

The Way of the Lord

37. Theological Hindrances to The LORDship of Jesus (Part 2)

We've recognized a sad reality over the years. Even people who've been freed from toxic memories and passive aggressive symptoms often face another hindrance to living in the LORDship of Jesus. That hindrance is the *religious system* they're part of. In fact, we firmly believe that the teachings of many denominations and sects *block* people from living in the Lordship of Jesus, and blaspheme the Spirit of God as well. This is no small matter, as Jesus warns: "*I tell you the truth, all the sins and blasphemies of men will be forgiven them. But whoever blasphemes against the Holy Spirit will never be forgiven; he is guilty of an eternal sin*" (Mark 3:28,29). This is an unmistakable warning from the LORD. Those who blaspheme the Holy Spirit *never* have forgiveness from the Father.

Do you know what blaspheming the Holy Spirit means? If you don't, you may be a blasphemer and not even know it. The word for blasphemy that's used in the original text means to *hurt God's reputation* or *discredit Him* through words or actions. When Jesus warned about blaspheming the Holy Spirit it was because the teachers of the law were accusing Him of using *Satan's* power rather than God's (Mark 3:30). That accusation was blasphemous because these religious leaders were *denying* the powerful work of the Holy Spirit through Jesus. In other words, by attributing the Holy Spirit's power to *Satan*, they were reviling *GOD Himself!*

Over the centuries throughout Christendom, the leaders of much of organized religion have *eliminated or minimized* key aspects of the Holy Spirit's ministry. So, how is that blasphemy? The Spirit of God is an eternal Person with the Father and the Son. *Jesus* sends the Holy Spirit to work *in* and *through* all those Who love and serve Jesus as their LORD: "*When the Counselor comes, whom I will send to you from the Father, the Spirit of truth who goes out from the Father, HE will testify about ME*" (John 15:26).

In our Hebraic Article, *The Gospel of the Covenant Is the Pilgrimage to Salvation*, we point out that the Father ratifies His Covenant in Christ with you by indwelling you with the Holy Spirit (2 Corinthians 1:21,22). Don't miss this essential distinction. *Only* when you're sealed with the Holy Spirit are you truly *owned* by Jesus. "*If anyone DOES NOT HAVE the Spirit of Christ, he DOES NOT BELONG to Christ*" (Romans 8:9). The Holy Spirit *IN* you is the sign that you *belong* to Jesus. Think of what that means to have the Spirit of GOD in you! You're *changed!* In the Book of Acts, when people received the Holy Spirit, miraculous things occurred to verify His presence in them (Acts 2:4; 4:31; 19:6). So don't you think you and those in your faith community would *confirm* the Spirit's presence in someone who claimed they were "Christian"?

For centuries, leaders of religious systems established man-made creeds and religious rituals so they could *dominate* the people in their denominational realm. By exercising their *own* power, they nullified the need to depend on the Holy Spirit. And in doing so, they diminished the biblical call to the LORDship of Jesus. If religious leaders aren't dependent on the Holy Spirit, they have no concern whether those in their congregations are filled with Him either.

When people live with spiritual power, it's because they're living with Jesus as LORD of *who they are* and *what they do*. And that LORDship in the lives of Jesus followers threatens religious leaders who enjoy being in control.

We need to anchor another key point about the Holy Spirit. In the Older Testament, the Spirit spoke to and through those who shared messages from God. And that same *Spirit of God* breathed out ALL of Scripture through the writers of the entire biblical text: “*ALL Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that the man of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work*” (2 Timothy 3:16,17). Religious leaders over the centuries *altered* God’s Word by *revising the clear understanding* of what God was saying in it. Through changing the meaning, they blasphemed the Spirit of God Who inspired the authors. And sadly, they deceived countless thousands of self-proclaimed Christians—people who see nothing wrong in living in ways that *bring down* the holy name and reputation of Jesus. Again, that’s blasphemy!

You might be in a faith community in which *parts* of the Bible are read or used for teaching each Sunday. But do you realize that *how* Scripture is presented may be giving you a “selectively altered” picture based on the religious leader’s perspective? What we mean is, have you ever considered what *isn’t* being taught, or what’s been subtly altered or eliminated? That’s why it’s so important that YOU be responsible to search out Scripture yourself! Religious leaders who avoid biblical teaching on the Holy Spirit are DISCREDITING Him—and that’s one definition of blasphemy.

Jesus made a promise that can’t be broken of how His followers would respond through His Spirit within them: “*Yes, indeed! I tell you that whoever trusts in Me will also DO the works I do! Indeed, he will do GREATER ones, because I am going to the Father*” (John 14:12). The only way we can *do the works* of Jesus is through His indwelling Spirit. If you *aren’t* doing the works of Jesus, then perhaps the Holy Spirit *isn’t* in you.

Or, maybe you’re in a religious system that denies or discredits the Holy Spirit as *not* working in Christ’s people today. Perhaps *they’re* influencing you to shun His power. The Holy Spirit testifies by works of power that *Jesus is God incarnate*. Are the denominations and religious leaders who deny or discredit the Holy Spirit actually enacting the spirit of *anti-christ*? (See 1John 2:18,22; 4:3; 2 John 1:7.) The apostle John warned that the anti-christ spirit was already at work even during his own lifetime. Is it any surprise that two thousand years later we’re seeing this blasphemy at work within so much of Christendom?

In our book *Restoring the Early Church* and in other writings, we cite how *revisionist theologians*, particularly those in Roman Catholicism, altered and eliminated the meaning of key parts of the Bible. (See also *Discussing How to Restore the Early Church*, Lesson 3: Hellenist Christianity in the US Today.) *REVISIONISM* restates historical truth and facts, manipulating them to fit a particular agenda or current cultural standards. As a result, what God considers important is altered or eliminated by denominational leaders. Revisionists eliminated the *clear understanding* of God’s Word that had been intended by the Bible’s writers. That way the religious system in authority could piece together different portions of scriptural text to justify *keeping themselves in power*.

Revisionists have so impacted faith practices through *religious systems* down through the ages! What a tragic difference from the *family* of interconnected, Spirit-empowered brothers and sisters in Christ our Lord intended. God sternly warns about altering or revising His Word: “*Do not ADD to what I command you and do not SUBTRACT from it, but KEEP the commands of the LORD your God that I give you*” (Deuteronomy 4:2; see also Revelation 22:18,19).

In our next segment we'll discuss certain key truths which Roman Catholicism in particular removed from God's Word. We'll also note how what was added *alongside the Bible* and given equal weight actually robbed God's people of walking in the LORDship of Jesus through His Spirit. We'll discuss what the Reformers did (and failed to do) when they had a chance to restore what God had intended in His Word.

We hope you're fully determined to walk in the LORDship of Jesus out of loving obedience to Him, and to live a life that's empowered by His Spirit!

For Further Study

- Book: *Restoring the Early Church*, Introduction—The Current Plight of the Church in the US
- Hebraic Article: *The Gospel of the Covenant Is the Pilgrimage to Salvation*
- Lifebyte 10: *The Book of Daniel* (Chapters 4-6)

Each is a free download on our website: <restorationministries.org>