Is the Holy Spirit a Divine Person? Pt. 1

By Charles Feinberg

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This message we begin a series on truth and error about the Holy Spirit. In this first study, we shall be dealing with two prominent questions; is the Holy Spirit a divine person. And what does he do for the world. Our subject then is is the Holy Spirit a divine person. And what does he do for the world. The series is by Dr. Charles Lee Feinberg dean emeritus and professor of Old Testament at Talbot Theological Seminary in La Mirada California. Friends it is amazing that many men who know the truth with reference to God the Father with reference to God the Son the Lord Jesus Christ are nevertheless quite a stray and far afield on the subject of the Holy Spirit. In other words this doctrine has in the past and in the present either been grossly neglected as though it did not exist at all or when attention has been given to it. It has been shamefully perverted and twisted from proper scriptural norms. It is imperative that we take the proper distinctions and adhere to strictly scriptural language and usage.

The Age in which we live this present age has rightly been called the age of the Holy Spirit. Since the Ascension of Our Lord Jesus Christ mentioned in Acts one this age begun in Acts 2 has rightly been called the age of the Holy Spirit. There's a very real sense in which in all of the Old Testament centuries we have the age of the father because God the Father is
prominent there. The Lord God of Israel called the God of Abraham the God of Isaac and the God of Jacob. The emphasis in the Old Testament is on the unity in the Godhead we may call it the age of the father that does not mean that the Son did not exist or the Holy Spirit did not exist. They all existed but the pre-eminent and predominant ministry is of the father. In the four Gospels with the manifestation of the Lord Jesus Christ. We have the age of the Son, for both his appearance and work are clearly set forth there in a wonderful portrayal not a biography but a wonderful portrayal which God wanted us to have to see his fourfold glory in Matthew Mark Luke and John.

Now from Acts, specifically Pentecost to the second coming of Christ we have the age of the Holy Spirit. Since our age is characterized by the office work of the Holy Spirit in a special sense. We must be well acquainted with the Holy Spirit. Now some have wondered why it is sometimes translated the phrase Holy Spirit and sometimes they find Holy Ghost. Well the translation of the Greek word Pneuma a translation of the Greek word should be spirit and that word we get from Latin origin Spiritus ghost is of Germanic origin from the word Geist which means spirit as well but today has an altogether different meaning. Something that's eerie and frightening in the light. So we should use the words Holy Spirit this is we say then this special time this special span this special epic in world history of the Holy Spirit. Have you noticed my dear friends that Luke concludes the Gospel of Luke concludes with the mention of a promise coming from the father and Acts begins with a statement tarry till you have the promise of the father.

These should be dovetailing one into another. Then why did the Holy Spirit allow in our order of the canonical books in our enumeration of the canonical books. Why did he allow John to be inserted? For a very good reason because the Gospel of John more than all other of the
Gospels has to say he has more to say than all the rest of them on the doctrine and the ministry and personality of the Holy Spirit. That is very vital especially do we find this in those chapters that we often call the upper room discourse from John 13 through 17. So we have ample reason then beloved friends to give attention prayerful careful attention and study to the doctrine of the Holy Spirit.

Now to answer our first question is the Holy Spirit a divine person. Well that has two elements. The question as to whether the Holy Spirit is a person and whether he is divine or whether he is God. Let us look at the first part. The Scriptures reveal without a shadow of a doubt that the Holy Spirit is a person he is as much a person as God the Father or God the Son. If it's claimed he cannot be a person because he has no body no physical body then that argument would operate as well against the father for God the Father has no physical body. Also there was a time when the Lord Jesus Christ before the Incarnation had no physical body before his incarnation in the Virgin Mary but both God the Father and God the Son have always been persons and so with the Holy Spirit the Holy Spirit though he does not have a physical body is a person you cannot join.

You cannot cement personality and the possession of a physical body in such a way that you cannot have one without the other. Think of the apostle Paul he's in the glory many centuries. But my dear friends he's still a person. But we do not indicate in Scripture that he is in a body because he says to be with the Lord is to be absent from the body. And yet he has personality. Now the Holy Spirit has the qualities that accompany a personality. There we have a truth that cannot be refuted it cannot be disputed. How so. Well names are given to the Holy Spirit that imply that infer that must mean must add up to personality. For instance he's called the comforter in John 14:16.
We read and I will pray the father and he shall give you another comforter that he may abide with you forever. Now comforter your mother comforted you. Your father comforted, you loved ones have comforted you but that is a quality of a personality and if one is called a comforter. He must be a person you can't call school spirit or patriotism spirits like that that are abstract you cannot call them comforters. Oh they may comfort you in an area but they are not comforters. Now, in John 16 and seven we read. Nevertheless I tell you the truth. It is expedient for you that I go away for if I go not away the comforter will not come unto you. But if I depart I will send him unto you. Notice John 14 16 and 16 7. Both tell us that the Holy Spirit is a comforter.

Now that name means one called to the side as a client calls a lawyer to his side to help him to assist him to aid him. Paracalel is the verb and the word is Paraclete. You say well that's too much I can't remember. Yes you can. It's a transliteration of a Greek word but has been in existence for centuries and you can learn it just as well as another and you will be speaking knowingly remember what we just said that we must make proper distinction and adhere strictly to scriptural language. Let's use scriptural language for scriptural ideas and scriptural concepts. So the name comforter, Paraclete means one called to the side as a client calls a lawyer. This same name is used of our Lord Jesus Christ comforter or Paraclete in First John two one the Apostle John says to believers my little children these things write I unto you that you sin not. And if any man sin, and he's Christian man or Christian woman young man or young woman in Christ, sin we have an advocate that word advocate is paraclete. He is our comforter.

With the Father Jesus Christ the righteous. Therefore if Christ is a person and he surely is a person and is called a comforter then the Holy Spirit called by such a personal name comforter is also a person. He cannot be denied. We cannot avoid the force of this and then John 14:16 as
we said no one but a person could be indicated he's taking the place of the person of Jesus Christ our Lord Jesus says concerning the Holy Spirit. I'll pray the father he shall give you another comforter. Well that wouldn't mean a person on the same level as any human being he must be on the level of a tremendously important human being to take the place of the Lord Jesus Christ when the mother says while I'm gone I will have a baby sitter. It'll be so and so it'll be grandmother it'll be aunt it'll be sister or brother.

The mother is not allowing one to take her place. That's just an idea or just a concept or an imagination. No. She wants a person to take her place and that's the way with the Lord Jesus Christ. So not only are names given to the Holy Spirit and used in speaking of him not only names that indicate personality but personal pronouns are used of the Holy Spirit. You know that a pronoun is a word in place of, pro, a noun. Another. And their personal it shows something that's impersonal. She shows something that's feminine. He shows something that is indicated as masculine. Now notice here in John 16 important passage verse 7:8 13 to 15. I'm going to read it will you please if you have your Bible. Follow it there and see how many times the personal pronoun is used. Nevertheless I tell you the truth. It is expedient for you that I go away. Those are all pronouns I you. That must mean the Lord Jesus a person is speaking to persons and he was to his disciples. I tell you the truth that is expedient for you that I go away for if I go not away the comforter will not come unto you.

But if I depart I will send him not it. Send him unto you. Personal pronouns are used of the Holy Spirit. And when he is come he will reprove the world of sin and of righteousness and of judgment. Nevertheless when he the spirit of truth is come, I'm emphasizing the pronouns he will guide you into all truth for he shall not speak of himself. But whatever 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 show it unto you. There you have personal pronouns used of the Holy Spirit. More personal characteristics of the Spirit are indicated in scripture characteristics not of something inanimate or impersonal or abstract but personal characteristics like what. Well one who searches and knows notice just as had been indicated in John's Gospel the 13th to the 15th verse all things that the father hath are mine. Therefore said I he shall take of mine and shall show it unto you.

Now notice these tremendous personal characteristics in first Corinthians 2 10 and 11 but God hath revealed them the unsearchable things that man by himself doesn't know God has revealed them unto us by his spirit. How come for the spirit searcheth all things. The Holy Spirit searches. If you've lost something in a home or you want someone to search out a certain matter you don't ask an abstraction to do that must be a person. The spirit searcheth all things. Yea the deep things of God for what man knoweth the things of a man except the spirit of man which is in him even so the things of God knoweth no man but the spirit of God. Notice these two important verbs searcheth and knows he searches and knows these are verily of a truth, personal characteristics of the Holy Spirit. And then more Isaiah 11:3.

God is going to make Messiah of quick understanding in the fear of the Lord and He shall not judge after the sight of his eyes. Neither reprove after the hearing of his ears he is going to have the spirit of God who endows him first Peter 1:11. The Holy Spirit searches what or what manner of time the spirit of Christ that's the Holy Spirit who was in them did signify when he testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ and the glory that should follow. Think of these qualities these characteristic personal characteristics of the Holy Spirit he is able to make of quick understanding. He is the one who searches. He is the one who knows he is the one who
testifies ahead of time about Christ's coming suffering and the final glory that comes after that. Amazing.

He has a will and no object that's inanimate can have a will. A chair can't have a will. A table can't have a will. Neither can a dog have a will, or a cat have a will in the sense of personality. First Corinthians 12:11 but all these worketh that one and the very same spirit dividing to every man severally individually as he wills. The Holy Spirit gives you and me qualities gifts as he wishes. Yes and the Holy Spirit has a mind. The mind is a clear attribute of personality because the mind of the flesh the Carnal mind is enmity hatred against God. Romans 8:7 and 27 for it's not subject to the law of God neither indeed can be he that searched the hearts the Holy Spirit knows what is the mind of the Holy Spirit. That's God the father here he searches the hearts. He knows what the mind of the Holy Spirit is because the spirit makes intercession for the saints according to the will of God.

What is said of the father is said of the spirit. And what is said of the son is said of the Spirit knowledge understanding searching all personal characteristics. Mind is a clear attribute of personality. The apostle Paul says in one place for we believe that we have the mind of Christ. There is the mind of the father. There is the mind of the Holy Spirit. Personal characteristics are indicated of the Holy Spirit and then personal acts are attributed to the Holy Spirit. Like speaking that must be of a person. We read in Revelation two seven the word of the Apostle John. He that has an ear let him hear what the Spirit says unto the churches the Spirit is speaking, that's a personal act speaking. You know how long that takes for a child after birth to learn how to speak. It is a marvelous act that sets man apart from animals and indicates a personality. Let him hear what the spirit says to the churches to him that overcometh while I give the eat of the
Tree of Life which is in the midst of the paradise of God revelation two seven and the Holy Spirit makes intercession.

Romans 8:26. We've had it before, likewise the spirit also helped with our infirmity our weakness for we don't know what we should pray for as we ought to but the spirit himself makes intercession the one who prays then must be a person. Prayer is a personal thing. Christ prayed to the father in John 17 and throughout his earthly ministry he prayed he must be a person. He surely is the spirit himself makes intercession for us with groanings that cannot be utters. That's Romans 8 and 26. And then beautifully in the Ministry of the word. The Holy Spirit calls he oversees. He commands notice it, acts 13:2 has rightly been pointed out many times as the beginning of the great enterprise of missions to the ends of the earth. We read in acts 13:2 as they minister to the Lord there in Antioch and fasted the believers did the Holy Spirit said he speaks separate me Barnabas and Saul for the work unto which I have called them.

He speaks and he calls. Yes he calls in the ministry. Not only that but he oversees he directs he administers and acts 16 6 and 7 remarkable verses. And this is after Paul had been in the ministry for some years now when they had gone throughout Phrygia and the region of Galicia and were forbidden by the Holy Spirit to preach the word in Asia who forbade them. The Holy Spirit and after they were come to Mysia they attempted to go into Bethenia but the spirit allowed them not. Who was it that grants permission? Who is it that disallows? Who is it that denies permission? The Holy Spirit yes he does what he calls he directs he oversees and he commands acts 20:28 says Paul to the Ephesian elders that my leaders take care therefore unto yourselves and to all the flock over which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers. Yes he does what, he commands.
He's made you overseers to feed he's told you to feed the church of God which he hath purchased with his own blood. Acts 20 verse 28 and the Holy Spirit can be influenced. He can be affected. He can be touched by personal treatment. You can't grieve school spirit; you can grieve somebody who has school spirit. You can't grieve a patriotic spirit the spirit of patriotism you can grieve somebody who has a spirit a patriot. But the Holy Spirit can be grieved. That shows that he has an ability to be affected or influenced by personal treatment. Ephesians 4 30 Paul says don't grieve not the Holy Spirit of God don't bring grief to him by whom you are sealed until the day of redemption. And Hebrews 10 and 29. He can be insulted. You can't insult a thing you can't insult a chair you can't insult a telegraph pole. You can insult a person, Hebrews 10:29.

He's speaking of judgment in the Mosaic Law says the writer of Hebrews how much more punishment suppose ye shall he be thought worthy who hath trodden underfoot the son of God has counted the blood of the covenant with which he was sanctified an unholy thing and has done despite unto the spirit of grace. What does do despite unto the spirit of Grace mean? Insult him. It means insult him. You can't insult a non-person. You can only insult one who can be effected by personal treatment then in Acts 5:3 the Holy Spirit can be lied to. Acts 5:3 but Peter said Ananias, why has Satan filled thine heart to lie to the Holy Spirit and to keep back part of the price of the land. You cannot lie to a non-entity but you can lie to a person. There was a young student who was preparing for Cambridge in England.

He was attacked by a certain sceptic who sneered at the idea of the Holy Spirit being a person. Why is it personality of the spirit? Why this spirit is wind, its breath its air. The very Greek word shows you this. It simply means wind. In some places it does mean wind, Pneumas we have pneuma pneumatic tires and pneumoniae we have such expressions as that he says that word just simply means wind. The believer said be it so then be so good as to tell me the
meaning of this passage and you quote from John 3 except a man be born of water and you don't want it. End of the spirit but of the wind you cannot enter the kingdom of God that was born of the flesh is flesh and that which is born of the wind is wind. The sceptic had no answer. The student said your words are borne not of the spirit but of the wind not of the Holy Spirit. He was right. Certainly was right. Far as that's concerned the word in the Old Testament "Ruach" mentioned in Genesis 1 the spirit of the Lord that isn't just a wind of the Lord, the spirit of the Lord hovered over the waters and there are definite places where it cannot mean anything else but Spirit the Spirit of God is not impersonal. He is not non personal. He is definitely personal. Dear Beloved Friend.

Don't ever give up that marvelous truth the Holy Spirit is a person. But there's more to it. The Holy Spirit is not only a person. He is God. That means he is a divine person. There are only three divine persons in the world. God the Father God the Son God the Holy Spirit. So I say it not enough to say the Holy Spirit is a person. It might conceivably be argued that he is a person on the human or on some angelic plane less than deity. Satan is a person but Satan is not a divine person. The Holy Spirit is more than a person. He is God as well. We must recognize we have to recognize that he is deity the Holy Spirit is just as God the Father is deity and God. The son is deity. God the Holy Spirit is deity. How do we know that? Well in the first place divine names are given to him. He's actually called God. He's actually called God in Acts 5:3 and 4 we read these words but Peter said Ananias why has Satan filled thy heart to lie to the Holy Spirit and to keep back part of the price of the land we just quoted that a bit ago.

Notice he goes on in verse 4 while it remained while that property was yours was it not thine own and after it was sold what is it not in thine own power. Why hast thou conceived this thing in thine heart that thou hast not lied unto men, notice this thou hast not lied unto men but
unto God verse 3 he says you've lied to the Holy Spirit verse 4 he says you've lied unto God. The Holy Spirit my dear friend is God. Never forget it and not only there but in 2 Corinthians 3:18 in the beautiful benediction. We have the Lord Jesus Christ joined with God the Father and God the Son will see that in just a bit. But notice the divine name is given in 2 Corinthians 3:18But we all the last verse of the third chapter 2nd Corinthians but we all with unveiled face beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord our chains.

We believers into the same image from glory to glory even as by the spirit of the Lord that in Greek is actually even as by the Lord the Spirit the Lord the Spirit the Spirit of God is Lord. No question as God the Father is called Lord God. The son is called Lord the Lord Jesus Christ. You will be using scriptural language you will be speaking correctly when you say the Lord the spirit Second Corinthians 3:18. He is not only human no he's more than human. He's not only a person he he's not only a personality. He's even more than that in a higher sense. He is a personality but a divine personality. The Holy Spirit is God because divine names are given to him.

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