**Lesson 1**

**Introduction to the study of The Holy Spirit**

**Why study about the Holy Spirit?**

The study of the Holy Spirit is a neglected subject, even at the seminary level

* Pneumatology is part of Theology 101 (Trinitarianism)
* In the 16 week class on Trinitarianism:
  + 8 classes are dedicated to the study of the attributes of God
  + 7 classes are dedicated to the study of Christology
  + 1 class is dedicated to the study of the Holy Spirit
* The Holy Spirit is the operative member of the Trinity in the world today.
* In the economic Trinity, by mutual agreement, the role of each member of the Godhead is clearly delineated.
  + It is the role of God the Father to elect and justify
  + It is the role of God the Son to provide atonement and to intercede for the saints before the Father.
  + It is the role of God the Holy Spirit to regenerate and sanctify.

But how much do you know about the operation of the Holy Spirit in the church, in you and in the world today? Arthur Pink states . . .

“In the past, having given consideration to the attributes of God our Father, and then to a contemplation of some of the glories of God our Redeemer, it now seems fitting that these should be followed by this series on the Holy Spirit. The need for this is real and pressing, for ignorance of the Third Person of the Godhead is most dishonoring to Him and highly injurious to ourselves.”

George Smeaton of Scotland (1814-1889) began his excellent work upon the Holy Spirit by saying,

“Wherever Christianity has been a living power, the doctrine of the Holy Spirit has uniformly been regarded, equally with the Atonement and Justification by faith, as the article of a standing or falling church. The distinctive feature of Christianity as it addresses itself to man’s experience, is the work of the Spirit, which not only elevates it far above all philosophical speculation, but also above every other form of religion.”

Samuel Chadwick of England (1840-1932) well states,

“The gift of the Spirit is the crowning mercy of God in Christ Jesus. It was for this all the rest was. The Incarnation and Crucifixion, the Resurrection and Ascension were all preparatory to Pentecost. Without the gift of the Holy Spirit all the rest would be useless. The great thing in Christianity is the gift of the Spirit. The essential, vital, central element in the life of the soul and the work of the Church is the Person of the Spirit.”

Thomas Goodwin (1600-1680) commenced his massive work on The Work of the Holy Spirit in Our Salvation (1660) by affirming,

“There is a general omission in the saints of God, in their not giving the Holy Spirit that glory that is due to His Person and for His great work of salvation in us, insomuch that we have in our hearts almost forgotten this Third Person.”

* “The modern church is ignorant of the working of the Spirit in the saints. And the reason there is wholesale ignorance of the working of the Holy Spirit is because of the Arminian theology of the day sees the efforts of man as the operative reason for salvation. The modern church is almost devoid of any knowledge of the work and power of the Holy Spirit. All the work of the Holy Spirit in regeneration and sanctification is attributed to the work of human evangelists and teachers.”
* “During the past two generations much has been written and spoken on the person of the Spirit, yet, for the most part, it has been of a sadly inadequate and erroneous character. Much dross has been mingled with the gold.”
  + “Furthermore, it cannot be denied that it is no longer generally recognized that supernatural agency is imperatively required in order for the redemptive work of Christ to be applied to sinners.”

Remember that this was written in the 1930s.

During his lifetime Arthur Pink saw the effects that “modern revivalism” was having on American society. The primary figure in this man-centered revival movement was Charles Finney (August 29, 1792 – August 16, 1875).

* Finney was an intelligent man (trained as a lawyer) and gifted orator who believed that anyone could be persuaded to “come to Christ.”
* Finney stated that unbelief was a “will not,” instead of a “cannot,” and could be remedied if a person willed to become a Christian.
* Finney can rightly be considered the father of modern-day Arminian evangelism. Under Finney’s teaching all work of the Holy Spirit was ignored. Instead, Finney believed that the only thing necessary for salvation was man’s persuasion that he should want Christ.

It was because of such men as Finney, Dwight Moody, Billy Sunday and Billy Graham that Pink makes his statement that “it is no longer generally recognized that supernatural agency is imperatively required in order for the redemptive work of Christ to be applied to sinners.”

* Modern evangelism focuses on the eloquence of the speaker as the determining factor of whether someone will believe or not. The attitude of modern evangelist is, “if someone doesn’t believe, there must be something wrong with your presentation.”
* Because of the man-centered focus of modern evangelism, the role of the Holy Spirit in salvation is either unknown or considered irrelevant. The efforts of man are deemed to be the primary force in modern evangelism.

“In the great majority of cases, professing Christians are too puffed up by a sense of what they suppose they are doing for God to earnestly study what God has promised to do for and in His people. They are so occupied with their fleshly efforts to “win souls for Christ” that they feel not their own deep need of the Spirit’s anointing.” The leaders in the modern church “are so concerned in multiplying “Christian workers” that quantity, not quality is the main consideration.”

* “Numbers of professing Christians have increased, fleshly activities have multiplied, but spiritual power has waned. Why? Because there is a grieved and quenched Spirit in our midst.”

It is because of the modern church’s woeful lack of knowledge of who the Holy Spirit is and His operation in the world today that we approach this study.

* How can you worship God the Holy Spirit if you do not know Him?

**The Personality of the Holy Spirit**

* Regarding the personality of the Holy Spirit, Arthur Pink states, “communion with God in the Trinity of Persons cannot be enjoyed without a clear apprehension of Him. Unless we have a right conception of His glorious being, it is impossible that we should entertain right thoughts about Him, and therefore impossible for us to render to Him that homage, love, confidence and submission which are His due.”
* “Some of our readers may be surprised to hear that there are men professing to be Christians who flatly deny the personality of the Spirit.”

To Arthur Pink this was an amazingly blasphemous statement. But in a recent poll, conducted in February and recently released by Arizona Christian University, an astounding number of professing Christians deny not just the deity of the Holy Spirit, but His existence altogether. 62% of the nearly 2,000 people polled said that the Holy Spirit is not a member of the Triune Godhead, but is rather simply a vague representation of God’s attributes.

So, what is the evidence that the Holy Spirit is a person? And not just a person, but a divine person?

* First of all, what is the definition of a “person”?
  + A “person” is an intelligent and voluntary entity, of whom personal properties may be truly predicated.
  + A “person” is a living entity, endowed with understanding and will, being an intelligent and willing agent.
  + Such is the Holy Spirit: all the elements that constitute personality are ascribed to and found in Him.

**Five Elements that constitute personality found in the Holy Spirit**

**1. Personal properties are ascribed to the Spirit.**

* He is endowed with understanding or wisdom, which is the first inseparable property of an intelligent agent. He knows all things.

***1 Corinthians 2:10— the Spirit searches all things, even the depths of God.***

* He is endowed with will, which is the most eminently distinguishing property of a person. The Spirit operates according to His divine will.

***1 Corinthians 12:11—one and the same Spirit works all these things, distributing to each one individually just as He wills.***

* He loves. After all how utterly meaningless would be such language were the Spirit only an influence or energy.

***Romans 15:30—Now I urge you, brethren, by our Lord Jesus Christ and by the love of the Spirit, to strive together with me in your prayers to God for me***

**2. Passive personal properties are ascribed to the Holy Spirit. In other words, He is the object of actions of men as none but a person can be.**

* As the objects of men’s actions . . .
  + The Holy Spirit can be put to the test

***Acts 5:9— "Why is it that you have agreed together to put the Spirit of the Lord to the test?”***

* + He can be lied to

***Acts 5:3—But Peter said, "Ananias, why has Satan filled your heart to lie to the Holy Spirit and to keep back some of the price of the land?***

* + He can be grieved

***Ephesians 4:30—Do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, by whom you were sealed for the day of redemption.***

**3. Personal actions are attributed to Him**

* The Holy Spirit speaks.

***1 Timothy 4:1—But the Spirit explicitly says that in later times some will fall away from the faith, paying attention to deceitful spirits and doctrines of demons***

* The Holy Spirit teaches.

***Luke 12:12—for the Holy Spirit will teach you in that very hour what you ought to say***

* The Holy Spirit commands and exercises authority.

***Acts 13:2—While they were ministering to the Lord and fasting, the Holy Spirit said, "Set apart for Me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them.”***

* The Holy Spirit intercedes for us.

***Romans 8:26—In the same way the Spirit also helps our weakness; for we do not know how to pray as we should, but the Spirit Himself intercedes for us with groanings too deep for words;***

**4. Personal characteristics are attributed to Him**

* In four statements by the Lord Jesus the Holy Spirit is described as the Comforter.
* In Hebrews 10:15 and Romans 8:16 He is described as the Witness.
* And in 1 Corinthians 6:11 the Spirit is described as the Justifier and Sanctifier.

**5. Personal pronouns are used when speaking of the Holy Spirit**

* In the Greek language the word *pneuma*, or “spirit,” is a neuter word. But whenever the Holy Spirit is spoken of in the New Testament the word Spirit is used in the masculine gender.
  + Furthermore, when speaking of the Holy Spirit, He is always referred to by the masculine pronouns “he, his, him” whenever spoken of in Scripture.

**What do the five elements of personality teach us about the person of the Holy Spirit?**

* It is important that when we think about the Holy Spirit that we understand that He is a personal being, not some impersonal, disembodied apparition or phantom. The Holy Spirit is just as much a personal being as God the Father and God the Son. He is fully God and possesses all the characteristics and attributes as the other two members of the Godhead.
* In light of what these and other Scripture passages say about the person and personality of the Holy Spirit, why do so many professing Christians deny that He is a divine person?