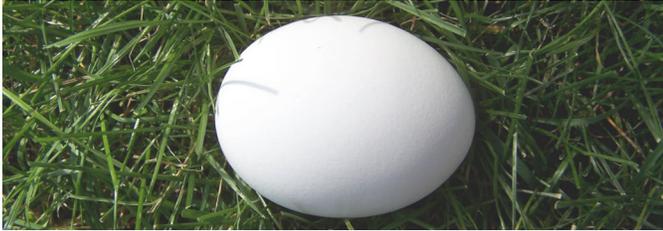


Defining Holiness Part II



By Philip E. Busby

Question #13 - *“What is the difference between The Holy Ghost and holiness?”*

This brings us to the core of what you asked, and that is, what is the difference between The Holy Ghost and holiness? If what I've said so far makes sense to you, then we should understand a little about why The Holy Ghost is called The Holy Ghost. Simply put, The Holy Ghost is the part of God which is mirrored by our spirit. Now, I don't mean this in a negative way, but the truth is, family relationships are a very fleshly thing. That is why it should have been obvious to the studied men of Israel that there would be no marrying and giving in marriage after the resurrection. (Matt. 22:23-32) The union of marriage was established so that new humans can be formed and then raised in an environment which makes sense. Now, I could write a whole book on this subject, but the base meaning is simply to say, those humans who choose to procreate should think ahead and take on the responsibility of creating and maintaining the nurturing environment children need. This is simply why the institution of marriage is required before the engagement into physical relationships between a man and a woman. It's also why physical relationships do not belong between two males or two females. There is simply no point unless you have distorted the meaning of a physical relationship to be primarily about something other than procreation - which our society definitely has!

Our main point here is simply that all of what we call family relationships have to do with the things of this world and life, not the next one. We are all created equal, but familiarity causes us to greatly care for one human or group of humans more than others. Family automatically gives us at least a sense of familiarity; and for parents to raise children, there is a requirement of special adherence to our parents, no matter how much we agree or disagree with them. This adds to the way we feel about family as a whole. Familiarity also has to do with the feelings which lead us to create things like our separation into, and consideration of, communities, states, nations, etc. So, I say again that family relationships are a fleshly thing; and thus, we understand it fairly well. This is why the representation of Son was given to Jesus. Jesus is the part our flesh is an image of. However, The Holy Ghost stands in much the same position as The Son, under The Father. This is why we put The Holy Ghost on the lower corner of our triangle, directly opposite The Son. This is also why we do not put a direct line between The Son and The Holy Ghost. They do not connect directly; They connect through The Father. This again is true of us. Our flesh and spirit are not connected directly, they are only connected through our mind, which must process everything.

The Holy Ghost and The Son are very similar to each Other in Their positions and functions. However, They function in two very different - shall we say - realms, and this is where words begin to really fail us. Because the spirit and the flesh operate differently and are two distinctly different parts, God has avoided simply describing the spirit side as another son. In fact, the Bible goes so far as to tell us Jesus is "...the only begotten of the Father,..." John 1:14 This fact is why it should be clear to us, there are only three parts in the Godhead. There is The Father, there is The Son, and there is The Holy Ghost. Three distinct parts and only three! What I mean by saying that The Son and The Holy Ghost are similar to each other is, they are the balancing parts on either side of the pivot which is The Father. Let's be clear, understanding the flesh does not give us an understanding of the spirit!

To understand what our spirit is, we must attempt to understand what our spirit is. Words are only the description of things we understand, and we do not understand our spirit very well. This leaves us with no good analogies to describe that third part of God, so He is simply called The Holy Ghost. He is also referred to in English as The Holy Spirit. This is not something to

be confused by, it's simply the weakness of our language. Neither gives us much understanding as to what we are talking about. To say spirit or ghost is to use words which have very vague meaning to us. Now, it's just my personal opinion, but I think, today, the word "ghost" carries with it more weight than "spirit." It seems to me, at times we are not sure that spirits exist, and even if we believe they do, we have trouble looking at them as an individual item. We tend to think of spirit as a more general, very undefined, force or energy. I believe the word "ghost" is more of a solid noun to us. We may doubt the existence of a ghost(s), but if something happened which convinced us a very defined but not physical entity did exist, we might be more likely to describe it as a "ghost."

We must understand that The Holy Ghost is not just wind or energy. The Holy Ghost is as much a definable part of God as Jesus. We have trouble describing Him because we think in such physical terms. We simply have not developed the words necessary to speak verbally about spiritual things. This is why we are left with words like "spirit" or "ghost" for this part of God instead of something more familiar, and relationship understandable, such as we have in saying father or son.

The problem is, we have distinct memories from a very early age in life which show us how we began to understand the physical world. At times, it was bright and sometimes dark, and as children, we are fascinated by the fact the physical can be so many shades in-between the extremes. We are also fascinated by the fact our world is composed of so many different colors and shapes! We just can't wait to experience things with all our physical senses. This is why children don't just look at something. They have to touch it, smell it, put it in their mouth, bang it against other things and with other things. We want input! As we grow, this tendency wanes in light of many factors. We learn things are delicate and breakable. We also learn other people may treasure many things breakable, which is a fact that has gotten us into much trouble. We also learn not everything is something which is pleasant to smell, taste, or even touch, and some things will down right harm us. Different people will have different feelings about all this, but most of us will recoil quickly from something hot or sharp. We understand what it means to fall from too great a height, or have something fall on us. In modern times, we even experience things which are of high speed. When some of the first me-

chanical passenger machines were built, some wondered what the effects of speed would have on the human body, but it was not until much later that machines finally went fast enough that true concern was warranted. Today, whether in a car, train, roller coaster or plane, most of us have a chance to find out just where our limit is on acceptable speed, as well. The point is, all our experiences shape who we choose to be and what we choose to do with our lives, but we often forget and/or never come to understand that these experiences are also spiritual.

As a child grows, they also learn what hurts and what is comforting in spiritual ways; but on a spiritual level people not only wane in their exuberance, they tend to ignore the fact our spirit exists altogether. This makes us, even before the death of our physical forms, a very lopsided, unwhole person. It even causes some ministers to teach that our spirit is dead, at least until we come to "salvation." However, this is untrue. The spirit is not where sin resides and it will not die, but it does get ignored greatly. Instead of using our mind to create a balance between listening to the spirit as well as the physical and then making choices which truly make sense, we simply allow the flesh and its instincts to determine our path. Now, we've already talked about the fact this happens, but the question is, why do we allow or even desire this to happen? Well, one of the base reasons is because, unlike God, we are not omnipresent. This is one of the most obvious details which shows us we are not God or gods in and of ourselves, but only made in His likeness.

Humans are encapsulated in time and space. All of our three parts have to exist together on one spot at one point in time. We have to use time in order to move to another spot. Now, it may seem like I'm trying to get all metaphysical on you, but just the opposite is true. Many religions, made up by people all around the globe, try to tell us we can live on a higher plane of existence. What they are often talking about is a way of existing without our bodies. Even so-called "science-fiction" writers, who believe in evolution, will portray the idea that when man "evolves" further, he will someday be more of an energy with no consistent physical form. All these ideas are based on man's hope he doesn't need what Jesus came and died to provide for us. With the devil's help, religions the world over (including evolution) try to tell us that having a body is primitive and a better way of life can be obtained by shedding it. They tell us we can learn

to exist in a form which does not have physical properties, per say. This is a perfect example of how the devil attempts to tell the truth but distorts the ending. We cannot simply convert into spirit. We are already spirit. We do need to, and will have to, shed these physical forms someday, but that doesn't mean we become some ghost which is no longer limited or restricted by time and/or space. When we lose our physical side, we will need something to replace it. Why can't God simply make us something entirely different? The answer is simple. Sin and its wages, which are death, have not really been overcome if the destruction of our bodies means a complete change in the composition of who we were created to be! (Rom. 6:23) Thus, Jesus' work was not to do away with the part of us which mirrors Him, but to provide new incorruptible forms so we can be whole again!

Now, the new forms are different from the ones we have now but not by much. We know this because Jesus demonstrated this new form for many days before He returned to The Father. (Acts 1:1-4) After His resurrection, Jesus is still touchable, and Jesus even eats food, which shows the new form has at least some compatibility with the physical we know now. When Christ returns to this planet, the Bible tells us the dead in Christ will rise from the dead. Then we which are alive and remain will not stay the same but be changed in the twinkling of an eye. (I Cor. 15:51-52) All those who are resurrected and changed will then have the new form Jesus died to provide, and they will live with Christ right here on this planet for over a thousand years. (Rev. 20) This can be done because, again, there is compatibility between the physical we know now and the new incorruptible forms we shall receive. However, part of the meaning of calling these new forms incorruptible is to say, like our spirit and mind the new form will not be mortal. It is not dependent on sustenance like the forms we have now. It will also not be vulnerable to the things which can harm or kill these current forms.

These new forms were purchased so those who desire to be with God can be made whole again, and ultimately go on to live eternally in a place Jesus is preparing for us. As we talked about before, this universe we live in now will be gone, and those who do not desire to be with God will not receive new forms. The two immortal parts of them will be cast into the place we call Hell. This will be great misery; and in an attempt to get us to understand this fact, the Bible uses

physical imagery to help us once again. The fact this is imagery is why hell is described as a lake of fire, (Rev. 20:15) while Jesus also talked about outer darkness, (Matt. 22:13) and there is even mention of a worm that never dies. (Mark 9:43-50) All these things have to do with the direct physical ideas we know about death which pertains to our flesh. We all understand what it means to be burned, but the greater point here is the fact fire destroys physical forms. Cremation is often used to dispose of bodies because it's the quickest way to return a body to dust. Darkness is an image of death because the grave is a place of utter darkness. One of the scariest nightmares for almost any human is the thought of being buried alive, and much of the horror has to do with the image of smothering darkness. Then there is the worm. Insects like worms are nature's common way of returning our bodies back to dust. So, what the Bible is really emphasizing by telling us these things is the fact hell is a place of utter destruction. It also emphasizes, there will be no replacement for our physical forms if hell is where we end up. If serving our fleshly desires is what is important to us, all that will disappear forever when we die. (Matt. 16:25)

You see, our physical bodies are not a prison, they are a part of who we are. Our mind needs our flesh and our spirit. So, when the Bible speaks to us about living in the spirit, it's not talking about an attempt at an "out of body experience," it's talking about allowing our spirit, which will go on into eternity, to have precedence in our lives over our flesh which will return to dust one day. What God asks us to trust in Him for is, He will make a way to overcome the fact we will, after death, be unwhole. Because only through God's work can we be given a new physical form which will not simply die again someday. This is one of the biggest differences between healing and receiving our ultimate healing. Lazarus was raised from the dead and so were others the Bible tells us, but those people are not walking amongst us today. Someday later, they died again. Sinful flesh is doomed to death. We can be healed of everything, including the ultimate failure of these physical forms; but we will simply start right down the path of deteriorating once again. This was true from the beginning of creation. The difference was, man had continuous access to a source of perfect healing and renewal. The fruit of the Tree of Life was more than just a food source! This is why God removed man from it after man sinned. (Gen. 3:22-24) Our flesh has to die. So the choice is clear. Leave this life without God and you will be miserable. Accept the

way God created us to live and find out what life can truly be! This has direct relationship to our discussion about holiness; but getting back to our point here, we need to understand we were created to put one foot in front of the other. This will not change in heaven, and to do this you have to have feet!

What this simply boils down to is, we are just what we believe we are at those times we look out into the night sky and think about how small we are in comparison to the universe. This is not meant to be discouraging, but it's a reality. There is a lot out there, but unless we develop the capability of actually going out there, we will not experience it. We cannot, through ceremony or practice, find a way to send our soul out of our body and explore the universe without our flesh. That is not how the spirit works. This is true even right here on good old planet earth. Again, we look at the baby who can only go places if someone takes him. Then one day, the child learns to roll, hold up its head, and crawl. These are big steps in a human's life, and the bigger step is when we learn to step, which is why we use the word "step" in the way I have in this sentence. The simple point I'm trying to make is that what we experience has a lot to do with our mobility. Mobility is something which is very physical so we tend to focus on it, and that is one of the biggest reasons we become so "fleshly minded."

This is one of the many ways we are different from God. God is omnipresent (meaning He is everywhere) but His presence is also capable of different - shall we say - "strengths." This is to say, God is everywhere (with the exception of that place He prepared for the devil and his angels) whether we are - for lack of a better term - conscious of it or not. However, God can - as we say - "draw closer" to us, which really has to do with God's presence strengthening in our lives. God can also "reveal" Himself to us. In Exodus, God came down in a "thick cloud." (Ex. 19:16) He was a pillar of cloud by day and a pillar of fire by night to Israel. (Ex. 13:21) In the book of Acts, The Holy Ghost's presence was seen in cloven tongues of fire which appeared on the heads of those who were baptized. (Acts 2:1-4) The Bible also shows us God can choose to walk with us in a very, one foot in front of the other way. We see this in the Garden of Eden, (Gen. 3:8) and in Abraham's life; (Gen. 18) but again, man's ultimate opportunity to be side by side with God came when The Word became flesh and dwelt among us. (John 1:14)

All this shows us God can come to us even though we are limited in our ability to move through time and space, and how strong and/or direct His presence is in our lives, is mostly up to us. What we must clearly understand is this is as true on a spiritual level as it is on a physical level. This is why Jesus told us He would not leave us comfortless, but He would ask The Father to send to us The Holy Ghost. Those who understood who Jesus was had become very accustomed to walking with God in a very direct, touchable way. Jesus was talking to those very people when He said I will not leave you comfortless. He was telling them that even though He had to go and prepare that place where we would ever be side by side with the direct presence of God, He did not want them to lose what they had gained by having Jesus right there in fleshly form. (John 14:15-21) This promise would also be for their children and their children's children and for as many generations as it took before Jesus returned. (Joel 2:21-32, Act 2) This is one of the reasons Jesus made the statement in Matthew 24:34 "This generation shall not pass, till all these things be fulfilled." Everybody living from that point until the time of Jesus' return would have an opportunity to have God directly in their life; and just as Jesus, at that time, only changed the world through His message, so too The Holy Ghost would work. This is why we are told, "...he who now letteth will let, until he be taken out of the way." II Thessalonians 2:7 The Holy Ghost is not here to take the next step in the process, that will be Jesus' responsibility when The Father decides the time is right for His return to this planet. (Matt. 24:35-39) Simply put, The Holy Ghost is here to continue the ministry Jesus began, and this should tell us something about the balance between spirit and flesh.

The Holy Ghost is here with us now, and the Bible tells us there is a baptism of The Holy Ghost. John the Baptist told those who followed his ministry that he baptized in water but there was One who was coming after him who would baptize us with The Holy Spirit and fire. (Matt. 3:11) John was, of course, talking about Jesus, and the fact He would give us the fulfillment of the promise that God would someday write the law in our hearts, by sending to us The Holy Ghost. (Jer. 31:33) What does the law have to do with it? Well, that question brings us squarely to our discussion about holiness!

The basis of everything is faith, and faith is a relationship with God. We cannot earn it or create it.

The door of faith has to be opened to us. This truth is why the Scripture tells us that to every man is given the measure of faith. (Rom. 12:3) Which means every human who has ever been born has, at the very least, had the opportunity to know God. That's pretty special, and that is why Eph. 2:8 does not say we are saved by faith but that we are saved by grace through faith, and even that is not of ourselves; it is the gift of God! It's because of God's grace that we are given a chance at a relationship with Him. So the question becomes, what do we want? Do we want a relationship with God or do we want only what we can find on our own in this life? If we believe God is what we want, then we must make the choice to seek Him. We must take hold of that measure of faith God has already granted us. That hand - so to speak - which God has already reached out to us. (Rom. 5:6-8) Then we must put forth effort to grow our relationship with God in much the same way any relationship takes effort to grow.

Now, God has put so much effort in on His side that without taking from us the free will He created us to have, there is nothing more He can do but wait for us to put forth effort on our side of things. This is where we get the old saying, "God can beat an elephant with a worm if He can get a wiggle out of the worm." God is literally waiting for us, and this is where the conversation about holiness begins! You see, we can talk about a desire to know God, but if in the end, we have no desire for holiness, then we will never truly see God. (Job 19:25-27, Heb. 12:14) The scripture uses the word "see" because, once again, it's using terms we can physically relate to. We can know God and even have a relationship with Him, but we will not continue to grow and maintain our relationship with God if we do not have a desire for holiness. This is because of the truth we talked about above. We cannot ascend to God. God must come to us. Through The Holy Ghost, God has even opened an opportunity for us to reach out and touch Him in a very personal and powerful way; but what stands in our way now is the simple truth there is one thing God can't do. God can not tolerate sin! Why? Because He is HOLY!

With this, we can wrap up our discussion about names. You see, The Holy Ghost is not called The Holy Ghost because holiness and The Holy Ghost are the same thing. He is called The Holy Ghost because He is more than just "a spirit" or "a ghost"; He is The Spirit part of God! The relationship between holiness and The Holy Ghost is that we can grow in holiness by

listening to The Holy Ghost. We are not perfect in our ways. We do not make perfect judgments, but if we will hear the voice of The Holy Ghost, we can avoid mistakes, because He can literally tell us what is the right thing to do in any given circumstance. The Spirit of God is already Holy, so He, of course, is the best teacher for our spirit to become holy! This is why The Holy Ghost, in relationship to us, is called The Comforter. Jesus told us to take up our cross and follow Him. (Matt. 16:24) He also told us not to worry when the world hates us for attempting to be what God wants us to be, because the world hated Him long before it hated us! (John 15:18) True believers will suffer in this world because this world is not righteous, and it certainly does not want to be holy. So, as this world vexes us for attempting to be righteous, which is connected to holiness, The Comforter is here to lead us through. Those who do want to be righteous are going to be at odds with this world on a constant basis, (James 4:4) and this is why The Father took Jesus from us. Jesus was not here to comfort our flesh. He came so we could afford to die. It does not matter what happens to our flesh, it's doomed already; and, in fact, the more we give it what it wants the more it takes us off course from what we need. Our spirit is the part which needs comforting, protection and training. Thus, The Father sent to us The Holy Ghost to comfort and train our spirit which will go on into eternity. The fact the spirit and mind will go on even for those who do not choose God, is why II Peter 2 tells us it would be better to never have known the truth than to know it and turn from it.

In our next segment we will talk about what holiness is. Until then, I pray you will ever find His guidance growing greater in your life, as you seek to stand your faith in the power of God!