

SummerSalon14 - Pneumatology

The most common theological error made regarding the Holy Spirit is failure to honor Him as He is —an equal member of the Godhead. I think this explains why many either *ignore* the Holy Spirit or else *grieve* Him by making false claims about His person and works. The Holy Spirit shares in *kind*, and in *degree*, the same attributes as the Father and the Son. The Spirit is omniscient, omnipresent, and omnipotent. John 16:13 indicates the Spirit's guidance into all truth is not His truth alone, but the truth of the Father and the Son. In Luke 1:35 the power that overshadowed Mary is synonymous with the power of the Most High God. And Paul's ministry was accomplished through signs and wonders produced by the Spirit (Rom 15:19). The Spirit is also eternal with the Father and the Son (Heb 9:14) because the Trinity has no beginning and no end. The Spirit was involved in the Creation (Gen 1:2) —along with the Father and the Son —and that same power of the Spirit continually sustains all Creation. *Creatio continuata* (or *creatio conservatio*) is the biblical doctrine of God sustaining and maintaining the earth and all of creation, consistent with Col. 1:16-20.

Even though doctrine regarding the Holy Spirit is not as extensive as doctrine for the Father and Son —collectively those Scriptures teaching on the Holy Spirit demonstrate the unity of the triune Godhead. The Spirit is designated by the masculine pronoun (John 16:13-14) where the masculine *ekeinos* is used rather than a neuter pronoun. Dr. Millard Erickson tells us that John "...deliberately chose to use the masculine to convey the fact that Jesus is referring to a person, not a thing or intangible force." In Eph 1:14 the Spirit is designated as "who" rather than "what." It is an egregious error when teachers or preachers refer to the Spirit as "it".

Another error taught about the Spirit is *tritheism*, the teaching that like God, the Son —the Holy Spirit has His own separate soul, body, and spirit. It is only the Second member of the Godhead, Jesus, who has a physical body. And His spirit is not His own; but that of the Holy Spirit.

The Spirit loyally performs His duty, seeking no worship for Himself. Always at work but never conspicuous, the "behind the scenes" nature of the Holy Spirit precludes doctrines presented in the books, ***Good Morning, Holy Spirit*** and ***Surprised by the Power of the Spirit*** are sound. The Spirit does not glory in Himself (John 16:14) —

but models after the Son's deference to the Father (John 17:4). Cooperation is the nature of the Spirit.

The *paraklētos* —is the one called alongside. He advocates for us as taught in John chapters 14, 15 and 16. In 1 John 2:1b, we read that "...if anyone sins, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous. This Advocate is none other than *the Holy Spirit*. The indwelling Spirit stands in for Jesus and carries out the same role to comfort, challenge and guide as Jesus did when He walked the earth.

The Spirit is intelligent, willful, and emotional —elements of personhood. John 14:26 says the Father will send the Counselor who will teach you all things and will remind you of everything I have said to you" (John 14:26). The Spirit is a moral agent, assuring the will of the Father and Son is accomplished in the lives of men and women. The Spirit teaches, regenerates, searches hearts, convicts, speaks, intercedes, commands, testifies, guides, illuminates, and reveals. The Spirit does not convey the esoteric, mystic, eastern or new age meanings of spirit with lower case s. Knowledge of the Holy Spirit is revealed only in the Bible. An ancient false teaching believed by the Egyptian Tropicis taught that the Holy Spirit was created as a type of angel. But no Person of the Trinity is "created" by the other Persons.

We clearly deduce that the most obvious practical error embraced by professing believers is ancient. The Montanists were a charismatic group whose cultic beliefs centered in speaking in tongues. Rising at the end of the second century, the Montanists called for reformation of moral behavior —the Montanist founder falsely claiming the *Paraclete* spoke through him. The Montanists believed that Spirit-inspired prophets would continue to be in the church throughout time. But we know there are no prophets after the close of the canon, after the first century. It is clear that the error of Montanism lives on today. A paper is posted in the **SummerSalon14** documents written by a seminary professor to refute the error of tongues. Documents are posted to describe the errors of the "Third Wave". This movement even boasts some highly respected scholars. (So it has been for thousands of years. It is leaders who first lead the flock astray.) But God's Word reminds us to "try the spirits" to make sure they are of Him (1 John 4:1).

Since we have no conscious awareness of the Spirit's operation *within* us, it is a mystery to consider how Rom 8:26 operates. "We do not know what we ought to pray for, but the *Spirit Himself intercedes for us with groans* that words cannot express".