

TEACHING GOAL

To show that the Holy Spirit is a person.

DOCTRINAL STANDARDS

Q. How many persons are there in the Godhead?

A. There are three persons in the Godhead; the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit; and these three are one God, the same in substance, equal in power and glory.

S.C. 6; L.C. 9; W.C. of F. II; Savoy 2; Young 7-9,15

SCRIPTURAL BASIS

Study Passage: John 16:1-15

Support Passages: John 14:16-17, 25-31, 15:26-27; Romans 8:26; Ephesians 1:13-14, 4:30; Galatians 4:1-6; Isaiah 63:7-14; Psalm 51:10-13

BIBLE STORY

John 3:1-10; The Spirit of God is the powerful person of the Trinity who causes people to be born again (or from above) according to His sovereign will and work.

MEMORY ASSIGNMENT

"And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, by whom you were sealed for the day of redemption." (Ephesians 4:30, ESV)

APPLICATION

We must not distress the Holy Spirit who, by means of a past and completely effective act, sealed us for the day of redemption and was given to the people of God as the pledge of their inheritance.

SUMMARY

Those who refuse the deity of the Son of God also refuse a personal Holy Spirit. The same errors that led to the heresy of Arius also caused were the basis for denial of God's Personal Spirit by those known as Monarchians and Sabelians. Again, in our day, Modernists, Unitarians, and such like, share in this heresy. The Word of God, however, is so specific and so plentiful are references to a personal Holy Spirit that there is no excuse for this denial. This erroneous view states that the Holy Spirit is like an idea or concept that is completely abstract. "Like the concept of beauty; as the flower is beautiful so God is a Spirit."

We read, "*When (He) the Spirit of truth comes, he will guide you into all the truth, for he will not speak on his own authority, but whatever he hears he will speak, and he will declare to you the things that are to come.*"¹ The verse begins with the use of the masculine personal pronoun He (ekeinos in Greek) in the phrase "When (He)" and since there exist feminine and neuter forms of this pronoun it clearly must be translated He. Such references to the Holy Spirit utterly destroy the view that God's Spirit is merely an abstract concept.

How can a mere abstraction intercede for us with groanings too deep for words², or be given as a pledge of our inheritance. Speaking of the Holy Spirit we read in Ephesians 1:14, "Who is given as a pledge of our inheritance, with a view to the redemption of God's own possession, to the praise of His glory." We notice again that the pronoun who translates the masculine Greek pronoun "hos" therefore the spirit of god is a He, not an it. How can a mere concept be grieved or distressed when we sin? (Ephesians 4:30)

The Spirit of God is named in scripture as The Paraclete (John 16:7). Not merely a help or a comfort but The Helper, The Comforter, The Intercessor, is the Holy Spirit. Help and comfort are merely abstract influences but The Helper, The Comforter is a person who acts in our behalf. The third person of the Trinity has intelligence (John 14:26), and affections (Isaiah 63:10, Ephesians 4:30). He searches, speaks, testifies, commands, reveals, strives, creates, makes intercession, raises the dead, etc. (Genesis 1:2, 6:3; Luke 12:12; John 14:26, 15:26, 16:8; Acts 8:29, 13:2; Romans 8:11; I Corinthians 2:10-11) A being that does all these things is no mere influence. He is not merely "the force" but He is the personal Holy Spirit of God.

Such divine perfections are given to Him as omnipresence, omniscience, omnipotence, and eternity. (Psalm 139:7-10; Isaiah 40:13-14; I Corinthians 2:10-11, 12:11; Hebrews 9:14) He is the regenerator of God's people and He inspires them and assures them of their union with Christ. He works sanctifica-

tion in people, teaches and guides the church. It is He that provides and preserves the Word of God throughout history. Let us therefore be careful to please the Spirit of God Who indwells and seals us. Let us please Him with holiness and service to our Lord Jesus Christ.

¹ John 16:13, ESV Parenthesis mine.

² Romans 8:26