

A Derek Prince Teaching Letter



No. 20: The Holy Spirit: Eternal, Omniscient, Omnipresent

Dear Friend

In this letter we will look further at the third Person of the Godhead – the Holy Spirit. There are three profoundly significant adjectives that apply to the Holy Spirit: eternal, omniscient, omnipresent.

Eternal

At the close of one of the first Pentecostal services I attended, the preacher asked me, “Do you believe that you are a sinner?” At that time I was a professional philosopher and had just completed my dissertation on “definitions” at Cambridge University. I immediately ran over in my mind various possible definitions of a “sinner.” All of them applied to me exactly! So I answered, “Yes, I believe I’m a sinner!”

The preacher then asked, “Do you believe that Christ died for your sins?” I thought this over and then replied, “To tell you the truth, I can’t see what the death of Jesus Christ nineteen centuries ago could have to do with the sins that I’ve committed in my lifetime.”

The preacher was wise enough not to argue with me, but I am sure he prayed for me! A few days later I had a powerful encounter with Jesus Christ, which changed the whole course of my life. In particular, the Bible became a living, meaningful book.

Some time later I was reading in Hebrews 9:14 that “Christ . . . through **the eternal Spirit** offered Himself without spot to God.” Suddenly I grasped the significance of the word “eternal.” Its meaning is far broader than just something that lasts an extremely long time. It denotes something which is above and beyond the limitations of time – something which comprehends simultaneously the past, the present and the future.

When Jesus offered Himself on the cross, His sacrifice was not limited to the time at which He died. It encompassed the sins of all men of all ages – past, present and future. It included the sins that I was to commit nineteen centuries later.

The Greek adjective “eternal” has a fathomless depth of meaning. It is derived from the noun *aion*, from which we get the English word “aeon.” An *aion* is a measurement of time and occurs in a variety of expressions, as in the following literal translations:

Heb. 7:24: “for the age” (NKJ “forever”) – that is, for the duration of the present age.

Jude 25: “from before every age, and now, and unto all the ages” (NKJ “both now and forever”).

Gal. 1:5: “unto the ages of the ages” (NKJ “forever and ever”).

It is obvious that the English translations do not even begin to convey the depth of the meaning of the Greek phrases. These expressions – and others like them – fill me with a sense of awe. I feel like a little drop of moisture suspended above a bottomless chasm that separates two mountains

too high for me to climb. My mind cannot fully comprehend that there could be even one age made up of ages, much less that there are ages made up of such ages. Yet the eternal Holy Spirit encompasses them all, stretching from the measureless past and on into the measureless future.

I begin to apprehend in a new way the title under which God is endlessly worshiped in heaven: "Lord God Almighty, who [eternally] was and is and is to come!"¹

Omniscient

Closely related to the eternal nature of the Holy Spirit is His omniscience. In 1 John 3:20 the apostle confronts us with a profound, yet simple revelation: **God knows all things**. There is nothing that God does not know. From the tiniest insect in the earth to the farthest star in space, there is nothing that God does not completely know.

God knows things about us that we do not know about ourselves. For instance, He knows the number of hairs that each of us has on our head.²

God knew the number of inhabitants in the city of Nineveh (Jonah 4:11). He knew – and controlled – the growth of the plant that shaded Jonah. He also knew – and controlled – the action of the worm that caused the plant to wither.³

In 1 Corinthians 2:9-10 Paul speaks about the things which "eye has not seen, nor ear heard, nor have entered into the heart of man." Then he continues, "But God has revealed them to us through His Spirit. **For the Spirit searches all things**, yes, the deep things of God."

The Holy Spirit both plumbs the deepest depths and scales the highest heights of all that was, that is and that is to come. His knowledge is infinite.

It is in the light of this infinite knowledge that we must each be prepared to give an account of ourselves to God. "And there is no creature hidden from His sight, but all things are naked and open to the eyes of Him to whom we must give account."⁴

The supernatural knowledge and wisdom of the Holy Spirit was manifested throughout the earthly ministry of Jesus, but never more than in His dealings with Judas Iscariot. When the disciples told Jesus, "We have come to believe and know that You are the Christ [Messiah], the Son of the living God,"⁵ Jesus gave them an answer which revealed that being the Messiah would entail being betrayed by one of His own followers: "'Did I not choose you, the twelve, and one of you is a devil?' He spoke of Judas Iscariot, the son of Simon, for it was he who would betray Him, being one of the twelve."⁶ Jesus knew by the Holy Spirit that Judas would betray Him, even before Judas knew it himself.

Even so, Judas could not carry out his plan until Jesus spoke a word that released him to do so. At the Last Supper Jesus warned His disciples, "One of you will betray Me." When questioned who it would be, Jesus replied,

"It is he to whom I shall give a piece of bread when I have dipped it." And having dipped the bread, He gave it to Judas Iscariot.

Now after the piece of bread Satan entered him. Then Jesus said to him, "What you do, do quickly."

Having received the piece of bread, Judas went out quickly – to betray Jesus.⁷

I am awed by the realisation that Judas could not carry out his plan to betray Jesus until Jesus Himself spoke the word that released him to do it. Throughout this whole scene, it was the Betrayed,

not the betrayer, who was in control.

When we comprehend the completeness of God's knowledge – and in particular His foreknowledge – it gives us the assurance that no matter what happens, God is never taken by surprise. There is no such thing as an emergency in the kingdom of heaven. Not merely does God know the end from the beginning, He Himself **is** both the Beginning and the End.⁸ And He is always in total control.

In particular, God knows those whom He has chosen to be with Him in eternity. "For whom He foreknew, He also predestined to be conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the firstborn among many brethren."⁹

If by the mercy and grace of God we make it through to that glorious, eternal destination, Jesus will never greet anyone with the words, "I never expected to see you here!" Rather, He will say, "My child, I've been waiting for you. We couldn't sit down to the marriage feast until you came."

At that glorious banquet, I believe, every place setting will carry the name of the person for whom it is prepared.

Until the number of the redeemed is complete, God waits with amazing patience, "not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance."¹⁰

Omnipresent

When we say that God is **omnipresent** we mean that He is present everywhere at the same time. In Jeremiah 23:23-24 God Himself affirms this:

*"Am I a God near at hand," says the LORD,
"And not a God afar off?
Can anyone hide himself in secret places,
So I shall not see him?" says the LORD;
"Do I not fill heaven and earth?" says the LORD.*

How can this be? We know that God is seated on His throne in heaven, with Jesus at His right hand. How then can He fill heaven and earth with His presence?

In Psalm 139:7-12 David supplies the answer. First, he asks:

*Where can I go **from Your Spirit?**
Or where can I flee **from Your presence?***

This reveals that it is through His Spirit that God makes Himself present everywhere at the same time. Then David fills in the vivid details:

*If I ascend into heaven, You are there;
If I make my bed in hell, behold, You are there.
If I take the wings of the morning,
And dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea,
Even there Your hand shall lead me,
And Your right hand shall hold me.
If I say, "Surely the darkness shall fall on me."
Even the night shall be light about me;
Indeed, the darkness shall not hide from You,
But the night shines as the day;
The darkness and the light are both alike to You.*

No matter where we may go, God is there by His Spirit – invisible, often imperceptible, but inescapable. For the unbeliever this may be a terrifying thought, but for the believer it is a comforting, strengthening assurance. No matter where we may find ourselves, “even there Your hand shall lead me, and Your right hand shall hold me.”

In the New Testament Jesus Himself gives us this assurance: “I will never leave you nor forsake you.”¹¹ At times we may not be in any way conscious of His presence, but by His Holy Spirit He is there. Our surroundings may appear totally dark, but “the darkness shall not hide from You . . .”

Each one of us needs to cultivate an inner sensitivity to the Holy Spirit that does not depend on the evidence of our physical senses. When our senses tell us nothing about His presence, or even when they seem to deny it, there should be an area in the inmost depths of our own spirit that maintains an uninterrupted awareness of the Holy Spirit’s presence. Then we shall more fully understand why He is given the title of “the Comforter”¹² or “the Helper.”¹³

There is no more appropriate way to close this letter than by thanking the Father and the Son for sending us the Holy Spirit. Will you join with me?

In my next letter I will speak about the ministry of the Holy Spirit in the Church.

Yours in the Master’s service



Derek Prince

¹ Revelation 4:8

² Matthew 10:30

³ Jonah 4:6-7

⁴ Hebrews 4:13

⁵ John 6:69

⁶ John 6:70-71

⁷ John 13:21-30

⁸ Revelation 21:6

⁹ Romans 8:29

¹⁰ 2 Peter 3:9

¹¹ Hebrews 13:5

¹² John 14:26, KJV

¹³ John 14:26, NKJ

For further study, we recommend the book T60,
“The Holy Spirit In You”.

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