

## Lesson 12

### Part One – Introduction to Systematic Theology

- I. Introduction
  - a. What is Systematic Theology?
  - b. What is the relation between Systematic Theology and Hermeneutics?
  - c. Why is it important to study the Bible systematically?

### Part Two – Theology Proper - Beginning at the Beginning

- I. Introduction to the One True God
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  - b. Why only one God
- II. The Nature of God
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    - iv. Holiness
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    - ii. John 1:1.
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    - iii. The ascension marks the first entrance of resurrected humanity into heaven and the beginning of a new work in heaven (Hebrews 4:14-16; 6:20).
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- i. Intercession Assures our Salvation
  - ii. Intercession Restores us to Fellowship Following Sin.
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- XII. The Future Work of Christ**

### **Part Four – Pneumatology: The Doctrine of the Holy Spirit**

The doctrine of the Holy Spirit is without a doubt one of the most misunderstood, misrepresented of all doctrines in Scripture. In many churches, especially those of the Charismatic variety, the Holy Spirit is viewed, not as a person, but as a force or a conduit through which God’s blessings are passed to the believer. Many treat the Holy Spirit as a genie from which they can receive all sorts of supernatural power to perform miracles, signs, and wonders. Sadder still is the fact that we don’t hear too much teaching on the Holy Spirit in our churches today. Hopefully, this study will go a little way at least in filling in some of the blanks we may have in our understanding of God the Holy Spirit. We begin with a discussion on...

#### I. The Personality of the Holy Spirit

When we speak of the personality of the Holy Spirit, it’s important to note that personality does not necessitate corporeity. In other words, when we talk about the Person of the Holy Spirit, we are not implying that He has a body or any other material form. The personality of the Holy Spirit is a very important doctrine because, if for no other reason, it prevents us (or should at least) from referring to the Holy Spirit as “It” (which many people unwittingly do).

Theologically, the word “*personality*”, when used to describe God the Father and the Holy Spirit, indicates that they are “*personal*”, that is, they have characteristics which enable them to communicate and interact with us on a very personal level. Most theologians define personality then as “*the possession of intellect, emotions, and will.*” The term is viewed as necessary to fend off potential claims that God is NOT a personal, communicative God. This was the view of Arius who, in the 4<sup>th</sup> century, declared that the Holy Spirit was only an influence emanating from the Father. He was condemned for this belief at the Council of Nicea in 325 but his teaching has continued to this day and is prominent in Unitarianism, among the Jehovah’s Witnesses, and many other cults. Sadly, there are many doctrinally illiterate people in solid churches who view the Holy Spirit more as a force or power than an actual person.

So, what proof do we have that the Holy Spirit is personal? Well, according to the first subpoint in your outlines...

### a. His Identity Confirms His Personality

The first thing we want to note is that the Holy Spirit is God or, better, the third “*person*” of the triune Godhead. Since we know our God to be a personal God, this must, of necessity apply to the Holy Spirit as well. We’ll talk about the deity of the Holy Spirit a little later on.

Now, since man is made in the image of God, it is not illogical (in fact, it’s perfectly acceptable) to assume that there are similarities between man and God. As we discussed last Wednesday evening, God has communicated to us certain attributes. Among these is personality. As I said on Wednesday night, I don’t know if many people have actually considered this but we are personal creatures only because God Himself is personal.

### b. His Attributes Confirm His Personality

#### i. Intellect

How do we determine that the Holy Spirit has an intellect? Well, according to **1 Corinthians 2:10**, “*the Spirit searches all things, even the depths of God.*” The word “*search*” means to examine or investigate a matter, yes, but this doesn’t mean that the Holy Spirit is not omniscient or is otherwise ignorant of something until He thoroughly investigates it. Albert Barnes is helpful here:

*“It is not to be supposed that he searches, or inquires as people do who are ignorant; but that he has an intimate and profound knowledge, such as is usually the result of a close and accurate search. The result is what the apostle means to state - the accurate, profound, and thorough knowledge, such as usually attends research. He does not state the mode in which it is obtained; but the fact. And he uses a word more emphatic than simple knowledge, because he designs to indicate that his knowledge is profound, entire, and thorough.”*

Paul actually clarifies this for us in the following verse (**1 Corinthians 2:11**) saying:

*“For who knows a person’s thoughts except the spirit of that person, which is in him? So also no one comprehends the thoughts of God except the Spirit of God.”*

#### ii. Knowledge

The fact that the Holy Spirit “*knows*”, in a comprehensive way, the thoughts of God is one of the best proofs we have to support His deity. God the Father is omniscient and so is the Holy

Spirit who knows His every thought. This also speaks to the inseparability of the third Person of the Trinity from the first and second. They are indeed expressive of One God existing in three distinct personages.

### iii. Emotions

I think I've shared this with you before, but I really don't like to use the word "emotions" when talking about God. Why? Because, in my opinion, emotions are indicative of instability. Let me explain. The Merriam-Webster definition of emotion is as follows:

*"...a conscious mental reaction (as anger or fear) **subjectively** experienced as strong feeling usually directed toward a specific object and typically accompanied by physiological and behavioral **changes** in the body."*

Can anybody tell me what's wrong with this definition as it might apply to God? [Discuss]

But, having said that, although we may not understand it exactly, it is clear that the Holy Spirit is an emotional being (but without change or subjectivity). **Ephesians 4:30**, for example, tells us "*do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God.*" The context tells us that the Holy Spirit is indeed grieved when a believer sins by lying, being angry, stealing, being lazy, saying unkind words, etc. This indicates that a "person" is being grieved. An influence cannot be grieved.

### iv. Will

The Holy Spirit possesses a will in that He has the power of sovereign choice, decision, and decree. We know, for example, that the Holy Spirit distributes gifts as He wills. In Acts 16:6 the Holy Spirit exercised His will in forbidding Paul to preach in Asia and redirecting him to Europe.

#### c. His Works Confirm His Personality

##### i. Teaching

Before Jesus departed from His disciples He encouraged them by telling them He would send them, "another Helper" (**John 14:16**). Interestingly, the word "*another*" is actually a "*quality word*" indicating that the Holy Spirit would be a Helper of the same kind *and quality* as Christ. Just as Jesus had taught His disciples, the Holy Spirit would teach them (**John 14:26**).

When Scripture tells us that we have the "*mind of Christ*," this is an allusion to the fact that the Holy Spirit is resident in us and is enabling and guiding us to think like Christ.

### ii. Testifying

In **John 15:26**, the disciples are told that the Holy Spirit would bear witness of Christ. The word translated as “bear witness” means to testify on behalf of someone.

The Holy Spirit testifies of Christ in that He would verify and validate that Jesus had in fact come speaking the truth of God. The Spirit is also said to bear witness with our own spirits, corroborating our claims of being children of God.

### iii. Guiding

In **John 16:13**, Jesus promised his disciples that when the Holy Spirit came He would guide them into all truth. The picture here is of a guide or escort leading a traveler through unfamiliar territory.

**\*NOTE:** The Holy Spirit is often referred to in Scripture as the “*paraklete*” or “*parakletos*.” This word comes from two Greek words, “*para*” (which means “*alongside*”) and “*kaleo*” (which means “*called out*”). Literally, the Holy Spirit is the “*One called out to be alongside the believer*.”

### iv. Convicting

**John 16:8** declares the future ministry of the Spirit would be to “*convict the world*.” “Convict” means to “*convince someone of something; to point something out to someone*.” It’s important to point out that conviction is not always a negative thing. We can be convicted in a positive way as well as being convicted of sin.

### v. Regenerating

This is a doctrine that has been the subject of much controversy over the years. The Holy Spirit is the One who “gives life” to the believer. You’ll recall Jesus’ words to Nicodemus in **John chapter 3** when He told him, “*You must be born ‘anotnen’*.” Jesus was literally telling Nicodemus that he must be born “*from above*” if he was to know eternal life. The controversy with regeneration concerns when and how it happens to the believer. Those in the Arminian or semi-Pelagian camp argue that regeneration follows (or, at best, is simultaneous with) the exercise of faith. The sinner exercises faith and then, as a result of that exercise of faith (or concurrent with the exercise of faith), the Holy Spirit regenerates him or her unto newness of life. What’s wrong with this view? [Discuss]. Regeneration **MUST** precede faith. Why? Because dead men cannot respond to the gospel! Unless a man is given the spiritual faculties



to respond to what he is being told, he CANNOT respond! It is helpful to look at the “*order of salvation*” or “*ordo salutis*” in **Romans 8:29-30**:

*“For those whom he foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son, in order that he might be the firstborn among many brothers. And those whom he predestined he also called, and those whom he called he also justified, and those whom he justified he also glorified.”*

God foreknew (or, better, foreloved) us, He predestined us, and then He called us. And how did we hear Him? We heard Him because, in regeneration, we were given the faculties to hear Him!

### vi. Interceding

We also read in **verses 26-28 of Romans 8** about how the Holy Spirit intercedes for us. Paul writes:

*Likewise the Spirit helps us in our weakness. For we do not know what to pray for as we ought, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us with groanings too deep for words. And he who searches hearts knows what is the mind of the Spirit, because the Spirit intercedes for the saints according to the will of God. And we know that for those who love God all things work together for good, for those who are called according to his purpose.*

An inanimate power or influence simply could not intercede for us but the “person” of the Holy Spirit does.

### vii. Commanding

In Acts 13:2 the Holy Spirit commanded that Paul and Barnabas be set apart for missionary work; Acts 13:4 adds that the two men were sent out by the Holy Spirit. In Acts 16:6 the Holy Spirit prohibited Paul and Silas from preaching in Asia; in Acts 8:29 the Holy Spirit directed Philip to speak to the Ethiopian eunuch.

### d. His Position Confirms His Personality

As one commentator noted, “*Certain acts are performed toward the Holy Spirit which would be most incongruous (or wouldn’t make sense) if He did not possess true personality.*”

i. He can be grieved

We discussed this earlier. The Holy Spirit can be grieved when we sin.

ii. He can be blasphemed

Normally, when we think of blasphemy, we think of it in terms of its being committed against the Father. Jesus was also blasphemed (see **Matthew 27:39**; **Luke 23:39**). When we do think of blasphemy against the Holy Spirit, we speak most often of the “*unpardonable sin*.” We read of this in **Matt. 12:22-32**:

*"Then there was brought to Him a demon-possessed man who was blind and dumb, and He healed him, so that the dumb man spoke and saw. And all the multitudes were amazed, and began to say, "This man cannot be the Son of David, can he?" But when the Pharisees heard it, they said, "This man casts out demons only by Beelzebub the ruler of the demons." And knowing their thoughts He said to them, "Any kingdom divided against itself is laid waste; and any city or house divided against itself shall not stand. "And if Satan casts out Satan, he is divided against himself; how then shall his kingdom stand? "And if I by Beelzebub cast out demons, by whom do your sons cast them out? Consequently they shall be your judges.*

*"But if I cast out demons by the Spirit of God, then the kingdom of God has come upon you. "Or how can anyone enter the strong man's house and carry off his property, unless he first binds the strong man? And then he will plunder his house. "He who is not with Me is against Me; and he who does not gather with Me scatters. "Therefore I say to you, any sin and blasphemy shall be forgiven men, but blasphemy against the Spirit shall not be forgiven. "And whoever shall speak a word against the Son of Man, it shall be forgiven him; **but whoever shall speak against the Holy Spirit, it shall not be forgiven him, either in this age, or in the age to come...**" In context here, blasphemy of the Holy Spirit is saying that Jesus did His miracles by the power of the devil. And why would this be unforgiveable? Because to attribute the work of Christ to the devil strikes at the very heart of the redemptive work of Christ, His testimony, and teaching.*

Can a believer today commit this “*unforgiveable sin*”? No, because we have eternal life, not conditional life. Plus, there is no evidence at all in the Bible to suggest that a believer has ever committed this sin. How about an unbeliever? Most theologians agree that no one can commit this particular sin today because to commit it required that one be in the presence of Christ, witnessing His miracles, and then attributing them to the devil.

iii. He can be resisted

In **Acts 7:51**, Stephen said to those who were stoning him, *“You stiff-necked people, uncircumcised in heart and ears, **you always resist the Holy Spirit**. As your fathers did, so do you.”* It is entirely possible to resist the leadings, convictions, and teachings of the Holy Spirit. It is NOT possible to resist the effectual call, however. That is another discussion for another day.

iv. He can be lied to

In **Acts chapter 5**, Ananias and Sapphira actually died because they had lied to the Holy Spirit. Again, one cannot lie to a force or influence.

v. He can be obeyed

This should actually go without saying but if the Holy Spirit can command us, then He can also be obeyed.

e. His Designations Confirm His Personality

One of the greatest ways to prove that the Holy Spirit is in fact a person, is to understand Greek pronouns. The Greek word for Spirit is *“pneuma”*, which is a word that is neuter in gender (neither male nor female). Under normal circumstances, the Greek grammar would require that any pronoun used as a substitute for *“pneuma”* must also be neuter. Under inspiration, however, the writers of the New Testament broke with the conventional grammar rules and used personal pronouns which are of the **masculine** gender. Look at **John 15:26**, for example. There, Jesus says:

*“When the Helper [parakletos] comes, whom I will send to you from the Father, that is the Spirit [pneuma; gender neuter] of truth who proceeds from the Father, **He [masculine pronoun]** will testify about Me.”*

We see the same thing in **John 16:13-14**:

*“When the Spirit [pneuma] of truth comes, he [masculine pronoun] will guide you into all the truth, for he [masculine pronoun] will not speak on his own authority, but whatever he [masculine pronoun] hears he will speak, and he [masculine pronoun] will declare to you the*

*things that are to come. He [masculine pronoun] will glorify me, for he [masculine pronoun] will take what is mine and declare it to you."*

### II. The Deity of the Holy Spirit

The deity of the Holy Spirit is inextricably bound up with the doctrine of the Trinity. A denial of one is a denial of the other. Conversely, belief in the Trinity necessitates a belief in the deity of the Holy Spirit.

#### a. Divine Titles

- i. Spirit of God
- ii. Spirit of Christ

This title evidences His relationship to the Father and the Son and also affirms His deity. When He is called the Spirit of God that means that He is the very Person of God. 1 Corinthians 2:11 clearly shows that as man and his spirit make one and the same being, so God and His Spirit are only one. The terms "Spirit of God" and "Spirit of Christ" are both references to the Holy Spirit. If we look at Romans 8:9-11, we see all three of the members of the Trinity mentioned. The "Spirit of God dwells in you" (v. 9); "Christ is in you" (v. 10), and the "Spirit of Him (the Father) who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you" (v. 11). In Acts 16:6-7, "Holy Spirit" (v. 6) and "Spirit of Jesus" (v. 7) are synonymous.

#### b. Divine Attributes

- i. Life

Just as the Father and the Son have life in themselves, so the Holy Spirit has life in Himself.

- ii. Omniscience

1 Corinthians 2:10-12. The Holy Spirit searches the depths of God; the same term "depth" (bathos) is used of the knowledge of God. It is unfathomable to man, but God the Holy Spirit knows the otherwise unsearchable and unfathomable (Romans 11:33).

- iii. Omnipotence

Job 33:4. The omnipotence of the Holy Spirit is seen in creation. In Genesis 1:2 the Holy Spirit is seen hovering over creation as a hen over its young; the Holy Spirit gave life to creation.

- iv. Omnipresence

Psalm 139:7-10; John 14:17. In Psalm 139 David exclaims that He cannot flee from the presence of the Holy Spirit; if he ascends to heaven, He is there; if he descends into the depths of the earth, the Spirit is there also. Even if he could fly away swiftly, he could not escape the

presence of the Spirit. The omnipresence of the Spirit is also taught in John 14:17 where Christ taught the disciples that the Spirit would indwell them all, an affirmation of the Spirit's omnipresence.

### v. Eternity

Hebrews 9:14. The Holy Spirit is called the Eternal Spirit in this passage. Through the eternal Spirit Christ offered Himself without blemish to God. Just as the Holy Spirit had a part in the birth of Christ (Luke 1:35), in the same way He also had a part in the death of Christ.

### vi. Holiness

Matthew 12:32. One important aspect of deity is that God is holy, entirely set apart and separated from sin and sinners. The most common name for the Spirit is Holy Spirit, indicating the third person of the Trinity also possesses this transcendent attribute of deity.

### vii. Love

Galatians 5:22. The Holy Spirit is love and produces love in the child of God. If He did not possess love as a primary attribute He could not produce love in the believer.

### viii. Truth

John 14:17. The Holy Spirit is termed the "Spirit of truth" in John 14:17 and 15:26. Just as Christ was the truth (John 14:6) so the Spirit is the truth and leads people into the truth through the Scriptures.

## c. Divine Works of the Spirit

### i. Creation

Genesis 1:2. Several Scripture passages affirm that the Holy Spirit was involved in the work of creation. Genesis 1:2 indicates that the Spirit brooded over creation, bringing it to life. In Psalm 104:24-26 the psalmist describes the creation, and in verse 30 he indicates how God created: "You send forth Your Spirit and they are created." Job 26:13 expands the creation of God to the heavens; the Holy Spirit created not only the earth but also the heavens.

### ii. Generating the Christ Child

Matthew 1:20. The Holy Spirit overshadowed Mary to assure a sinless humanity for Christ.

### iii. Inspiration of Scripture

2 Peter 1:21. There is an analogy between the Holy Spirit's generating Christ's humanity and the Spirit's superintending the writers of Scripture; just as the Holy Spirit overshadowed Mary,

guaranteeing the sinlessness of Christ's humanity, so the Holy Spirit superintended the human writers to guarantee an inerrant Scripture.

### iv. Regeneration

Titus 3:5. To regenerate means to give life. The Holy Spirit causes the new birth; He is its author. Regeneration by the Holy Spirit is the spiritual counterpart of human reproduction in the physical realm. Human generation produces human life; spiritual regeneration produces spiritual life. The Holy Spirit produces the new birth, but He does it through the instrumentality of the Word of God (1 Peter 1:23). The same truth is taught in John 3:6 where Jesus indicates the Holy Spirit produces the new birth in that He regenerates the person.

### v. Intercession

Romans 8:26. Christ is an intercessor for believers, but so is the Holy Spirit.

### vi. Sanctification

2 Thessalonians 2:13. There are three aspects of sanctification, the first being positional: "the setting apart which occurs when by the Holy Spirit the one who believes is joined unto Christ and thus comes to be in Christ." NOTE: The other two are progressive sanctification and ultimate sanctification.

### vii. Helping Saints

John 14:16. In this text Jesus promised the disciples "another Helper." Helper is the Greek word "parakleton" which comes from two words: "along side" and "called." Hence, the Holy Spirit is "One called alongside to help."

### d. Divine Procession of the Holy Spirit

The relationship of the Holy Spirit to the other members of the Trinity is expressed by the term "procession," indicating that the Holy Spirit came forth from both the Father and the Son. There are several indicators suggesting the doctrine of the procession of the Spirit. All designations such as "Spirit of God" affirm the procession of the Spirit in that He is the Spirit from God. The present tense of John 15:26 ("proceeds") is used to understand the eternity of the relationship. Hence, the Holy Spirit is spoken of as eternally proceeding from the Father and the Son. NOTE: The procession of the Holy Spirit does NOT indicate the subordination of the Spirit to the other members of the Trinity.