

By Faith Lesson 21

The Holy Spirit

The Dove-the symbol of the Holy Spirit (Luke 3:22)

The Holy Spirit proceeds from the Father and the Son. The Father has created all things, the Son has redeemed mankind and the Holy Spirit sanctifies man upon the earth, making him acceptable to God. Man is not of himself holy. Only the Holy Spirit can make him holy. That is why the Bible teaches in this way: "Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his." (Rom. 8:9) So important it is to receive and preserve the Holy Spirit.

The Third Person

The outpouring of the Holy Spirit

Already before He ascended into heaven, Jesus promised to send the Holy Spirit unto His own. This promise was fulfilled on Pentecost. The Holy Spirit began to do the work of winning the souls of men. Christian Doctrine teaches of the work of the Holy Spirit in the following way:

"The work of Christ in the world continues in His congregation as the work of the Holy Spirit. In the congregation of Christ, we are in living unity with Christ and with other Christians. That is why the Bible calls the congregation, the Body of Christ." (Christian Doctrine 44)

The Holy Spirit and the Living Congregation cannot be separated from each other

The Holy Spirit works through the kingdom of God, and teaches according to the Bible. Jesus said that the Holy Spirit takes from Him, that is from the Word of God, and gives unto the disciples.

"But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you." (John 14:26)

One of the tasks of the Holy Spirit is rebuking. The Holy Spirit rebukes the unbelieving world. Jesus said of it: "And when he is come, he will reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment: Of sin, because they believe not on me; Of righteousness, because I go to my Father, and ye see me no more; Of judgment, because the prince of this world is judged." (John 16:8-11)

This reproof is given so that man would see his evil condition and would understand to make repentance. Unto those who are penitent, over their sins the Holy Spirit proclaims the Gospel through Christians, in which all sins are forgiven unto him in the name and blood of Jesus. This is the office of the Holy Spirit. Jesus gave this office.

"And when he had said this, he breathed on them, and said unto them, Receive ye the Holy Ghost: Whosoever sins ye remit, they are remitted unto them; and whosoever sins ye retain, they are retained." (John 20:22,23)

The office of preaching is the office of the Holy Spirit

The Holy Spirit, then, has the keys of the kingdom of Heaven. With one of the keys, the penitent are released from their sins, and with the other key, the impenitent and disobedient are bound in their evil condition, so that they would understand and repent. With all this also, the Holy Spirit reveals the love of God.

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The work of the Holy Spirit does not end there when it helps a person into the kingdom of God. Jesus also taught His own concerning the office of the Holy Spirit in this way: "Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak: and he will show you things to come. He shall glorify me: for he shall receive of mine, and shall shew it unto you." (John 16:13,14)

The Holy Spirit unites the children of God into one Family of God

In this way, the Holy Spirit desires to lead the children of God even today in the fellowship of the kingdom of God, in which He does His work.

The Bible instructs us to pray that God would not remove His Holy Spirit, but that He would protect and cleanse our hearts. The Holy Spirit becomes mournful over our faults. But He rejoices when we come to believe our sins forgiven in the name and blood of Jesus, through the Gospel which is preached from the kingdom of God.

Exercises

1. Unto whom did Jesus promise to send the Holy Spirit? (John 16:7)
2. How far did Jesus send His own as witnesses with the power of the Holy Spirit? (Acts 1:8)
3. What happened to those who proclaimed the Gospel without the Holy Spirit outside of God's kingdom? (Acts 19:13-16)
4. What did David pray when by his fall he lost the Holy Spirit? (Ps. 51:12)
5. From where does the Holy Spirit flee, according to the book of The Wisdom of Solomon 1:5? (One of the Apocryphal Books)
6. What happened in the home of Cornelius, when Peter proclaimed the forgiveness of sins in the name of Jesus? (Acts 10:44-48)
7. Review the Third Article of the Creed and its explanation. Memorize them.
8. Search Hymn 127 for different names for the Holy Spirit.