

Pastor Jeremy M. Thomas
Fredericksburg Bible Church
107 East Austin
Fredericksburg, Texas 78624
830-997-8834 jthomas@fbgbible.org

B0524 – June 19, 2005 – Major Bible Themes
Chapter 14 – God The Holy Spirit: His Personality

So far, Dr. Chafer's Major Bible Themes began with The Bible. We spent four weeks studying the Bible itself. First, we looked at The Bible: The Word of God. The Bible did not originate with men but with God.

Second, we looked at the Bible: Inspired of God. This chapter discussed how the infallible words of God could be perfectly transmitted through fallible human beings. We discovered through the study of manuscript evidence that we have copies and translations which are totally sufficient. The two key passages for inspiration are 2 Peter 1:20-21 and 2 Tim 3:16-17.

Third, we looked at The Bible: Its Subject and Purpose. We found that the Subject of the Bible is Jesus Christ and the purpose of the Bible is to glorify God.

Fourth, we looked at The Bible: As a Divine Revelation. God reveals Himself clearly to all men by way of creation and conscience. This alone makes all men responsible to God. He also reveals Himself clearly in the propositional words of Scripture. This Scripture is known as a canon, or measuring standard, by which all things are judged. It is totally sufficient.

Fifth, we turned to God the Trinity where we studied the evidence from the Old and New Testaments for the unity and plurality in the Godhead. We determined from these evidences that "God is one in essence and three in person". However, within the Trinity we discovered that there is subordination of role. The Son is subordinate to the Father and the Spirit is subordinate to the Father and Son. However, subordination of role does not in any way change their unity of essence. In this chapter we also looked at the attributes of God which are applied to all three persons of the Trinity and the fixed decree of God which includes

the entire plan of God including all events which will ever occur. We also dealt in brief with God's sovereignty and human freedom during this extensive and important chapter.

Sixth, we began to look at each member of the Trinity. First we spent one week looking at God the Father. He is Father of all creation in a general sense because He created it. Second, He is Father to Israel by way of intimate relationship because He elected them as a nation. We also looked into how the 1st person can be the God of our Lord Jesus Christ and concluded that the 1st person is God of Jesus' humanity while He is Father of His deity. We also discovered the marvelous truth that believers become the sons of God and inasmuch He is our Father in a very special and intimate way.

Seventh, we turned to a study of the 2nd person of the Trinity; God the Son. First we established that the Son is eternal and is God.

Eighth, we studied God the Son, His Incarnation. We proved that He was a real human without a sin nature and discussed the reasons for the incarnation.

Ninth, we studied God the Son, His Substitutionary Death. Here we proved that His death was a substitution by use of the OT sacrificial system and the NT prepositions. We then broke down the various aspects of His Substitutionary work under the heading of Atonement and discussed redemption—the Price Paid, propitiation—the Father Satisfied, and lastly reconciliation—the World Changed. The extent of redemption, propitiation and reconciliation is always said to be for the whole world including every member of the human race and all creation originally put under man's charge.

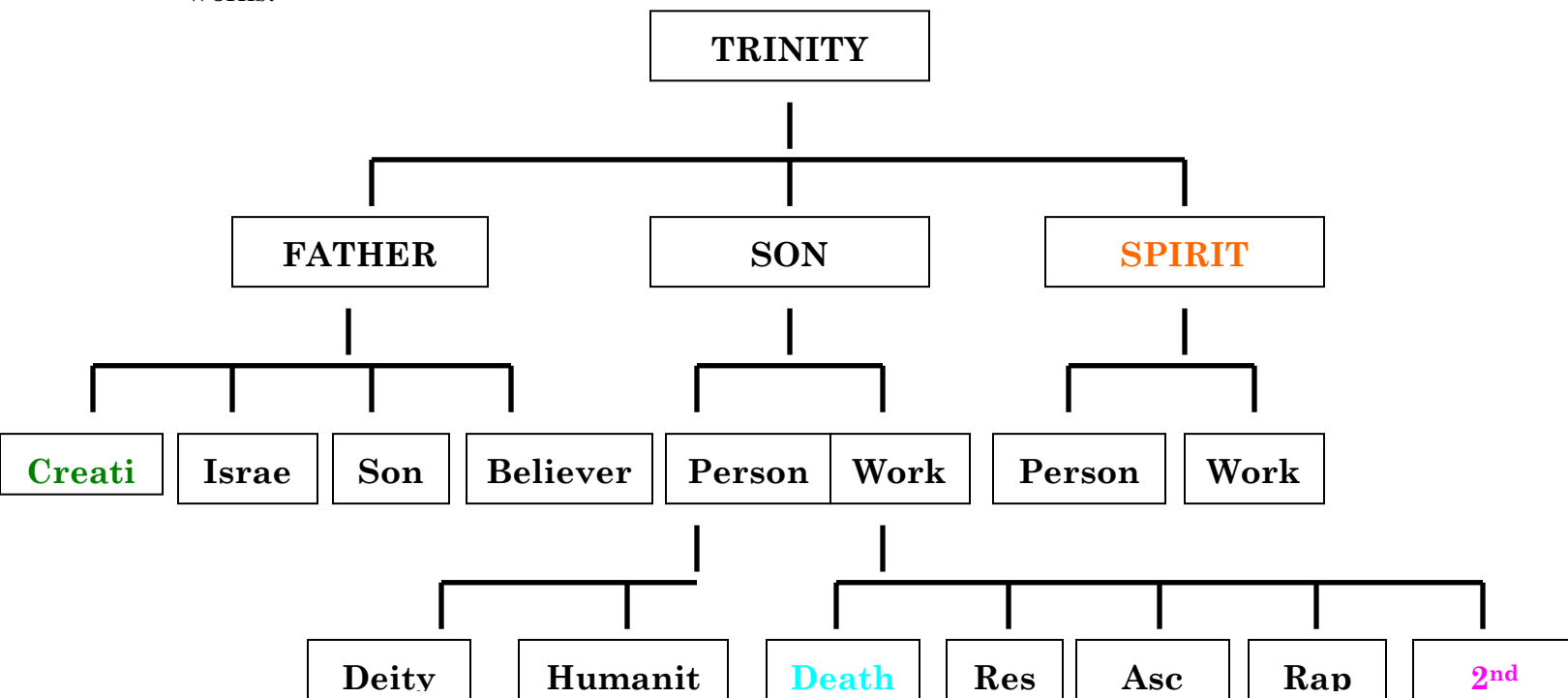
Tenth, we studied God the Son, His Resurrection where we studied the fact and meaning of the resurrection, the scriptural proof of resurrection in the Old Testament and New Testament, Christ's predictions of His own resurrection, the teaching that all men will be resurrected, proofs of the resurrection of Christ, the nature of the resurrection body, and the reasons for the resurrection of Christ.

Eleventh, we studied God the Son, His Ascension and Priestly Ministry where we learned that after spending 40 days on earth in His resurrection body teaching His disciples about the kingdom of God He ascended to heaven to the right hand of the Father from where He sent the Holy Spirit on the Day of Pentecost to begin the Church, from where He constantly intercedes for us in the heavenly courtroom of God, from where He builds His church, and where He has gone to prepare a place for us.

Twelfth, we studied God the Son, His Coming for His Saints where we learned that Christ will return to the air with all saints who have died in Christ and those living will be caught up in the air to meet them and return to the Father's house in heaven where we will remain until the 2nd Coming of Christ immediately after the tribulation. This event is imminent (no signs) and is pre-tribulational.

Thirteenth, we studied God the Son, His Coming with His Saints where we learned that the 2nd Coming of Christ will be post-tribulational, bodily, personal and to the earth. He will return with His saints and angels to the earth to wage war against all who oppose Him, to save Israel, to judge the Gentile nations, to build His millennial temple, to set up His millennial government and rule for 1,000 years.

This week we are leaving God the Son and are turning to God the Spirit where we will spend the next six weeks. First we will look at His person and then we will look at His works.



This begins to show that there is a large network of interrelated truths and it is getting larger and more complex as we build each week doctrine upon doctrine. For example, all of **creation** is related somehow to the Son's **death** because there will be a regeneration of creation at the **2nd Coming** of Christ (Matt 19:28). And **regeneration** is a work of the **Spirit** which we will look at next week. So, this is just one example of how we show relationships between things. We could form a network of connections like this for any

doctrine of the Bible. This is what we call concept mapping and it can become a very powerful tool for thinking conceptually as a Christian. This is a great and fun way to do theology and it is something that can be used in SS to teach children or adults. I mention all this because, several weeks ago, Dick Roesch mentioned a very important quote by Charles Ryrie where he said, “Theology is for everyone. Indeed, everyone needs to be a theologian. In reality, everyone *is* a theologian—of one sort or another. And therein lies the problem. There is nothing wrong with being an amateur theologian or a professional theologian, but there is everything wrong about being an ignorant or a sloppy theologian. Therefore, every Christian should read theology.”ⁱ Theology means thinking about God and expressing those thoughts in some way. Everyone is responsible for becoming an organized theologian. This concept mapping that I’ve shown you is an excellent way of doing this. This week we are working with one piece of this puzzle but it has many connections with the rest of the pieces. We’re looking at God the Spirit: His Personality and this has important implications for other doctrines on our diagram.

I. The Importance of His Personality

If the Holy Spirit is not a person then He cannot be God. If He is not God then there is no Trinity. Further, if He is not God then His works of regeneration, indwelling, baptism, sealing, and filling do not really have any real power behind them. You should be able to see that this would really mess up Christianity and your thinking. Therefore, it is very important to understand and affirm the personality of the Holy Spirit.

The Church was slow in developing theology. It took some time to understand and express NT truths in a cogent way. For example, the true doctrine of the deity of Christ was not expressed biblically until the Council of Nicea, in 325AD. At that council only one sentence was included about the Holy Spirit. It read “And (we believe) in the Holy Ghost.”ⁱⁱ 55 years later the church father Gregory Nazianzen, who believed in the deity of the Holy Spirit wrote, “Of the wise among us, some consider the Holy Ghost an influence, others a creature, others God himself, and again others know not which way to decide, from reverence, as they say, for the Holy Scripture, which declares nothing exact in the case. For this reason they waver between worshipping and not worshipping the Holy Ghost, and strike a middle course, which is in fact, however, a bad one.” So, you can see that even in the year 380AD there were differences of opinion on the matter of the deity of the Holy Spirit. It was not until the Council of Constantinople in 381AD that a full formulation of the deity of the Holy Spirit was pronounced as the orthodox teaching of Scripture:

Nicea (325)

Constantinople (381AD)

“And in the Holy Ghost”

“And in the Holy Ghost, who is Lord and Giver of life, who proceedeth from the Father, who with the Father and the Son together is worshipped and glorified, who spake by the prophets.—In one holy catholic and apostolic church; we acknowledge one baptism for the remission of sins; we look for the resurrection of the dead, and the life of the world to come. Amen.”ⁱⁱⁱ

The formulations of these two councils were fundamental in the development of the doctrine of the Trinity which was not fully formulated until the Council of Chalcedon in 451AD. Do you see how the church grew gradually in its understanding and how it was a logical progression? And do you see how each progression was required to move forward. They had to understand that Christ was God (Nicea, 325AD)) and then that the Holy Spirit was God (Constantinople, 381AD) before they could then understand and express the doctrine of the Trinity (Chalcedon, 451AD). Do you see the logical progression in men’s thinking about God? They were doing theology. They were connecting the dots. Now you should be able to see the vital importance of understanding and affirming the Holy Spirit’s personality. He is not just an influence or another creature but God Himself, which we will now set out to prove from Scripture.

II. The Personality of the Holy Spirit

A. He Performs Personal Acts

The Spirit convicts the world of sin, righteousness, and judgment. Only people do the work of convicting others.

John 16:8-11 "And He, when He comes, will convict the world concerning sin and righteousness and judgment; ⁹ concerning sin, because they do not believe in Me; ¹⁰ and concerning righteousness, because I go to the Father and you no longer see Me; ¹¹ and concerning judgment, because the ruler of this world has been judged.

The Spirit teaches believers and only people teach others.

John 14:26 "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.

John 16:13-15 "But when He, the Spirit of truth, comes, He will guide you into all the truth; for He will not speak on His own initiative, but whatever He hears, He will speak; and He will disclose to you what is to come. ¹⁴ "He will glorify Me, for He will take of Mine and will disclose *it* to you. ¹⁵ "All things that the Father has are Mine; therefore I said that He takes of Mine and will disclose *it* to you.

The Spirit speaks in propositional language to God the Father in affirmation of our sonship. Only people use propositional language to speak to God. By contrast the creation does not speak but groans (Rom 8:22). Therefore, He is not an influence but a person.

Galatians 4:6 Because you are sons, God has sent forth the Spirit of His Son into our hearts, crying, "Abba! Father!"

The Spirit testifies along with our human spirit. Only people testify (also cf John 15:26).

Romans 8:16 The Spirit Himself testifies with our spirit that we are children of God,

The Spirit intercedes on our behalf when we do not know how to pray. Only people pray to God.

Romans 8:26 In the same way the Spirit also helps our weakness; for we do not know how to pray as we should, but the Spirit Himself intercedes for *us* with groanings too deep for words;

The Spirit leads believers in the path of righteousness. Only people guide others.

Romans 8:14 For all who are being led by the Spirit of God, these are sons of God.

The Spirit appoints believers to certain areas of ministry. This was perceived as being sent by the Spirit (13:4). Only people appoint and send people to do ministry

Acts 13:2 While they were ministering to the Lord and fasting, the Holy Spirit said, "Set apart for Me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them."

The Spirit ministers in several areas including regeneration (John 3:6), permanent indwelling (John 14:16-17), baptizing (1 Cor 12:13), sealing (Eph 1:13-14), filling (Eph 5:18), and restraining (2 Thess 2:7). The fact that He ministers clearly testifies that He is a person and not merely an it or an influence. The nature of His ministries indicates that He is God. Only God can regenerate (i.e. impart new life; re-create the human spirit; create Christ's eternal life in the believer). Only God can baptize (i.e. put a person in Christ). Only God can seal (i.e. keep a person in Christ).

B. Personal Acts Affect Him

Insomuch this proves that He is a person. He may be grieved by disobedience

Isaiah 63:10 But they rebelled And grieved His Holy Spirit; Therefore He turned Himself to become their enemy, He fought against them.

Ephesians 4:30 Do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, by whom you were sealed for the day of redemption.

The Spirit's work/power may be quenched, extinguished. Every time we don't live by faith we quench the Spirit. Only people's work can be quenched by other people.

1 Thessalonians 5:19 Do not quench the Spirit;

The Spirit may be blasphemed or slandered by men such that is unforgivable.

Matthew 12:31-32 "Therefore I say to you, any sin and blasphemy shall be forgiven people, but blasphemy against the Spirit shall not be forgiven. ³² "Whoever speaks a word against the Son of Man, it shall be forgiven him; but whoever speaks against the Holy Spirit, it shall not be forgiven him, either in this age or in the *age* to come.

The Spirit may be lied to. I think this is one of the greatest passages showing His personality and deity.

Acts 5:3-4 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? ⁴ "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."

The Spirit may be insulted. Only persons can be insulted.

Hebrews 10:29 How much severer punishment do you think he will deserve who has trampled under foot the Son of God, and has regarded as unclean the blood of the covenant by which he was sanctified, and has insulted the Spirit of grace?

C. He Has Personal Names

He is called Comforter/Helper/Advocate just as Christ is. Inasmuch He is just as much a person as Christ is (cf 1 John 2:1)

John 14:26 "But the Helper [*parakletos*], 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.

The Spirit is referred to as a Spirit in the same way that God is referred to as a Spirit.

John 4:24 "God is spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth."

The Spirit is referred to by masculine pronouns even though the word "spirit" in the Greek is a neuter noun.

John 16:7-8 "But I tell you the truth, it is to your advantage that I go away; for if I do not go away, the Helper will not come to you; but if I go, I will send Him to you. ⁸ "And He, when He comes, will convict the world concerning sin and righteousness and judgment;

John 16:13 "But when He, the Spirit of truth, comes, He will guide you into all the truth; for He will not speak on His own initiative, but whatever He hears, He will speak; and He will disclose to you what is to come.

The Helper is very clearly the Holy Spirit. The word Helper is a masculine noun *parakletos* and Jesus says I will send "Him" a masculine pronoun and again in verse 8 and 13 Jesus uses a masculine demonstrative pronoun *ekeinos* of the Holy Spirit.

D. He is a Member of the Trinity

There are a few passages where the Holy Spirit is explicitly called God (also cf Isa 6:8-9 with Acts 28:25-26 and Jer 31:31-34 with Heb 10:15-17).

Acts 5:3-4 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? ⁴ "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."

The Holy Spirit also possesses the attributes of God which means that He is God. He is holy inasmuch as He is called the Holy Spirit (Tit 3:5). Inasmuch as He is holy however does not mean He is more holy than the Father or the Son. He is sovereign (1 Cor 12:11). He is omnipresent (Psalm 139:7). He is omniscient (1 Cor 2:9-11). He is eternal (Heb 9:14). He is truth (1 John 5:6). Since He possesses the attributes of God He is God.

He is associated with the other two members of the Trinity.

Matthew 28:19 "Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit,

2 Corinthians 13:14 The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit, be with you all.

Revelation 1:4-5 Grace to you and peace, from Him who is and who was and who is to come [Father], and from the seven Spirits who are before His throne [Spirit], ⁵ and from Jesus Christ [Son], the faithful witness, the firstborn of the dead, and the ruler of the kings of the earth.

This week we have tried to verify from a mountain of evidence that the Holy Spirit is a personality and not a creation, an influence or an idea. We have seen the importance of His personality to the doctrine of the Trinity. We have seen His personality in Scripture confirmed in four ways; 1) He performs personal acts, 2) personal acts affect Him, 3) His

names in Scripture, and 4) He is a member of the Trinity. Next week we will look at His 1st Advent to planet earth and then we will begin looking at the works of the Spirit.

ⁱ Charles Ryrie, *Basic Theology* (Chicago, IL: Moody Press, 1999), 9.

ⁱⁱ Phillip Schaff, *History of the Christian Church, Vol 3: Nicene and Post-Nicene Christianity* (Peabody, Massachusetts, Hendrickson, 2002), 629.

ⁱⁱⁱ Phillip Schaff, *History of the Christian Church, Vol 3: Nicene and Post-Nicene Christianity* (Peabody, Massachusetts, Hendrickson, 2002), 669.

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