



BELIEVERS CHAPEL

6420 Churchill Way | Dallas, Texas | 75230 | t 972.239.5371 | believerschapeldallas.org

Sermons of S. Lewis Johnson

Systematic Theology

“The History of the Doctrine of the Holy Spirit - I”

TRANSCRIPT

[Prayer] ...that has been given by a word by godly men down through the years. We thank Thy for the teaching ministry of the Holy Spirit in the first century and the second century and in the third and all of the succeeding centuries to the present day. And we thank Thee for the way in which certain aspects of the truth of the word of God have been settled through discussion and controversy and that we are the benefit of the beneficiaries of this controversy in study and conversation. And we pray that we may avail ourselves of the benefits and thus understand Thy word more clearly. So we pray tonight as we consider the history of the doctrine of the Holy Spirit that Thou art guide and direct us, enable us to avoid the pitfalls of the past.

In this we ask in Jesus' name. Amen.

[Message] Now, tonight we are beginning a two-part study of the doctrine, the History of the Doctrine of the Holy Spirit. And so we are going to be concerned with what the church has thought about various aspects of the teaching concerning the Holy Spirit. We're not going to be looking at the New Testament yet or the Old Testament, but we're going to be considering the time which begins with the conclusion of the New Testament period, or the period of the apostles, and we are going on down to modern

day and seek -- we are seeking to set forth in chronological order what Christians have thought about a doctrine of the Holy Spirit.

Now, I think the great benefit of this for us is going to be that we shall learn the pitfalls into which the church has fallen, and we shall thereby be better able to avoid them ourselves. And I think also we shall see the things that the early church and the succeeding generations have seen from the Scriptures. And after a great deal of controversy and battling over the points, they have arrived at a consensus under the direction of the Spirit, and we are able to enter into the benefits of their understanding. So tonight, the first in the two-part series of the History of the Doctrine of the Holy Spirit, and then the following week we will consider the Holy Spirit and the Scriptures, and we shall begin to study the text of Scripture itself.

While I am thinking about it, we will not be meeting next Monday night. I would love to do it, but I have to be in Winnipeg, Canada, this next weekend. And since Northwest Airlines is still on strike, I cannot get back to Dallas in time for the Monday night meeting. I arrive at nine o'clock. I can't even get back for the football game, so we will have to postpone it until the following Monday, so we will not meet next Monday night.

The History of the Doctrine of the Holy Spirit. I am sure, in speaking to an audience such as this, that I do not have to say to you that history is of tremendous value to us. I know that Henry Ford said history is the succession of one damn thing after another, and I agree that that is a pithy pointer to history's disasters. But a more significant remark about the importance of history is this one: he who ignores history is destined to fulfill it. And there is a great deal of wisdom in that. I hope I do not have to exhort you regarding the importance of history. In fact, the only reason that I've said as much as I have said is because I have occasionally, in recent years, come into contact with some young people who have questioned the value of history. One young man particularly told me that he saw no significance, no importance whatsoever in the study of

history. Well, he is destined to fulfill it. This has special reference or relevance to the doctrine of the Holy Spirit because the doctrine of the Holy Spirit is a doctrine that has been plagued by the errors of men in the past, and a knowledge of the history of the subject may preserve us from some of them. Tonight we’re going to look at one particularly for a little while.

The errors of a certain Christian who lived in [Phrygia](#) by the name of Montanus. And I think if we learned the lessons of Montanists and Montanism as his heresy has been known by church historians. We shall not be led astray too quickly by some of the movements that have to do with the charismata in the 20th Century.

Now, we have studied so far the importance of theology, and I pointed out, from the standpoint of logic as well as from the standpoint of the Bible, that theology is not only important, it is necessary and that everybody has a theology. We either ultimately have a poor theology or we have a good theology. It is necessary. Then we studied last time the importance of pneumatology or the doctrine of the Holy Spirit, and we saw that the Holy Spirit is involved in the production of the Scriptures. We saw that the Holy Spirit was involved in the creation. We saw that the Holy Spirit was intimately involved in redemption, for He was active in almost all of the spheres and events of our Lord’s life and ministry. And while it is not said that he was active in his death and in his resurrection, we may presume that he did have activity in it, but the Scriptures like to stress the fact that Jesus Christ died voluntarily and that he rose again by the power of the Father. And so the part that the Holy Spirit had in the death and resurrection of our Lord is played down by the Bible, I think, for those reasons.

But the Holy Spirit is involved in regeneration. When we are saved, when we become Christians, we are born of the Spirit. As Jesus himself said in John chapter 3, the Holy Spirit is our professor of Christian education, for it is He who teaches us the word of God. He has inspired the scriptures and it is He who illumines us as we study them.

Interpretation is the human endeavor. Illumination is the divine endeavor. And it is the Holy Spirit's part to illumine us as we seek to interpret the word.

He is also involved in sanctification for our growth and grace as the product of the Spirit's work in our hearts. And then he is the power for Christian service. And I tried to distinguish last time, remember, between the terms gift of the Spirit, the gift of the spirit, which was a reference to the coming of the Spirit on the Day of Pentecost. Then the gifts of the spirit which were sovereign manifestation, sovereign gifts of power for Christian service. These gifts are several characters. We shall -- of several different types, and we will consider them in due course. These are sometimes utterance gifts, sometimes non-utterance gifts, but every Christian has a gift. It is a special bestow from the Spirit according to his sovereignty and that gift is to be used in our Christian service.

And then the graces of the spirit, these are the virtues of Christian life which are produced in us by the Holy Spirit. These are not specially related to service. They are related to our daily life. For example, Paul says, the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, meekness, self-control, and so on. These are the graces of the Spirit. They make up his fruit. They are the products of the life of the Spirit within us.

Now, just giving a little survey like that indicates how important the ministry of the Holy Spirit is. Hardly any aspect of theology, hardly any aspect of Christian life, is not touched by the Holy Spirit. How important it is that we understand his ministry well and accurately and clearly.

Now, tonight we want to touch upon, as I said, the thoughts and the problems of the centuries concerning him. And so this is going to be an historical study. And I hope that if you came expecting something from the Bible, you will not be too disappointed because I believe, ultimately, you will say, I'm glad that I endured that lecture that Dr. Johnson gave about the history of the Holy Spirit and the thoughts concerning him.

Let’s begin with the post-Apostolic age. *Post*, of course, means after. *Apostolic*, the apostolic age, was the age of the apostles, generally the first century when the Apostles ministered and wrote. And this is point number one of our outline. Two weeks from tonight we will give Roman II and Roman III. The post-apostolic age to the Reformation. And I have selected 95 A.D. as the beginning because it was then that some of the first of the sub-Apostolic or post-Apostolic writings began to issue from them who were not apostles. For example, Clement, who was a Bishop at Rome, wrote a letter to the Corinthians in his epistle -- Clement’s epistle is the first chronologically of the writings of the so-called apostolic fathers; that is, the men who wrote just after the apostles left. And so we begin with 95 because it is then that other than Christians, other than apostles begin to write about things that concerned the Christian faith. And 1517 A.D. is selected as the time of the Reformation because it was in 1517 that Martin Luther nailed his Ninety-Five Theses to the door of the Castle Church in Wittenberg in Germany. And we’re using that date as the historical beginning of the Reformation. There, one could argue for other dates, but that is for scholars. This is simple enough and accurate enough for us.

And capital A, the anti-Nicene period.

Now, the reason that we call this anti-Nicene period is, of course, *anti* means before and *Nicene* comes from the word *Nicaea*, which was a city in Asia Minor where a significant council took place that had to do with the deity of Jesus Christ. And it is very important in the history of the Christian church, the Council at Nicaea, for it was there that it was definitely established that the church had come to an agreement upon the deity of Jesus Christ. A great controversy had raged in the church, and it was at Nicaea in 325 that that controversy was settled, not the -- no denials of the deity of Christ ever took place since then. But the church pondered and debated and reflected upon that question, and I believe guided by the Holy Spirit, came to a conviction that Jesus Christ was co-equal with the father in his substance just as much God as the father was God. So the anti-Nicene period then is the period from 95 to the time of the Council at Nicaea.

Now, the principal problems of the time referred to here, the post-Apostolic age to the Reformation, the principal problems were the problem number one of the personality of the Holy Spirit, was he a person or was he just an influence. Now, you know today in the 20th Century, you have people refer to the Holy Spirit who are Christians as it. Now, in so doing they reflect that they are not so certain about the fact that the Holy Spirit is a person. So that was one of the problems that the early church wrestled with, although, it does not seem that they wrestled with it very long. They seemed to have almost, from the beginning, spoken a spoken language of a personality of the Holy Spirit. I think one could make a case for the problem of the personality of the Holy Spirit being primarily a 20th Century problem in professing Christendom, but, nevertheless, the personality of the Spirit was a question.

Now, the bigger problem was the problem of the deity of the Holy Spirit. Was the Holy Spirit as much God as the Father and Son are God? And the third problem was the problem of the procession of the Spirit, P-R-O-C-E-S-S-I-O-N -- procession of the Spirit.

Now, the procession of the Spirit has to do with this question: does the Holy Spirit, when he comes, come from the Father, or does he come from the Father and the Son? Does he proceed from God the Father alone? The Eastern Church -- by now, of course, the Eastern Church means the Eastern Orthodox Church. The Eastern church still believes that it is correct to say the Holy Spirit has come from the Father only, but the Western Church believed after Augustine that the Holy Spirit came from the Father and from the Son.

Now, in the 20th Century, and I think down through the centuries, that question has not had a great deal of practical relevance. And I will refer to it, but I’m not going to spend any time on it because after 25 years of thinking about the importance of this, I must confess I have a little difficulty seeing where it really is very relevant to us, though I accept the procession from the Father and from the Son.

Now, capital A, the anti-Nicene period. I wish we had time to deal with a full treatment of this period, but, ultimately, in Believer’s Chapel, when we have a real school, we will have a course in the history of Christian doctrine in which we will deal with this question, and also a course in the history of the Christian church, in which this subject will also be discussed. But when we are talking about theology, we have to assume certain things, and I know that’s assuming too much because you’re not theological students, and most of you probably have never taken a course in the history of Christian doctrine. You should be ignorant because you have not. It’s just not something that most of us would take unless we have been to seminary.

If we were to give a full treatment of this, we would have to discuss the Apostolic Fathers, for example, Clement, Barnabas, Ignatius, Polycarp, some of these names probably are familiar to you. You’ve read them somewhere, but you don’t know exactly where to put them. Don’t feel disturbed over that. There are lots of names among the ancient church Fathers that I’m not sure where to put either, so that’s not -- really doesn’t commend in, that -- that shouldn’t be a commendable thing to you because I’m very ignorant. But, nevertheless, that’s the way I feel about it.

We also should have to discuss the apologists who came after the Apostolic Fathers, men like Tatian and Justin Martyr -- by the way, I put these names over here so you will understand how they are spelled -- Irenaeus, Tertullian. I think we can pass over these men without dealing with them and simply say this, that the giants of this period of time, from 95 A.D. to 325 A.D., the giants of this period were lower in capacity and in stature than the Apostles. And all you have to do to realize how great the Apostles were is to finish reading the New Testament and then open up Clement and read his first letter to the church at Corinth. If you want to understand how great the writers of the New Testament are, just do that. Sometime it would be a good exercise for you.

You would find it interesting because this man, a Bishop at Rome, wrote that the church at Corinth in order to give them some spiritual advice just like Paul had written the

Church at Rome and just like he had written the Church at Corinth. And Clement had read Paul. He refers to Paul’s letters to those churches. But there is all the difference in the world between the two writings. You can just tell that one stands on one plane and another stands on the other. And it was by the simple reading of these documents that the early church came to believe that the writings of the Apostles were inspired and the writings of the Apostolic Fathers were not.

People often ask me the question, how can -- or how did the church arrive at the belief that the 27 books of the New Testament were inspired in the light of all of the other documents that were written. Well, it’s not a simple matter in the case of some books, and it did take a little period of time because not everyone was able to sit down with the 27 books in hand and the other books and compare them, but it is evident almost from the beginning that the church recognized a distinction in quality in the inspired books from those that were later regarded as uninspired. And the best test of the superior quality of the New Testament is not for me to tell you about it; it’s for you to read them yourselves. And by the way, it doesn’t cost much to get a copy of the Apostolic Fathers. It would be interesting to you to read it -- read them. But, at any rate, I think we can say about this period, these men, then giants of the period -- they were the giants, Justin Martyr, Tatian, and Irenaeus, and Tertullian, the Apologists, and then the Fathers I have mentioned, Clement and Polycarp and Ignatius and the others. They were men of lower stature and poorer capacity. But, nevertheless, in their writings, they reflect that they believed in the personality of the Spirit, and they also believed in the deity of the Spirit.

Now, they didn’t discuss theologically these things. They assumed that others understood these facts. They didn’t know about a lot of the problems that were raised later on historically. But in the things that they say, they show that they assume a belief in the personality of the Spirit and in the deity of the Spirit. And I want to show you how this is seen. In the various -- in the very earliest form of the Apostle’s Creed, remember the Apostle’s Creed that you recite in church, is a creed that is traced back to an old

Roman creed in the 2nd Century, that is as far as we are able to go. And the developed Apostle’s Creed that is recited in the church is a much later document than that, but it ultimately goes back to this 2nd Century old Roman creed. And I’m going to read you the old Roman creed on which our leader Apostle’s Creed was built. And notice what it says about the Holy Spirit.

I believe in God Almighty. And in Jesus Christ his only Son our Lord, [Now, if you knew the Apostle’s Creed -- I think, by the way, it’s a good thing to memorize. If you knew the Apostle’s Creed, you would have immediately said, uh-oh, he made a mistake. What do we say? I believe in God the Father Almighty. This says, I believe in God Almighty.] And in Christ Jesus his only son our Lord who was born of the Holy Spirit and the Virgin Mary. [Now you can see a difference again, but notice that even in this earliest expression of the faith of the church there was the idea that the Spirit was more than an influence,] who was born of the Holy Spirit in the Virgin Mary, who was crucified under Pontius Pilate and was buried and the third day rose from the dead. Who ascended into heaven and sitteth on the right hand of the Father wence he cometh to judge the living and the dead. And in the Holy Ghost (and we are to understand as the verb, I believe.) And I believe in the Holy Ghost, the Holy Church, the remission of sins, the resurrection of the flesh, the life-everlasting.

Now, you can see from this that there is assume a belief in the personality of the Holy Spirit and, I think, also in his deity because it has expressly stated that just as they believe in God the Father and in Jesus Christ, they believe in the Holy Spirit. Further, doxologies in the writings of these men from this anti-Nicene period are doxologies that affirm the same thing. They are addressed to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit, which indicates that they regard the Spirit as more than an influence. They regard Him as a person, and they also regard him as God. And then when they baptized in the earliest days, the earliest baptismal formulas that we have record of that Christians used include the Trinitarian formula to baptize in the name of the Father and of the Son and of

the Holy Spirit. So the early church, right from the beginning, recognized the personality of the Holy Spirit, and they also recognized his deity, though they did not debate the matter. They seemed to have been guided to that belief by the Holy Spirit without ever having really reflected upon it very much.

So I think we can say of the anti-Nicene period that they unconsciously reflected the faith that arose out of later discussion. Now, there is one movement that I want to talk about for a minute in this anti-Nicene period, and it is the movement known as Montanism. Now, the reason I want to discuss it is because it bears a great deal of similarity to what has happened in the Christian church in the 20th Century.

Now, let me tell you a few things about Montanists and about Montanism. Montanus was a man who was converted to the Christian faith and who lived in the land of Phrygia. Now, Phrygia, remember, is in Asia Minor. As a matter of fact, when Paul came to Antioch in Pisidia, according to our words above the text of Acts 13, and preached his great sermon in the synagogue there, he was really in Phrygia. Now, Phrygia was a land that was noted for several things. Primarily it was noted for its magicians and the practice of black art.

Now, if you wanted to get someone in the first century who knew something about magic and who appreciated sorcery and incantations and all of the fortune telling and that type of thing, well, all you had to do was to go to Phrygia because the Phrygians were susceptible to that.

Now, Montanists came out of Phrygia and I don’t think that that is something we should pass by without noting. His heresy has been called by some the Phrygian heresy for that reason. Now, he and the women -- now, I put the two to Prisca and Maximilla here -- I must not lose my microphone -- I have set Prisca and Maximilla off here not because the women are not equal to this fine line of men here, you understand. You cannot do that in the 20th Century with the women’s lib movement, but simply to indicate that they were disciples of Montanus. Now, Montanus was the leader of this movement

and Prisca and Maximilla were prophetesses, and they were very prominent in the movement known as Montanism, which, by the way, is rather interesting, isn’t it? Because in the movements today which stress the *charismata*, the Spiritual gifts of prophecy and speaking in tongues, it almost universally is evident that the women are also very prominent in them. Isn’t that striking? Isn’t that striking? Now, Montanists claimed the gift of prophecy. Further, he claimed that he was the coming of the Paraclete.

Now, we mustn’t completely blame Montanus for everything that he said because he was a young Christian, and that’s another characteristic of the movements identified with Charismata in the 20th Century. Almost all of them feed upon new converts, people who are immature in the Christian faith. And so Montanus and Prisca and Maximilla announced themselves as prophets. This is a prophecy of Montanus,

“Behold man is as a lyre, that’s L-Y-R-E -- and I play upon him as a plectrum. The man sleeps, and I arouse him. Behold! It is the Lord who changes the hearts of men and gives a heart to men.

Now, he believed on the basis, particularly of the writings of John, that the last and highest stage of revelation had been reached, and the age of the paraclete had come, the Holy Spirit and he spoke in Montanus. And the descent of the heavenly Jerusalem was near at hand.

Now, notice the things that are characterized by this movement. Immaturity, women prominent -- pardon me, ladies. The men were prominent, too, mind you, but the women were prominent -- three, prophecies, charismatas, speaking in tongues, and prophecies of the soon coming of the end of the age. Now, of course, the end of the age did not come as Montanus, Montanists had prophesied.

Now, this movement spread and it spread across North Africa, and it even gained an adherent in this very unusual man, Tertullian, from North Africa, a lawyer, a

voluminous writer, and in many ways a man possessed upon usual intelligence, but he fell prey to Montanism and accepted its teaching, which also illustrates the fact that you may even find a person who has a great deal of intelligence who is taken in by heresy.

Now, that's really -- that's discouraging, isn't it? If a man like Tertullian, who was one of the greatest minds of his day, could be taken in by this heresy -- well, then upon whom can we lean? Well, we can only lean on God, ultimately. No man ever. I guess there is a lesson in that.

Well, the story of Montanism is the story of rejection by the early church. This heresy flourished for a while, but ultimately because of its abhorptions from the truth, it was rejected by the early Christian church. And after about the 6th Century, it died out completely.

Now, I want to lay a great deal of stress on that because, frankly, this is my opinion. I cannot prove it. I'm warning you ahead of time. I cannot prove it, but I think that the modern tongues and prophecy movement bears such a great resemblance to Montanism and its excesses and its heresy, that it would scare me right at the beginning. Now, we're going to deal a great deal more with this question of the gift of tongues. And the schedule that I have, we are to spend two nights on the gift of tongues. So I'll save what I want to save for then. But I think there is a lesson, you see, right here in the early stages in the Christian church to beware of such excesses in Christian doctrine.

Now, let's move on to from Nicaea to Chalcedon, C-H-A-L-C-E-D-O-N. This is also another city in Asia Minor. Chalcedon -- from Nicaea to Chalcedon or from 325 to 451 A.D. Due to the great Christological controversies that arose during this period of time, from the days of 95 A.D. to 451 A.D., those great controversies concerning the person of Christ, it was inevitable that the question of the deity of the Holy Spirit be raised. And at the Council of Constantinople in 381 A.D. there the question of the deity of the Holy Spirit was settled once and for all by the early Christian church. So let me just say a few words now about that which led up to this Council of Constantinople. Last year when we were

talking about a doctrine of Jesus Christ, we talked about the Council of Nicaea. And you remember the issue at the Council of Nicaea was the deity of Christ. And there were two men who were prominent in this. One was Arius. Arius was an elder in the city of Alexandria in Egypt. The other as Athanasius. Athanasius was also an Alexandrian. Arius believed that Jesus Christ had a nature like God’s. Athanasius believed that Jesus Christ had a nature which was the same in essence as God’s. And remember, I put on the board the two Greek words because a controversy actually came down finally to the controversy over these two words, and one of them was the word *homoosias* and the other was the word *homoiosis*. Now, this means of the same nature, *osias* means “being.” *Homi* means same. *Homoi* means “like.” And so this means of similar nature. Now, the controversy actually came down to the distinction between those two words. And, as you can see, the only difference between them is one little letter. The Greek iota or our I. Now, isn’t it -- isn’t it interesting?

Now, as a result of this, many have left over what happened at Nicaea, given -- had some words with regard to it. He said that they world was convulsed over the fact that the Christian church was divided over a diphthong. Now, this would be the kind of thing that Huntley and Brinkley could make a great deal of, couldn’t they? The whole Christian church divided over one little letter, but, you know, as I said last year, there is a great deal of difference often between two concepts that differ in only one letter.

Let’s take the word theist. Now, a theist is a man who believes in God. But what is an atheist? Well, there is all the difference in the world between those two little words, but they differ in only one letter. One has an A that the other one does not have. So we should never rest our opinions of a controversy of how many letters are involved in the issue.

Now, Carlisle made the statement, too, that he was greatly disturbed over the fact that the Christian church had been divided by a little diphthong, but then he added but, later, I came to see that the whole essence of Christianity was bound up in that one little

letter, had one little diphthong. Well, let me give you one of -- a characteristic statement. This is the statement of T.H. Green. One need not be an orthodox Trinitarian to see that if Aryanism had had its way, the theology of Christianity would have become of a kind in which no philosopher who had outgrown the demonism of ancient systems could for a moment acquiesce. You know, the words, if Jesus Christ is only like God, then we have opened the door to polytheism and demonism. For if Jesus Christ is like God, but not god, but we worship him nevertheless, as the New Testament plainly teaches, then we may as well have a pantheon of Gods. We’ve begun. We have only two that we can worship, but there is that distinction which is so important.

By the way, today -- I had read this before, but it had never really come home to me. There is a description of Arius that is given, and I’m going to read it to you. Arius is described to us as a tall spare man, ascetic in habits and dress with long tangled hair. So I’ve come to believe as a result of this statement that Arius was the first hippy. Now, I’ve stopped in the center -- middle of the sentence when I asked my wife this afternoon what kind of a person do you think Arius was? She said, I imagine he was a well-handsome fellow.

Now, of course, she said that because she had listened to me teach. And one of the things that I’ve often said is that the anti-Christ will undoubtedly be a very magnetic personality. He will be dynamic. His mouth will speak great things. He will be a great rhetorician and many other things are said in the Bible which indicates that he’s the kind of man who could fool people. Well, he’ll be the John F. Kennedy of his day, except more so, or the Franklin D. Roosevelt of his day for you old-timers. I can still remember sitting by the radio and just being entranced by the words that came out of FDR’s mouth. Why, whatever he was for, I was for, anybody that could talk like that. Those fireside chats. My, as a kid, I didn’t understand what was going on, but I still liked to hear him talk.

Now, it goes on to say after his long, tangled hair and a curious practice of twisting about -- that may be because he was taking some form of psychedelic drugs. I don't know -- but with all the fascinating manners and address and not without a considerable mixture of craft and vanity. Now, those are some of the characteristics of the anti-Christ of the last days. Well, Arius then believed that Jesus Christ was of similar nature, but Athanasius, stood up for the deity of Christ. And as a result of Nicaea, a landmark was passed in the history of the Christian church. And as a result of it, the Christian church, since that time, has had no doubt of the deity of Christ.

Well, it was natural that since these controversies concerning Jesus Christ were taking place during this time, that there should be a controversy concerning the nature of the Holy Spirit. Was he really God? And so this controversy raged but not with the degree of intensity that -- that controversy concerning the deity of Christ had raised -- raged. There was a man, a bishop by the name of Macedonius. He had been deposed from his bishopric, but he became the leader of those who were known as spirit fighters and he fought against the doctrine of the deity of the Holy Spirit. But at the Council of Constantinople, the church came to the conviction, officially, that the Holy Spirit was just as much God as the Father was God. And I'm going to read you what they determined. .

After the Nicene formula, these words were added. The Lord, the life giver that -- this was regarding the spirit -- The Spirit, the Lord, the life giver that proceeds from the Father that with the Father and the Son is together worshiped and together glorified. And so at the Council of Constantinople the question of the deity of Jesus Christ -- of the Holy Spirit was settled.

Now, from the time of Constantinople to Chalcedon, 451A.D. while the subject of the deity of the Holy Spirit was settled by this council, that did not stop all of the discussion. And so from the time of 381 A.D. to 451 A.D., the subject of the deity of the Holy Spirit was discussed both in the east and in the west. And in the west, the greatest disputer was a man by the name of Augustine.

Now, Augustine is such a great man, that it would do us well to spend two or three hours on Augustine. And let me suggest to you, if you want some good reading -- remembering, of course, that Augustine wrote in the fifth century most of his significant treatises. He was born in 354 A.D. and died in 430 A.D., so he wrote some things in the fourth century as well, but it would do you good to read some of his writings. He is the man who, above all else, during the time frame from the Apostles to the time of the Reformation kept the doctrines of grace from pollution by the Pelagians, who sought to -- who sought to teach that man was not really fallen utterly in the fall, that man really had human ability to believe and to make himself acceptable to God. And it is as a result of the writings of Augustine that these questions were largely settled by the Christian church, and it is upon the foundation of Augustine that the protestant Reformation was grounded because Calvin and Lutheran and others were great followers of Augustine. In fact, I think that you can truly say that there is a progression from Paul to Augustine, Gus for short, to Calvin and Lutheran.

And Augustine is a very important man, and he wrote a book called *On the Trinity*. And this is perhaps one of the finest theological works of that period of time. And in it, he argued for the deity of the Holy Spirit. Augustine had wonderful conversion. As a young man, he had grown up in a place called Hippo, so he was known in history as Augustine of Hippo, a place in North Africa near Carthage. And as a young man, he had not been a Christian, but his mother was. Her name was Monica, and she prayed for him constantly. Augustine then became a Manichaeon. Now, the Manichaeon religion was a Persian religion.

Now, we have a lot of that in the 20th Century, too. It had the familiar Persian beliefs that manifest themselves today in some of the modern versions of Persian religion that are with us. And he became a Manichaeon. And finally he was sent to Rome or to north -- to northern Italy, ultimately, came to Milan, and there he came -- he had in the meantime become a little disenchanted with Manichaeism, but he still was not a Christian.

He was deeply disturbed over his -- over the sense of sin and guilt that he had. And, of course, his mother’s prayers were being answered. And he came under the influence of Bishop Ambrose of Milan. And it was through Ambrose’s influence that Augustine became a Christian. And he heard the story of his life, and it is, of course, the book known as the Confessions of Augustine.

Now, if you went to college or university, you probably at one time or another read somewhere that -- in your outside reading -- that that was a possible selection for you to read if you took much history. I suggest that sometime you get Augustine’s confessions and read them. It is a very interesting story of how a man comes out of sin, although he was a brilliant man, out of sin and a sense of guilt to faith in Jesus Christ. And he became the greatest theologian of his day -- in fact, the greatest theologian of centuries. And it is Augustine’s thought that has influenced the western world as much as any other human being because Calvin leaned upon him. Now, then this then was a continual -- continually discussed matter, the deity of the Spirit, until the Council of Chalcedon in 451 A.D.

Now, remember, last year we talked about Chalcedon, and I pointed out that that conference, that council, was the council at which the church came to a conviction regarding the relationship of the two natures in Jesus Christ of one another, his divine nature and his human nature, and that council is really the landmark of the controversies concerning the person of Jesus Christ. His deity and his true humanity and the relationship of his two natures. Every Christian ought to be familiar with what was the issue of the council at Nicaea, and every Christian ought to be familiar with what the Council at Chalcedon issued as an expression of faith, because all Bible exposition is ultimately related, evangelicals -- is ultimately related to what happened at Chalcedon at that council.

Now, then, just a word about from Chalcedon to the Reformation and the doctrine of the Holy Spirit. Now, this is a long period of time. From Chalcedon to the time when

Luther nailed his theses to the castle church’s door. Since the deity and personality of the Holy Spirit had been settled, it only remained to discuss the question of his procession. And this was discussed and finally at the Council of Toledo -- I didn’t put this one the board -- Toledo in Spain in 589 A.D., the west determined that the Holy Spirit preceded from the Father and from the Son, largely, due to the influence of Augustine. The Eastern Church never accepted the decision of the Council of Toledo and so in the east today, if you were to ask them about the *filioque* clause, they would say, we don’t accept that. The *filioque* clause is the Latin term and from the Son. comes from -- he proceeds from the Father and from the Son. You remember the Latin word *filius* means Son and *filioque* is “and from the Son.” And they debated whether that clause should be attached to the Holy Spirit proceeded from the Father and from the Son or not. Augustine thought it should be added, and so the church in the west has added it.

I’m going to ask you, if you will, just for a moment, to turn to a couple of passages in John in order that you might see the biblical basis for this controversy, which I have taken the liberty to suggest to you is not too important. Now, let’s turn to John chapter 14 in verse 26. John chapter 14 in verse 26. Jesus says -- are you getting warm? I am, too, but it’s only six minutes, so maybe we’ll just let it rest. I may stop a minute early.

“But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name,”

Notice the statement the father will send the spirit in my name. Notice verse 16 of chapter 14 of John.

“And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter.”

And you can see that the Holy Spirit here in both of these references is said to have come from the Father. Verse 26 of Chapter 15,

“But when the Comforter is come, whom I will send you from the Father.” And so here we see that Jesus says that he is sending the Holy Spirit from the Father. And he goes on to say “even the Spirit of truth, which proceedeth from the Father,”

There is the text that has to do with the procession of the spirit. Now, Chapter 16 in verse 7.

“Nevertheless I tell you the truth; It is expedient for you that I go away: for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send him unto you.”

Now, you can see from these statements that the Holy Spirit has said in one place to be from the Father. And in other places, it said to be sent by the Son. So I think it is fair to say that the Holy Spirit is sent by the Son and proceeds from the Father as well. But it’s unimportant, it seems to me, I have never really been able to figure out why that controversy should have been a great controversy. I know the reasons for it, but I don’t want to go into it right now, why the east didn’t accept it and why the west did. That pertained to some inner conflicts that had taken place in each region. But, nevertheless, it doesn’t seem to be very relevant to us.

Before I close, I would like to say one word about something that was very common during the period of the Middle Ages. And, after all, in the Middle Ages, we do have events that took place in the period, from Chalcedon to the Reformation. One of the movements of the Middle Ages is know as medieval mysticism. What is mysticism? Well, mysticism or the mystics believed that a Christian might have direct communion with God

through meditation and prayer to such a degree that they may actually become united to God. They believe, further, most of them, that they had an inner light and through this inner light, they could know things about God. One of them went so far as to say -- I'm sorry to say, some of you who are former Lutherans, but one of them -- this is an extremist, and I'm sure you could say the same for almost all groups -- even some of the Lutherans went to the extreme of saying, I am Christ Jesus, the living word of God. I have redeemed thee by my sinless sufferings.

Now, he was not trying to say what those words seem to suggest. He was just saying he was so united to God in his meditation and prayer that what was said of Jesus Christ could be said of him. I call that blasphemy myself, but I know the spirit in which they said it. They appealed to an inner light and they appealed to revelations which were not in the word of God. That was a mystic. What are of its errors? Well, in the first place, it did not recognize that the whole point of God's word given to us is that through this Bible, we come to know God through Jesus Christ as he is revealed in the Scriptures. Now, we must be aware of any kind of belief that we have a special understanding of God that is not found in the Bible.

Every bit of knowledge that we have about God should be traceable to the words of Holy Scripture. We have no inner light by which we can directly gain revelation from God. There is no such thing any longer. No revelations come directly from God. The word of God is God's word to us. And so mysticism is erroneous because it stresses revelation apart from the Holy Scriptures. Are there any truths in it? Well, of course, the truth of communion with God. We can truly commune with God through the Scriptures. We can have direct relationship to him, but our relationship must be guarded and guided by the word of God.

Now, this is a very relevant thing, and that's why I mention it, because in the 20th Century, we are living in the day in which, now, not only do we have a great stress on all prophets, not only stress on speaking in tongues, not only stress on sorcery and fortune

telling and horoscopes and this type of thing, but even in the 20th Century, now, we’re having a revival of mysticism.

And if you take *Time* magazine you will know that just a week ago *Time* for October the 5th, 1970 -- it’s this week’s *Time*, in the religion section, the title of the article is mysticism in the laboratory. And it’s the story of how one of the *Time* reporters went to two individuals, two doctors, one male and one female -- I don’t think that has any necessary significance here at this point, although, I will say that the reporter is also a female who went and sat in with these doctors and had a mystical experience whereby she felt that she was lying in a boat on a wonderfully hot languid July afternoon, lazily floating past meadows lush with trees and flowers, and there she had some experiences, particularly in connection with the problem of injustice, she said, that were like a new birth. Isn’t that startling? And this is recommended to Christianity and the churches and that those who lead in this ought to be the preachers of the churches.

Now, if we know what the Bible teaches about the Holy Spirit, we will beware of Montanism. We will beware of mysticism and all of the other abhorations found through the year.

Our time is up. We are going to pick it up with the Reformation next time and then finish the story of the history of what the church has thought about the Holy Spirit. Let’s bow in prayer.

[Prayer] Father, we thank Thee for Thy Word. We thank Thee that Thou has given it to us to guard us against error. Help us, Lord, not to become so academic and so intellectual that we fail to remember that it is possible to have a true experience of communion with Thee through the word. So help us, Lord, to have communion, but may it be in the truth.

For Jesus’ sake. Amen.

“The History of the Doctrine of the Holy Spirit, part I” by S. Lewis Johnson
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