

The Personality of the Holy Spirit

Introduction:

The doctrine of the Holy Spirit is a subject of much confusion and controversy in Christendom today. A general ignorance concerning the third Person of the Holy Trinity has led to a number of extremes and errors, most notably evident in the so-called “Charismatic Movement.”

Three problem areas connected with the doctrine of the Holy Spirit are:

Holy Spirit Baptism.

The “Pentecost Birthday” of the “The Church.”

Spiritual Gifts.

Another serious though not so prevalent error has to do with the personality of the Holy Spirit. Anti-Trinitarian cults such as the Jehovah’s Witnesses teach the He is an “Impersonal force”, rather than the Third Person of the Godhead.

To the casual reader of the Bible, the Holy Spirit at times may seem to be just an impersonal influence of grace and power. This is because the work of the Spirit is unseen (John 3:8) and unheralded (John 16:13.) In addition, some of the Biblical symbols of the Holy Spirit (e.g. “Breath” — Job 33:4; John 20:22; “Water” — John 7:38, 39; “Oil” — I Samuel 16:13) are impersonal. It should be noted however, the Bible also uses impersonal symbols for both the Father (e.g. Psalm 18:2) and the Son (e.g. I Peter 2:6-8).

I. His Personality is implied Through His Names and Titles

The Bible uses many personal Names and titles for the Holy Spirit.

A. Names Which are Self-Descriptive.

1. Spirit

I Corinthians 2:10

The Greek word “pneuma” which is translated “Spirit” in our English Bible means “breath”. The connotation is really that of “life” — in both the creative sense of everlasting existence (Genesis 2:7; Job 33:4) and in the spiritual sense of eternal life (John 20:22).

2. Holy Spirit

Luke 11:13

3. Holy Ghost

Matthew 28:19

The Word “Ghost” has a definite personal implication.

4. Eternal Spirit

Hebrews 9:14

B. Names Which Show the Relationship to God the Father.

1. The Spirit of God — I Corinthians 3:16

2. The Spirit of the LORD — Isaiah 11:2

3. The Spirit of the Lord GOD — Isaiah 61:1

4. The Spirit of the Living God — II Corinthians 3:3

The Personality of the Holy Spirit

- C. Names Which Show His Relationship to Jesus Christ
 1. The Spirit of Christ — Romans 8:9; I Peter 1:11
 2. The Spirit of His Son — Galatians 4:6
 3. The Spirit of Jesus Christ — Philippians 1:19
- D. Names Which Show His Relationship to Men.
 1. Spirit of Burning — Isaiah 4:4
 2. Holy Spirit of Promise — Ephesians 1:13
 3. Spirit of Truth — John 14:17; 15:26; 16:13; I John 5:6
 4. Spirit of Life — Romans 8:2
 5. Spirit of Grace — Hebrews 10:29
 6. Spirit of Glory — I Peter 4:13, 14
 7. The Comforter — John 14:26; 16:7

Note: the Holy Spirit associates Himself with men in their deliberations — Acts 15:28.

II. His Personality is Seen Through the Use of Personal Pronouns

The Holy Spirit is not an “it!” — a mere influence or impersonal force. The use of personal pronouns in relation to Him demonstrates this to be the case.

- A. John 14:16, 17, 26
Note the “He” and “Him”
- B. John 16:7, 8, 13, 14
Note the “He,” “Him,” and “Himself.”

Note: A question is often raised concerning Romans 8:16, 26, where the phrase, “... Spirit itself...” is used.

To this we would submit:

1. The context of verse 26 and 27 forbid any thought of impersonal Holy Spirit.
2. The use of the neuter pronoun “it” is grammatically correct when speaking in the third person. e.g. A doctor speaking to a parent: “The child itself is not well.”
3. Note the use of the impersonal “which” for God in Psalm 106:21 and I Thessalonians 2:4.

III. His Personality is Shown Because He Possesses the Marks of Personality

- A. Knowledge — I Corinthians 2:11
- B. Will — I Corinthians 12:11
- C. Mind — Romans 8:27
- D. Love — Romans 15:30
- E. Goodness — Nehemiah 9:20

IV. His Personality is Shown Because His Acts Are Those of a Person.

- A. He Teaches — Luke 12:12; John 14:26
- B. He Convicts — John 16:8
- C. He Gives Utterance — Acts 2:4
- D. He Commands — Acts 8:29
- E. He Forbids — Acts 16:6-7
- F. He Helps — Romans 8:26-27
- G. He Searches — I Corinthians 2:10-11
- H. He Speaks — Revelation 2:7

The Personality of the Holy Spirit

- I. He Leads and Guides. — Romans 8:14
- J. He Calls and Commissions. — Acts 13:2; 20:28
- V. His Personality is Implied Because He is Affected Like a Person.
 - A. He May be Blasphemed. — Matthew 12:31
 - B. He May be Lied to. — Acts 5:3
 - C. He May be Resisted. — Acts 7:51
 - D. He May be Grieved. — Ephesians 4:30
 - E. He May be Quenched. — I Thessalonians 5:19
 - F. He May be Vexed. — Isaiah 63:10
 - G. He May be Tempted. — Acts 5:9
- VI. His Personality is Implied Because He is Identified with the Father and the Son
 - A. In the Great Commission — Matthew 28:19
 - B. In the Apostolic Benediction. — II Corinthians 13:14
- VII. His Personality is Demonstrated Because He is Distinguished From God's Power and Influence
 - A. The Holy Spirit and God's Power Distinguished.
Luke 1:35; 4:14; Acts 10:38; Romans 15:13, 19; I Corinthians 2:4
 - B. The Holy Spirit and Divine Influence Distinguished.
Romans 8:26; I Corinthians 12:4, 8, 11

If He is only a FORCE — I want Him. (Acts 8:18-20)
If He is a PERSON — He wants me!