

## KNOW THE TRUTH

### Lesson 9 - The Person and Work of the Holy Spirit (1 of 2)

Outline is drawn from pages 245-260 of *Know the Truth - A Handbook of Christian Belief* by Bruce Milne.

#### KEY CONCEPTS FROM CHAPTER 18 - "THE PERSON OF THE SPIRIT"

- I. Old Testament Teaching
    - A. Old Testament Teaching
      1. "The Hebrew for 'Spirit', *rûah*, also means 'wind' or 'breath' (Ps. 148:8; Ezek. 1:4). The 'Spirit of the Lord', however, is always the personal agency of God, denoting God in his activity in the world (Gen. 2:7; Judg. 11:29; Ps. 139:7). The OT looks forward to a new era, the age of the Spirit of God (Isa. 11:2; 44:3; Ezek. 36:27f.; Joel 2:28f.)." (Milne, 245)  
\*See B.B. Warfield on the difference between the Spirit in the Old Covenant and New - Works of Warfield, vol. 2, p. 101
    - B. New Testament Teaching
      1. A personal being
        - a) "The Holy Spirit is not 'it', an impersonal force or power, but a divine person." (Milne, 246)
      2. A divine being
        - a) "Scripture witnesses unambiguously to the deity of the Holy Spirit. He is a member of the Godhead, the ever-blessed object of our worship, love and praise, who shares the same divine nature as the Father and the Son (Matt. 28:18f.; 2 Cor. 13:14; Eph. 4:4-6)." (Milne, 246)
- \*Note the list of scriptures on page 246

#### KEY CONCEPTS FROM CHAPTER 19 - "THE SPIRIT OF PROMISE"

- I. The Spirit Before Christ's Coming
  - A. Life
    1. "The Spirit is commonly referred to in relation to the creation of the cosmos." (Milne, 247)
  - B. Knowledge
    1. "The Spirit illuminates the mind with the knowledge of God and his truth (Deut. 34:9; Ps. 143:10), particularly in prophetic insight (1 Sam. 10:10), but also in a general capacity for understanding (Gen. 41:38f.)." (Milne, 247)
  - C. Promise
    1. "The link between the Spirit and the promised messianic age is twofold:
      - a) First, the Messiah who is to come is himself anointed by the Spirit (Isa. 11:2; 42:1; 61:1f.; cf. Luke 4:16-20)...
      - b) Secondly, in the messianic age God's Spirit will be poured out in a special manner and degree (Ezek. 36:27f.; Joel 2:28f.)." (Milne, 248)
- II. The Spirit and Christ
  - A. The Spirit received by Christ
    1. "The reception of the Spirit by Christ is seen particularly clearly at his baptism, where the 'Holy Spirit descended on him in bodily form like a dove' (Luke 3:22)." (Milne, 248)
  - B. The Spirit given by Christ

1. "John the Baptist prophesied that Jesus' ministry would involve his baptizing 'with the Holy Spirit and with fire' (Matt. 3:11)." (Milne, 248)
2. "The Holy Spirit is therefore none other than that member of the eternal Godhead who brings to bear in the life of God's people the fruits of the victory won by Christ in his life, death and glorification. The ministry of the Spirit is in this sense a 'spilling over' from the throne of God of the blessing wrought by Christ for sinners." (Milne, 249)
3. "This understanding carries important implications."
  - a) "For one thing it underlines the folly of any attempt to separate the work of the Spirit from the work of Christ. (Milne, 249)
  - b) "Conversely, recognizing the indissoluble link between the ministry of the Spirit and the glorification of Jesus ought to deliver us from fear concerning the ministry of the Holy Spirit. (Milne, 249)
  - c) "This...provides a standard with which to test claims to authentic ministries of the Spirit: if they are irreconcilable with the Jesus we meet in the Gospels, with his warm compassion and sane humanity, then they can be dismissed. The Spirit is Jesus, in the sense that he seeks to bring Christ to us and bring us into an even fuller appropriation of Christ's redemption blessings." (Milne, 249-250)

\*Note the list of scriptures on page 250

## KEY CONCEPTS FROM CHAPTER 20 - "THE SPIRIT AND CHRISTIAN BEGINNINGS"

- I. The Foundation: The Grace of God
  - A. Grace
    1. "The supreme underlying reality in all Christian experience of the Spirit is God's sovereign grace (Exod. 34:6; Eph. 1:7f.). Grace (Lat. gratia; Gk. charis; Heb. hēn) means the free display of favour, particularly by a superior to an inferior. Referred to God, it is that free decision of God, apart from all constraint and in no way compelled by our merit, to have mercy upon his sinful creatures, saving his people from all the effects of their sin, through Jesus Christ (Acts 15:11; Eph. 2:8; Titus 2:11)." (Milne, 251)
  - B. God's Free Grace
    1. "The freedom of divine grace needs to be underlined. God acts to save because he chooses to; it is a work of God over and above all the requirements of creatorhood; as with Israel, so with the church, it was in no way because of what we were or ever will be (Deut. 7:7f.). God loves and saves his people because he loves and wills to save them. There can be no 'explanation' beyond that." (Milne, 251)
  - C. God's Sovereign Grace
    1. "God's grace is also sovereign (Acts 18:27; Rom. 11:5f.; 1 Cor. 15:10). "Because it is God who purposes to save his people, he will certainly carry that resolve into realization. No power, demonic or human, is able to thwart his purpose. Let God be God! The various facets of Christian experience of the Spirit expounded below are simply distinguishable facets of this foundational reality, the sovereign grace of God in its operation to save sinners." (Milne, 251)
- II. The Essence: Union with Christ by the Spirit
  - A. Election
    1. Introductory Remarks

- a) "This refers to that work of God's grace whereby he chooses individuals and groups for a purpose or destiny in accordance with his will." (Milne, 252)
2. "Difficulties surrounding this great biblical and Christian doctrine can be confronted by noting the following truths concerning election." (Milne, 252)
  - a) "It is a revealed truth, disclosed in Scripture. (Milne, 252)
  - b) "It is a Christian truth to be met only from within the experience of regeneration by God's grace. It is not an explicit part of the gospel which the Christian presents to the unbeliever." (Milne, 253)
  - c) "It is a trinitarian truth. Election is not only related to the Father. Jesus Christ elects (John 15:16) and the ministry of the Holy Spirit is also referred to in the context of election (1 Pet. 1:2)." (Milne, 253)
  - d) "It is a Christological truth... People are 'chosen in Christ' (Eph. 1:4); the elect are saved only through Christ's work of atonement (Rom. 8:29f.; Eph. 1:7f.). All the blessings of the elect come through Christ (Eph. 1:3), i.e. through their union with him." (Milne, 253)
  - e) "It is a complementary truth. Election must be held in relation to, or in tension with, the Bible's clear insistence on human responsibility in face of God's summons in the gospel (Matt. 23:37; Heb. 12:25)." (Milne, 253)
  - f) "It is a divine truth. The relationship between human freedom and divine election can never be fully grasped by the human intellect. Both aspects are taught in Scripture and both are to be believed." (Milne, 253)
  - g) It is a practical truth. (Milne, 253)
    - (1) Doxology
    - (2) Security
    - (3) Holiness
3. Related issues
  - a) Foreknowledge
  - b) Reprobation
- B. Calling
  1. "This refers to that work of God by his Spirit in which he summons men and women to come to him and receive his mercy in Jesus Christ." (Milne, 255)
    - a) General call
    - b) Effective call
- C. Regeneration
  1. "Regeneration literally means 'born over again', or 'rebirth'. The OT referred to a future work of the Spirit by which he would reside 'within' the people of God, bringing them new life and enabling them to fulfil God's will (Ezek. 36:25f.; cf. Jer. 31:33). In the NT Jesus speaks to Nicodemus of regeneration by the Spirit as the only means of entry to the kingdom of God (John 3:1-8). Other biblical terminology closely echoes these references: 'born of God' (1 John 2:29; 3:9; 4:7; 5:4, 18; John 1:13), 'born again by the Word' (1 Pet. 1:23; cf. Jas 1:18), 'new creation' (2 Cor. 5:17; Gal. 6:15), 'created' by God (Eph. 2:10; 4:24)." (Milne, 255)
  2. "Regeneration marks the moment and the means of our coming into union with Christ. It is an instantaneous change from spiritual death to spiritual life, a spiritual resurrection (Eph. 2:1, 5), the once-for-all event at the beginning of the Christian life, parallel to physical birth." (Milne, 255)

#### D. Repentance

1. "This literally means a 'change of one's mind'. In biblical contexts it refers to a changed mind concerning sin and evil." (Milne, 256)
2. "It is seen in the Bible as a fundamental element in human response to God and commonly linked with faith; we turn from sin to Christ (Mark 1:15; Acts 2:38; 20:21). Conversion, literally 'change of direction', is closely related." (Milne, 256)
3. "God's call to repentance is a reminder of the fundamentally moral character of the gospel and the new life which issues from a response to it." (Milne, 256)
4. "Like faith, repentance is not confined to the earliest moments of Christian experience. Christians are called to lifelong repentance, an ever-repeated turning away from sin as it is revealed to us." (Milne, 256)

#### E. Faith

1. "Faith is fundamental to all genuine Christian experience. Without faith it is 'impossible to please God' (Heb. 11:6). It may be provisionally defined as 'trust in the truth of Jesus Christ crucified and risen'."
2. Three aspects of faith
  - a) "Faith is trust" (Milne, 256)
  - b) "Faith is trust in truth" (Milne, 257)
  - c) "Faith is trust in the truth of Jesus Christ, crucified and risen." (Milne, 257)

#### F. Justification

1. "Justification is that work of God's grace whereby sinners through their faith-union with Christ are accounted righteous before God on the grounds of Christ's obedience and death (see also Part 4)." (Milne, 257)
2. Justified by faith or works?

#### G. Adoption

1. "Adoption refers to that work of God's grace by which he receives us as his very own children through Christ and in our union with him." (Milne, 258)
2. Three Implications
  - a) "Adoption implies that the Christian life is, first, life with God as Father (Rom. 8:15; Gal. 4:6). Both these verses speak of our using the word Abba in address to God. This is the very word which Jesus had made his own in his prayers and which means 'my own dear Father'." (Milne, 259)
  - b) "Secondly, it is also life with others. 'Adoption' teaches us to see our fellow Christians as brothers and sisters in the family of God. Here is possibly the deepest word we can speak about our Christian relationships; we belong together in God's one great family drawn from all nations and generations." (Milne, 259)
  - c) "Thirdly, adoption means life with Christ as our elder brother (Rom. 8:14, 29; Heb. 2:10f.). In the Roman world, the adopted son was granted full legal status in the family alongside any other natural sons. He could even be nominated by the father as legal heir over the claims of his natural children. What a wonder this is! We are given full status within the family of God along with the 'natural' Son of the Father, the Lord Jesus Christ." (Milne, 259)

\*Note the list of scriptures on page 259