

Sabbath School Lesson #4 – The Personality of the Holy Spirit – 21-27 Jan 2017

Christ who breathed on His disciples saying, “Receive ye the Holy Spirit” (John 20:22), wants us to receive the same “Spirit of Christ” which was in all the prophets (1 Peter 1:11), because “if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of His” (Romans 8:9), which Spirit is Christ Himself, as “the Lord is that Spirit” (2 Corinthians 3:17), for Christ being “the last Adam was made a quickening Spirit” (1 Corinthians 15:45) and “because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of His Son into your hearts” (Galatians 4:6), and for these reasons, let us have Christ; as Ellen White says, “It is not safe to catch the spirit from another. We want the Holy Spirit, which is Jesus Christ” {Lt66-1894 (April 10, 1894) par. 18}.

The memory text for this lesson reads: “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). ‘Aha,’ you may say, ‘the Lord said “Comforter,” which means “another” Individual, not His Spirit.’ Not so fast, please. Let us allow Scripture to interpret itself (Isaiah 28:10). The question is: “how readest thou?”

Christ’s discourse in fourteenth to sixteenth chapters of John is the most misunderstood, particularly what He said about the Holy Spirit. Christ told His disciples that His Father will send them “another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever” (John 14:16), then He told them, “A little while, and ye shall not see Me: and again, a little while, and ye shall see Me, because I go to the Father” (John 16:16). Why did He say those words if He was going to send someone else? He spoke in the third person, for He returned in a Spirit way to them.

Apostles understood this, hence Paul would say, our “Lord is that Spirit” (2 Corinthians 3:17). He is able to comfort us in all our temptations because He was tempted just like us: “For in that He Himself hath suffered being tempted, He is able to succour [comfort] them that are tempted” (Hebrews 2:18). It is “Christ in you, the hope of glory” (Colossians 1:27). “Greater is He that is in you, than he that is in the world” (1 John 4:4). As Jesus has suffered being tempted, and comes to us in a different way than He ever did before, He is “another Comforter.” Jesus said, “I will not leave you comfortless, I will come to you” (John 14:18).

The Spirit was to come to convict the world of sin. “And when he is come, he will reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment” (John 16:8). “Unto you first God, having raised up His Son Jesus, sent Him to bless you, in turning away every one of you from his iniquities” (Acts 3:26). It is Jesus, after His resurrection, who comes to us to turn us from sin. Jesus Christ is that Comforter who knows what we are going through because He has been there Himself; the Comforter is not a different third Individual of the Godhead.

Some may immediately say, ‘Jesus called the Comforter ‘he,’ therefore he must be someone else.’ It was common in Christ’s day to speak of oneself in the third person. You find this style of writing throughout the New Testament. In John 5:19-22, Jesus spoke of Himself in the third person. And so, Christ refers to the Spirit of His very person as ‘he.’

Speaking to His disciples, pointing to a future day, Christ said, “I will not leave you comfortless: I will come to you. Yet a little while, and the world seeth Me no more; but ye see Me: because I live, ye shall live also. At that day ye shall know that I am in My Father, and ye in Me, and I in you” (John 14:18-20). Even though the disciples were alive while Jesus spoke to them, His words were “because I live, ye shall live also.” That the life they live will be His life. In these words Jesus was not referring to a mere physical or probationary life which everyone possesses. Neither was He referring to a life that only begins after our resurrection. He was referring to them obtaining a special kind of life, or a state of being, that is dependent on His resurrection and coming to them. According to Jesus’ words in that dialogue (John 14:12-20), this state of being, or life, was to be available on the day when He comes to them and lives in them. He was referring to a life that begins on this earth in our mortal flesh upon receiving the Comforter. It is equally important to understand that this Spirit/life Jesus referred to would not be received by everyone. Only those who “see him”, “know him” and have a relationship with Him will receive it. Notice the words in verse 17 “the Spirit of truth; whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him”. Those in the world do not have and cannot receive this comforter, for they believe not.

Read in John 14 to see the similarity between what Jesus said about Himself and about the Comforter. First, Jesus: “the world seeth Me no more” (verse 19); Comforter: the world “seeth him not” (verse 17). Second, Jesus: “but ye see Me” (verse 19); Comforter: “but ye know him” (verse 17). Third, Jesus: at that time, He was with His disciples; Comforter: at that time, “he dwelleth with you” (verse 17). Fourth, Jesus: “I in you” (verse 20); Comforter: “shall be in you” (verse 17). Fifth, Jesus: “I will come to you” (verse 18); Comforter: “give you another comforter” (verse 16). Sixth, “Lo, I am with you always even unto the end of the world” (Matthew 28:19); Comforter: “he may abide with you forever” (John 14:16).

Is the Spirit of Jesus a different person than Jesus Himself? Absolutely not! The spirit of Jesus is Jesus Himself (see Mark 2:8, 8:12, Luke 23:46). The Spirit is Christ’s own life; it is the nonphysical, non-tangible aspect of Him. Just like your spirit is who you are on the inside (just as in Daniel 2:1 “his spirit” was still the same as king Nebuchadnezzar himself), in the same way Christ’s Spirit is who He is (as explained in 1 Corinthians 2:11). Therefore, when the Bible says that God will send us the Spirit of His Son into our hearts (Galatians 4:6), it means that Jesus Himself will come into our hearts. That is exactly what Jesus said in John 14 “I in you”. Paul understood this (see Galatians 2:20). Moreover, according to Paul, there is one God, the Father, and one Lord, Jesus Christ, and then he said that the Lord, or Jesus Christ, is that Spirit. He also says that Jesus, the second Adam, was made a life giving Spirit (1 Corinthians 8:6; 2 Corinthians 3:17; 1 Corinthians 15:45). Paul’s writings clearly teach us that the Holy Spirit or the comforter is Jesus Himself in the Spirit way. Paul also tells us that “your body is the temple of the Holy spirit which is in you” and then he says: “Know ye not your own selves, how that Jesus Christ is in you” (1 Corinthians 6:19; 2 Corinthians 13:5).

These verses are very clear. The indwelling of the Holy Spirit is the indwelling of Christ Himself. When we receive Christ we in actual fact receive His own life. The only reason we receive His life is because we receive Him (1 John 3:11-13). When Jesus told the disciples “Because I live, you shall live also” He was telling them that time will come very soon when I will dwell in you and I will live in you; you will live my life. Notice these verses: “Christ in you, the hope of glory” (Colossians 1:26-27); “Greater is He that is in you, than he that is in the world” (1 John 4:4); “I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave Himself for me” (Galatians 2:20); “That Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith” (Ephesians 3:17); “Know ye not your own selves, how that Jesus Christ is in you, except ye be reprobates?” (2 Corinthians 13:5); and one more: “And if Christ be in you, the body is dead because of sin; but the Spirit is life because of righteousness” (Romans 8:10).

If “the personality of the Holy Spirit” is different from the Spirit of Christ, then Christ is not in us and we are reprobates! God sent His own Son, “*that the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us*” (Romans 8:3-4). “For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of His Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by His life” (Romans 5:10). But bear in mind that the life of Christ does us no good unless it is in us. “Know ye not your own selves, how that Jesus Christ is in you, except ye be reprobates?” (2 Corinthians 13:5). If the life of Christ is not “made manifest in our body” (2 Corinthians 4:10), we are not Christians at all! It is not the mere fact that Jesus kept the law hundreds of years ago that saves us, but it is the fact that He still lives, that His life now is the same as it was then, and that He lives in us, and fulfils the law *in us*, not outside of us, not by someone else.

Tuesday section quotes: “Ellen G. White has perceptively stated that ‘there are three living persons of the heavenly trio ... the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.’ – Ellen G. White, *Evangelism*, p. 615.” ‘Aha,’ you say, ‘trinity!’ Not so fast please. *Evangelism* is not an original Ellen White book, but a Compilation done in 1946 long after her death, by LeRoy Edwin From, in some cases using half-quotations, words omitted and words disjoined from their original context to support a trinitarian view. To fully understand what Ellen White taught, compare her other writings, for “the testimonies themselves will be the key that will explain the messages given, as scripture is explained by scripture” {1SM 42.2}. Read her writings on the subject of the Godhead; to help you, download a booklet by Nader Mansour (http://revelation1412.org/files/1413/4269/9545/Putting_the_Pieces_Together.pdf) and read the full quotations; you will be amazed to find clearly that Ellen White was never a trinitarian!