

## Lesson 2 - "Identifying Who the Holy Spirit Really Is"

Sunday, June 13, 2010

Lesson Scripture: Acts 2:1-4

**Lesson Objective:** To answer the following questions:

"Is the Holy Spirit a person or some other entity?" "If the Holy Spirit is a person, what does that mean to me?"

**The Holy Spirit's Characteristics as a Person** - When we are being told something for the very first time, our attention is greatly peaked to learn more about what we are being taught. This is the way many people are today when they hear about the Holy Spirit. The subject is new to them and they really do not know who He is. It is similar to being told a mystery. This is certainly not a bad response concerning knowledge of the Holy Spirit; but it is one that needs to be quickly fixed. Do you sometimes think of the Holy Spirit as being a non-person? This may happen when a person is asked the question "Have you been filled by the Holy Spirit?" We naturally do not think of the Holy Spirit as a person but rather as something that is happening to us physically. When a person views the Holy Spirit as a person rather than a force, their entire perspective will change. A misinterpretation of who the Holy Spirit is may come from a wrong interpretation of God's Word in Acts Chapter 2. Acts 2:1-4 says <sup>1</sup>*When the Day of Pentecost had fully come, they were all with one accord in one place.* <sup>2</sup>*And suddenly there came a sound from heaven, as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled the whole house where they were sitting.* <sup>3</sup>*Then there appeared to them divided tongues, as of fire, and one sat upon each of them.* <sup>4</sup>*And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance.* This is when the Holy Spirit came into the lives of the first Christians. The misinterpretation comes when the individual reads concerning the sights and sounds that were present when the Holy Spirit arrived. In the above passage the phrases that may have caused the confusion are underlined. The assumption might have occurred because of the sound of the wind or the divided tongues of fire. Perhaps it was the people speaking words not in their native language. The assumption is that this must be the Holy Spirit; but, it is not. This would be similar to the sound of a siren on a fire truck. You hear the siren and determine that it is from a fire truck...but it is not the fire truck itself. The descriptions in the passage were simply manifestations of the Holy Spirit. To be able to understand the Holy Spirit better, Dr. Stanley in his book gives us the characteristics of a person and a Bible passage that describes that same characteristic in the Holy Spirit. Please review the passages of Scripture to see the Holy Spirit's characteristic.

Characteristic	A Person's Description	Holy Spirit
Knowledge	Ability to know, understand, recognize, and have meaning.	1 <sup>st</sup> Corinthians 2:11
Will	Ability to make choices and decisions on the basis of what one chooses to do.	1 <sup>st</sup> Corinthians 12:11
Emotion	Ability to feel or have feelings and to be aware of them.	Romans 15:30; Ephesians 4:30; John 14:16-17

Review the above passages of Scripture for each characteristic. Describe in the space provided the characteristics that the Holy Spirit has that match the person's characteristic and description. What words are used in John 14:16-17 that describes the Holy Spirit as a person?

**The Holy Spirit's Place in the Trinity** - The Holy Spirit is the third member of the Holy Trinity consisting of God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit. Each member of the Trinity has their own unique identity and function. God the Father is our heavenly Father and Creator; God the Son is our Sacrifice and Savior; and the Holy Spirit is our Helper and Teacher that was sent to us. They have always been together. Genesis 1:2 says <sup>2</sup> *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.* The Spirit of God was present during the creation of the world and mankind. To take this one step further, Genesis 1:26-27 says <sup>26</sup> *Then God said, "Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness; let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, over the birds of the air, and over the cattle, over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth."* <sup>27</sup> *So God created man in His own image; in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them.* In this passage we see that God said "Let Us make man in Our image." We were created in the image of those in the Trinity. We have the same qualities as God. We have the same characteristics God has that were described earlier in that we can learn things, make decisions, and feel emotions. The Holy Spirit is the Spirit of God that was present at creation. It is also the Spirit who came upon Jesus Christ at His baptism found in Matthew 3:16. It is the Holy Spirit that becomes our Helper at salvation.

**God's Promise and Power Given to the Believer** - Jesus promised His disciples and us today that He would send the Holy Spirit to us. In John 14:26 Jesus said <sup>26</sup> *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 things that I said to you.* Jesus repeatedly promised that God would send the disciples His Spirit (See Luke 11:13; John 7:39; 14:16; 15:26 and 16:7). The promises He made is also known as the "Promise of My Father". After Jesus was crucified and before His ascension to heaven, He promised the disciples in Luke 24:49 <sup>49</sup> *Behold, I send the Promise of My Father upon you; but tarry in the city of Jerusalem until you are endued with power from on high.* Bear in mind that the disciples did not receive the Holy Spirit until 40 days later (at Pentecost). Jesus was still with them at the time and the Helper was sent after He ascended on high (Read John 7:39). When we accept Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior of our life, we receive the Holy Spirit immediately (Jesus has already ascended to heaven). The important questions that now need to be asked are "Have you accepted Jesus Christ as your Savior?" If not, "What is preventing you from doing it now?" If you are a Christian, "How do you know for sure that the Holy Spirit is within you?"

Jesus promised us the Holy Spirit because He knows that we need the power to be steadfast and effective in our witness for Him. The Holy Spirit enables the Christian to live the Spirit-filled life. We must realize that the power we have through the Holy Spirit is far greater than any other principality, power, or dominion that we could ever encounter. Paul's words can be of comfort to us where he said in Ephesians 3:20-21 <sup>20</sup> *Now to Him who is able to do exceedingly abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that works in us,* <sup>21</sup> *to Him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus to all generations, forever and ever.*

According to Ephesians 3:20-21, what is the Holy Spirit able to do in your life?

Dr. Stanley provides us with challenges for spiritual growth in each lesson. Please prayerfully consider taking the challenges that God has given you this week and act upon them in your life.

<b>Challenges for Today and Tomorrow</b>	
Today:	The Holy Spirit is part of the Trinity of God and He brings God's power to my life.
Tomorrow:	I will spend time this week studying what the Bible teaches concerning the Spirit's power in my life.