

# THE HOLY SPIRIT AND THE GODHEAD

- Dr Barry Chant

## THE PERSON OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

The Holy Spirit is actually a Person. Personal qualities are attributed to Him. And verbs are used about Him which can only apply to a person.

## THE GODHEAD

The Bible affirms that there is one God and that God is One (*Deuteronomy 6:4; 1 Corinthians 8:6*). Yet there are three Persons all spoken of as God.

We call this the Godhead or more specifically the holy Trinity.

## Various definitions

People have made many attempts to define what this means. Here are some of them:

Monarchianism; Modalism; Nature (shamrock, water).

# **Non-Trinitarian Views (Oneness; Islam)**

## **A Biblical View**

Perichoresis. Baxter Kruger puts it beautifully:

*When Christianity says God, it says Father, Son and Spirit existing in a relationship of acceptance and delight and self-giving love, a relationship so true, so rich and real and good, so open that the only way we can speak of it is to say that God is three, yet utterly one... For this Trinitarian relationship, this abounding and joyous fellowship, this unspeakable oneness of love is the very womb of the universe and of humanity within it.*

**A trinitarian God is an existential and ontological necessity.**

It is utterly necessary that there be a plurality in the Godhead. Some say God created humankind because he needed someone to love.

This is biblically, philosophically and existentially unacceptable. Love needs an object of love to exist. Without an object of love, it is meaningless.

God has always existed (existential) and He has always been love from the beginning - which the

Scripture affirms and which is ontologically necessary i.e. grounded in God's being).

A true God must be perfect, and perfection includes love. It is essential to nature and being.

But who did God love before the creation of angelic, human or animal life? What did it mean to say that he is love?

The only answer is a divine plurality.

## **So, the implications for us are -**

- When the Spirit comes into our lives, He brings the supernal love of God with Him (*Romans 5:5*). How wonderful!
- When we are filled with the Holy Spirit, it is not just a force or a feeling: it is God Himself.

Which is why our bodies are called his temples (*1 Corinthians 6:19-20*). A temple is made for a god.

What an amazing phenomenon! What an incredible act of grace! We dare not despise it or treat it lightly.

- When the *Holy* Spirit comes, holiness must be the outcome (*1 Corinthians 3:16-17; 6:19-20*).

- When the Holy *Spirit* comes into our lives, He comes like a rushing torrent of power which the *pneuma* of the Lord drives (*Isaiah 59:19*).
- When Christ was manifest in the flesh, He emptied Himself of His divine attributes such as omnipresence and omniscience and immortality.

This is another 'mystery' (*1 Timothy 3:16*). When He died on the Cross, He had to be truly human so He could represent us as a man (God cannot die). But only as one man.

To have the power to save us by bearing *all* of humanity's sin and guilt He had to be God. Amazing love!

## **GOD OF INFINITY**

*But when the Helper comes, whom I will send to you from the Father, the Spirit of truth, who proceeds from the Father, he will bear witness about me. (John 15:26)*

Come let us bow to the Father who shows us kindness, compassion and unchanging love. Great is his faithfulness, strong his forbearance, rich is the mercy he rains from above.

Come let us honour the Son who redeems us,  
High Priest and Sacrifice blended in one;  
Saviour, Deliverer, Shepherd and Hero,  
King of all Kings and God's excellent Son.

Come let us follow the Spirit who leads us  
to mend those whom evil and suff'ring devour,  
clothes us with power to witness to Jesus,  
Spirit of Truth for this desperate hour.

Come let us worship this God of infinity,  
fearful, mysterious, untamed and free,  
ever omnipotent, wise, omnipresent,  
perfect in unity, one God in three.

*Chorus*

Come, come, bow to the Father,  
Come, come, honour the Son,  
Come, come, follow the Spirit,  
Worship this God  
Worship this God  
Worship this God of Infinity,  
Three in One.

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