

# The Person of the Holy Spirit - Part 2

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Growing up, it never dawned on me that the Holy Spirit was actually a divine Person. I said the creed, and acknowledged with my mouth that, 'I believe in 'God the Father, God the son, and God the Holy Spirit.' But there was no inward reality of His divinity until years later. In some churches, people honour the Spirit with their lips, yet in reality He is neglected as their Lord. He is the 'forgotten God' as Francis Chan has said. May this never be the case with us. In this article, I look at what Scripture reveals about His divinity and how we can sin against Him.

## **The Holy Spirit Has the Characteristics of God**

If He is God, then Scripture would describe Him as having the characteristics of God. Characteristics such as omnipotence (He is all-powerful), omniscience (He is all-knowing) and omnipresence (He is all-encompassing).

We see that the Spirit is described as having all of these attributes. Let's have a look:

### **His Omnipresence**

*'Where can I go from your Spirit? Where can I flee from your presence?'* (Psalm 139:7). This is a rhetorical question and the answer is obviously, 'Nowhere!'

### **His Omniscience**

In Romans 11:33-34, Paul exclaims that no one can know the Lord's vast and complex thoughts and plans. Yet the Spirit does! *'For who knows a person's thoughts except their own spirit within them? In the same way no one knows the thoughts of God except the Spirit of God'* (1 Corinthians 2:11).

### **His Omnipotence**

*'And the angel answered her, 'The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you.'*" (Luke 1:35). Genesis 1 describes the Spirit of God as actively involved in the creation event (Genesis 1:2). What a powerful being He is!

## His Name is Placed on Equal Terms with God

We see that His name is placed on equal terms with God, and here we have the revelation of the nature of God as being three persons yet one substance.

- *'But Peter said, Ananias, why has Satan filled your heart to lie to the Holy Spirit ... You have not lied to man but to God'* (Acts 5:3-4). Lying to the Holy Spirit is synonymous with lying to God.
- *'Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptising them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit'* (Matthew 28:19).
- *'The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ and the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all'* (2 Corinthians 13:14).
- We also see that the Spirit is called eternal. Only God is eternal in nature! (see Hebrews 9:14)

Because the Spirit is God, we give Him room to be Lord among us when we meet. Paul exclaimed, *'Now the Lord is the Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom'* (2 Corinthians 3:17).

## On Sinning Against the Holy Spirit

There is not one single sin against the Spirit, but many that the Bible describes.

### 1. The Spirit May Be Grieved

*'And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God'* (Ephesians 4:30).

One may grieve the Spirit without blaspheming the Spirit. The context here is dealing with how we treat others in anger, bitterness, rage and slander. In other words, when we act selfishly and sinfully towards others, it grieves the Spirit. To grieve Him means to cause Him intense sorrow.

### 2. The Spirit May Be Resisted

*'You stiff-necked people, uncircumcised in heart and ears, you always resist the Holy Spirit. As your fathers did, so do you'* (Acts 7:51).

This describes ongoingly resisting His work and activity in your life. The Jews resisted the prophets, whom the Spirit spoke through, and refused to receive correction. When the Spirit shows us our sin and pricks our conscience through others or through scripture, we can ignore and resist Him.

Those who keep resisting the Spirit can easily end up hardening their hearts and falling away from the faith (see Hebrews 3:7-19). We are called to be those who keep *'holding faith and a good conscience'* (1 Timothy 1:19a), and not to be like Hymenaeus and Alexander who *'made shipwreck of their faith'* (v19b).

### 3. The Spirit May Be Quenched

*'Do not quench the Spirit'* (1 Thessalonians 5:19).

'Quenching' literally speaks of 'extinguishing something'. The encouragement is to not stop His powerful activity and 'fire' in your life. God's intent is that we live in the Spirit. We are to cultivate a sense of the Spirit's presence in our life. Scripture says we can pray in the Spirit (Jude 20), worship

in the Spirit (1 Corinthians 14:15), and love in the Spirit (Galatians 5:22). Sin, unbelief and neglect can quench His activity in our lives.

#### **4. The Spirit May Be Blasphemed Against**

*'Truly, I say to you, all sins will be forgiven the children of man, and whatever blasphemies they utter, but whoever blasphemes against the Holy Spirit never has forgiveness, but is guilty of an eternal sin' for they were saying, "He has an unclean spirit"'* (Mark 3:29-30).

This Scripture has often caused Christians great fear. The word 'blaspheme' essentially means to 'slander or speak evil of' a person. To put the Scripture in context, we see that Jesus is ministering in great power by the Holy Spirit. The Pharisees resist Jesus and attribute the Spirit's work in Jesus to Satan, when it was plain to see that God was with Him. So blaspheming the Spirit speaks of a willful rejection of Jesus and the Spirit's activity on Him. In other words, it is a rejection of Jesus, the Anointed One.

People who reject Jesus '*never have forgiveness*' (Mark 3:30), because they reject the very means of their forgiveness. To use an illustration: it is like a filthy person, who hasn't washed for a year, telling you that water is very dangerous and bad for your health. Because he has called something which could help him evil, he rejects the very means of getting clean!

We must understand that blasphemy against the Spirit is not unforgivable in the sense that God is powerless or unwilling to forgive, but in the sense that the sinner is unwilling to receive forgiveness. The apostle Paul's life offers evidence that blasphemy as such is forgivable (see 1 Timothy 1:13). He spoke evil of Jesus and the church, yet found mercy.

*'The sin is not unpardonable because the atoning work of the Son is not sufficient for that sin, but because that sufficient work is willfully demeaned, blocked, and detested by those for whom it would otherwise be entirely sufficient.'* (Thomas Oden)

#### **To Conclude**

So in conclusion, we see that the Person of the Holy Spirit needs to be welcomed among us in greater measure and openness if we are to impact and disciple the nations as Jesus commanded us to do. We can only do it by His strength, wisdom and power! He is the very presence and power of God, whom the Father has given to us as our helper here on the earth.