is a mini-Systematic Theology, which is different than verse-by-verse. It takes the results of verse-by-verse and organizes the truths categorically; Bibliology, Theology Proper, Christology, Pneumatology, Soteriology, etc...So this class will serve as a primer for a future more in-depth Systematic Theology. But we start with basics and we are using our doctrinal statement as a starting point.

When I first came here nine years ago I basically walked in off the street because my seminary president told me I should apply. Out of the clear blue I walked in and handed them my doctrinal statement and then went and had lunch with Jerry and Fred, the first two pastors of this church. That all happened on a single day and who knew that a nobody from nowhere would be pastoring this church for over eight years now. I tell you the story because I was told later that the best move I could have made was dropping off that doctrinal statement. My statement agreed so well with the doctrinal statement of the church that it worked out to be a good fit. And the central goal when a change of pastor occurs is continuity, continuity of thought, continuity of doctrine. The last thing you need is some kind of disruption, some kind of change.

We've dealt with point one, Bibliology, the Bible, which is the traditional place a Systematic Theology begins, the Scriptures. Point two, the Trinity, who is God, what is God like. Point three, the Person of the Son. However, traditionally, between point two and three is placed a statement regarding the Person of the Father. We don't have that so it's my conviction we add that for the sake of comprehensiveness. We go directly to the Person of the Son

then to point 4, the Holy Spirit. So today we come to the Holy Spirit and He is by far the least understood of the three persons of the Trinity. He sort of remains an ethereal figure in the Trinity that God is.

Before we go into our statement I want to make several observations about the Holy Spirit. Not only is He the least understood of the three Persons but the 20th century was termed the Century of the Holy Spirit for two reasons. First, because of the issue of Spiritual Gifts and their cessation or non-cessation. This issue arose due to certain phenomena attributed to the Holy Spirit in the early 1900's at the Azusa Street Revival in Los Angeles. And it always makes me go into a kind of holy laughter myself because I ask myself, can anything good come out of Los Angeles. But in any case, that event gave rise to Pentecostalism with its defining mark of tongues speaking. The problem with tongues is not whether the Holy Spirit can give that gift or did give the gift; the problem is that it's a revelatory gift. So if tongues is a gift the Holy Spirit is now giving then the canon is open and we ought to have Revelation 23 being written. And that's why the tongues issue is a serious debate. Don't ever let anyone de-rail you on this issue by saying, well, you cessationists are limiting the Holy Spirit, you are quenching the Holy Spirit. Baloney, that's not the issue at all. The issue is whether God is giving new revelation and has re-opened the canon. If He has, I don't see any Scripture being written, where is Revelation 23? Where's the 67th book of the Bible?ⁱ So to say that tongues have not ceased does violence to the integrity of Scripture. And that's why the issue is so serious. So the first reason the 20th century is known as the Century of the Holy Spirit is the tongues issue. And people debate whether the tongues are originating with the Holy Spirit or by demonic or psychological manipulation. We'll deal with tongues issue more completely when we get to point twelve in our doctrinal statement.

The second reason the 20th century has been termed the Century of the Holy Spirit is because of the rise of Neo-Orthodoxy and whether something is true because God said it or something is true because you experienced it. As Dr Walvoord states, "The twentieth century has witnessed growing interest in the doctrine of the Holy Spirit. The advent of crisis theology with its claim to supernatural revelation has tended to focus attention on the doctrine of the Holy Spirit."ⁱⁱ What he means by "crisis theology" is Neo-Orthodoxy which flooded the Church after WWII through the writings of Karl Barth. Some of you know what I'm talking about, some of you don't. The unfortunate thing is

the reason our local church has a tough time growing numerically isn't because we're doing anything wrong, it's simply because most Christians today are Neo-Orthodox and we're not. What I mean is people who come in the door are looking for a man-centered experience to verify their faith but what they get is a God-centered theology that is completely foreign to them. So let me clarify what Neo-Orthodoxy is. It was a response to Liberalism in the 1940's and the idea was that you have a crisis of doubt in life that the word of God is really true and through a supernatural experience with God the Bible *becomes* true to you. So the Bible *becomes* true for you because of your experience. It's your experience that validates it is true. So, as far as the Bible itself is concerned, the Bible is not intrinsically the word of God but merely *contains* the word of God and parts of it become the word of God to you through your act of faith in a crisis experience. Before that it is not the word of God at all, it only becomes the word of God on the basis of your experience of it. Since the Holy Spirit was said to be instrumental in the crisis experience making the Bible true for you then the 20th century became known as the Century of the Holy Spirit. So those are two very important reasons a study of the Person and Work of the Holy Spirit are vital today; they are two major departures from orthodoxy about how the Holy Spirit works.

As we turn to our doctrinal statement you will notice in point four that His Person and some of His Works are mentioned. This is not traditional, traditionally the Person and Work are divided in Systematic Theology, you treat the Person and later you treat the Work. As Dr Chafer says, "Since the whole field of Systematic Theology is so extensive, it is the part of wisdom to reserve the consideration of the works of the triune God...for later contemplation."ⁱⁱⁱ And I agree with Dr Chafer. Under our fourth point in the statement we have His Person, "We believe in the Personality of the Holy Spirit of God, - the Third Person of the Trinity" and then a few of His Works mentioned; His conviction of sin, quickening into life and regenerating the sinner. That's a mixture of His Person and His Work. Then we have divided other works of the Spirit into point eleven where we make mention of being born again of the Spirit of God; in point twelve we have some more of His works, namely, spiritual gifts; and in point fifteen we have mention of the sealing of the Holy Spirit. That's all fine and well, it's just that traditionally all those works would be placed together under a single point and that would be my suggestion in writing a doctrinal statement.

On that note I want to give you an exercise. One of the most practical and beneficial exercises a Christian could ever engage in is writing his own doctrinal statement, setting out what he understands the Scriptures to teach. My suggestion would be to take other doctrinal statements, creeds or confessions as a starting point and that would force you to read with precision and to think about each phrase and expression and to search the Scriptures to find what passage(s) support such doctrines. And I really think if you would do this it, and I would be willing to work with you, give you direction, guidance, that kind of thing, but if you do this it will change your life forever. One of the main reasons Christians lives don't change much is because they don't apply themselves to rigorous thinking, they don't study, they don't sit down and do exercises, they don't do homework. But if you would do this assignment it would force you to think in an organized fashion rather than being all over the place and that means huge dividends when it comes to your life and practical application. So I'm going to encourage you, all of you, each of you, to start writing your own doctrinal statement.

Traditionally you keep each Person of the Triune Godhead distinct from their Work, granting that ultimately the Person cannot be separated from His Work, yet nevertheless it is helpful, because as Dr Chafer says, the whole study of each Person and Work is so extensive, it is the part of wisdom to consider the Person and leave the Work for later contemplation. And that's the way I would do it but we have a good statement here and so we'll look at some of the Person and some of the Work of the Holy Spirit. Our statement reads,

4. We believe in the Personality of the Holy Spirit of God, - the Third Person of the Trinity (John 14:26; 15:26), and that it is He who convicts of sin (John 16:8-11), quickens into life, and regenerates the sinner (John 3:5), making him a son of God, through faith in Christ Jesus (Gal 3:26).

Everything is Scriptural here as far as I can see. Let's start at the beginning, "We believe in the Personality of the Holy Spirit of God – the Third Person of the Trinity." That's all His Person. Notice the first expression, "We believe in the *Personality* of the Holy Spirit of God." By the term Personality we don't mean what is meant in our day, I like his personality, I like the way he carries himself, he's vibrant, he's outgoing, and that's not what this is talking

about. What this term is referring to is that the Holy Spirit is not an “it,” an impersonal wind or force of God sent out to accomplish God’s will, but is a true Person having intellect, sensibility and will. Everyone who denies the Trinity, whether they are Unitarian, Jehovah’s Non-Witnesses or Mormons, reduces the Son to a mere man and the Spirit to a mere force. So what the term Personality is guarding against is the idea that the Holy Spirit is the mere wind of God, an impersonal force that God sends out to accomplish things. Dr Chafer has a chapter in Volume 1 of his *Systematic Theology* called “The Personality of God.” In that chapter he says, “Those elements which combine to form personality are: intellect, sensibility, and will; but all of these acting together require a freedom both of external action and of choice of ends toward which action is directed. Intellect must direct, sensibility must desire, and will must determine in the direction of rational ends. There can be no personality, either human, angelic, or divine, apart from this complex of the essentials.” In another place he says, “Nothing is clearer than that personality is a unity.” So as to God’s essence, His essence is essentially Personal. And in another place he says, “This witness of the Bible is that man, angels, and God are all possessed with those essential elements which together constitute personality.” Namely, intellect, sensibility and will. Up to this point he has stated that God is a Personality, God in His essence is a Personality. But God is also three in Person. And the question is whether each of the three Persons is a distinct Personality. To this I think we must say yes because each of the three Persons is God. As Chafer says, “... Personality must be ascribed to each in the full measure of divine perfection...The Father and the Son reveal each other as Persons (Matt 11:27), and the Father and Son send the Spirit whose mission is clearly that of a person (John 14:16-17, 26; 15:26; 16:7-11). The foundational truth of all Scripture is the fact that God is one God who subsists in three Persons.” So the Spirit is not a mere it or a force. People get that idea because God sends the Spirit; He’s the Spirit of God, so they get this idea that He’s just an active force of God sent out to accomplish God’s will. That’s not the Scriptural idea at all. They also get the idea that the Spirit is nothing more than an influence because He’s ethereal, He’s incorporeal, but if that were the case then the Father and the Son wouldn’t be real Persons either because God is spirit, not body. The big point about personality is that it refers to the intellect, sensibility and will and those obviously do not stem from having a physical body.

Is this critical to affirm? You bet it is. “If God is not a personal being, the result must be either atheism or pantheism...A blind, necessitated force is the origin of all. The existence of the world in the heavens is without reason or end. There is no reason for the existence of man, no rational or moral end. The universal sense of moral obligation and responsibility must be pronounced a delusion... All that remains is the dark picture of the universe without divine teleology or providence.”^{iv} In short we would live in an impersonal universe and have no explanation for human personality. The Scriptures declare emphatically that we live in an intensely Personal Universe because it is providentially governed by a Personal God who confronts all men at all times and in all places. As Paul declared, “In Him we exist and move and have our being,” and as David said, “Where can I go from your Spirit? If I go to the depths of Sheol, Behold, Thou art there.” God is Personal and that is the necessary precondition for creatures like angels and men being personal. Apart from His Personality our personality is nothing more than surface like bubbles floating on a shore less ocean of chance. In short, creature personality rests upon God’s prior and ultimate Personality.

So yes, “We believe in the Personality of the Holy Spirit of God,” the Holy Spirit is not an it, He is not a force, He is not an influence. Turn to Acts 5. This is where Ananias and Sapphira, the husband and wife pair held back funds when they sold some property and said they gave all the proceeds to the Church because they wanted to get their names in big flashing lights. Verse 3, “But Peter said, “Ananias, why has Satan filled your heart to lie to the Holy Spirit and to keep back *some* of the price of the land?” Who does Peter say Ananias lied too? The Holy Spirit. Now, would someone please explain to me how you can lie to an it? You don’t lie to it’s you lie to Persons. The Holy Spirit is a person.

Now, having said that, just because you prove that the Holy Spirit is a Personality with intellect, sensibility and will, one who can be lied to, does not prove that the Holy Spirit is God because angels and men also have personality. So that’s why our statements says, “the Third Person of the Trinity.” You have to state that He is also God, a member of the Triune Godhead. And notice verse 4, here we have one of the passages that Explicitly states the deity of the Holy Spirit. “While it remained *unsold*, did it not remain your own? And after it was sold, was it not under your control? Why is it that you have conceived this deed in your heart? You have not lied to

men but to God.” And there you have the deity of the Holy Spirit stated, they lied to the Holy Spirit, verse 3; they lied to God, verse 4. Therefore what do we conclude? The Holy Spirit is God.

Let’s go to another passage on the deity of the Holy Spirit, Rev 1. This one shows His deity by His association with the Father and the Son, showing His equality with Father and Son. So to be clear, the Holy Spirit is just as much God as the Father is God and just as much to be adored as the Son is to be adored and just as much to be worshipped as both the Father and the Son are to be worshipped. There is no inferiority of essence in the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit is sovereign, He’s just, He’s righteous, He’s love, He’s omniscient, He’s omnipresent, He’s omnipotent, He’s immutable and eternal. He is very God of God. Now I took you here a few weeks ago to show this but I had to rush through it. What this passage shows is He is associated with the Father and the Son. And this passage has always stayed with me because there is a triad of Persons here and in the OT you had triads of Persons. So while it’s not clear to every Christian that the Trinity is in Rev 1:4-5 it’s because they don’t know the rest of the Bible. Revelation is the end of the Bible and as John Whitcomb said, every verse presupposes you know every previous verse. So when you come to the last Book, Revelation, the assumption is you already know every other Book. Students of the Revelation have pointed out that while there are 0 quotations of the OT there are more than 500 allusions to it. The Book of Revelation is basically a compilation of ideas from the OT. And so by the time you reach Revelation you should quickly recognize the Trinity. Notice what John says, verse 4, “Grace to you and peace,” and get ready to identify the three Persons who send grace and peace, “from Him who is and who was and who is to come,” there’s a Person, “and from the seven Spirits who are before His throne,” there’s another Person, verse 5, “and from Jesus Christ, the faithful witness, the firstborn of the dead, and the ruler of the kings of the earth,” there’s another Person. There are Three Persons, all of whom send grace and peace. First, “Him who is and who was and who is to come,” referring to whom? The Father, “and” copulative *kai* so we’re moving to someone distinct but related, “and from the seven Spirits who are before His throne,” or the sevenfold-Spirit, that’s the Holy Spirit and you should know that because you already know Isaiah right? Look in your margin, if you have a study Bible, there should be a cross reference there looking back to Isaiah. This is one of those allusions I mentioned. What chapter and verse is it alluding to? Isaiah 11:2. So if you hold your place here and go to Isaiah

11 you'll find a Messianic prophecy of the Holy Spirit. Verse 1, "Then a shoot will spring from the stem of Jesse," Jesse was David's father, it's the Davidic line, "And a branch from his roots will bear fruit." You thought fruit bearing was a NT Christian idea. No, the Messiah would bear fruit. The question is, how is He going to do that in His humanity. Verse 2 answers, "The Spirit of the LORD will rest on Him, The spirit of wisdom and understanding, The spirit of counsel and strength, The spirit of knowledge and the fear of the LORD." Now go back and count the number of things He is the Spirit of? He's "The Spirit of the LORD," that's one, "The spirit of wisdom" that's two, "The spirit of "understanding," that's three, of "counsel and strength," that's four and five, "of knowledge and the fear of the LORD," that's six and seven. Spirit of seven things or the seven-fold Spirit, seven being the number of perfection, fullness or completion. So who is this? Is this seven different spirits or is this the Holy Spirit? It's the Holy Spirit. And what did John call him in Rev 1? "the seven Spirits who are before His throne" or the seven-fold Spirit.

Then looking back at Rev 1:5, "and" another copulative *kai*, "and from Jesus Christ, the faithful witness" the third Person mentioned. Clearly you should see if your mind is being led by the Spirit of God that this is the Trinity. The seven Spirits aren't some kind of angels. What's the problem with the angel idea? The seven Spirits are sandwiched in between the Father and the Son. Now why would you sandwich angels in between the Father and the Son when the Father and the Son are of the same essence and angels of a lesser essence? You wouldn't. So what's the implication? Usually you see the Spirit third in the chain, last, but here He's in the middle. The implication is the Father, Spirit and Son are all of the same essence, they're all God. These are associations, the Spirit is linked right in there with the Father and the Son

The third category that shows the deity of the Holy Spirit is that He has all the Attributes of God. Remember David in Psalm 139, "Where can I go from your Spirit? If I descend into Sheol, thou art there." What attribute? He's in all places at all times? Omnipresence. No creature is omnipresent, you can go away from creatures. You can't go away from the Spirit. So the Spirit must be God. Another attribute, He's Holy, over and over and over He's referred to as whom? The "Holy Spirit," that very appellation signifies He's God. You wouldn't call any mere creature holy.

Turn to Heb 9:14. All we're showing is that the Holy Spirit has the Attributes of God. And here's another one, "how much more will the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered Himself without blemish to God, cleanse your conscience..." what attribute of God is given to the Holy Spirit here? Eternality, He has no beginning or end, He is the root and ground of all existence and ever was and evermore shalt be. What mere creature is eternal? Only God is eternal. Therefore the Holy Spirit is God.

Turn lastly to 1 Cor 2:10. Elliot Johnson at Dallas Seminary says this is one of the most difficult passages in the NT and I know there were differences among the faculty over there. My take is that the passage is about where Paul and the other apostles and prophets got their gospel message, they got it by revelation; it was made known to them by the Spirit of God. One of the implications of verse 10 you can see is that the Spirit is omniscient. "For to us God revealed them through the Spirit; for the Spirit searches all things, even the depths of God." That is, the Spirit knows all things about God. And since God is infinite, to know all things about God would be to have infinite knowledge. So there He's omniscient.

Alright, enough of the Personality of the Holy Spirit and the Deity of the Holy Spirit. He has intellect, sensibility and will and He's also fully God. Our statement also says He is "the Third Person of the Trinity." Third to signify rank. The purpose of assigning them numbers, First, Second and Third Person's is to show subordination within the Trinity, not subordination of essence, we've just seen that the Holy Spirit has all the attributes of God, but the subordination is one of role. Here's how the Athanasian Creed states it, "The Father is neither made, nor created, nor begotten: The Son is from the Father alone, not made, nor created but begotten: The Holy Spirit is from the Father and the Son, not made, nor created, nor begotten, but proceeding." That is very well put, so well put it's worth breaking down. Notice they're just articulating what Scripture says here and very succinctly. The Father is neither made, nor created, nor begotten: That's why He's called the First Person of the Trinity. But then notice the Son, He's co-equal with the Father when it comes to essence, neither made nor created, but He's subordinate when it comes to role. The Son is from the Father alone, not made, nor created but begotten: always the Bible says the Son is begotten of the Father, or the only begotten Son of God and that's an eternal begetting, meaning one of a kind, He's eternally the Son of God and the Father alone sent the Son

into the World, not the Father and the Spirit. This is what makes the Son the Second Person of the Trinity. And finally, the Spirit, again, of the same essence as the Father and the Son, neither made nor created, but distinct in role, not begotten as the Son, but proceeding, The Holy Spirit is from the Father and the Son, not made, nor created, nor begotten, but proceeding. Inasmuch as He is called “the Spirit of God” (Gen 1:2) and “the Spirit of the Father” (Matt 10:20) He proceeds from the Father.

As for His relationship to the Father and the Son turn to John 14:26, ²⁶“But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My name, He will teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all that I said to you.” Who is the Father sending here? This was a big debate between the Eastern and Western Churches, it caused a split about 1000 years ago. Clearly the Father will send the Spirit. But who’s name does the Father send the Spirit in? The name of the Son, meaning the authority of the Son.

If this isn’t clear go to John 15:26, “When the Helper comes, whom I will send to you from the Father, *that is* the Spirit of truth who proceeds from the Father, He will testify about Me,” clearly the Son is involved in the sending of the Spirit.

And finally, for final clarification turn to John 16:7, “But I tell you the truth, it is to your advantage that I go away; for if I do not go away, the Comforter [Helper] shall not come to you; but if I go, I will send Him to you.” So who sends the Spirit? The Father only? No, the Father and the Son. The Spirit proceeds from both the Father and the Son and this is why the Holy Spirit is called the Third Person of the Trinity, there’s a subordination of role within the trinity and it’s an amazing thing. He takes this backseat role and He forever takes this backseat role. As Bruce Ware says, “It is nothing short of remarkable that the Spirit clearly embraces and in no respect resents the fact that he has, eternally, what might be called “the background position” in the Trinity. It would be one thing for someone to accept and embrace a background position for a certain period of time knowing that eventually he would be brought out into the spotlight and given more central focus and attention. But here we see something far more amazing, something nearly unbelievable when considered from our perspective as fallen human beings. The Holy Spirit embraces eternally the backstage position in relation to the Father and the Son.... Amazingly, even though the Spirit has identically the

same nature as the Father and the Son, even though he is fully and equally God, yet he willingly accepts this behind the scenes position in nearly everything that the triune God does. In creation, redemption, and consummation, he willingly accepts the role of supporter, helper, sustainer, and equipper, and in all these respects he forsakes the spotlight. Such is the role of the Spirit within the Trinity, broadly conceived."

Alright, now that we have looked at His Personality, His Deity and His Subordination of Role within the Trinity let's briefly look at three works of the Holy Spirit cited in this point, "and that it is He who convicts of sin (John 16:8-11), quickens into life, and regenerates the sinner (John 3:5), making him a son of God, through faith in Christ Jesus (Gal 3:26)." We don't have a lot of time but we'll see more of these things later.

What is here is very important; clearly the work of the Holy Spirit in establishing our salvation is stated. And the way it is worded is critical. The first thing it points out is John 16:8-11 so let's turn there, "that He convicts of sin." Surely in the light of the fact that man is fallen, which fact will be treated next week and shows that logically the work of the Spirit with respect to salvation should be placed after the Fall which sets up the need for salvation. But we'll treat it anyway, presupposing that man is fallen and has imputed sin directly from Adam, inherited sin indirectly from Adam and personal sin. So on at least three counts we're dead; dead, dead and dead again.

In this dead condition and people really don't appreciate the Fall, even pastors do not understand the gravity of the Fall. Spurgeon said, "Few preachers of religion do believe thoroughly the doctrine of the Fall, or else they think that when Adam fell down he broke his little finger, and did not break his neck and ruin his race."^v This is a serious, serious predicament we are in. The point is no man is going to come to God, no one, no not one. Paul says Jews don't seek God and Gentiles don't seek God, Jews seek signs, Gentiles seek intellect, but no one seeks God and the reason is because we are dead in sin and hiding from God. Isn't that the picture early painted by God in the garden with Adam? Adam wasn't looking for God, Adam was hiding from God. So if man is ever going to come to God, God has to come to Him first and initiate.

Now notice in John 16:8 something God the Holy Spirit is now doing. “And He, when He comes,” referring to the Holy Spirit, “when He comes,” has He come yet at this point? No, at this point He had not taken up this ministry. What ministry? The ministry of convicting the world concerning sin and righteousness and judgment;” He wasn’t doing those things until the Day of Pentecost, this is distinctly a ministry of the Holy Spirit through the Church. You could argue there was something similar going on through Israel in the OT but not exactly what this is talking about, “Convicting the world concerning sin and righteousness and judgment.” That’s Jews, that’s Gentiles, the whole world and clearly its going to occur through the church because the conviction is not some kind of ooey gooey feeling people get that I’m in trouble with God. It has to do with three specifics; namely sin and righteousness and judgment. So this is not a vague feeling of guilt, this is very specific and therefore it occurs through the Church; as the word of God goes out through church age believers. So this is a dispensational distinctive, we don’t have a lot about dispensations or any of that in our doctrinal statement but this verse in our statement is a big time dispensational verse. The Holy Spirit is not working the same now in the Church as He did with Israel in the past. There are differences. So He’s now exposing, notice the word convict, it’s the idea of bringing something to light, making it clear. And the things He makes clear are in vv 9, 10 and 11, “concerning sin; namely, they do not believe in Me; concerning righteousness; namely, I go to the Father and you no longer see Me;” who goes into the presence of the Father? You better be righteous if you walk in there or you’re going to get axed. And verse 11, concerning judgment; namely, the ruler of this world has been judged.” Those three things the Holy Spirit convicts the world of and He does it through the Church as the word of God is taught.

And our point is that this has to happen if anyone is ever going to be saved. Chafer called this a pre-salvation work of the Holy Spirit, without which no one would be saved in the present era. You have got to hear the facts about sin, righteousness and judgment, but more than that, you have to be convicted of them, you have to come to grips with the fact that you are dead and the only way to get to the Father is through faith in the Son and there’s a judgment coming, so time is running out. It’s the Spirit that does this. As Walvoord said years ago, “The ministry of the Holy Spirit to the unsaved follows three specific lines, then. First, the unsaved must understand that salvation depends upon faith in Christ. Second, the unsaved must

understand the righteousness of God as belonging to the person of God and as made available for the sinner through Christ. Third, the unsaved must face the fact of judgment and find in Christ one who was judged and executed as their substitute.”^{vi}

All that’s pre-salvation, the next thing is salvation itself, the Holy Spirit “quickens into life, and regenerates the sinner (John 3:5)”. Turn to John 3:5. This is the Nicodemus encounter. This guy was a ruler of the Jews, he was a top guy, he knew the Scriptures, or he was supposed to know the Scriptures and Jesus rakes him over the coals for not knowing the Scriptures. That’s why pastors like me, we get mad at pastors who don’t teach their people the word of God and we call them out by name. People say, well that’s not loving. Hey, I’m just following Jesus’ example. These guys should know better, what’s wrong with them, they’re pastors, shepherds of Christ’s flock and they don’t know the word of God. Yeah I’m going to call them out, who else is going to do it? Jesus did it. Notice verse 3, “Jesus answered him, “Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born again he cannot see the kingdom of God.” The issue was entrance into the kingdom. how do I enter the kingdom? Answer: you must be born again or born from above, both are true, the human spirit must be born again and this birth comes from above, from the Spirit who is the agent. Verse 4, “Nicodemus said to him, "How can a man be born when he is old? He cannot enter a second time into his mother's womb and be born, can he?" Jesus answered, " Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the spirit he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.” People argue about what it means to be born of water and the Spirit. Clearly two births are in view. I think verse six clarifies, “That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit.” The point is you have to be born physically, that’s the birth by water, when the baby is born that’s the water birth, it’s the physical birth. Second is the Spirit birth, that’s the birth of the human spirit. Verse 15 and 16 will clarify how that occurs, it’s through faith.

And this is what we call regeneration. Really that word is only used twice in the NT and only once with respect to salvation, that’s over in Titus 3. But being born again or being born from above, those are equivalents in my estimation. I can’t see any difference.

Through faith, faith is trust in the reliability of someone or something, John 3:15, 16, 18, Eph 2:8-9, Acts 16:31, repentance, faith is an instrument,

through faith we are saved, faith occurs and at that time we are regenerated, not regenerated before faith. Faith and works opposite. If you work you get paid, but if you don't work but believe, no pay.

ⁱ Before 1900 people did not even debate the gift of tongues. Virtually everyone was a cessationist. The early church fathers wrote numerous statements to the effect that tongues speaking petered out early on except for some very rare instances. I give you this list from Tom Constable; Origen (c. 185-c. 254 A.D.), "Against Celsus," 7:8 in *The Ante-Nicene Fathers*, 4:614; Chrysostom (347–407 A.D.), "Homily 12 on Matthew," in *The Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers*, 10:77; idem, "Homily 14 on Romans," *ibid.*, 11:447; idem, "Homily 29 on 1 Corinthians," *ibid.*, 12:168; idem, "Homily 6 on 1 Corinthians," *ibid.*, 12:31; Augustine (354-430 A.D.), "On Baptism, Against the Donatists," 3:16:21, *ibid.*, 4:443; idem, "The Epistle of St. John," 6:10, *ibid.*, 7:497-98; idem, "The Epistle of 1 John. Homily," 6:10, *ibid.*, 7:497-98; idem, "The Answer to the Letters of Petition, to Donatist," 2:32:74, *ibid.*, 4:548; and idem, "On the Gospel of St. John, Tractate," 32:7, *ibid.*, 7:195. Joseph Dillow's work, *Speaking in Tongues*, pp. 147-64, gives further information about the historical cessation of the gift of tongues.ⁱ

ⁱⁱ L. S. Chafer, *He That is Spiritual*, foreword by John F. Walvoord.

ⁱⁱⁱ L. S. Chafer, *Systematic Theology I*, 129.

^{iv} John Miley cited by L. S. Chafer, *Systematic Theology I*, 186.

^v *Christian History Magazine-Issue 29: Charles Spurgeon: England's "Prince of Preachers"*. 1991.

Carol Stream, IL: Christianity Today.

^{vi} John F. Walvoord, *The Holy Spirit* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1991), 114.

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