

Grieving the Holy Spirit

Explaining Ephesians 4:30

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Once again, I have received an email that has sparked a sermon. It seems to be one of the best sources of sermons, I think. Somebody will have a question or they might make me upset to get my mind going.

This one was in the form of a question, but it was more of a castigating question. "How can you be so insensitive as to use 'it' in reference to the Holy Spirit? Didn't Jesus say in John 16:13 that when, 'He, the Spirit of Truth has come, He will guide you into all truth'? Shouldn't you give God the Spirit more respect?"

Obviously, this was a Trinitarian writing to me.

We receive a fair amount of email concerning the nature of God and almost entirely concerning the Holy Spirit and what part it plays in the Godhead.

We make no bones about it on the website. We do not believe that God is three-in-one, but rather a Family consisting now of God the Father, and His Son Jesus Christ; and also the God Family has the potential of containing billions of sons and daughters eventually. We tell them in the "About Us" section on all of our websites that we are non-Trinitarian. That wording, of course, sparks many questions, "What is non-Trinitarian?"

Christians of this world find this intriguing, exasperating, and incomprehensible since they have never been taught such a thing in their churches. Most of them have no idea that there could be a formation of the Godhead other than a trinity. The more ignorant of them think that from time immemorial, the church (and even Israel), believed that God has always been God the Father, God the Son, and God the Spirit. They accept without question what they have been taught.

So they then write to us. It is either with curiosity because they have never thought of it, or with condemnation. It is about fifty-fifty where they condemn us and tell us that we are a cult, or that we are going to hell, or to ask why we are preaching such blasphemy and masquerading as a church of God.

Now, we get this a lot from Pentecostals because they consider themselves the church of God. And we have the name church of God. They think that we are knifing them in the back, and giving them a bad name, giving Christ a bad name, and giving God a bad name.

So, to these latter, we are a cult teaching heretical doctrine; and they are going to straighten us out.

It is really funny, in a way. You get these lay people with hardly any education (it comes through their emails because of their misuse of the English language) who have the audacity to correct us with open vehemence and almost hatred. It is really sad to see. You can imagine a face and a finger pointing at you, saying, "You bad boys! Do you not know any better?"

If they took the time to look, they would see that John Ritenbaugh has been a minister since 1966, which is coming on 40 years; and the rest of us elders have a good amount of years behind us also. A couple of us have degrees in theology and many years as members of the church of God. They just never think that we might have thought this through and that we sincerely believe that God is not a trinity.

They do not. They come with all the fire of their belief and point the finger at us, and tell us, that we are wrong, and that we are going to go to hell, God will judge us, and various things like that.

Even though we write them back, and tell them very plainly, and show them admissions from their own scholars that the Bible contains no Trinity doctrine, Trinitarians believe (even after all of this) that they hold a few trump cards in their hand. And these are various "proof texts."

These verses, they say, prove that the Spirit has personality, and is, therefore, *hypostasis*. Remember that word? Remember Dr. Stavrinides and that very long, boring sermon that he gave about 15 years ago? He tried to explain the Holy Spirit, and "help" us to understand this concept of the Trinity through the term "hypostasis."

Contrary to Trinitarian thought, hypostasis does not mean "person." It does not mean "being." If you know anything about Greek, *hypo* means "low," "under," or "below." Some of you have hypoglycemia, meaning low blood sugar. *Stasis* means? It is really strange what *stasis* means? "sediment." The original use of the word is sediment! In fact, medically in ancient Greek, the word was used for excrement, both liquid and solid, because it is what flowed out as sediment from the body. Really strange!

But, what it came to mean, in general usage, is substance. So, this is an *under-substance*; or a substance below something else. So, it could mean *the basis*.

But, what it means in terms of philosophy is "the real essence of a thing, the true essence."

So, we get these definitions: True essence; transcendent, absolute, or intelligent reality (obviously that one has been added to, a little bit more than the basic meaning); real existence; it can mean plan or a purpose, because that is what one intends, that is what is underneath one's actions; an intention; a plan, a purpose.

But it does not mean person necessarily.

Now the Trinitarian conception of hypostasis was not influenced by the Bible at all. In fact, this idea of hypostasis having anything to do with a being came in with the neo-Platonic philosophy. That was after the time of the apostles.

Listen to this. This is *one* sentence of neo-Platonic philosophy that has to do with hypostasis. After you hear this you are going to understand why the Gnostics loved it so much. Just one sentence! Get your head around this. This is their definition of hypostasis:

While deriving from ultimate being, it also has ultimate being.

It is from this concept, then, that they developed the idea of the Holy Spirit. If you understand what they are saying, you put the words Holy Spirit in there instead of hypostasis:

The Holy Spirit derives from ultimate being?God?and therefore it is also ultimate being.

But it is totally philosophy. You will not find anything like that in the Bible. And so this is the understanding that eventually turned into the idea of the Holy Spirit as God.

But, you know what, in the Bible hypostasis is never once even remotely used for the Holy Spirit to describe it, or to rename it. The word, hypostasis, is used only five times in the Bible. Every time it is by the apostle Paul.

Twice it is used to modify the word "boasting." That is strange, is it not? Hypostasis boasting! But what it means, basically, is that he had a plan for why he boasted the way that he did. He had a purpose in boasting. So, when you come across that, I believe it is in II Corinthians 9, he is saying that he had a reason for boasting the way he did, because he was trying to get a point across, trying to get them to do something. So he had an intention, something underneath, that was supporting his boasting. And so it was hypostasis.

The three other times that Paul used it in the book of Hebrews. Twice it modifies or describes faith. "(Hebrews 11:1) "Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen." It is our confidence that there are things that we do not see but really do exist. The idea is that there is a real existence behind our faith. And that real existence is God Himself and so we can have faith.

That is the same way it is basically used in that same vein in Hebrews 3:14, where we can hold our confidence steadfast to the end because we have an understanding of God?s reality that makes our faith strong. And so he tells us to hold fast to that.

The fifth time it is used in direct relation to God the Father. That is in Hebrews 1:3.

Hebrews 1:3a Who being the brightness of His glory and the express image of His person?

Now it is translated person there but a Trinitarian translated this Bible.

If you look it up in a very good lexicon they will tell you, if they are honest, that the word means "essence," and that it should be translated essence. Christ is the very image of God?s essence. "Person" may come into there, because God because we know for sure He is a Person. Its underlying meaning, though, is that there is a reality there in God, and that reality has been matched, stamped upon, Jesus Christ. There is no difference there. They are the same. He is the express image of God the Father?s own reality.

So, here we have gone through the word hypostasis in the Bible, and there is nothing in it at all that talks about the Holy Spirit. That argument, then, is false.

Now, because they cannot rely on that, they have to fall back on a few tricks. These are these proof-texts that I mentioned a bit earlier.

Their argument, then, is basically that if the Bible describes the Holy Spirit in personal

terms?that is doing things that a person would do?then the Holy Spirit must be a personal being. Therefore, they can then use philosophy to say that the Holy Spirit is hypostasis.

They have to get around it somehow. So, they come at it from the point of description. If the Bible describes the Holy Spirit in any way doing any thing that a person could do, then the Holy Spirit must, therefore, be a person.

Now *Thayer*, if you know who he is, he has a lexicon of the Greek in the New Testament, and he comes right out and says on the word "pneuma"?spirit?that when it is described in terms of personhood, doing things that a person would do, that these terms are rhetorical uses of human traits. That means that the Bible is not calling the Holy Spirit a person. But, it is using rhetoric?figures of speech?in order to describe something to a human so that the human could understand. It is not necessarily saying that the Holy Spirit has these personal qualities.

This idea that a thing must be a person, if it is described in personal terms, is not even logical. We ascribe personal things to things that are inanimate. Does not your car run? Does not your computer "think?" Well, maybe that is a stretch. Mine certainly does not. We do this all the time. Like, your feet smell. That maybe true, but have you ever seen them smell. For some reason that was the only one that popped into my mind. It is called personification.

Even though this is not really logical, it convinces a majority of Christians that this is so; that if it is described in personal terms it must be a person. Any counter argument that the biblical writer employed either personification or anthropomorphism as a figure of speech is greeted with either derision or with cries of blasphemy.

Like the e-mailer said, "Why do we not give the Spirit more respect?"

What we are going to do today is we are going to focus on one of these proof-texts. And that one is Ephesians 4: 30 which says,

Ephesians 4: 30 And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God.

This is one of their "aces in the hole," because only people can grieve and that is the way that they look at it. And since they Holy Spirit can be grieved, then, therefore, it is a person.

I hope to explain first how this is not evidence that the Holy Spirit is a God being, and second, and more importantly, I would like to show Paul's teaching in this verse because if we just try to use it as a proof text, it is not going to do us much good because he had a real reason?a hypostasis, an underlying intent?for putting it this way.

Let us go ahead and read Ephesians 4, beginning with verse 25. It is vital that we understand this verse [Ephesians 4: 30] in context. Proof texts by definition are taken out of their contexts. They are one verse, or one sentence, or one phrase that is lifted from the surrounding material and used to prove a point.

Paul has just finished the doctrinal section of the book of Ephesians. If you will remember, he started out in chapter one talking about their redemption and all of the things that God has done for us from the foundation of the world, and then he went on to other things. He talks about grace in chapter 2. In chapter 3, he talked about the mystery that we have been given to understand. Then in chapter 4, as he began he is talking about our unity, and the gifts that have

been given to us by the Holy Spirit; and that we are supposed to go on to spiritual maturity using these gifts with the various helps that have been given in the church.

Then starting in verse 17 (of chapter 4) he begins to talk about the fact that we have been taken from an old way, and been given a new way. So he talks about the old man dying, and the new man being raised up in newness of life. There are responsibilities then, because we are a new creation, and that is where we come, then, to verse 25. He says:

Ephesians 4:25-32 Therefore [Therefore is a statement of conclusion. So he is saying, "in conclusion," or "because of what we have seen so far"], putting away lying, "Let each one of you speak truth with his neighbor," for we are members of one another. Be angry, and do not sin": do not let the sun go down on your wrath, nor give place to the devil. Let him who stole steal no longer, but rather let him labor, working with his hands what is good, that he may have something to give him who has need. Let no corrupt word proceed out of your mouth, but what is good for necessary edification, that it may impart grace to the hearers. And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, by whom you were sealed for the day of redemption. Let all bitterness, wrath, anger, clamor, and evil speaking be put away from you, with all malice. And be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, just as God in Christ forgave you.

Since he had just started talking about putting off the old man and putting on the new, as he said there in verse 24?in righteousness and true holiness?he starts immediately into various things that we can do, and we should be doing.

This, then, is a list of things that we should be putting off, getting rid of, or overcoming and things that we are supposed to be replacing them with.

If you would notice, he says to replace lying with telling the truth. It is very simple. He says that we are not supposed to steal any longer, but we are to work with our hands so that we have something to give.

We are supposed to quit speaking corrupt language, in corrupt ways, and we are supposed to replace it with language that builds up and that helps other people. And, we are to replace malice with kindness.

Now, not grieving the Holy Spirit comes right in the middle of these admonitions. You notice it does not say that we are to replace it with anything. It is just an admonition put in there as if Paul suddenly had a thought that this thing?this not grieving the Holy Spirit?would be helpful to understand, to add in at this point in his exhortation of the Ephesians.

Some say that not grieving the Holy Spirit has to do with corrupt communication because it is linked to it with the word "and."

That is what it came after, "Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth, but what is good for necessary edification" and then he says, "And do not grieve the Holy Spirit."

Others say that it belongs with verse 31 about getting rid of bitterness, wrath, anger, clamor, and evil speaking. There is evil speaking again.

But, it does not necessarily have to go with either.

To me, it seems more like an interjection that encompasses this idea of getting rid of the old man and putting on the new.

As Paul sets this out in the flow of Ephesians 4, grieving the Holy Spirit is something only God's begotten children can do. It does say back in the Old Testament that His Holy Spirit was grieved by the Israelites. But there is an important thing to understand, and that is that He was working with the Israelites at the time. They were the ones who had made the covenant with Him, and so it was possible, by Him giving them commands and them not doing those commands, that it would grieve His Holy Spirit.

And so, unconverted people could, at one point, grieve God's Holy Spirit. But under the New Covenant the only ones necessarily that can grieve God's Holy Spirit are those have made the covenant with Him?who have His Spirit.

I know this because that is what it talks about in verses 17 through 19.

Ephesians 4:17-19 This I say, therefore, and testify in the Lord, that you should no longer walk as the rest of the Gentiles walk, in the futility of their mind, having their understanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God, because of the ignorance that is in them, because of the blindness of their heart; who, being past feeling, have given themselves over to lewdness, to work all uncleanness with greediness.

He says something very similar there in Romans 1, that God has given them over to a reprobate mind. He is not working with them now. In a way you could say that He is letting them do what they want for the time being. He will work with them later.

So right now they are not grieving His Holy Spirit because he expects it of them. They cannot do any better because they are alienated from Him and their alienation and their hostility is going to make them break His commandments, do things that are wrong, things that are totally futile, and vain.

And so the grieving of God's Holy Spirit is focused on those who have access to that Holy Spirit, and who, in one sense, matter most to God.

Right now, only we can really grieve God's Spirit. We are the ones who are putting on the new man. We are the ones in whom Christ is living. Our bodies then have been made temples of God's Spirit. We are the ones who are the new creation. We are the ones who are putting on righteousness and true holiness. We are the ones that can disappoint God.

Now that we understand the background, I want to pick this verse apart piece by piece.

The first area we need to probe is the structure of this sentence. It would be good to write this down to get the literal syntax of this sentence in Greek. I am not going to give you the Greek,

but I am going to give you the literal English translation of the Greek.

This might sound weird because it is not in English syntax. It goes like this:

Ephesians 4:30 And not grieve the Spirit, the Holy, of the God, in which you are sealed unto a day of redemption.

I am going to skip over the words, "not grieve" at this point and we will start with "the Spirit, the Holy of God" because this is very important. It is used only here in this verse: "The Spirit, the Holy of the God"

It is used, "The Spirit, the Holy" only one other place, without "of the God," and that is in I Thessalonians 4:8. But that is not important right now.

The Spirit, the Holy of the God is a unique construction to say the least. And because of its uniqueness, it is pointing out something very important to us. However, Trinitarian translators have glossed over this by calling it the Holy Spirit of God. But it is much more than that. It has a very distinctive meaning.

If you want to translate it into a more understandable English, it would be like this: "The Spirit, the Holy one of God." That is better because it indicates more precisely that the Spirit is Holy, not because of itself, but because it is God's. The Spirit is that Holy one, that Holy Spirit of God. It is God who gives it its holiness because God is holy.

By this construction Paul is not saying that we grieve some third member of a trinity, but that we grieve God Himself in His Spirit. "Do not grieve the Spirit, that Holy Spirit of God."

Think of this in your own life. Has someone ever said something that deflates your spirit? God's Spirit is so much greater than ours, but we have a spirit too. There is a spirit in man. It is what gives us mind and intelligence. It is what gives us the ability to speak and to plan, to learn, to grow, to have communication with God's Spirit. It is that same kind of spirit that is like God's in that sense that we are able to have a relationship with Him.

Let us just say that you were having a wonderful day. Everything was going well. You were whistling as you were doing your work, all the pieces of your day had fallen into right into place, you have been able to accomplish so much. You were on top of the world, and then someone calls you up on the phone and tells you that a long lost friend has died.

Immediately, it grieves your spirit. Instead of being up on top of the world in joy, lifting up your head, not a care in the world, suddenly your spirit has crumpled, and you feel badly. You want to cry; and all the things that you had done that day that were so wonderful just a minute before now seem kind of worthless. Your spirit has been grieved.

We could say if we were the apostle Paul writing about your situation, "Do not grieve your spirit" or "let us pull somebody out of the crowd, Beth?" "Do not grieve her spirit, the joyful spirit of Beth."

Do you understand what I am getting at?

Do not grieve God's Spirit, that joyful Spirit of God's. That is the sense of it. It is not

necessarily saying that there is a third member that is grieved, but it is saying that God Himself has been grieved by something that we do.

It is an unusual way to say something in English, and it is similarly unusual in biblical Greek. Like I said, this happens only once in the whole Bible. It is emphatic and very descriptive. Paul wants us to be tugged at our heartstrings and make this personal. When we do things badly, it is going to grieve that Holy Spirit of God.

We should not be giving any dishonor to that Spirit which is so holy?God?s own.

It tends to heighten the seriousness of our sins that give God grief, and that is why Paul stuck it in here. He is going through all these sins, particularly he talks about lying (9th Commandment), wrath (6th Commandment), stealing (8th Commandment), corrupt communication (9th Commandment again); and of course, he talks about other things from the 6th commandment again, bitterness, wrath, anger, etc.

He is telling us that these sins, these things that we do that break God?s commandments, even these ones that do not seem quite as important, they come at the end of the list, "Who cares if you tell a little ?white lie??" Paul is saying, "Oh NO! When we do these things, we grieve God?s very Spirit! He is hurt by our sins! As little as we think they are, to Him they are big, because He is Holy! He cannot bear to look upon sin in any of its forms!"

Even though we may think it is a little thing, to Him it is grievous. It is very serious. We have got to put these things off and put on the right things so that we do not make our God have sorrow. We want Him to be happy and joyful, and proud of our conduct. "This is My son in whom I am well pleased." We want Him to say that about us. We do not want Him to say, "Man this kid of mine constantly frustrates Me! He cannot get it through his thick skull that lying, anger, stealing, etc. are wrong. I will not have them in My kingdom!"

So, do we make Him joyful, or do we grieve Him?

That is why Paul constructed this the way he did. He wants it to hit us right between the eyes! "Do you know what your sins do to the Father? So, therefore, do not do these things!"

Another part of the construction of this verse is, as it is in my New King James, it says, "by whom you are sealed."

Other translations will say, "in whom." The literal says, as I gave it to you, "in which." That is the best, I think.

The nasty little secret here is that the Greek words that are translated "in which" are "en hoo." These do not refer to a person, necessarily. "En" which is a preposition, means "in." And, "hoo" is a relative pronoun that can be translated "who, whom, which, or what." It all depends on the words around it, especially what it is referring to.

What does it refer to here? The word Spirit. Do you know what Spirit is? It is not masculine and it is not feminine, but it is neuter in Greek. To give it a personal translation like "who or whom" does damage to the actual wording.

It should be "in which" to make it better.

Now that I have said that, there is something very intriguing about this "en hoo." The intriguing thing about this phrase is that in Mark 2: 19, Luke 5: 34, and John 5: 7, "en hoo" is translated "while." It is a particular construction that has a sense of time, like "during which," or "while." Or, "as long as."

It fits here in Ephesians 4: 30. It says, if we read it that way, "And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, while you are sealed for the day of redemption."

As long as you are sealed do not grieve God's Spirit! For the duration of the time you are sealed do not grieve God's Holy Spirit!

Why did they use "in whom"? Because they were blinded by their own Trinitarian belief. They wanted to make sure that we believed that the Holy Spirit was a person, and so this construction was ignored.

Paul already told them in Ephesians 1: 13-14 that the Holy Spirit had sealed them and had been given to them as a guarantee, or down payment?an earnest of their salvation or their redemption. So, this reference to duration under that seal makes sense. He does not need to tell them again that they had been sealed by the Holy Spirit. He is more interested in letting them know that they are in a period of time in which they *are* sealed by the Holy Spirit, and that they should refrain from grieving God's Spirit during that time.

It makes more sense to me than saying "in which you were sealed" because they already knew that from Ephesians 1: 13-14.

So, what it does is remind them and therefore us, that God's Spirit is with us all the time, and will be with us until we are redeemed. Then we will be changed, and we will be spirit. But up until that time we need to be careful that we do not grieve God's Holy Spirit, because it could lead to something much worse if we keep it up.

What he is saying here is that this sealing by the Holy Spirit is not just given to us when we are justified, but it continues with us throughout the whole of our Christian lives. Through our whole period of sanctification we are sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise. It sets us apart. It marks us as one of God's children. On top of that, it aids us in fulfilling all that we need to do to come to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ, which is mentioned just a bit earlier in Ephesians 4: 13.

He is telling us here that we do not want to do anything that is going to endanger our relationship with God through the Spirit because that Spirit has been with us from the beginning and it is going to continue to be with us all the way to the day of redemption. We do not want anything to sully that bond, to spoil that relationship.

The translators, in many cases, have fiddled with the tense of the verb "are sealed."

Remember that is what I gave you as the literal translation. Many other Bibles use "were sealed" especially modern translations. The King James uses "are sealed" and it is the better translation. This is one of those tricky verb tenses in Greek. It is the passive aorist indicative. I know that means absolutely nothing to most of you. There is no definitive answer to this as the aorist is so difficult that the scholars themselves cannot agree about how it should be rendered.

Sometimes it is simple past tense. Sometimes it could mean something that happened in the past, but continues in the present, and is going to continue in the future. That seems to me to be the way that we are talking about here about the word sealed.

Yes, we were sealed. But, we are still under the seal and he mentions right here in this verse that we will be sealed all the way to the day of redemption.

It seems better to me to translate it "are sealed" rather than "were sealed." Yes, it was something that was done in the past, but it is still continuing on and will continue on.

It works better for me to say are sealed, rather than were sealed. It makes it more present, and that is what Paul was getting at. It is their present conduct that could, in some cases, actually go to the point of severing their relationship from God. And he did not want it to start. So he was saying, "do not grieve the Holy Spirit in you present actions, put those bad things off, and put on something new to strengthen that relationship rather than to cause it to frazzle. That is what he is getting at there. I think the "are sealed" is better.

What is that sealing by the Holy Spirit?

It is literally a mark or sign that validates ownership or origin. In old times when they sealed a letter, it told the receiver 1) who had sent it, and 2) it also validated that it had not been tampered with.

Romans 8:14 For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, these are sons of God.

The Holy Spirit is the seal that we should recognize among ourselves, others should recognize, the demons certainly recognize it, and God certainly recognizes it, that through the Spirit we are His.

So, the Holy Spirit in us identifies us, then, as God's children. It identifies that God is the source of our beliefs and it identifies, to those who are aware, of where you are headed as well.

In Ephesians 1:14, which I have mentioned already, it also says that this seal guarantees our inheritance just as a down payment or an earnest is a good faith pledge of one's intention to buy a house. So, when God gives us the seal of the Spirit, He gives us a pledge that our inheritance is there; and He is going to do whatever it takes to get us there, and then the rest is up to us.

He, in good faith as one half of the covenant, is going to do the best of His ability?which is perfect?to get us to where we need to be. We are part of this covenant as well, the recipients of all these blessings and promises, and it is up to us to fulfill our part in the covenant.

The Spirit, then, is God's pledge to us that He will do all that He possibly can to bring us to the Kingdom of God. The rest is up to us.

I have gone all this way and I have not really defined the word "grieve," which is what I probably should have done in the first place. It is just a simple word and it means exactly what you think that it means. It is the Greek word, "lupeo" and it means "to distress; to vex; to make

sad; to cause sorrow or grief." That is exactly what happens to you if you hear that someone close to you has died, or on the other hand, it could also be the emotion you have when something does not go right that you expected to go right. It causes you vexation and frustration. You are kind of put out about what has gone on.

One other thing on this: It can refer to the pain of unjust suffering as well. That is certainly what happens with God. When we do something wrong, we are causing God unjust suffering. He did not deserve the sins that we do causing Him pain. He cares for us. He cares about us. He loves us. He wants everything to come out perfectly in our lives. But, when we do something and it endangers us and our potential, He gets upset. He has feelings. He wants us to have everything good. But, we often shoot ourselves in the foot and that causes Him pain. He is vexed, He is frustrated, and He is sad.

I think we have sufficiently dissected this verse. There is enough evidence to see, just from what we have gone through here, that there is no evidence to prove that the Holy Spirit is a person in this verse, or a member of a supposed trinity. In fact, it shows that if you properly translate this, the Spirit is something that God possesses just as we possess a spirit. And just as we can be grieved by others doing us wrong, God can be grieved when we do something against Him. Basically, that is all that it means.

But, there is a great deal of sentiment there that Paul put into the construction of it to make it hit us in the heart. And that is why that he did it this way.

There are a few similar verses in the Bible that we need to mention just so that we understand that this was not just pulled out of thin air by Paul. Going over these will give us a little better grasp on this subject.

If you go back to Isaiah 63, we will see the place where most scholars believe Paul pulled this from. Verse 10 is talking about Israel and God's relationship with them. Most of us understand the relationship between Israel and God enough to understand:

Isaiah 63:10 But they [Israel] rebelled and grieved His Holy Spirit; so He turned Himself against them as an enemy, and He fought against them.

Like I said earlier, because God had a covenant relationship with them, He was working with them and therefore they could grieve His Holy Spirit.

Now, by their rebellions against God's commands, Israel always grieved God's Spirit. They rarely did anything that made Him proud to be their Father. They were always disappointing Him time and time and time again. This is a type of summary statement. They rebelled and grieved His Holy Spirit.

Does this prove that there is a Trinity in the Old Testament? No, because you know and I know that the one that they are talking about here is the Lord YHWH or YHVH the Tetragrammaton, as the Greeks like to say.

It is very obvious here from verse 7 onward that Isaiah is talking about the Lord. It says, "I will

mention the lovingkindness of the Lord, and the praises of the Lord, according to all that the Lord has bestowed on us." By the time that he gets down to verse 10, he is still talking about the Lord, but he says that Israel grieved His Holy Spirit. It is very similar in construction to what Paul used.

So, it is the Lord who turned Himself away from them. It is the Lord who brought Assyria on them, and allowed them to fall to Assyria

In the same way, when we fail to do as God commands and reject the prodding of God's Spirit within us, we similarly grieve God. It is the same thing. Paul was just leaning on his knowledge of the Old Testament and inserting the same thought into the New Testament.

It is the same thing happening because we are the ones in that are in this covenant with God and He is going to be looking at our actions and either we are going to be rebelling and grieving Him, or on the other hand, we are going to be obeying and pleasing Him.

So, in the same way, Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, today, and forever. It is the very same thing.

On to Acts 7. This is at the end of Stephen's speech to the Sanhedrin. Probably the thing that ended up getting him killed.

Acts 7:51 [Stephen says], You stiffnecked and uncircumcised in heart and ears! You always resist the Holy Spirit; as your fathers did, so do you.

I am sure that hit them between the eyes! Here these Pharisees and Sadducees felt that they were upholding God's way of life, they were pillars of the community, they were keeping the law, and Stephen tells them that they were doing exactly the same thing that their fathers did in the wilderness, and all the way up through the time of the exile. This time, though, he uses the word "resist." This is the same thing as grieving the Holy Spirit except the shoe is on the other foot, so to speak. It is not God's reaction, but it is the thing that causes God's reaction that he is talking about here. It is very much like Isaiah 63:10 where he said "they rebelled" and that caused God's grief. This is their resistance and that causes God to act a certain way, which is not said in this particular verse.

It is intriguing to think that Saul, who became Paul, heard Stephen say this and it stuck in his head. Because, if you will remember, they laid their clothes at the feet of a young man named Saul (verse 58), and it says in chapter 8:1 that Saul was consenting to Stephen's death.

I wonder if this stuck in his head, and when he was called, it really made an impression on him. I would not doubt it. He knew it was a "got ya." And, that is how he uses it in Ephesians 4 as well.

Back to Acts 5. This is the episode of Ananias and Sapphira. You know what they did. They sold a possession but they kept back a certain part of it and did not tell anybody.

Acts 5:3-4, 9 But Peter said, "Ananias, why has Satan filled your heart

to lie to the Holy Spirit and keep back part of the price of the land for yourself? While it remained, was it not your own? And after it was sold, was it not in your own control? Why have you conceived this thing in your heart? You have not lied to men but to God? Then Peter said to her, "How is it that you have agreed together to test [tempt] the Spirit of the Lord? Look, the feet of those who have buried your husband are at the door, and they will carry you out.

They lied and they tested?tempted?the Holy Spirit. If you notice that when we went through verses 3 and 4, Peter first said that you lied to the Holy Spirit, but then at the end of verse 4, he says that you have not lied to men, but you have lied to God.

This is the very same thing that he is talking about there in Ephesians 4: 30, except he uses a different way of looking at it. It is God's Spirit. It is not a separate member of a trinity. When you lie to God's Spirit?His mind, His essence, His power?you lie to God.

That is all it is. It is as simple as that. Then, when you get to verse 9, and we are talking about tempting or testing God, notice that it says, "to the Spirit of the Lord." It is the same thing again. It is the Spirit that is possessed by the Lord. It is God's Spirit, the Lord's Spirit, the Spirit of Jesus, the Spirit of the Father. They are one. It is the very same thing.

This should have struck Ananias and Sapphira because this is the exact same thing Israel did. If you go back to Psalm 78, it is talking about Israel testing or tempting God in the wilderness. Peter is saying that, "you picked up right where they left off. What you are trying to do is get a reaction out of God! You may not look at it that way, but that is basically what you are doing. You have done a sin, and you want to see if God is going to notice."

Of course He notices! Do not tempt Him to strike you down!

What did He do? He struck them down!

This was a very early object lesson to the Church. God is not going to let your sins slide. There is a penalty for sin. Just because there is grace does not mean that there is not a penalty for sin anymore. Sometimes God allows it to go for years before the penalty comes, but sometimes to make a point, He smacks us down. You are not going to get away with sin. God does not change. He is the same yesterday, today, and forever.

He functions in the same way under the Old Covenant as under the New Covenant. Just a few ground rules have changed. Sin is still sin. We better be careful that we do not grieve His Holy Spirit and cause Him to react, because He may just react.

Let us go to I Thessalonians 5:19. We are getting worse here, if you have not noticed. We are going along the spectrum of things that lead to a severing of the relationship. I just want to pick out this one verse here. Paul says very succinctly:

I Thessalonians 5:19 Do not quench the Spirit.

Think of this in physical terms. What do we do when we quench our thirst? We suppress it. We give ourselves a long gulp of water and it suppresses our thirst. We say that we quench it.

When we quench a fire, what do we do? We smother it with water and that puts it out.

When we quench the Spirit, we do the exact same thing. We suppress it, we smother it, we stifle it. We keep it from acting.

Did you know that you had that power? You do!

It is another way of saying that we either resist it or ignore it. This one is a little bit more active. You can ignore something without doing much. But quenching the Spirit is more active. It is something that we do deliberately. We purposefully resist the urgings and proddings of God's Spirit. We do not allow it to work within us because we have our own plans. We have our own goals. And so, we stifle God's Spirit, we put it down. We reject the things that it prompts us to do. Then our own spirit takes dominance. Pretty soon, we are not able to hear or feel those proddings any more. Over time it can go out.

Turn to Hebrews 10. This is the worst one of all.

I could have gone to Mark where it talks about blaspheming the Spirit, which Jesus says will not be pardoned.

Hebrews 10:26-31 For if we sin willfully after we have received the knowledge of the truth, there no longer remains a sacrifice for sins, but a certain fearful expectation of judgment, and fiery indignation which will devour the adversaries. Anyone who has rejected Moses' law dies without mercy on the testimony of two or three witnesses. Of how much worse punishment, do you suppose, will he be thought worthy who has trampled the Son of God underfoot, counted the blood of the covenant by which he was sanctified a common thing, and insulted the Spirit of grace? For we know Him who said, "Vengeance is Mine, I will repay," says the Lord. And again, "The Lord will judge His people." It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God.

This is the far end of things, when we have taken the grieving, the quenching, and the resisting of the Holy Spirit to its ultimate conclusion. Here Paul says that if we willfully return to the practice of sin, there is no *second* justification for us. Christ died once for our sins. He cannot be sacrificed for our sins a second time. To try to do that puts the blood that He shed to an open shame. It is counted as a common thing? just like anybody else's blood. As though Christ's sacrifice was no better than any other man's death.

He says, "Do you not know that that is going to stir up God's wrath more than anything that you could do? To treat it so commonly that you ask for His blood to be shed again for you, like you were more important than He?"

If we do this, we gravely offend God who is the Spirit of grace. He was so good, so loving, and kind to give us grace in the first place, and we turn around and spit in His face at that grace. And then have the audacity to ask for it again. That is what he is talking about here.

This is the unpardonable sin, what Jesus elsewhere calls blaspheming the Holy Spirit. Counting

the blood of that sacrifice, holy blood by which we have been sanctified, as normal ordinary blood. Christ's sacrifice had no value is what we say if we do such a thing.

That is why Paul says, "do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God." What he is saying is, "Do not even start on that road. Let us get rid of the old man, let us put on the new man, because we do not even want to think of doing that to God." We do not want it to even cross our mind to do anything that would cause God any bit of either frustration or sadness. We want to do things that will please Him and make Him proud of us as His sons and daughters.

Let us finish in Galatians 5:

Galatians 5:24-25 And those who are Christ's have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires. If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit.

Since we have put off the old man, buried him in a watery grave, let us not grieve God's Holy Spirit, but walk in His Spirit, and live in His Spirit.