

# Church of God, The Eternal

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## Fundamentals of Belief #5 Fundamental #3—Part A; What Is the Holy Spirit?

Edited Sermon Transcript  
Jon W. Brisby; 2-12-00

We are ready to continue this afternoon, brethren, our series that I have been going through for the last several weeks on the *Fundamentals of Belief*. We have already gone through the first two fundamentals—number one and number two—and are ready for Fundamental of Belief number three.

Fundamental of Belief number three speaks of the Holy Spirit. Remember, as I said in the last sermons, the first twenty of the *Fundamentals of Belief* of the Church of God, the Eternal are word for word, those of the Radio Church of God that Mr. Armstrong originally wrote. We have seen through number one, the concept of who and what God is. In fundamental number two, we learned who Jesus Christ is and how Jesus Christ fits into that Divinity. Fundamental number three—that I have planned to do in two sermons—addresses the Holy Spirit. We are going to find out what the Holy Spirit is and what the activities of that Holy Spirit are. Let's read it. Fundamental number three reads as follows:

We believe in the Holy Spirit, as the Spirit of God and of Christ Jesus; the power of God with which all things were created and made; that thru the Holy Spirit, God is everywhere present; that the Holy Spirit is divine Love, Faith, Understanding, Power, Joy and all the attributes of God—the Spirit of life eternal.

That is the fundamental. This afternoon, we are going to go through the first part of that fundamental: "We believe in the Holy Spirit, as the Spirit of God and of Christ Jesus; the power of God with which all things were created and made." Those are the phrases that we want to cover. Basically, then, what we are going to do today is we are going to cover the question, "What is the Holy Spirit?," because that's what the first part of this fundamental is basically speaking to. What is the Holy Spirit? Then, in the next sermon we will analyze the second part of the Fundamental of Belief because that goes into what I call the attributes of the Spirit. What is the activity, the work of that Spirit and what does it accomplish in our lives?

Today though, we are going to focus specifically on what is the Holy Spirit and how should we view it in connection with God? So let's examine the first phrase, "We believe in the Holy Spirit as the Spirit of God and of Christ Jesus." Turn first with me to John 14:15–17 and we will look at this scripture two or three times today.

If ye love me, keep my commandments [Instructions of Jesus Christ to his disciples soon before his suffering and his death]. And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever; Even the Spirit of truth; whom the world cannot receive, because it sees him not, neither knows him: but ye know him; for he dwells with you, and shall be in you.

Who is this Comforter that Christ promised would come? The word "comforter" is the Greek word, *parakletos*. *Parakletos* means an intercessor, a consoler, an advocate and a comforter. So the translators chose to use the term "comforter," but just as easily could have used advocate, or consoler or intercessor. What was this "Comforter"? Well, later in the very same verse we read, "he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever; Even the *Spirit* of truth." So this Spirit was the Comforter.

That "Comforter," whatever that agent was that was interceding on behalf of the people in the absence of Jesus Christ after His resurrection, is called a Spirit. That word "Spirit," brethren, is the Greek word, *pnuema*. *Pnuema* simply means, a breath or a wind. So there is something about this particular spirit that is special because it is something that was going to be used as an agent for the benefit of God's people. What is this "Spirit" and to whom does it belong?

In Trinitarian thought, you see, the Father and the Son and the Holy Ghost or the Holy Spirit are considered three persons within a coequal god. So nominal Christianity will tell you, "Well, this spirit is the third person in the deity. This is a separate and distinct, but not separate and distinct person in a triune god." They're thinking the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit are all equally ranked persons within a Godhead.

So maybe one of the best ways to answer the question, "What is the Holy Spirit?"—because our fundamental of belief says, "We believe in the Holy Spirit, as the Spirit of God and of Christ Jesus"—is to read our fundamental which says it is the power of God. Our belief concerning the Holy Spirit—and that which we learned from the very beginning, that we were taught from Mr. Armstrong—is very much a fundamental of belief that separates us from the rest of this world and all of those in this world who claim to be Christians.

Because we do not believe in the trinity, we do not believe in a triune god, we do not believe that the Holy Spirit is a person, a separate and distinct entity of essence within the Godhead. Trinitarians will tell you that they are coequal and they will give you a raft of excuses and explanations to try and prove out of the scripture that the Holy Spirit is a separate person—separate from the Father, separate from the Son. For those that are interested in going into the details of the origin of the trinity doctrine, we have a very good piece, a very detailed technical historical piece called, *The Trinity and the Nature of God* which will give you all the information that you need. I am going to touch on just a few points—enough, I think, to succinctly be able to make the point and provide the evidence that a trinity has nothing to do with God's truth.

If you are ever facing someone—friends, associates, anybody—who questions your belief, for not believing in a trinity, and believing what we have already gone through and talked about concerning the nature of God the Father and the Son and their relationship in the Divinity which is called God, and the fact that you do not believe that the Holy Spirit is a third person in the trinity—here is the very simplest explanation that I know of, to be able to shoot holes in the idea of a trinity.

Trinitarians believe, as I have already said, that the Father, Son and Holy Spirit are coequals. They are all equally ranked entities within this Godhead. So what should come to mind right off the bat? What have we already been through? Are the Father and the Son equals in the divinity of God? Have we not already gone through many scriptural evidences to show that the Father has ultimate authority within that family of God and that Christ is in every way subject to the authority of the Father? We can set aside the whole essence of the debate over the Holy Spirit and debunk Trinitarian thought just by proving that Christ is in subjection to the Father. Because if you believe that Christ is in subjection to the Father, even as He sits on His right hand on the throne of God, you have already proved that there is nothing to the trinity whatsoever. So let's look at that argument before we even get into the arguments specifically addressing the Holy Spirit. John 14:28:

Ye have heard how I said unto you, I go away, and come again unto you. If ye loved me, ye would rejoice, because I said, I go unto the Father: for my Father *is* greater than I.

"My Father is greater than I"—so said Jesus Christ. Some might argue, "Well, that was only because He was still in the flesh at that time. The Father was greater than He was, as He existed at that point in time in flesh and blood. But see, once Christ was resurrected and went back to heaven to sit on the Father's right hand, then He was back in His glorified state and He was again coequal in the Godhead." Let's continue on and see if that's true.

1 Corinthians 11:3: Here now, Christ had already died and been resurrected and is in heaven in His glorified state, so here is what the Apostle Paul says about that very being:

But I would have you know, that the head of every man is Christ; and the head of the woman is the man; and the head of Christ is God.

I didn't see anything there about the Father and the Son in heaven being coequal, let alone the existence of a third coequal entity called the Holy Spirit. "The head of Christ is God."

1 Corinthians 15:24–25, 28: "Then cometh the end," Now here is a description of exactly what is going to happen at the very end of the plan of salvation of mankind—when Christ completes His mission as the Creator, to form the Earth and the heavens, to create man and the seven thousand year plan culminating in the birth of millions and millions of sons into that divine family, into the family of God. "Then cometh the end, when he shall have delivered up the kingdom to God, even the Father." So all of this work that Christ is doing now is going to culminate in His fulfillment of a commission, given from the Father in which, when He finishes that duty and that work He is going to turn that kingdom back over to the Father who commissioned the work to begin with. ". . . when he shall have put down all rule and all authority and power. For he must reign, till he hath put all enemies under his feet." Verse 28:

And when all things shall be subdued unto him, then shall the Son also himself be subject unto him that put all things under him, that God may be all in all.

Here is a prophecy for what is going to happen at the very end of the plan, yet to be fulfilled, and it says the Son is going to be subject to the one who commissioned the plan, and the one who commissioned it was the Father. Now tell me if you will, if you believe even that one scripture; that you can believe in the trinity—coequal entities in a Godhead. No, the concept brethren, of a trinity is easily proven to be false, even without consideration of the role of the Holy Spirit, if you just focus on the proper truth that we can delineate from the Bible concerning the Father and the Son and their relationship.

The Athanasian Creed, which was adopted in the fifth century, actually was the first of the creeds to attempt to explain and to advance the idea of a trinity. If you are wondering what the creeds were; the first creed, as far as I am aware, was what is called, *The Apostles' Creed*. A creed, by the way, is simply a statement of your beliefs, very much like what we are going through right now. We are going through *The Fundamentals of Belief* of the Church of God, the Eternal. This document that I am reading from, which is an article, is simply an expression of our creed.

Historically, you had the church in its different phases, the apostate church which wrote these different summaries in short paragraph form, to try and explain what their fundamental doctrines were, what their beliefs about Christ really entailed. The first of these creeds that we have is called the Apostles' Creed, and it actually came on the scene in the neighborhood of 150 A.D. Many people actually try to attribute it to the original apostles, some even going to great lengths to try and prove or claim that all twelve of the apostles actually wrote parts or all of one of the sentences within the creeds—that this was their way of coming together before they went out on their journeys, on their different assignments to spread the gospel: to put into a short document something that would establish succinctly what it is they all agreed on as far as doctrine, so that they would be more likely to preach and teach the same thing. Well, the Apostles' Creed is likely anything but a legitimate document that can related back to the original Apostles. It is probably more than likely, one of the spurious documents that were created and attributed to God's servants.

You will find that the Apostles' Creed is nearer the truth than any of the other creeds. The additional creeds that came up later—like the Nicene Creed in the third or the fourth century, which came out of the counsel of Nicea—are actually elaborations in which you start to see more and more error creep in as the church went farther and farther away. By the time you get to the fifth century and the Athanasian Creed, it is the first time you see the trinity being introduced. Just one or two hundred years before that, at the time of the Nicene Creed, they were still fighting, as I mentioned in the last sermon, over the role of Jesus Christ as God and what His relationship was within the divinity of God. The Holy Spirit is mentioned in that creed, but there is no emphasis placed on it yet.

Now, by the time you get to the fifth century and the Athanasian Creed, the whole focus is on promoting this idea of a trinity. This is hundreds of years after the time of Christ and the Apostles would never have recognized, by any means, what these men were claiming was the truth of God at that point. The Athanasian Creed attempted to justify belief in a triune God, but they wanted to do so without sanctioning pagan worship of multiple gods. The Catholic Fathers were very much opposed to this idea of worshipping multiple gods. So even though they had embraced this idea of three entities within a Godhead, they did not want it to appear to appeal to the pagans as if they were saying they worshipped multiple gods. In order to have this concept of a triune God they had to come up with some sort of a description for the trinity that said we believe in three persons in the Godhead and yet they are still one; three, but one, one, but three. The most confusing and the most divisive thing you could ever try to explain or understand.

Therefore, they generated this concept of three persons, not really being separate, but being one. Augustine tried to explain it by saying, "Human languages cannot express the

true relationship." In other words, "we don't have words in any language that can really define it so it's just beyond our ability to express what this relationship in the Divinity is." That is the kind of thing you say, brethren, when you can't explain something because it doesn't make sense.

God has made His truth understandable for those to whom He has opened their minds to see it. It makes sense and you can express God's truth in any language. What are some of the justifications of those who try and uphold the idea of a trinity?

One of the first claims is that the Spirit has attributes that can only apply to a person. Acts 13:2 is one of those scriptures. "As they ministered to the Lord, and fasted, the Holy Ghost said," Any time you see that term "Ghost" in the New Testament as, "the Holy Ghost," it is simply the very same Greek word that we saw already back in John 14:17. It is the Greek word, *pneuma*. It is appropriately translated *spirit*, the same way that you would translate *pneuma* anywhere else in the New Testament. In John 14:17 it says, "Even the Spirit of truth." OK, but here is the very same word they translate in Acts 13:2 as, "the Holy Ghost." If it is appropriate to call it a ghost then why can't we and why shouldn't we call it a ghost everywhere else the word *pneuma* shows up?

Would it make sense in John 14:17 to say, "Even the Ghost of truth"? Would that carry what they are trying to say? It appears, in most cases when the word "spirit" was used by itself, they were willing to translate it "Spirit." However, when it was the Holy Spirit, the translators instead called it the Holy Ghost. This is an attempt again, to give additional weight and substantiation for this idea of the Spirit being a separate person, an entity unto itself. It is the same word, so we always use the term "Holy Spirit."

Acts 13:2: "As they ministered to the Lord, and fasted, the Holy [Spirit] said. . . ." Here, because the Holy Spirit said something, they assert, the Holy Spirit has attributes of a person. 1 Corinthians 2:10, another such alleged evidence: "But God hath revealed them unto us by his Spirit: for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God." The fact that the Spirit searches, they allege, means the Spirit is engaged in an action that can only be attributed to a person. So the Trinitarians seek to tell us. Ephesians 4:30: "And grieve not the holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption." If the Holy Spirit is something that can be grieved, then it must be a person who has a personality and some of its own separate substance if it can be grieved, so we are told and expected to believe.

What are the proper explanations for the language that was used in the inspired Scripture in reference to the Holy Spirit? Keep it in mind because we are going to answer it in one very simple explanation in just a moment.

The second claim—and we have a single answer that we have for this that is really going to address at least two or three of the claims of the Trinitarians—is that the Holy Spirit is God, is a being, a person within the Godhead because it is identified even with Jehovah, the *YHVH* of the Old Testament. And so let's turn to Acts 28:25–26 and we read here:

And when they agreed not among themselves, they departed, after that Paul had spoken one word, Well spake the Holy [Spirit] by Esaias the prophet unto our fathers, Saying, Go unto this people, and say, Hearing ye shall hear, and shall not understand; and seeing ye shall see, and not perceive.

The explanation here is, the Holy Spirit must be a being in the Godhead, in the divinity of God because it says, "Well spake the Holy [Spirit] by Esaias." Therefore, the Holy Spirit must have been that *YHVH* of the Old Testament. Hebrews 10:15–17:

Whereof the Holy [Spirit] also is a witness to us: for after that *he* had said before [so here again we have a scripture that is supposedly giving the Holy Spirit personality] . . . for after that he had said before, This is the covenant that I will make with them after those days, saith the Lord, I will put my laws into their hearts, and in their minds will I write them; And their sins and iniquities will I remember no more.

So here we are expected to believe that because the Holy Spirit is "he who said" something concerning the covenant, and then later says, "saith the Lord," therefore, the Holy Spirit was the *YHVH* of the Old Testament and must be this separate being, worthy of separate consideration. Contrary to all of these assertions, brethren, these texts actually support the true explanation concerning the Holy Spirit.

2 Corinthians 3:17–18: What is the Holy Spirit? Here we are going to find that after the death, the burial and the resurrection of Jesus Christ, references to the Spirit as strictly being the power of God was expanded. In the New Testament you find that reference to the Holy Spirit was very often used synonymously with reference to Christ. We are going to see quite a few scriptures that support that. This is the first one.

2 Corinthians 3:17–18: "Now the Lord is that Spirit"—that *pneuma*. Who was it that Paul was talking about? Who did Paul call, "the Lord?" The whole ministry of Paul was about Jesus Christ. Paul is referring to Jesus Christ and he says, "the Lord is that Spirit: and where the Spirit *of* the Lord . . ." Who possesses the Spirit? Is the Spirit a coequal in the divinity of God? How then do we have Paul here claiming that the Spirit is *of* the Lord?

". . . where the Spirit *of* the Lord is, there is liberty. But we all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit *of* the Lord."

It is a spirit possessed by Christ. We are also going to find that whatever this spirit is, it is a possession of the Father. It is possessed both of the Father and of the Son; it is not a separate third person. Otherwise, the very references that Paul and the other Apostles make, in their reference to the Holy Spirit in the New Testament and the inspired Scripture, would be a slap in the face to that third person, if there were indeed a trinity. Matthew 10:19:

But when they deliver you up, take no thought how or what ye shall speak: for it shall be given you in that same hour what ye shall speak. For it is not ye that speak, but the Spirit *of* your Father which speaketh in you.

How can the Spirit, therefore brethren, be a separate coequal person when it is possessed, it is a possession, it is owned, it is utilized, it is exercised by the Father. "For it is not ye that speak, but the Spirit of your Father." 1 Corinthians 2:11:

For what man knoweth the things of a man, save the spirit of man which is in him? even so the things of God knoweth no man, but the Spirit of God.

Here, we find a very direct relationship. If you want to understand what the Holy Spirit is, Paul has given us a direct correlation to understand the power of that Spirit. "For what man knoweth the things of a man, save the spirit of man which is in him? even so . . . [a direct correlation now, to the spirit that is within man] . . . even so the things of God knoweth no man, but the Spirit of God." So man has a spirit—which is not an immortal soul, which we will get to in later fundamentals of belief. That spirit that is within man is obviously the very essence that gives us consciousness, thought, ability and power to do our work as God has ordained. It is compared by Paul to the very Spirit of God—the power by which God does His work. It is not a third person, it is a possession of God, it is the essence of God's mind and His power.

What about those that claim, "Well yes, but the Holy Spirit in the New Testament is referred to as a 'he'?" We have heard those explanations over the years, but just quickly to address it. Back in John 14:15–17 again, you will see those references to the Spirit with the word "he" only when the Greek word for "spirit"—which is the antecedent—is in the masculine form. So when we read here in verse 16: "And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that *he* may abide with you forever." "He" is more appropriately translated "it." Because of the fact that "comforter"—the Greek word,

*parakletos*—is masculine in the Greek language, the translators automatically gave its pronoun a masculine form and used the word "he" instead of "it." It is not any substantiation whatsoever that the Holy Spirit is a person.

Did Mary have a separate and distinct person living in her? Let's look at a scripture. If you believe the Holy Spirit is a separate person, that spirits are separate entities, in and of themselves, then turn with me to Luke 1:46–47 and see if that logic holds up. "And Mary said, My soul doth magnify the Lord, And my spirit hath rejoiced in God my Saviour." What was Mary talking about when she said, "my spirit hath rejoiced." Was she possessed with some kind of a separate spirit that was not in and a part of her very mind? Was this a separate spirit that was inhabiting her body and she had one mind, but it had another mind? So, she wasn't rejoicing, but this other spirit entity in her was rejoicing—is that what we are led to believe? If you believe in the Holy Spirit as a third person of God, that is exactly what we are accusing God of. What about Paul, was Paul possessed with a separate spirit that was not synonymous with his own mind and his own consciousness? Romans 1:9, let's look at it:

For God is my witness, whom I serve *with my spirit* in the gospel of his Son,  
that without ceasing I make mention of you always in my prayers.

"For God is my witness, whom I serve with my spirit." What was Paul talking about? Was Paul really talking about the Spirit as a separate entity, which was separate and distinct from his own mind and his own consciousness? Or was he expressing his own mental orientation in service to God? He was talking about the spirit which God placed in each one of us that is called the spirit of man, which we just read about in 1 Corinthians 2:11. That spirit which was compared directly to the Spirit of God as the power, the consciousness, the essence that God uses to think and to work. It is not a third person.

The Holy Spirit, and the use of the term "the Holy Spirit," actually became interchangeable in reference to the risen Christ. The Holy Spirit speaking is equated with Christ speaking. Let's notice some of those for proof, so that when you see reference to the Holy Spirit taking action, doing things which might appear to substantiate the idea that it is a separate personage, and that might even trouble you in mind in being able to explain it to friends or acquaintances who might ask you about it, you will have a way to answer concerning all these scriptures we have already seen which show the Holy Spirit doing things.

Acts 5:3–4: "But Peter said, Ananias, why hath Satan filled thine heart to lie to the Holy [Spirit]"—another scripture that might give us a problem if we think it is an explanation for a trinity, the Holy Spirit as a third person.

. . . why hath Satan filled thine heart to lie to the Holy [Spirit], and to keep back part of the price of the land? Whiles it remained, was it not thine own? and after it was sold, was it not in thine own power? why hast thou conceived this thing in thine heart? thou hast not lied unto men, but unto God.

We find within this very section something that helps define the Holy Spirit. In the first part we have someone lying to the Holy Spirit, and yet, in verse number 4 we see, "thou hast not lied unto men, but unto God." Lying to the Holy Spirit therefore, was synonymous to lying to God, and as we are going to see probably even more specifically related to lying to Christ because Christ was the Being who is working with mankind. Christ promised that He would be here. We are going to see in some more scriptures that He is the one who is interfacing with us. If you are called to the knowledge of the truth, it is Christ who is living within you. How is Christ living within you? It is through the Holy Spirit. Revelation 2:7:

He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith . . . [So here again, apparently we have the Spirit talking, so maybe this is substantiation that the Holy Spirit as a third person]. He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches; To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the tree of life, which is in the midst of the paradise of God.

Who was the Spirit? Is this really speaking of the Holy Spirit as a separate and distinct individual? Turn back to Revelation 1:1—the very beginning of the book. Who was it that was writing this book? Who was it that was inspiring the Apostle John in a vision now, to write all of these things down? The very first phrase of the first book tells us: "The Revelation of Jesus Christ." Everything that is written here, all the speaking that is being done, is coming directly from Jesus Christ. So when we read in Revelation 2:7, "He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith," that is synonymous with Jesus Christ speaking. Jesus Christ *is* the very advocate, the very comforter, the intercessor, the *parakletos* that we first noted.

1 John 2:1: "My little children, these things write I unto you, that ye sin not. And if any man sin, we have *an advocate* with the Father"—we have *parakletos*. Brethren, that word "advocate" is the very same word, *parakletos*. We find in 1 John 2:1 a direct definition of what that *parakletos* is, what that advocate is: "if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, *Jesus Christ* the righteous:" That very entity which is translated "Comforter" that we saw already in John 14:16–18—turn there with me again—is also translated as, "the Spirit of truth." It is also translated as the "Holy Spirit," These are all direct references to Jesus Christ himself.

John 14:16–18 again, "And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter"—or it could have been translated just as equally "advocate" the same way advocate was used in 1 John 2:1. John 14:16–18:

. . . he shall give you another [advocate], that he may abide with you for ever; Even the Spirit of truth; whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him: but ye know him; for he dwelleth with you, and shall be in you. [Christ speaking here]: I will not leave you comfortless: *I will come to you.*

Who did Christ say was going to come and to comfort and to be their advocate and their intercessor? He was coming Himself. He was coming Himself through the power of the Holy Spirit, which we have already seen is a possession of both He and His Father. It is the mind, the power, the essence of eternal life as we are going to see in the next sermon. It is the very means by which Jesus Christ was going to come and to give comfort, help, aide, support and direction to the called and the chosen in the New Testament church. It is not a separate person, brethren, it was the very mind and the power of God. Romans 8:8–9:

So then they that are in the flesh cannot please God. But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you. [Whatever that Spirit is, brethren, it is something we can have]. Now if any man have not the Spirit *of Christ*, he is none of his.

It is that Spirit that proceeds out of the Father and out of the Son, not a third person of a trinity. Acts 20:28:

Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy [Spirit] hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood.

Now what if I were to read into this, as many do, to try and convince people, "The Holy Spirit is the one who called the ministry. This third separate entity of three in the Godhead is the one who commissioned the ministry to carry on the gospel"—does that jive with everything else we know in the New Testament scripture? Who was it that selected the ministry? Who is it that is head of the church? If you believe in three parts of a Godhead as the Father, Son and Holy Ghost, this would seem to imply that they flipped a coin or something and decided the Holy Ghost was the one who was going to commission the ministry, be the head of the church, and appoint that work in the carrying out of the gospel. Ephesians 5:23–24, who is it that is really head of the church?

For the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the church: and he is the saviour of the body. Therefore as the church is subject unto Christ, so let the wives be to their own husbands in every thing.

No, Jesus Christ, as the head of the church, was the Being within the divinity of God that was commissioned to come and to die, to be the Savior, and to be resurrected. And He said *He* would come back, He would be with us and He would do that work through the Spirit which is His power to accomplish His work, not a third person. So when it said, back in Acts 20:28, "over the which the Holy [Spirit] hath made you overseers," the Holy Spirit there is being used synonymously to describe the very action of Jesus Christ. You will find that very often when you read through the scriptures, any reference to the Holy Spirit taking an action or doing something *is* literally synonymous with the works of Jesus Christ.

Next, if the Holy Spirit is a third person in a coequal trinity then Paul insulted that Spirit many, many times in his salutations. You see, in seventeen epistles opening with invocation of grace and peace, thirteen of them give glory to God and to Christ without mention whatsoever of the Holy Spirit. Now if you truly believe in three coequal beings in a Godhead, and if you think Paul believed it and the other Apostles did, why would you ever, when you are writing a salutation to the church, say, "I am bringing you greetings from the Father and the Son" and leave out any reference whatsoever to this very coequal important being called the Holy Spirit? Would that not be a slap in the face? Notice just a couple of scriptures here. Ephesians 1:2–3:

Grace be to you, and peace, from God our Father, and from the Lord Jesus Christ. Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ.

Oops! No reference to the Holy Spirit. If that really were a third being in a Godhead, certainly it would be hard to believe it from the writings of Paul. One more in 1 Corinthians 1:2 "Grace be unto you, and peace, from God our Father, and from the Lord Jesus Christ." In most of those epistles you will find the salutations are opened just that way.

No, brethren, the concept of a trinity, a false concept of a triune God, is as old almost as man himself. What you will find in historical references is that the ancient Babylonians believed absolutely, in a triune God. Historical references to beings with three heads representing God—a triune god with three persons in a divinity—far predate the coming of Jesus Christ or the establishment of the church. Those that are caught up in that accept such a concept directly by accepting the authority of an apostate body. That is exactly what happened to the true church even as it happened in the first century—apostate even before the close of that first century. So it has happened in this last day church. I think years ago

it was hard for us to believe how it would ever be possible for the church, back in the time of the Apostles, to go astray so fast and for them to go away from the church within just so few years after having the personal witness of Jesus Christ there. I think maybe now we can understand it because of what we have seen occur in the last twenty-five to thirty within the last day church.

How quickly can a body go apostate? How quickly can every fundamental doctrine that was revealed actually be overturned and repudiated? We have proven it, brethren. We've seen it with our own eyes. As it happened in the original apostolic church, so it happened in the last day church just as it was prophesied to occur.

This concept of a triune God is one of the fundamental linchpins that represents how evil and despicable that departure was. It is that which captivates and is universally accepted by those who call themselves Christians in the world today. I would be suspicious of anything that the masses of this world seem to agree on. No, the Holy Spirit is the power of God. It is not a third person, it is the very power, the essence by which God accomplishes His work. Our fundamental of belief says it is "the power of God with which all things were created and made." That's what we believe. The Holy Spirit is God's power. Let's notice it.

Micah 3:8: "But truly I am full of power . . . [where did that power come from?] . . . I am full of power by the spirit of the [Eternal]." Once again, it is the Spirit *of* the Eternal, not that which is separate of it's own accord—a coequal of God.

But truly I am full of power by the spirit of the Lord, and of judgment, and of might, to declare unto Jacob his transgression, and to Israel his sin.

That power comes from the Spirit. It is the Spirit of God which brings power, and it is the source of power through which He accomplishes His work. Notice it also in Judges 14:5–6:

Then went Samson down, and his father and his mother, to Timnath, and came to the vineyards of Timnath: and, behold, a young lion roared against him. And the Spirit of the [Eternal] came mightily upon him, and he rent him as he would have rent a kid, and he had nothing in his hand: but he told not his father or his mother what he had done.

So here is another example. What was it that gave Samson the power to overcome even that mighty beast? His might came from the Spirit of God. It is a Spirit which gives power. Jeremiah 32:17:

Ah Lord God! behold, thou hast made the heaven and the earth by thy great power and stretched out arm, and there is nothing too hard for thee.

It was the Spirit of God that He used, as our fundamental of belief states, to create the heavens and the Earth. Genesis 1:1–3: "In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth." We have already seen in our coverage of the first two fundamentals—what is God and what is Jesus Christ—that it was God, and even more specifically Jesus Christ, who brought that creation into being.

In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth. And the earth [appropriately translated, "became *tohu* and *bohu*"] was without form, and void [chaotic]; and darkness was upon the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters. And God said, Let there be light: and there was light.

What was it that God used to actually start that recreation—to create light, and to begin the metamorphosis that would result in the creation, to carry forward the plan for man's salvation? It was the use of His Spirit, the very power, the essence of God by which He exercises control. The Father worked through the Son—that Being who became Jesus Christ actually did the work and used the power of that Spirit and "moved upon the face of the waters. "And God said, Let there be light." And through the use of the power of that Spirit, "there was light." Psalms 66:5–7:

Come and see the works of God: he is terrible in his doing toward the children of men. He turned the sea into dry land: they went through the flood on foot: there did we rejoice in him. He rules by his power for ever; his eyes behold the nations: let not the rebellious exalt themselves.

He rules, it says, by His power forever. That is a power, brethren, that is exercised by the use of the Holy Spirit. Hebrews 1:1–3:

God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, Hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son, whom he hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also he made the worlds [a scripture we saw already showing that it was the Son who did the work]. Who being the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person, and upholding all things by the word of his power, when he had by himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high.

There is the use again of that very power by the Son who used it in the very creating of the world, and that power, brethren, was the very Spirit. How else do we see that power manifested? Proof that the Holy Spirit is indeed the power of the God. Luke 24:49:

And, behold, I send the promise of my Father upon you [here Jesus Christ is making a promise to his disciples]. And, behold, I send the promise of my Father upon you: but tarry ye in the city of Jerusalem, until ye be endued with power from on high.

These called and chosen ones that Jesus Christ commissioned were promised that they would be receiving power, special miraculous power through which He would accomplish His work in them. What was this power? What was the power that Christ promised that He would send? Acts 1:7–8 gives us the answer:

And he said unto them, It is not for you to know the times or the seasons, which the Father hath put in his own power. But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy [Spirit] is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth.

What power was it, brethren, that they were going to receive that would allow them to become apostles, to spread that gospel and to accomplish His will? These were weak men who had already proved throughout the time of the ministry of Jesus Christ that they had frailties and flaws, that they did not have faith and did not have confidence yet. But they were promised that they would be given a power that would change their lives and allow them to do things they never could have hoped to accomplish. What Christ promised was power, just as we read here in Acts: "ye shall receive power, after that the Holy [Spirit] is come upon you." The Holy Spirit is the very means by which we receive the power of God because it is the very essence of the mind, the being and the activity of God.

If we have been called to understand the truth, we can recognize what the Holy Spirit is. We don't have to be deceived concerning false teachings of a triune God—that which came right out of Babylon. If you are called and if you are faithful to that which you have been given, you understand the nature of God. You don't need to be deceived by all of the scholars and people of this world that attempt to convince you that the Godhead and the divinity of God is a mystery which cannot be understood. If you are called and chosen, you can understand the nature of *the* God—the nature of the Father, the nature of the Son. You can know what their relationship is together, and recognize that the Holy Spirit is the power, the essence, the purpose, the will, the way God does His work, performs His activity, and

that which He uses to inspire us, to fill us, to allow us to become His servants and to share in that family.

Next time, we are going to see the attributes of that Spirit. What does the Holy Spirit do for us? What are the activities of that Spirit within our lives?