



FEED MY SHEEP

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The Holy Spirit, Witchcraft and Blasphemy

The previous issue of FMS provided an introduction to the doctrine of the deity of the Holy Spirit. We noted that while from one perspective the *Star Wars* series of movies can be seen as a parable or allegory of Christ and is replete with biblical themes (albeit, no doubt unintentionally on the part of the moviemakers), from another perspective, the *Star Wars* series has introduced Oriental religious doctrines into our popular culture. We especially noted the now-common phrase “May the Force be with you!”

We queried: Is that what the Holy Spirit is? —just a force or spiritual energy? The Bible shows that while the Holy Spirit is indeed force and power and energy, he is much more than that. And we gave a few short examples to show that the Holy Spirit is a person and a divine person at that (i.e., he is very God). We will now expand upon the proofs before coming full-circle to discuss the “reversal” noted in the previous issue. Our proofs will now follow classical exegesis of the doctrine of the Holy Spirit.

The classical exegesis is what we termed “the duck rule” in our study of the deity of Christ. (If it walks like a duck, quacks like a duck...it’s a duck.) Applying the classical exegesis to our study of the Holy Spirit, we will search to see if **attributes** of the Holy Spirit are the attributes of God (and no one else), and if the Holy Spirit is **worshiped** as God, and if the **activities** of the Holy Spirit are the works of God. In other words, if the Spirit is described with the attributes of God, is worshiped as God, and does the works only God can do, then the Holy Spirit *is* God. (If we wish to humorously describe this process as “duck theology,” that is fine with us since its validity cannot be denied.)

The attributes of the Holy Spirit

There are at least four major attributes which apply to God and to God alone. Thus if they are also found to be applied by the Scriptures to the Holy Spirit, it proves the oneness of the Spirit with the Godhead. Additionally, we can list the Scriptures here under “attributes” in which the Holy Spirit is **equated** with God. Four major attributes of God are his *eternality*, his *omnipresence*, his *omniscience* and his *omnipotence*. His eternality is spoken of in the Book of Hebrews.

Hebrews 9:14 How much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without spot to God, purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?

In Psalm 139 David speaks under inspiration of God and affirms that no matter where he might flee to try to escape the presence of God, he cannot for God’s Spirit is everywhere (omnipresence).

Psalm 139:7 Whither shall I go from thy spirit? or whither shall I flee from thy presence?

8 If I ascend up into heaven, thou *art* there: if I make my bed in hell, behold, thou *art* there.

Remarkably, all three persons of the trinity are found in the following passage from Isaiah which speaks in v. 13 of the omniscience of the Holy Spirit of Yahweh.

Isaiah 40:10 Behold, the Lord YHWH [the Father] will come with strong *hand*, and his arm shall rule for him: behold, his reward *is* with him, and his work before him.

11 He shall feed his flock like a shepherd [the Son, the Good Shepherd]: he shall gather the lambs with his arm, and carry *them* in his bosom, *and* shall gently lead those that are with young. ...

13 Who hath directed the Spirit of YHWH, or

being his counsellor hath taught him?

The New Testament confirms the omniscience of the Holy Spirit:

1 Corinthians 2:10 But God hath revealed them unto us by his Spirit: for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God.

11 For what man knoweth the things of a man, save the spirit of man which is in him? even so the things of God knoweth no man, but the Spirit of God.

Thus, the knowledge of the Spirit is commensurate with the knowledge of God. The omnipotence of the Spirit is alluded to in Micah 3:8, Matthew 12:28 (cf. Luke 11:20) and Romans 15:19. Moreover, we have already discussed the power of the Holy Spirit in the previous issue. The instances where the Holy Spirit is *equated* with God or with Christ are numerous. We will cite only a few. Each by itself practically establishes the deity of the Holy Spirit. For example, recall how Ananias and his wife, Sapphira, chose to hold back some of the proceeds from the sale of real estate which they promised to donate to the Christian community.

Acts 5:3 But Peter said, Ananias, why hath Satan filled thine heart to lie to the Holy Ghost, and to keep back part of the price of the land?

4 Whiles it remained, was it not thine own? and after it was sold, was it not in thine own power? why hast thou conceived this thing in thine heart? thou hast not lied unto men, but unto God.

In the above citation, clearly, the Holy Ghost in verse 3 is equated with God in verse 4. In the following verse, the Holy Spirit is equated with Christ.

1 Corinthians 15:45 And so it is written, The first man Adam was made a living soul; the last Adam was made a quickening spirit.

The "last Adam" is of course a reference to Jesus Christ. It is saying that Christ is a life-giving Spirit. This is equating the Holy Spirit with Christ for when we are "born again" (literally, "born from above," i.e., born of the Holy Spirit), we are engendered with that incorruptible seed from the Holy Spirit which ultimately results in eternal life.

1 Peter 1:23 Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever.

So are we quickened to eternal life by Christ or by the Holy Spirit? The answer is "both" since the two are one. The doctrine of the inspiration of Scripture provides a plethora of examples equating the Holy Spirit with God. To set the stage for just two examples, we recall that

All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for cor-

rection, for instruction in righteousness: [1 Timothy 3:16]

God inspires all Scripture; yet God himself inspired Peter to state that it was the Holy Spirit through whom the prophetic writings came. Again, the two are one God.

2 Peter 1:21 For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost.

Notice who is speaking through Jeremiah in the following passage.

Jeremiah 31:33 But this *shall be* the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel; After those days, saith YHWH, I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts; and will be their God, and they shall be my people.

34 And they shall teach no more every man his neighbour, and every man his brother, saying, Know YHWH: for they shall all know me, from the least of them unto the greatest of them, saith YHWH: for I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more.

Your Bible might say "the LORD" for the underlined portions above, but as is our custom, we reinsert the holy name of God, YHWH, (pronounced "Yahweh") back into the text where it belongs. (We have explained this more in detail in footnotes in previous issues.) Yahweh, our Father-God, is the one who is declaring all these prophecies through the mouth and pen of Jeremiah. Yet, in summarizing this passage in the Book of Hebrews, the writer tells us that it was the Holy Spirit who was responsible for those words:

Hebrews 10: 15 Whereof the Holy Ghost also is a witness to us: for after that he [the Holy Ghost] had said before,

16 This is the covenant that I will make with them after those days, saith YHWH, I will put my laws into their hearts, and in their minds will I write them;

17 And their sins and iniquities will I remember no more.

The worship of the Holy Spirit

If the Holy Spirit is God, then all the worship due the Father and the Son is equally due the Spirit. Yet we do not find an abundance of Scripture passages clearly discussing the worship of the Spirit. Why not? Because Jesus said that the Holy Spirit "would not speak of himself" (John 16:13). Nevertheless, we do find several instances indicative of worship of the Spirit.

John 4:24 God is [Holy] Spirit: and they that worship him must worship *him* in spirit and in truth.

Paul's benediction upon the Corinthian believers included reference to and reverence for all three members of the trinity.

2 Corinthians 13:14 The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Ghost, be with you all. Amen.

Likewise with the baptismal directions, there is worshipful acknowledgment of the triune Godhead.

Matthew 28:19 Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost:

We are told in the Book of Acts, chapter 4, verse 12 that there is salvation in no other name than Jesus, and yet here we find the charge to baptize "in the name" of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. The only logical conclusion is that the three are one God. The trinity doctrine as we have taught it is vindicated. And therefore, the Holy Spirit is equally worthy of men's worship.

The worship of anyone other than God himself is an abomination. It is idolatry, a death penalty offense under the first commandment. Therefore, if we find worship of the Holy Spirit in the Scriptures, then either the Holy Spirit is one and the same God, or God himself is condoning idolatry of something that is not God.

The activities of the Holy Spirit

The works and actions of the Holy Spirit are myriad—yea, infinite—so let us focus on a handful which indisputably demonstrate his deity. For the sake of space we shall merely reference the appropriate Scripture passages. The Holy Spirit is the (co-)creator of all that is; of the earth (Gen. 1:2); of the heavens (Job 26:13); of man (Gen. 1:26; 2:7; Job 33:4); of animals (Psa. 104:24-30); of Christ's human body (Mat. 1:18-20).

He is also the co-creator of the new nature in a Christian. It is the process known as *sanctification* whereby the Holy Spirit guides the believer into all truth (John 16:13). Question: How can someone guide someone else into all truth unless he himself knows all truth? That would mean that the guide is omniscient. Only God is omniscient; hence, the Holy Spirit is God.

This process of leading the Christian into all truth (sanctification) results progressively in righteous behavior. Do not despair, Christian reader. Absolutely righteous behavior (perfection) is not achieved in these frail, mortal bodies. That is why we claim Christ's righteousness, not our own, as the basis of our salvation. We accept his free gift, yet we strive for holiness *because* of his love and what he did for us.

Now consider this:

Matthew 12:31 Wherefore I say unto you, All

manner of sin and blasphemy shall be forgiven unto men: but the blasphemy against the Holy Ghost shall not be forgiven unto men.

32 And whosoever speaketh a word against the Son of man, it shall be forgiven him: but whosoever speaketh against the Holy Ghost, it shall not be forgiven him, neither in this world, neither in the world to come.

Given such powerful statements by our Lord about offenses against the Holy Spirit, could the Holy Spirit be anything less than God?

The reversal = witchcraft = blasphemy

We have shown that the Holy Spirit is indeed a force, a power, an energy—"May the Force be with you!"—but he is much more than that. We have also shown Scriptures which prove that the Holy Spirit is also a person, and more than that, he is a divine person. Now, being cognizant of the awesome reality that **the Holy Spirit is God**, we are prepared to revisit the statement we made at the beginning of this study (page 1 of the previous issue).

We had stated that there is a great danger among believers today in that the role and function of the Holy Spirit is reversed. As noted, this reversal has been helped along by the philosophy inculcated into our culture by such movies as the *Star Wars* series. The "blessing," "May the Force be with you!" has entered everyday conversations; but, unfortunately, most understand the Force to be some impersonal power or energy which can be tapped into when needed. Therein lies the problem and the danger. Such heathen philosophies would not infect Christians were it not for the fact that most professing Christians have such a faulty and woefully inadequate understanding of their Christian faith. If we succumb to the Oriental view of "the spirit," we unwittingly become witches and blasphemers. How so?

First, to simply understand the Spirit as impersonal power, force or energy is not wrong; it is merely incomplete. It was by-and-large the unfiltered, unfocused view and understanding available to believers in the Old Testament. What is wrong is the reversal: it consists in seeing the Holy Spirit as merely a power, force or energy to be called upon, used and manipulated as needed by the believer to obtain their goals and desires. In other words, instead of recognizing that we are to be humble, willing vessels to be used by the Holy Spirit for his purposes, many have it reversed so that God, the Holy Spirit, becomes relegated to a tool for us to use to seek our own wishes.

This is the essence of witchcraft! There are many activities and practices associated with witchcraft (trying

to contact the dead {i.e., necromancy}, enchantments, casting spells, forbidden divination, etc.), but the common denominator of all these practices, the chief characteristic of all witchcraft is the attempt to use or manipulate spiritual forces to do our bidding. Because they do not consult tarot card readers and astrologers, or attend seances or cast spells, etc., Christians would deny that they practice witchcraft.

Nonetheless, we believe witchcraft has invaded the church in a much more subtle way by masquerading as “spirit-filled” Christianity. NB: This is not intended as an insult to those who call themselves “spirit-filled,” nor is it aimed at Pentecostals or charismatics in general. There is a *bona fide* “spirit-filled” Christianity. We believe in the spiritual gifts. We are talking about abuses in spiritual practices among Christians no matter what their denomination or theology. Would that all Christians were truly “Spirit-filled!” But let us examine our practices. How do we view the Holy Spirit? As a tool to be used so that we can get what we want, or as the awesome God of the universe before whom we bow in grateful worship, ready to serve him?

The Bible says that witchcraft is as the sin of idolatry (1 Sam. 15:23). That is because when one engages in such attempted manipulation of the spirit, one is worshiping *self* instead of the Almighty Creator. It all comes back to that very foundational question concerning the sovereignty of God: just who is in charge anyway—God? or you and I? Do we really think that our “free will” can override God’s plan? Preposterous! But this is the practical (if not admitted) belief of vast numbers of Christians.¹

So let us keep our role and that of the Holy Spirit in their proper places in our thinking and theology. He is the creator; we are the creatures. He is the boss; we are the servants. We are not to attempt to use the infinite power of the Spirit to achieve *our* desires; but we are to seek to willingly submit to and follow his leading in order to accomplish *his* purposes in the earth.

Blasphemy is attributing the powers of God to that which is not God. Since the Holy Spirit is God, then to attribute his power (the Eastern religions’ “force”) to some impersonal, and therefore non-divine source is blasphemy. Have we ignorantly tried to use the Holy Spirit as a “gimme gadget?” Have we unwittingly committed the sin of blasphemy? If so, many well-meaning Christians (including clergy) will tell you that this sin is unpardonable. They will quote Matthew 12:31 (see p.3).

In their theology, it is the only sin anyone can commit for which there is no opportunity for repentance, no possibility of God’s forgiveness. By their doctrine, you are already condemned to either eternal hellfire or final annihila-

tion—no chance of heaven for you—even if you committed this sin in ignorance.

But be not alarmed, my friend, their condemnation of you for your sin is in itself blasphemy! They attribute to God a heinous punishment which “never came into his mind.” A correct understanding of that passage in no way condemns you (or them) to eternal torment or to being annihilated out of existence forever. (We have expounded the correct interpretation of this “blasphemy passage” in some of our tape ministry messages.² The explanation is too involved to detail here, but let us just take brief notice of a point or two.)

First, please understand that we are not attempting to minimize or condone the sin of blasphemy. Sin is sin, and blasphemy is a very grievous sin. Rather, our contention deals with the judgment for this sin. Secondly, check the fruit of this doctrine which claims that a blasphemer has no hope. Think about it: If you have blasphemed by attributing the power of God to “devils” (non-holy spirits, in this case), and Christians have told you and convinced you that you are therefore already condemned to eternal torment, then why in the world would you attempt to live a good, God-pleasing life?

If you were utterly persuaded that the Bible teaches that you have absolutely no chance of being “saved,” then what motivation is there to be obedient to God’s laws from that point on? Such a person would undoubtedly—and quite logically—conclude that he may as well “live like the devil” and get all he can get because after he dies there will be no more opportunity for pleasure and happiness. Do you see what horrendously evil fruit such a doctrine brings forth? That false understanding of Scripture produces a person who thereafter becomes a lifelong reprobate, a God-hating criminal and sinner. The truth is that God is both just and yet “his mercy endures forever.” Praise Father, Son and Holy Spirit! One God, blessed forever, amen!

ENDNOTES

1. For a detailed examination of free will, predestination and the purpose of sin and evil, among numerous other topics, request our ten-tape series *The Sovereignty of God*. Ten audio tapes in an album. \$30 + \$3 shipping.

2. To “sample” our tape ministry for a couple months, simply ask to be placed on the tape ministry. We generally send out two tapes per month.

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