

Pine Knoll Sabbath School Study Notes
First Quarter 2017: *The Holy Spirit and Spirituality*
Lesson 2 “The Holy Spirit: Working Behind *the Scenes*”

Read for this week’s study

Ezekiel 37:5, 9; Genesis 1:2; Job 26:13; Exodus 31:1-5; John 16:13, 14; Galatians 5:16-23.

Memory Text

“He will glorify Me, for He will take of what is Mine and declare it to you” (John 16:14, NKJV).

Lesson Outline from Adult Sabbath School Study Guide

- I. Introduction
- II. The Elusiveness of the Holy Spirit
- III. The Holy Spirit at Creation
- IV. The Holy Spirit and the Sanctuary
- V. The Holy Spirit in Glorifying Jesus Christ
- VI. The Holy Spirit and Christ
- VII. Further Study

Questions and Notes for Consideration

Facilitator: Daniel Duda

1. “The Holy Spirit is not at the center of the biblical record, and we know amazingly little about Him. He remains in the background, and that’s because His role is to advance the work of Someone else in the Godhead—Jesus, the Son of God—and to give glory to God the Father. All this so that fallen human beings might be saved from the eternal death that sin would otherwise bring them.” (Sabbath afternoon)
So does it mean that if we knew more about the Holy Spirit, or if Bible writers wrote more about Him, then “fallen human beings [would not] be saved”?
2. “From the testimony of Scripture, we learn that the Holy Spirit willingly and gracefully accepts a supporting, helping, sustaining, and equipping behind-the-scenes role. No matter whether it is in creation or redemption or mission, He does not seek to stand in the spotlight, regardless of His crucial role.” (Sabbath afternoon)
3. What does this say to us about the Godhead? If the Holy Spirit is as equally God as the Father, what does this “shyness” of the Godhead bring to our understanding of God’s character?
4. “It is difficult to predict with exactness where the wind comes from and where the wind is going. Who hasn’t at times been baffled by the sudden appearance of wind

seemingly out of nowhere? Yet we can learn to become somewhat familiar with the movements and patterns of the wind. In a similar manner, the Holy Spirit is active where He wills. No one can control Him. Yet we can know where He is active and at work.” (Sunday’s lesson) While it is fortunately true that no one can control the work of the Holy Spirit, the text in John 3:3-8 says: “So it is with everyone born of the Spirit” – about the one born of the Spirit! How do we embrace the surprising work of the Spirit in our lives and the lives of the Church community?

5. “While the Bible clearly mentions God the Father and His divine Son, Jesus Christ, as being active in the creation of the world (see Isaiah 64:8; Colossians 1:16, 17), the Holy Spirit is present also, though in a more subtle manner. He does not appear as the central actor in the Creation story. Instead, He is ‘hovering’ over the void, and through His moving He is present at the genesis of life on this earth. [...] The Creation act was possible only through the work of the Holy Spirit and that He played an active part during this process.” (Monday’s lesson)
6. What implications do you see in the fact that a role which is not central can still be significant? How does this reality influence what we do for God in our families, community, and the world? How can religion get off track and easily become a cover, *using* others to promote ourselves and meet our unfulfilled needs?
7. “The Bible tells us that the Holy Spirit was also present at the building of the sanctuary, the central place where reconciliation between God and human beings took place and a holy God met sinners.” (Tuesday’s lesson). How is the Holy Spirit today enabling people with skills and beauty? How can we be more open to the work of the Holy Spirit not only **in** us and **through** us, but also have eyes to see what He is doing **around** us?
8. “The Spirit, we might say, is the matchmaker, the celestial marriage broker, whose role it is to bring us and Christ together and ensure that we stay together.” (Wednesday’s lesson) Isn’t Jesus doing the same work with regards to the Father, as the Holy Spirit does in regard to Jesus?
9. “Any emphasis upon the work of the Holy Spirit that detracts from the Person and work of Jesus Christ is not from the Holy Spirit.” (Wednesday’s lesson) Analogically, we can say that any emphasis upon the work of Jesus that detracts from the person and work of the Father is not from God! It is about the role division and other-centeredness of the Godhead.
10. In this story, in the context of the work of the Holy Spirit, Luke three times uses the verb “to open” (*dianoigo*) [eyes in v. 31; Scripture in v. 32; minds to understand the Scripture in vs. 44, 45]. What insight is he communicating about the role of the Holy Spirit?
11. The Holy Spirit works with **power** (Zechariah 4:6) when He **gently** works on the hearts and minds of people, revealing truth, fully respecting human freedom and choices. This is the way that God will win the war that started in heaven (Revelation 12:7)

Thoughts from Graham Maxwell

I'm impressed that when Jesus was here, he would suggest, "Don't look to me, look to the Father." The text says we should always outdo one another in giving honor. The Trinity does that. The Son is always outdoing himself to give honor to the Father. But I notice it comes back the other way—the Father gives the Son a name above every other name. And the Holy Spirit in a self-effacing way is always drawing our attention to the Father and the Son. The way those three divine persons behave is a model to us. {Graham Maxwell. Excerpt from the audio series, Conversations About God, #1, "The Conflict in God's Family" recorded January, 1984, Loma Linda, California} *To listen to the entire audio of the above reference, click on the following direct link: <http://pkp.cc/1MMCAG>*

What's the first mention of the Holy Spirit in the biblical record? Genesis! Page 1, isn't it? Right at creation he was here. How about his work to win and convert and convict, and lead us into the truth? Is that in the Old Testament anywhere? Do you think of any references to the Spirit doing this kind of work?

Well, think of all the places; innumerable places. And you remember when David confessed his sin, he said, "And take not thy Holy Spirit from me." What had led David to repentance but the work of the Holy Spirit? So you remember all the verses we looked at on the way through, referring to the Holy Spirit. Then why did Jesus say, "It would be better that I go, and then the Holy Spirit can come." Why did he say it would be better? He only stayed three and a half years in his ministry. {Graham Maxwell. Excerpt from the audio series, The Picture of God in all 66 – Acts, recorded April, 1982, Riverside, California} *To listen to the entire audio of the above reference, click on the following direct links:*

<http://pkp.cc/59MMPOGIA66> (Part 1) <http://pkp.cc/60MMPOGIA66> (Part 2)

Further Study with Ellen White

Sanctification is not the work of a moment, an hour, a day, but of a lifetime. It is not gained by a happy flight of feeling, but is the result of constantly dying to sin, and constantly living for Christ. Wrongs cannot be righted nor reformations wrought in the character by feeble, intermittent efforts. It is only by long, persevering effort, sore discipline, and stern conflict, that we shall overcome. We know not one day how strong will be our conflict the next. So long as Satan reigns, we shall have self to subdue, besetting sins to overcome; so long as life shall last, there will be no stopping place, no point which we can reach and say, I have fully attained. Sanctification is the result of lifelong obedience. {AA 560.3}

He who places himself unreservedly under the guidance of the Spirit of God, will find that his mind expands and develops. He obtains an education in the service of God which is not one-sided and deficient, developing a one-sided character, but one which results in symmetry and completeness. Weaknesses that have been manifested in a vacillating will and powerless character, are overcome, for continual devotion and piety bring the man in such close relation to Christ that he has the mind of Christ. He is one with Christ, having soundness and strength of principle. His perception is clear, and he manifests that wisdom which comes from God. Says James, "Who is a wise man and endued with knowledge among you? let him shew out of a good conversation his works with meekness of wisdom" (James 3:13). "The wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, and easy to be intreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality, and without hypocrisy. And the fruit of righteousness is sown in peace of them that make peace" (James 3:17, 18). {1SM 338.2}

Sanctification means habitual communion with God. There is nothing so great and powerful as God's love for those who are His children. {HP 129.5}

The sanctification of the soul is accomplished through steadfastly beholding Him [Christ] by faith as the only-begotten Son of God, full of grace and truth. The power of truth is to transform heart and character. Its effect is not like a dash of color here and there upon the canvas; the whole character is to be transformed, the image of Christ is to be revealed in words and actions. A new nature is imparted. Man is renewed after the image of Christ in righteousness and true holiness. . . . The grace of Christ is essential every day, every hour. Unless it is with us continually, the inconsistencies of the natural heart will appear and the life will present a divided service. The character is to be full of grace and truth. Wherever the religion of Christ works, it will brighten and sweeten every detail of life with more than an earthly joy and a higher than earthly peace (Letter 2a, 1892). {6BC 1117.15}

The sanctification of the soul by the working of the Holy Spirit is the implanting of Christ's nature in humanity. Gospel religion is Christ in the life—a living, active principle. It is the grace of Christ revealed in character and wrought out in good works. The principles of the gospel cannot be disconnected from any department of practical life. Every line of Christian experience and labor is to be a representation of the life of Christ. {COL 384.1}

Love is the basis of godliness. Whatever the profession, no man has pure love to God unless he has unselfish love for his brother. But we can never come into possession of this spirit by *trying* to love others. What is needed is the love of Christ in the heart. When self is merged in Christ, love springs forth spontaneously. The completeness of Christian character is attained when the impulse to help and bless others springs constantly from within—when the sunshine of heaven fills the heart and is revealed in the countenance. {COL 384.2}

True sanctification unites believers to Christ and to one another in the bonds of tender sympathy. This union causes to flow continually into the heart rich currents of Christlike love, which flows forth again in love for one another. {5BC 1141.2}

The qualities which it is essential for all to possess are those which marked the completeness of Christ's character—His love, His patience, His unselfishness, and His goodness. These attributes are gained by doing kindly actions with a kindly heart. . . . {5BC 1141.3}

Christ has made provision that His church shall be a transformed body, illumined with the light of heaven, possessing the glory of Immanuel. It is His purpose that every Christian shall be surrounded with a spiritual atmosphere of light and peace. There is no limit to the usefulness of the one who, putting self aside, makes room for the working of the Holy Spirit upon his heart and lives a life wholly consecrated to God. . . . {SD 29.3}

To us today, as verily as to the first disciples, the promise of the Spirit belongs. God will today endow men and women with power from above, as He endowed those who on the Day of Pentecost heard the word of salvation. At this very hour His Spirit and His grace are for all who need them and will take Him at His word. {SD 29.4}

Those who are under the influence of the Spirit of God will not be fanatical, but calm and steadfast, free from extravagance in thought, word, or deed. Amid the confusion of delusive doctrines, the Spirit of God will be a guide and a shield to those who have not resisted the evidences of truth, silencing every other voice but that which comes from Him who is the truth. {SD 29.6}

A holy influence is to go forth to the world from those who are sanctified through the truth.... The Holy Spirit is to work on human hearts, taking the things of God and showing them to men. {SD 29.7}

The truths of the word of God meet man's great practical necessity—the conversion of the soul through faith. These grand principles are not to be thought too pure and holy to be brought into the daily life. They are truths which reach to heaven and compass eternity, yet their vital influence is to be woven into human experience. They are to permeate all the great things and all the little things of life. {COL 100.2}

From the beginning, God has been working by His Holy Spirit through human instrumentalities for the accomplishment of His purpose in behalf of the fallen race. This was manifest in the lives of the patriarchs. To the church in the wilderness also, in the time of Moses, God gave His "good Spirit to instruct them." Nehemiah 9:20. And in the days of the apostles He wrought mightily for His church through the agency of the Holy Spirit. The same power that sustained the patriarchs, that gave Caleb and Joshua faith and courage, and that made the work of the apostolic church effective, has upheld God's faithful children in every succeeding age. It was through the power of the Holy Spirit that during the Dark Ages the Waldensian Christians

helped to prepare the way for the Reformation. It was the same power that made successful the efforts of the noble men and women who pioneered the way for the establishment of modern missions and for the translation of the Bible into the languages and dialects of all nations and peoples. {AA 53.1}

Christ promised that the Holy Spirit should abide with those who wrestle for victory over sin, to demonstrate the power of divine might by endowing the human agent with supernatural strength and instructing the ignorant in the mysteries of the kingdom of God. Of what avail would it be to us that the only begotten Son of God humbled Himself, endured the temptations of the wily foe, and died, the just for the unjust, if the Spirit had not been given as a constant, working, regenerating agent, to make effectual in each individual case what has been wrought out by the world's Redeemer? {GW 286.1}

The promise of the Holy Spirit is not limited to any age or to any race. Christ declared that the divine influence of His Spirit was to be with His followers unto the end. From the Day of Pentecost to the present time, the Comforter has been sent to all who have yielded themselves fully to the Lord and to His service. To all who have accepted Christ as a personal Saviour, the Holy Spirit has come as a counselor, sanctifier, guide, and witness. The more closely believers have walked with God, the more clearly and powerfully have they testified of their Redeemer's love and of His saving grace. The men and women who through the long centuries of persecution and trial enjoyed a large measure of the presence of the Spirit in their lives, have stood as signs and wonders in the world. Before angels and men they have revealed the transforming power of redeeming love. {AA 49.2}

The Lord Jesus acts through the Holy Spirit; for it is His representative. Through it He infuses spiritual life into the soul, quickening its energies for good, cleansing it from moral defilement, and giving it a fitness for His kingdom. Jesus has large blessings to bestow, rich gifts to distribute among men. He is the wonderful Counselor, infinite in wisdom and strength; and if we will acknowledge the power of His Spirit, and submit to be molded by it, we shall stand complete in Him. What a thought is this! In Christ "dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily. And ye are complete in him." {SD 282.2}

The Spirit was to be given as a regenerating agent, and without this the sacrifice of Christ would have been of no avail. The power of evil had been strengthening for centuries, and the submission of men to this satanic captivity was amazing. Sin could be resisted and overcome only through the mighty agency of the Third Person of the Godhead, who would come with no modified energy, but in the fullness of divine power. It is the Spirit that makes effectual what has been wrought out by the world's Redeemer. It is by the Spirit that the heart is made pure. Through the Spirit the believer becomes a partaker of the divine nature. Christ has given His Spirit as a divine power to overcome all hereditary and cultivated tendencies to evil, and to impress His own character upon His church. {DA 671.2}