

PASTORAL COMMUNICATION

NEWCASTLE AND SOUTH SHIELDS AND THEIR FUTURE CHURCH PLANTS IN SUNDERLAND AND GATESHEAD



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THE HOLY SPIRIT IS GOD AND A DISTINCT PERSON ACCORDING TO THE SCRIPTURES

Those who follow the same line of thought as the Jehovah’s Witnesses treat the Holy Spirit not as a Person nor as God but only as an extension or “spirit” of God. However, the Scriptures, from the Old Testament to Christ, John, the apostle Paul, and the rest of the New Testament Scriptures, clearly teach that the Holy Spirit is another distinct Person of the Godhead who, like God the Father and God the Son, is also God.

The Early Pioneers

The early pioneers of the Adventist church, such as Waggoner and Uriah Smith in 1877 and D.M. Canright in 1878, rejected this theology. However, the early 1890s saw the beginning of a shift toward accepting the personhood of the Holy Spirit.

Ellen White Progressed in Her Understanding of the Holy Spirit

One has to understand that the light is given to the student of the Scriptures in a progressive manner. No reformer or pioneer in the history of the Christian

church got all the light at once. Ellen White, in 1891, confessed the limits of her own understanding concerning the Holy Spirit when she wrote to Brother Chapman: “There are many mysteries which I do not seek to understand or to explain; they are too high for me and too high for you. On some of these points, silence is golden.”

—Ellen G. White to Brother Chapman, June 11, 1891, Letter 7, 1891, in Manuscript Releases, vol. 14 (Silver Spring, MD: Ellen G. White Estate, 1990), 175, 179.

However, two years later, in 1893, Mrs White opposing Waggoner or Smith who denied the Person of the Holy Spirit, clearly writes: “There is altogether

Important Dates to Remember:

03 August

NEC's visit to Area 1

23-26 August

Newcastle Family Camp

6-8 September

South Shields Family Camp

11-14 September

NEC Session

21 September

Prayer Emphasis & Baptism in the Afternoon

05 October

Area 1 Day of Fellowship

Wolves Alert!

“Beware of false prophets, who come to you in sheep’s clothing, but inwardly they are ravenous wolves.

Matthew 7:15

Therefore take heed to yourselves and to all the flock, among which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to shepherd the church of God which He purchased with His own blood. For I know this, that after my departure savage wolves will come in among you, not sparing the flock.

Acts 20: 28,29

too little made of the work of the Holy Spirit's influence upon the church. . . The Holy Spirit is the Comforter, in Christ's name. He personifies Christ, yet is a **distinct personality.**" —Ellen G. White, "Privileges and Responsibilities of Christians; Depend on Holy Spirit, Not Self," MS 93, 1893, in Manuscript Releases, vol. 20 (Silver Spring, MD: Ellen G. White Estate, 1993), 323, 324.

And three years down the line, she further penned unequivocally: "Evil had been accumulating for centuries, and could only be restrained and resisted by the mighty power of the Holy Spirit, **the third person of the Godhead**, who would come with no modified energy, but in the fullness of divine power."

—Letter 8, 1896, p. 1 (To "My Brethren in America," February 6, 1896.)

Clearly, she progressed in her understanding of this subject. This principle of a progressive revelation is well taught in Proverbs 4:18: "But the path of the just is like the shining sun, that shines ever brighter unto the perfect day."

Nevertheless, the doctrine of the church is established through the authority of Scripture rather than through Ellen

White's writings or any extra-biblical writers. In fact, no pioneer is the interpreter of the Scriptures. It is not Waggoner, Smith, Bates, Jones or White. The Scripture that is revealed to us, interprets itself and therefore, it is God's will that we examine diligently the truth concerning the Holy Spirit directly from its pages.

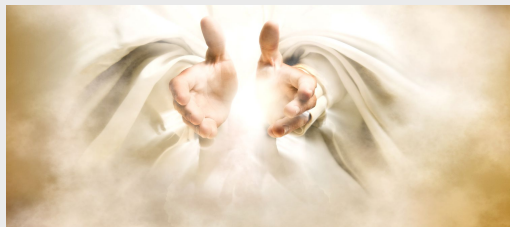


God As Multiple Persons in the Book of Genesis

Right at the very first passage in the very first book of the Bible, Moses already hints that the Creator God is a multiplicity of Persons and not just one Person.

In Genesis 1:1, Moses says, "In the beginning, God ['Elohim'] created the heavens and the earth" (NKJV). The Hebrew word Moses uses for "God" is 'Elohim'; it is a plural Hebrew word for God because the singular Hebrew word for God is 'El' or 'Eloah'. Elsewhere, Moses uses 'Elohim' to mean "gods", as in Exodus 20:3, where Moses writes of God saying, "Thou shalt have no other gods ['elohim'] before Me."

Moses' use of 'Elohim' does not just mean "greatness" or "majesty" as most Arian-leaning believers suggest, but he means that 'Elohim' (God) is a multiplicity of Persons.



This is, in fact, very clear when he uses it again in Genesis 1:26, and records of God saying to Themselves: "Then God ['Elohim' —plural] said, 'Let Us [plural] make man in Our [plural] image.'"

So, right at the very first chapter of the very first book of the Bible, God already reveals to us that He is more than one Person.

Moses would consistently repeat this revelation that God is a plurality of Persons such as in Genesis 3:22 after humans fell into sin: "Then the LORD God [YHWH 'Elohim'] said, 'Behold the man has become like one of Us [plural] to know good and evil'".

He further reiterates the revelation regarding the multiplicity of the Person of the Godhead after the flood, in Genesis 11:6,7: "And the LORD [YHWH] said, 'Indeed the people are one, and they all have one language... Come, let Us [plural] go down and there confuse their

language, that they may not understand one another".

The Meaning of "God Is One"

If Moses presents God as a multiplicity of Persons, the question is: Why does Moses also declare, "The LORD our God is one"?

In order to understand this, we need to pay attention to the words Moses employs. Let us look on the Hebrew words that he, under the inspiration carefully used in Deuteronomy 6:4:

"The LORD [YHWH] our God ['Elohim] is one ['echad']."

In this passage, Moses uses the plural word 'Elohim' for God again, which as we have already shown, means multiple persons. But why does he say that 'Elohim' is "one" if it is a plurality of persons? The answer is that the Hebrew word 'echad', translated in English as "one",

does not just mean “one person”. It means a “unity of multiple persons” or “oneness in essence.”

The word Moses uses that is specific to only one person is ‘yachid’, as he records God saying to Abraham in Genesis 22:2, “Take now your son, your one [yachid] son Isaac, whom you love.” The word ‘yachid’ to refer to Isaac, the only son of Abraham and Sarah is specific to mean only one person, but Moses differentiates this with the other word to describe God as “one” by using the word ‘echad’ which carries the semantic range of a unity of multiple persons.

In fact, Genesis 1:24 describes the husband and the wife as “one



[‘echad] flesh”. The couple are not only one person but rather, they are multiple persons being “one” in the sense of being united in the sacred bond of marriage.

We also covered earlier, in Genesis 11:6 where God describes the people of the earth after the flood as “one”, in the sense of being united in one language, character and purpose: “And the LORD [YHWH] said, ‘Indeed the people are one [‘echad]’”.

Thus, God is described as “one” in Deuteronomy 6:4, not in the sense that God is only one [‘yachid’] Person, but rather “one” [‘echad’] that emphasises God as a plurality of Persons, yet “one” in essence,

character, purpose and nature.

“Yahweh Spirit” or “God the Spirit” in the Book of Samuel

Prophet Samuel in the Old Testament understood that the Holy Spirit was a distinct Person of the Godhead. This is evident in his testimony. He knew that the Spirit YHWH who spoke to him was God.

Samuel says, “The Spirit of the Lord [Ruach-YHWH] spoke by me, and His word was on my tongue. The God of Israel said, The Rock of Israel spoke to me..” (2 Sam. 23:2-3).

In this passage, the two Hebrew words ‘Ruach-YHWH’ are translated into English with five words: “The Spirit of the LORD.” However, ‘Ruach-YHWH’ is literally “Yahweh Spirit” or “God the Spirit.”

And, if you look carefully at the verses above, Samuel presents the Holy Spirit as a distinct Person and not just an extension of YHWH because he says that ‘Ruach-YHWH’ spoke to him and put His word on his tongue. In the first line (verse 2), he testifies that the Spirit spoke to him. But then, in the second line (verse 3), Samuel identifies the distinct Person of the Holy Spirit as “the God of Israel” who “spoke” to him.

The Angel Who Will Not Pardon Wilful, Rebellious Sins

A compelling passage in the Old Testament that clearly attributes the Spirit as a distinct Person and who has jurisdiction over sin is found in Exodus 23. This truth cascades down to the New Testament unified by Jesus Himself and the apostle Paul.

YHWH said to Moses and the Israelites:

“Behold, I send an Angel [Hebrew word ‘Malak’, means “angel” or “messenger”] before you to keep you in the way and to bring you into the place which I have prepared. Beware of Him and obey His voice; do not rebel [tammer] against Him, for He will not pardon your transgressions [‘pesha’kem’ means “rebellious sins”]; for My name [in the Old Testament, “name” means “title” or “character” or “nature,”] is in Him. But if you carefully obey His voice and do all that I say, then I will be an enemy to your enemies and an adversary to your adversaries. When My Angel goes before you and brings you to the Amorites and the Hittites and the Perizzites and the Canaanites, the Hivites and the Jebusites, and I blot them out” (Exo. 23:20-33 [Hebrew words and emphasis supplied]).

Moses records God speaking and sending His Angel or Messenger who would come in His name, an expression which means “in His same nature or title as God” because “name” in the Old Testament usage when applied to God signifies His title or nature. God (the Father) presents this Messenger as a different Person from Him. He tells the people of Israel not to rebel against this particular Angel or Messenger who would come in the exact

nature as Him, that is, as God, and He is the One who would not forgive wilful rebellions.

God revealed to us who exactly this Angel is when Isaiah later confirmed that this Angel who also held the title (name) of God, was the Holy Spirit. He says, "But they rebelled and grieved the Holy Spirit; therefore, He turned Himself against them as an enemy, and He fought against them" (Isa. 63:10).

Thus, Isaiah clarifies that the Holy Spirit was grieved due to their rebellious sins, and He transformed Himself from a Friend to an Enemy of Israel. Notice that in Isaiah 63:9 he talks about this same Angel back in Exodus and identified Him as the Holy Spirit using 'He' and 'Himself' pronouns and never as an "it" or simply an inanimate power.

The truth concerning the Person of the Holy Spirit starts like a spring that becomes a river and appears to us like a sea in the New Testament.

The Holy Spirit in the New Testament by Whom Unpardonable Sin Can Be Committed Against

Jesus then continues to progress the theme of rebellious sins from the books of Exodus and Isaiah and gives the most explicit confirmation that the Holy Spirit is a distinct and different Person from Him as God, where both Himself and the Holy Spirit can be sinned against, and both can forgive sins — a prerogative that only belongs to God (see Mark 2:7).

Yet, Christ differentiates Himself as God and the Holy Spirit's as God by saying that while sin against Him as a Person can be forgiven, sins against the Holy Spirit can

never be forgiven. "Anyone who speaks a word against the Son of Man, it will be forgiven him; but whoever speaks against the Holy Spirit, it will not be forgiven him, either in this age or in the age to come" (Mat. 12:32, also Luk. 12:10).

As you can clearly see, Jesus, as recorded by Matthew and Luke progresses the revelation of this truth regarding committing rebellious sin against this Angel by which the Israelites were warned about in Exodus and whom Isaiah identified as the Holy Spirit. Jesus then progresses and continues the discussion of this distinct Person, the holy Spirit whom unpardonable sin can be committed against, by which Israel in the past have been warned: "He will not pardon your transgressions" (Exo. 23:20-33).

The Scripture can never be so clear about this truth.

Concluding Words

At times, it is hard to fathom and grasp in our finite minds that the Holy Spirit is a Person since what is common knowledge and exactly what clings in the human sense of sight regarding the Holy Spirit is limited to two forms: a dove at Jesus' baptism and fire at Pentecost. As far as the sense of sight is concerned, we are limited to those two.

But, what I would like to remind you though that the people of God do not simply live by sight but by faith. You and I have to believe and accept the Words spoken to the prophets who recorded them for our learning.

The biblical evidence presented in this first part of our study concerning the holy Spirit clearly shows that He is an Angel in Exodus who also has the title or name of God. Isaiah identified this Angel as the Holy

Spirit, and Jesus expounded the Holy Spirit's Person and role confirming to us that the Spirit has prerogative over sin. He is God, just like God the Father and God the Son. Therefore, He is worthy of our worship.

This is a solemn truth. Anyone among the flock infiltrating with a gospel different from this Biblical truth, teaching people with the erroneous doctrine concerning the Holy Spirit, seeking to snatch the elect, just stop!

Do not openly rebel against the Holy Spirit by blaspheming Him. Repent right now before it's too late! This document is prepared with the blessing of the Lord for the elect to be strengthened in their resolve to have faith in the revealed Word of God. Those of you who are doubting or have been for many years rejecting the Holy Spirit with your rebellion must repent. Otherwise, He will not pardon you.

