

## *Why Study The Holy Spirit?*

**O**f all the subjects to study from the Word of God, the Holy Spirit is one of the most important and one of the most difficult. We cannot visualize Him. Most of us have some mental image of Jesus as a man. Likewise, when we think of the Father, some picture probably comes to mind; but how are we to visualize the Holy Spirit? Our inability to conjure up a mental image of the Holy Spirit makes it difficult for us to study this subject. Why study the Holy Spirit?

*First, a study of the Holy Spirit will help us to understand our own spiritual nature.* The Bible teaches that we have been created in the image and likeness of God (Genesis 1:26). Since God is spirit (John 4:24), and since we have been created in His image, we are spiritual beings. As spiritual beings, the only way we can understand our own spiritual nature is by coming to understand something about the Holy Spirit of our God.

*Second, a study of the Holy Spirit will help us to know God Himself.* In John 17:3 Jesus said, "And this is eternal life, that they may know Thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom Thou hast sent." We come to know God only as we grow in our understanding of His Holy Spirit. Studying the Holy Spirit is essential in coming to know Jesus, that we may have eternal life through Him.

*Third, a study of the Holy Spirit is vital to living the Christian life.* In Romans 8 Paul discussed the role of the Holy Spirit in the lives of God's children. He declared that the Spirit dwells within those "who are in Christ Jesus," setting us "free from the law of sin and of death" and imparting

"life to [our] mortal bodies" (vv. 1, 2, 11). Through the presence of the Spirit we are empowered to put "to death the deeds of the body" (v. 13), and to call upon God as "Abba! Father!" (vv. 14–17). When we pray, the Holy Spirit functions as an intercessor, searching our hearts and communicating to the Father "with groanings too deep for words" (v. 26). The Holy Spirit plays all of these vital roles in the hearts of God's children as He helps them to lead victorious lives in Jesus.

*Fourth, our study of the Holy Spirit will help us to avoid doctrinal error.* Our study is further complicated by the prevalent misinformation and misunderstanding of the Holy Spirit. Some sincere, religious people attribute any emotional experience to the workings of the Holy Spirit. Some believe the Holy Spirit has to operate mysteriously upon one's heart before he can be saved and become a child of God. Others think of the Holy Spirit as an impersonal influence (such as electricity) without any personal attributes or characteristics. With confusion so rampant in the religious world, it is no surprise that many Christians have avoided the subject of the Holy Spirit! The fact that the King James Version, in its translation, refers to this third member of the Godhead as the "Holy Ghost" may add to the confusion of some Bible students.

### CONCLUSION

Avoiding the subject of the Holy Spirit is not the answer to our confusion. Neglecting what the Word of God says on any topic will leave us

open to vicious satanic attacks. Satan relies upon people's ignorance to lead them into all kinds of false teachings, superstitions, and sinful practices.

To battle the darkness of Satan's kingdom, Christians must rely upon the light of God's Word (Psalm 119:105). Equipped with the Word, Christians can study the subject of the Holy Spirit with the prayerful attitude of the psalmist:

"O send out Thy light and Thy truth, let them lead me; let them bring me to Thy holy hill, and to Thy dwelling places" (Psalm 43:3). Let us enter our study with this same humble attitude as we search God's Word for understanding concerning His Holy Spirit. With the eternal light of God's truth, we will carefully examine the false doctrines, superstitions, and subjective experiences of religious people. ▲

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