

SYSTEMATIC THEOLOGY

Pneumatology— Study of Holy Spirit— Part 1 The Person of the Holy Spirit

Introduction

- Sadly this has been a historically neglected doctrine.
 - Not a massive amount of scriptures dedicated to it. It is less explicit than other doctrines.
 - The Holy Spirit's ministry was to magnify the Father and Christ rather than Himself.
 - The early doctrinal debates all centered on Christological issues.
- In the last century the study of Pneumatology has heightened dramatically.
 - Dispensationalists and the Scofield Study Bible popularized the doctrine. Dispensationalists teach that we are in a dispensation of the church which is an age in which the Holy Spirit labors in ways not found in the Old Testament.
 - Another reason the doctrine drew interest is because of the theory of evolution. Creationists studied biblical creation intently, and noticed the role of the Holy Spirit in it.
 - The charismatic movement heightened the desire to study more on the Holy Spirit. Many evangelicals studied it as a corrective on the charismatic movement's abuse of the doctrine.
- This is an important doctrine.
 - The Holy Spirit provides a personal dynamic interaction with the living God.
 - Through the Holy Spirit, we experience the very presence of God dwelling in us.

History of Pneumatology

- The earliest centuries of the church offered very little serious reflection on the doctrine.
- They did agree that the Holy Spirit gave us the Scriptures.
- The very earliest Christians believed in the divinity of the Holy Spirit.
 - The New Testament is a clear line of evidence, but so is the first generation of Christians after the death of the Apostles.



Early Church

- Clement of Rome around AD 95 wrote 1 Clement.
 - In 1 Clement 58:2, he wrote, “as God lives, and the Lord Jesus Christ lives, and as the Holy Spirit lives.”
- Some in the second generation also agreed.
 - Tertullian in Adversus Praxeum 2,3,8.
- However, there were some early teachers that were confused about it.
 - Irenaeus believed the Holy Spirit was an attribute of God.
 - Origen believed in tritheism.



Early Church

- In the 3rd and 4th centuries, the doctrine of the Holy Spirit got absorbed into the larger Christological debates since those debates dealt with the entire Trinity.
 - Arianism was the greatest threat to biblical pneumatology because Arius declared both Christ and the Holy Spirit to be lower created beings distinct from God.
 - In defeating Arianism, the church learned to talk about the diversity of the Godhead and the unity of the Godhead.
- Athanasius was the greatest champion for Trinitarianism and fought hard to secure it for the Roman Empire.



Early Church

- He also ended up in a confrontation with the “Topici.”
- Through figurative interpretation of Scripture, they argued that the Holy Spirit is a creature that was brought into existence out of nothingness, but is nothing more than the highest ranked angel and must be seen as distinct from the Father and Son.
- Athanasius debated this view with great vigor, arguing for the divinity of the Spirit and His consubstantial nature with the Father and Son.
- He argued from sound scriptural exegesis, logical reasoning, and personal experience.
 - There were a number of Scriptures that were appealed to and we will cover many of them when we talk about the Spirit's divinity a little later.
 - In terms of logic, the close relationship between the Spirit and the Son is like the close relationship between the Son and the Father.
 - As a result the Spirit must belong in essence to the Son just as the Son in essence belongs to the Father.
 - In terms of experience, the Holy Spirit makes us all partakers of God in which we each experience communion with God.



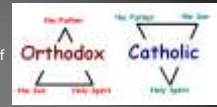
Early Church

- Athanasius did not completely put to rest the issue.
- In the late 4th century Gregory of Nazianz informed his readers that there were still many opinions and debates about the Holy Spirit.
- Furthermore, the early church witnessed a proto-Pentecostalism with movements like Montanism and Novatianism, which were highly charismatic and promoted false views about the Holy Spirit.



Medieval Church

- The sixth century onward to the Reformation in the sixteenth century is referred to as the Medieval period.
- During this time frame, there was relative disinterest in the Holy Spirit except in the case of the well known Filioque Controversy.
 - It ended up leading to the great split between the Eastern Orthodox and Roman Catholic churches in A.D. 1054.
 - Back in the Nicene Creed of 381, a statement was made declaring that the Holy Spirit proceeded from the Father to the church.
 - Two centuries later in 589, the Western church had their own council at Toledo where they added the phrase "and Son" to the creed thus making it say that the Holy Spirit proceeded from the Father and Son.
 - The Eastern Church refused to accept this change and by 1054 they finally split because of it.
 - This situation is called the Filioque Controversy because the "and Son" phrase is filioque in Latin.
- Other than this, the Medieval Church generally ignored the doctrine of the Holy Spirit.



Reformation Church

- During the Reformation, the doctrine of the Holy Spirit finally received new attention.
 - Luther argued that Scripture is the final authority, but the witness of the Holy Spirit is needed to fully understand it.
 - Furthermore, Luther argued for the total inability of man thus necessitating the enabling and gifting of the Holy Spirit for the sinner to receive Christ by faith.
 - Calvin and other Reformers will speak of the role of the Spirit in sanctification and preservation of the saints.
- However, the Holy Spirit never achieved a dominant role in the view of the Reformers as their primary concern was restoring Scripture to its proper place of authority.
 - It was a good start though and set the stage for later Pneumatological studies.



A Word About Crazy Charismania

- It is unfortunate that many today in the charismatic movement place more authority on what Holy Spirit allegedly tells them than on the Holy Scriptures.
- This was never meant to be the case.
- The Spirit inspired the Scriptures to leave an objective and unchanging standard of truth for us to base our lives upon, and it is rather absurd that He would then forgo the objective reality by giving people subjective revelation.



Protestant Scholasticism

- Following the Reformation on down to the present, we have seen the negative influence of Protestant Scholasticism.
- The human philosophies of liberalism, romanticism, and existentialism were added into the church.
 - These movements aided in the establishment of the many experiential forms of Christianity which continue to this day and cause a great deal of division in the church.
 - Unfortunately, this is the divide between Pentecostals and Evangelicals.



Divinity of the Holy Spirit

- It is important to know what passages prove that the Holy Spirit is God.
- We will start with passages that explicitly equate God with the Holy Spirit.
- A great example is with Ananias and Sapphira in Acts 5:3-4.
 - Acts 5:3-4 But Peter said, "Ananias, why has Satan filled your heart to lie to the Holy Spirit and to keep back for yourself part of the proceeds of the land? 4) While it remained unsold, did it not remain your own? And after it was sold, was it not at your disposal? Why is it that you have contrived this deed in your heart? You have not lied to men but to God."
- Another good example is 1 Corinthians 3:16-17 and 6:19-20.
 - 1Corinthians 3:16-17 Do you not know that you are **God's temple** and that God's Spirit dwells in you? 17) If anyone destroys God's temple, God will destroy him. For God's temple is holy, and you are that temple.
 - 1Corinthians 6:19-20 Or do you not know that your body is a **temple of the Holy Spirit** within you, whom you have from God? You are not your own, 20) for you were bought with a price. So glorify God in your body.

Holy Spirit and Infinite Attributes

- Now we will look at passages that show the Holy Spirit has the infinite attributes.
- He is omniscient.
 - 1Corinthians 2:10-11 these things God has revealed to us through the Spirit. For the Spirit searches everything, even the depths of God. 11) For who knows a person's thoughts except the spirit of that person, which is in him? So also no one comprehends the thoughts of God except the Spirit of God.
 - If God is omniscient, but the Holy Spirit comprehends the thought of God, He must be omniscient too. There can only be one omniscient being. Thus, the Holy Spirit is God.
 - This corresponds to the Trinity.



Holy Spirit and Infinite Attributes

- The Holy Spirit is omnipotent.
 - Luke 1:35 And the angel answered her, "The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; therefore the child to be born will be called holy—the Son of God.
 - The power of the Holy Spirit is equated with the power of the Most High, which is God. Only one being can be omnipotent.
- The process of salvation shows the Holy Spirit's omnipotence.
- Concerning the rich young ruler (Matthew 19:25-26), Jesus replied that with men it is not possible to be saved. Yet, with God it is possible since God has the power to do what otherwise is impossible.
- We relate this to the Holy Spirit based on a different discussion that Jesus had with a Pharisee.
 - Speaking to Nicodemus, Jesus revealed how men are saved (John 3:5-8).
 - They must be born again by the Holy Spirit.
 - When we put the data of these two conversations together we find that only God can save men and that only the Holy Spirit can save by giving a new birth to humans.
 - Thus, the Holy Spirit is God.
- Furthermore, the Holy Spirit is doing what is only possible for God to do, thus demonstrating omnipotence in the miracle of salvation.

Holy Spirit in Salvation

- Matthew 19:25-26 When the disciples heard this, they were greatly astonished, saying, "Who then can be saved?" 26) But Jesus looked at them and said, "With man this is impossible, but with God all things are possible."
- John 3:5-8 Jesus answered, "Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God. 6) That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. 7) Do not marvel that I said to you, 'You must be born again.' 8) The wind blows where it wishes, and you hear its sound, but you do not know where it comes from or where it goes. So it is with everyone who is born of the Spirit."



Holy Spirit and Infinite Attributes

- The Holy Spirit is eternal. If God is eternal, but the Holy Spirit is eternal, then the Holy Spirit must be God.
 - Hebrews 9:14 how much more will the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without blemish to God, purify our conscience from dead works to serve the living God.

