

Jesus Promises the Holy Spirit (John 14:15-24)

Expository Lessons from the Gospel of John

I. Background for the Farewell Discourse

- a. As we resume in the text, it is the Thursday night, the night before Jesus is to be crucified.
 - i. Jesus has had his Last Supper with the disciples, at which (we know from **Matthew, Mark and Luke**) He instituted the Lord's Supper with the bread and the cup.
- b. After dinner has ended and Judas has departed, but before Jesus and his disciples cross over to the Garden of Gethsemane (where Jesus will be taken prisoner), Jesus gives a lengthy and very significant talk to the apostles.
 - i. The passages we will cover in this lesson are part of that "Farewell Discourse", which we find in **John 13:31-17:26**.
 - ii. Jesus had just explained that He was going to the Father. When Philip requests that Jesus to "show us the Father", Jesus replies that anyone who has seen Him has seen the Father.
 - iii. In our last lesson we spoke about the relationship between the Father and the Son, as understood by the early Christians (and consistent with all the other passages in the New Testament).
 - iv. Now Jesus speaks directly about the Holy Spirit.

II. Jesus Promises that the Father will Send the Holy Spirit

- a. Read **John 14:15-24**.
- b. In the "Farewell Discourse" Jesus discusses several inter-related topics, and often touches on the same subject several times throughout this talk. Therefore, in this series we are generally taking the topics one at a time *within this discourse* rather than going through line-by-line (where we would be repeating the same thing in different lessons).
- c. In prior lessons we touched on:
 - i. The way to God and to heaven is to follow the teachings of Jesus; to obey all of His commands. The one *who keeps His commands* is the one who loves Jesus; He and His Father will make their home with that person.

- ii. The relationship between the Father and the Son (*divinity* of the Son, who proceeded from the Father; the Son being *sent by* the Father; the Father being *head of* the Son).
- d. In this lesson we will focus on what Jesus is saying about the Holy Spirit. Designations used by Jesus to describe the Spirit:
 - i. “another Helper... the *Spirit of truth*” (**John 14:16-17**)
- e. Jesus reveals more about the Spirit a little further on in this Farewell Discourse. Read **John 14:25-26** and **John 16:5-15**.
 - i. “the Helper, the *Holy Spirit*” (**John 14:26**)
 - ii. Clearly the “*Spirit of truth*” and “*Holy Spirit*” are two ways Jesus uses to refer to the very same thing.
- f. Things we learn about the Holy Spirit in these passages in **John 14** and **John 16**:
 - i. Jesus promises that He will ask the Father to send his apostles a Helper, the Holy Spirit (**John 14:16**).
 - ii. The Spirit will abide with them (but not with “the world”) forever (**John 14:16**).
 - iii. Jesus tells the apostles, “He (the Holy Spirit) dwells with you *and will be in you.*” (**John 14:17**)
 - iv. Jesus tells the apostles that the Holy Spirit “will teach you all things and bring to your remembrance all the things I said to you” (**John 14:26**).
 - 1. Often non-Christians will ask: How do you know the apostles write down Jesus’ words accurately, when they wrote many years after he died? This passage tells us: Jesus says *God’s Spirit would remind them* of all the things he told them.
 - v. Jesus connects His departure with sending the Holy Spirit to the disciples. He says, “If I do not go away, the Helper will not come to you; but if I depart, I will send Him to you.” (**John 16:7**)
 - vi. The Holy Spirit “will convict the world of sin, righteousness and judgment”. (**John 16:9**)
 - vii. Jesus tells the apostles that when the Holy Spirit comes, “He will guide you into *all truth*”, and will tell them of things to come. (**John 16:13**)

III. Who (or What) is the Holy Spirit?

- a. Review of some references to the Holy Spirit we have encountered thus far in the gospel of **John**:
 - i. John the Baptist saw the Holy Spirit come down upon Jesus in the form of a dove at the baptism of Jesus, and the Spirit remained on Him. (**John 1:32-33**)
 - ii. Jesus told Nicodemus that he must be born again “of water *and the Spirit*” in **John 3:5-8**.
 - iii. In **John 4:10-15**, Jesus spoke to the Samaritan woman the well, telling her that He could give (*spiritual*) water which, if anyone drank it, they would never thirst. He said the water he would give “will become a fountain of water springing up into everlasting life”.
 1. Later, in Jerusalem: “On the last day, that great day of the feast (*of Tabernacles*), Jesus stood and cried out, saying, ‘If anyone thirsts, let him come to Me and drink. He who believes in Me, as the Scripture has said, out of his heart will flow rivers of living water.’ But this He spoke concerning the Spirit, whom those believing in Him would receive; for the Holy Spirit was not yet given, because Jesus was not yet glorified.” (**John 7:37-39**, NKJV)
 2. We see that the “living water” or “fountain of water springing up” that Jesus promised to the Samaritan woman referred to *the Holy Spirit*.
- b. The Holy Spirit is mentioned many places in the Old Testament. Some well-known examples:
 - i. “In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. The earth was without form, and void; and darkness was on the face of the deep. And the *Spirit of God was hovering over the face of the waters.*” (**Genesis 1:1-2**, NKJV)
 - ii. David, after being confronted on his sin with Bathsheba, says: “Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a steadfast spirit within me. Do not cast me away from Your presence, and do not take Your Holy Spirit from me.” (**Psalms 51:10-11**, NKJV; designated **Psalms 50:12-13** in the LXX)
 - iii. There are places in the Old Testament where it says the Spirit of the Lord fell on someone or departed from them (**1 Samuel 16:13-14**, designated **1 Kings 16:13-14** in the LXX; **Isaiah 59:21**; **Ezekiel 11:1-5**).

IV. The Holy Spirit as Part of the Trinity

a. Places where we see all three referenced (Father, Son and Holy Spirit)

i. Genesis 1

1. In the beginning, God made heaven and earth. (**Genesis 1:1**)
2. In creation account, Spirit of God was hovering over the face of the water. (**Genesis 1:2**)
3. God says, "Let Us make man in Our image and according to Our likeness" (**Genesis 1:26**) Note that God refers to himself in plural term ("us", not "me") Early Christian writers understood that He was referring to the Son and the Holy Spirit, who are with God when man was created.
4. Irenaeus (130-200 AD), early Christian writer who was bishop of the church in Lyons, in modern-day France, made the same point:
 - a. "For with Him were always present the Word and Wisdom, the Son and the Spirit, by whom and in whom, freely and spontaneously, He made all things, to whom also He speaks, saying, 'Let Us make man after Our image and likeness' (**Genesis 1:26**)"
 - b. (Source: Irenaeus, Against Heresies, book 4, chapter 20; found in Ante-Nicene Fathers vol. 1, pp. 487-488.)
5. We know from the New Testament that the Son of God was present and actively involved in the creation of all things, in the beginning (**John 1:1-3, Hebrews 1:1-2, Hebrews 1:8-10, Colossians 1:15-16**).

ii. Isaiah 48:16

1. "Come near to Me, hear this: I have not spoken in secret from the beginning; from the time that it was, I was there. And now the Lord God and His Spirit have sent Me." (**Isaiah 48:16**, NKJV)
2. Someone who was there from the beginning is speaking, saying that the Lord God (the Father) and His Spirit (the Holy Spirit) have sent Him (the Son).

iii. **Mark 1:8-12** (and other parallel passages on the baptism of Jesus by John the Baptist)

1. “And immediately, coming up from the water, He saw the heavens parting and the Spirit descending upon Him like a dove. Then a voice came from heaven, ‘You are My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.’” (**Mark 1:10–11**, NKJV)
 2. Father speaks, addresses the Son, on whom the Spirit descends.
- iv. **Matthew 28:18-20**, Jesus gives the Great Commission.
1. “Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit,” (**Matthew 28:19**, NKJV)
- v. **2 Corinthians 13:14** (the closing blessing of Paul in this letter).
1. “The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all. Amen.” (**2 Corinthians 13:14**, NKJV)
- vi. From Peter’s introduction, in the beginning of **1 Peter**.
1. “Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ, To the pilgrims of the Dispersion in Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia, elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, in sanctification of the Spirit, for obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ: Grace to you and peace be multiplied.” (**1 Peter 1:1–2**, NKJV)
- b. The Holy Spirit is God (is divine).
- i. “But Peter said, ‘Ananias, why has Satan filled your heart to lie to the Holy Spirit and keep back part of the price of the land for yourself? While it remained, was it not your own? And after it was sold, was it not in your own control? Why have you conceived this thing in your heart? You have not lied to men but to God.’” (**Acts 5:3–4**, NKJV)
 1. Peter says that Ananias lied to the Holy Spirit: he lied to God. Peter refers here to the Holy Spirit as God (divinity).
 - ii. David realized that there was nowhere he could go to escape or hide from God’s Spirit, which is everywhere (an attribute of divinity).
 1. “Where can I go from Your Spirit? Or where can I flee from Your presence? If I ascend into heaven, You are there; If I make my bed in hell (=Sheol or Hades), behold, You are there.” (**Psalm 139:7–8**, NKJV; designated Psalm **138:7-8** in the LXX)
- c. Is the Holy Spirit an “It” or a “He”?

- i. We live in an age when there is confusion about pronouns. What about the Holy Spirit?
- ii. The Greek word “pneuma” (wind, spirit) is neuter. (In Greek, unlike English, all nouns are either masculine, feminine or neuter.)
- iii. However, when Jesus refers to the Spirit as “another Helper”, Jesus also uses a masculine pronoun (translated “He” in the NKJV) to refer to the Holy Spirit.
 - 1. “But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My name, He (*in Greek: “that one”, masculine gender*) will teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all things that I said to you.” (**John 14:26**, NKJV)
 - 2. Similar in **John 16:13-14**.
- iv. It is important for us to understand that the Holy Spirit is not just an impersonal cosmic force or influence. The Holy Spirit is a person (meaning He has a personality, a will; He hears, and He speaks). Examples that illustrate this:
 - 1. Jesus said “...whatever He hears He will speak; and He will tell you things to come...He will take what is mine and declare it to you.” (**John 16:13-14**, NKJV)
 - 2. Paul told the Ephesian elders, “...the Holy Spirit testifies in every city, saying that chains and tribulations await me.” (**Acts 20:23**, NKJV)
 - 3. Peter wrote, “Of this salvation the prophets have inquired and searched carefully, who prophesied of the grace that would come to you, searching what, or what manner of time, the Spirit of Christ who was in them was indicating when He testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ and the glories that would follow.” (**1 Peter 1:10-11**, NKJV)
 - 4. Also recall the passage from **Acts 5**, where Peter said that Ananias had lied to the Holy Spirit. Someone lies to a *person* (meaning a personality, which could include humans, angels or God); one does not lie to an impersonal force (*like gravity*).
- d. How Christians have understood the relationship between the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit (the trinity), historically.
 - i. From our previous lesson, regarding the relationship between the Father and the Son:

1. The Father was unbegotten.
 2. The Son was begotten of the Father from eternity.
 3. The Father is greater than the Son, and head of (over) the Son.
- ii. To review part of a quote from Tertullian (160-230 AD), early Christian writer from Carthage in North Africa:
1. “Now the Spirit indeed is third from God and the Son; just as the fruit of the tree is third from the root, or as the stream out of the river is third from the fountain, or as the apex of the ray is third from the sun. Nothing, however, is alien from that original source whence it derives its own properties. In like manner the Trinity, flowing down from the Father through intertwined and connected steps, does not at all disturb the Monarchy (= single rule), while it at the same time guards the state of the Economy (= management or arrangement).”
 - a. (Source: Tertullian, *Against Praxeas*, chapter 8; in *Ante-Nicene Fathers* vol. 3, p. 603.)
 2. This is typical of many early Christian writings; see *Dictionary of Early Christian Beliefs*, ed. David Bercot, articles on Trinity and Holy Spirit.
 3. Note that the Father is the source of the trinity; the Son and the Spirit proceed from the Father.
 4. Note that the Spirit is considered third in terms of order, after the Father and the Son.
- iii. Historic understanding of the divinity of the Holy Spirit, and His relationship to the Father and Son, is expressed in the Nicene Creed (original version 325 AD; variations later).
1. The Spirit proceeded from the Father. (Western Christians will say the Holy Spirit proceeded “from the Father *and the Son*”; some have said, “from the Father *through* the Son”).
 2. In theological circles, this is known as the “filioque” controversy. That is Latin for “and the son”, which Western Christians (Roman Catholic) added to the Nicene Creed, but Eastern Christians (Orthodox Church, Church of the East) did not accept.
 3. Two versions of the Nicene Creed:

- a. "...Who (the Holy Spirit) proceeds from the Father" (earlier Eastern version); versus
 - b. "...Who proceeds from the Father *and the Son*" (version later accepted by the Western churches).
- e. **Question:** How should we view and understand the Holy Spirit, practically? For me personally, two parts of the Old Testament help provide a picture of the Holy Spirit:
- i. When the Spirit came down on Jesus at His baptism, it was in fulfillment of a prophecy in **Isaiah 11**. Read **Isaiah 11:1-5** (description of the Holy Spirit).
 - 1. "There shall come forth a rod from the root of Jesse...." Jesse was the father of King David, from whom Jesus was descended. Therefore, this prophecy points to Jesus, who came out of that root stock.
 - 2. "The Spirit of God shall rest upon *Him* [this rod from the line of Jesse]...."
 - a. A beautiful picture (and prophecy) of the Spirit of God coming down on Jesus in the form of a dove at Jesus' baptism. Fulfillment of this prophecy is referenced *in all four gospels*, in: **Matthew 3:16**, **Mark 1:10**, **Luke 3:21-22** and **John 1:32-34**.
 - 3. Many wonderful attributes of the Holy Spirit are held up (wisdom, counsel, might, knowledge, etc.).
 - ii. The Holy Spirit is foreshadowed by the pillar of cloud (by day) and fire (by night) in the Exodus journey out of Egypt and through the Wilderness. In **1 Corinthians 10:2** Paul says the Israelites were all "baptized in the *cloud* and the *sea*", which parallels what Jesus said about being born again "of *water* and the *Spirit*" in **John 3:5**. From the Exodus journey we see the following parallels between the pillar of cloud/fire then, and the Holy Spirit after the time of Jesus' death and resurrection:
 - 1. The pillar was manifest after the Passover Lamb was slain (**Exodus 13:21-22**).
 - 2. The pillar led them *to the water*, and then *through the water*, which Paul in **1 Corinthians 10:2** referred to as their "baptism". Similarly, the Holy Spirit in **Acts 2** at Pentecost pointed the way to the message Peter gave, culminating in **Act 2:38-41**.

3. The pillar *led them through the Wilderness*, to the Promised Land. It told them specifically what route to take, when to stop and set up camp, and when to break camp and resume their journey.
4. The people set up camp with the pillar and the tabernacle *at center* of their community.
5. The pillar led them all the way through the Wilderness (representing the Christian life here for us, a time of testing), until they reached the Promised Land (representing heaven at the end our own spiritual journey).
6. All this time, the pillar was a guide, a sign of God's presence, a protector and a comforter. This is what the Spirit of God is for us today as Christians. Jesus said He would not leave us as orphans, but that God would send His Spirit to be with us: to protect, guide and comfort us on our journey to heaven.

V. Does the Holy Spirit Literally *Dwell Inside* of Christians?

- a. Jesus said in **John 14:17** "(the Spirit) dwells with you *and will be in you*".
- b. **Question:** Did Jesus mean that literally? Does the Holy Spirit literally dwell inside of Christians?
- c. While most Christians would say "yes", there was a long period in the Churches of Christ where a literal indwelling of the Holy Spirit was rejected. How could something like that happen to a group so serious about studying and following the Bible, when the Scriptures are so clear on this?
 - i. This was an over-reaction against the rise and influence of Pentecostalism in the early 20th century. Pentecostalism tends to be a very subjective, emotion-based movement with a focus on feelings, personal experiences and miraculous signs.
 - ii. Many (understandably) have been turned off by manipulation of church leaders who insist the Holy Spirit is behind their own plans or agendas.
 - iii. In reaction to this, the Churches of Christ swung to the other direction, teaching that the Holy Spirit gave us the Scriptures, and we just need to study the Book.
 - iv. When I first came into the Churches of Christ in the 1980's, almost all of the teaching on the Holy Spirit was on what the Spirit *does not do* (rejection of miraculous signs, gifts of the Holy Spirit, baptism of the Holy Spirit, etc.). The result in many Churches of Christ:

1. A tendency toward legalism; producing a rather brittle and “dry” religion; and
 2. Strong focus on studying the Bible, yet one that could tend toward knowledge of theological facts and doctrines at the expense of a richer inner spiritual life.
- d. **Question:** How do we know the Holy Spirit literally dwells in Christians? Let’s consider what other passages in the New Testament say:
- i. “But you are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if indeed the Spirit of God dwells in you. Now if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he is not His. And if Christ is in you, the body is dead because of sin, but the Spirit is life because of righteousness. But if the Spirit of Him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, He who raised Christ from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through His Spirit who dwells in you.” (**Romans 8:9–11**, NKJV)
 - ii. “Or do you not know that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have from God, and you are not your own?” (**1 Corinthians 6:19**, NKJV)
 - iii. “And because you are sons, God has sent forth the Spirit of His Son into your hearts, crying out, ‘Abba, Father!’” (**Galatians 4:6**, NKJV)
- e. **Question:** When does the Holy Spirit enter into the heart of a disciple?
- i. When a disciple is born (again) of water *and the Spirit*. (**John 3:3-5**)
 - ii. When a person is baptized and *receives the gift of the Holy Spirit* (**Acts 2:38**).
- f. **Question:** Can we lose the Holy Spirit, or drive Him out of the temple, our hearts?
- i. “Now He who establishes us with you in Christ and has anointed us is God, who also has sealed us and given us the Spirit in our hearts as a guarantee.” (**2 Corinthians 1:21–22**, NKJV)
 1. But is that “guarantee” *unconditional*?
 2. Example: Imagine you purchase a new car with a 5-year guarantee. However, you never change the oil and even decide to put sand in the gas tank. After the engine freezes up, you decide take it bac to the car dealer and insist that they honor their ‘guarantee’. What would the result be? Forget it! Even though there is a warranty or guarantee, *it assumes you are taking care of the car and not abusing it!*

3. It is similar with the Holy Spirit. We have a guarantee, but *if we abuse what we have been entrusted with*, that guarantee will be revoked by God.
- ii. Read **1 Thessalonians 5:14-22**.
 1. “Do not quench the Spirit”
 2. To quench something is to extinguish it, like a fire being put out by water.
 3. We can put out / drive out the Holy Spirit by abusing our temples, living sinful lives that violate Jesus’ commands.
 - iii. As discussed previously, Paul tells us in **1 Corinthians 6:19** that the body of a Christian is “the temple of the Holy Spirit”. Consider also what he says about that temple, earlier in **1 Corinthians 3**.
 1. “Do you not know that you are the temple of God and that the Spirit of God dwells in you? If anyone defiles the temple of God, God will destroy him. For the temple of God is holy, which temple you are.” (**1 Corinthians 3:16–17**, NKJV)
 2. Yes, the body of a Christian is a temple of the Holy Spirit. However, we are warned that *if we defile that temple*, God will destroy us!
 3. Clearly we must be careful to maintain the holy state of this temple, or God will void the guarantee of our salvation and we will be destroyed as a result.
 - iv. Irenaeus warns us,
 1. “As therefore he says, when we were destitute of the heavenly Spirit, we walked in former times in the oldness of the flesh, not obeying God; so now let us, receiving the Spirit, walk in newness of life, obeying God. Inasmuch, therefore, as without the Spirit of God we cannot be saved, the apostle exhorts us through faith and chaste conversation to preserve the Spirit of God, lest, having become non-participators of the Divine Spirit, we lose the kingdom of heaven; and he exclaims, that flesh in itself, and blood, cannot possess the kingdom God (referring to **1 Corinthians 15:50**).”
 2. (Source: Irenaeus, *Against Heresies*, book 5, chapter 9; found in Ante-Nicene Fathers vol. 1, p. 535.)

- v. Origen (185-255 AD), teacher in Alexandria, points to the story of the Flood of Noah to make the point that God can (and will) remove his Spirit from those who become wicked.
 - 1. “At the time of the Flood, when all persons had corrupted their way before God, it is recorded that God spoke in this manner, concerning undeserving men and sinners: ‘My Spirit will not abide with those men forever, because they are flesh (**Genesis 6:3**).’ *By this it is clearly shown that the Spirit of God is taken away from all who are unworthy.*”
 - 2. (Source: Origen, *De Principiis*, book 1, chapter 3; found in Ante-Nicene Fathers vol. 4, p. 254.)
- vi. When we become Christians, our bodies become temples of God in which the Holy Spirit lives. If we quench the Spirit, we can drive the Spirit out. If the Spirit departs and does not return, we will lose our salvation.

VI. Conclusions

- a. Now that Jesus has been crucified and resurrected (and ascended to heaven) Holy Spirit guides us. (However, Jesus is still interceding for us, at the right hand of the Father.)
- b. He is a personality (not an impersonal force), divine, part of the trinity, came from the Father.
- c. Throughout Scripture: starting in Genesis 1, throughout the OT and NT
- d. Do not make the mistake of over-reacting against errors others are making around us (who abuse the teaching on the Holy Spirit).
- e. Our bodies are temples of Holy Spirit.
- f. Don’t quench the Holy Spirit; He is a guarantee, but not an unconditional one. He can be taken away if we abandon following God.
- g. There is more teaching to come on the Holy Spirit, in upcoming lessons.