

THE HOLY SPIRIT

“God the Holy Spirit”

Introduction-

Much ink and blood has been spilled in the debate over the validity of the Trinity as a Biblical doctrine. I do not intend to set the debate at rest in one hour's time. But I do hope to bring some clarity to the subject. This message is entitled “God the Holy Spirit”, the first in a series entitled “The Holy Spirit: His Character and Qualities Examined Through Biblical Symbolism.” In order to proceed in this series, it is necessary for us to be clear as to who the Holy Spirit is. Various systems of theology have him defined from just another name for God the Father to a mere impersonal force through which God works. We need to examine these claims as well as the truth the Scripture presents about the Holy Spirit.

With regard to the Trinity, I do not regard myself an expert. If I had to define the history of my theology, I would have to say that I moved from Ignorance to Unitarianism to Trinitarianism. But even Trinitarians have a hard time agreeing on all the particulars of what constitutes orthodoxy. If some of the concepts in this message or this series seem heretical to the listener, forgive me. It is not my intent to offend. I ask only that you “search the Scriptures to see if these things are so.” (Acts 17:11) As I have said, I do not pretend nor intend to know or understand it all. The Godhead is an awesome and mysterious thing.

1 Tim 3:16

Beyond all question, the mystery of godliness is great: He appeared in a body, was vindicated by the Spirit, was seen by angels, was preached among the nations, was believed on in the world, was taken up in glory. NIV

Jer 2:19

Your wickedness will punish you; your backsliding will rebuke you. Consider then and realize how evil and bitter it is for you when you forsake the LORD your God and have no awe of me," declares the Lord, the LORD Almighty. NIV

Exact Identity-

Rom 1:20

For since the creation of the world God's invisible qualities-his eternal power and divine nature-have been clearly seen, being understood from what has been made, so that men are without excuse. NIV

*God speaks to us through the creation. This is the whole crux of symbolism. “A symbol [in Scripture] . . . is designed to represent certain characteristics or qualities in that which it represents. To be interpreted, it requires a pointing out of the characteristics, qualities, marks or features **common** to both the symbol and that which it symbolizes.”¹ This is what this series is all about. We are going to examine what the Holy Spirit wants us to understand about Him when he calls himself a river, or a dove, or an eagle, or a cloud, or oil.*

¹ Kevin Connor, *Interpreting the Symbols and Types*, BT Publishing, Portland, OR, 1992, p. 85

But symbolism is an outgrowth of the creation speaking about God. The whole creation gives evidence of God. And the deeper science looks, the more complex and weighty the evidence gets. Now, I'll admit that the simplistic definition of the Trinity sounds illogical: three Persons, individual, yet unified, each God, but not three gods. How could this be?

*Suppose you had two oxygen atoms, each at the same temperature and pressure in the same quantum state. Can these two atoms be distinguished? No, from the quantum mechanics point of view, **they are the same atom**. In other words, if you interchanged them physically, the universe is unchanged. Without this exact identity, there would be no stability of matter and keeping track of chemical reactions would be impossible!² So we see that even on an atomic scale, two things (or three) can be one. Why do we think this thing impossible with God?*

Father, Son, and Spirit Are the Same-

1. Same in essence:

a. Spirit

i. Father

John 4:24 “**God is spirit**, and his worshipers must worship in spirit and in truth.” NIV

ii. Son

Acts 2:36

"Therefore let all Israel be assured of this: **God has made this Jesus**, whom you crucified, both **Lord** and Christ." NIV

2 Cor 3:17

Now the **Lord is the Spirit**, and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom. NIV

iii. Spirit

Rom 8:16 “**The Spirit himself** testifies with our spirit that we are God's children.” NIV

b. Word

i. Father

John 1:1 NIV

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the **Word was God**.

ii. Son

John 1:14

The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the One and Only, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth. NIV

iii. Spirit

John 6:63

The Spirit gives life; the flesh counts for nothing. **The words** I have spoken to you **are spirit** and they are life. NIV

² Frank J. Tipler, *The Physics of Immortality*, Doubleday, New York, NY, 1994, p. 230

2. Same in attributes:

a. Eternal

i. Father

Ps 90:2

Before the mountains were born or you brought forth the earth and the world, **from everlasting to everlasting you are God.** NIV

Isa 9:6

For to us a child is born, to us a son is given, and the government will be on his shoulders. And he will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, **Everlasting Father,** Prince of Peace. NIV

ii. Son

Isa 9:6

For to us a child is born, to us a son is given, and the government will be on his shoulders. And he will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, **Everlasting Father,** Prince of Peace. NIV

Rev 22:13

I am the Alpha and the Omega, the First and the Last, the Beginning and the End. NIV

Heb 13:8 “Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever.” NIV

iii. Spirit

Heb 9:14

How much more, then, will the blood of Christ, who through the **eternal Spirit** offered himself unblemished to God, cleanse our consciences from acts that lead to death, so that we may serve the living God! NIV

b. Omniscient

i. Father

Ps 147:5 “Great is our Lord and mighty in power; **his understanding has no limit.**” NIV

1 John 3:20

whenever our hearts condemn us. For God is greater than our hearts, **and he knows everything.** NIV

ii. Son

Heb 4:12-14

12 For the word of God is living and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the division of soul and spirit, and of joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.

13 **And there is no creature hidden from His sight, but all things are naked and open to the eyes of Him to whom we must give account.**

14 Seeing then that we have a great High Priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our confession. NKJV

Col 2:2-3

2 My purpose is that they may be encouraged in heart and united in love, so that they may have the full riches of complete understanding, in order that they may know the mystery of God, namely, Christ,

3 in whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge. NIV

iii. Spirit

1 Cor 2:10-11

10 but God has revealed it to us by his Spirit. The Spirit searches all things, even the deep things of God.

11 For who among men knows the thoughts of a man except the man's spirit within him?

In the same way no one knows the thoughts of God except the Spirit of God. NIV

c. Omnipresent

i. Father

Jer 23:23-24

23 "Am I only a God nearby," declares the LORD, "and not a God far away?"

24 Can anyone hide in secret places so that I cannot see him?" declares the LORD. "Do not I fill heaven and earth?" declares the LORD. NIV

ii. Son

Eph 4:10

He Who descended is the [very] same as He Who also ascended high above all the heavens, that He [His presence] might fill all things (the whole universe, from the lowest to the highest). AMP

See also Eph 1:20-33 and Col 1:15-17

iii. Spirit

Ps 139:7-8 NIV

7 Where can I go from your Spirit? Where can I flee from your presence?

8 If I go up to the heavens, you are there; if I make my bed in the depths, you are there.

3. Same in worship:

a. Father

Matt 6:9

"This, then, is how you should pray: "Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name, NIV

b. Son

Matt 14:33 NIV

Then those who were in the boat worshiped him, saying, "Truly you are the Son of God."

Phil 2:9-11

9 Therefore God exalted him to the highest place and gave him the name that is above every name,

10 that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth,

11 and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father. NIV

c. Spirit

Acts 7:44-51

44 "Our forefathers had the tabernacle of the Testimony with them in the desert. It had been made as God directed Moses, according to the pattern he had seen.

45 Having received the tabernacle, our fathers under Joshua brought it with them when they took the land from the nations God drove out before them. It remained in the land until the time of David,

46 who enjoyed God's favor and asked that he might provide a dwelling place for the God of Jacob.

47 But it was Solomon who built the house for him.

48 "However, the Most High does not live in houses made by men. As the prophet says:

49 "Heaven is my throne, and the earth is my footstool. What kind of house will you build for me? says the Lord. Or where will my resting place be?

50 Has not my hand made all these things?'

51 "You stiff-necked people, with uncircumcised hearts and ears! You are just like your fathers: You always resist the Holy Spirit! NIV

1 Cor 3:16-17

16 Don't you know that you yourselves are God's temple and that God's Spirit lives in you?

17 If anyone destroys God's temple, God will destroy him; for God's temple is sacred, and you are that temple. NIV

1 Cor 6:19-20

19 Do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit, who is in you, whom you have received from God? You are not your own;

20 you were bought at a price. Therefore honor God with your body. NIV

Temples are built to house the object of our worship. After describing the three structures of worship (Tabernacle of Moses, Tabernacle of David, and Temple of Solomon), Stephen accuses the Jews of resisting the Holy Spirit because they never recognized his true dwelling place. If we are the temple of the Holy Spirit and temples are built to house that which we worship, then it stands to reason that the Holy Spirit is to receive worship. In this aspect, the Holy Spirit can be said to be the "silent partner of the trinity" because no verse explicitly says "worship the Holy Spirit." Indeed, His main role in worship is to inspire us to do so (John 4:24, Is. 63:10-15). His worship is seen in the worship given to the name (Ps. 8:1-2; Ps. 105:3; Matt. 28:19). All expressions of the Godhead are found in the name of the Lord (Father) Jesus (Son) Christ (Spirit). He is "the fullness of the Godhead bodily." (Col. 2:9)

The Unity of the Godhead Seen in the Creation-

Gen 1:1-2

1 In the beginning God [אֱלֹהִים] created the heavens and the earth.

2 Now the earth was formless and empty, darkness was over the surface of the deep, and the Spirit of God was hovering over the waters. NIV

The Bible tells us "in the beginning God." God is the Hebrew word 'elohiym, which is plural. This word is followed in the text by two letters which are not translated into the English, an aleph and a tav. Right at the start, the 'elohiym calls Himself the First and the Last, the Beginning and the End. In verse two, we see the Spirit brooding over the waters as a bird would brood over her eggs.

Gen 1:26

Then God said, "Let us make man in our image, in our likeness, and let them rule over the fish of the sea and the birds of the air, over the livestock, over all the earth, and over all the creatures that move along the ground." NIV

Again, the 'elohiym said, "Let us." This makes perfect sense, since they were all involved.

Col 1:15-17

15 He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation.

16 For by him all things were created: things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or powers or rulers or authorities; all things were created by him and for him.

17 He is before all things, and in him all things hold together. NIV

The Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit worked in concert in the creation. Their unity is clearly seen. The classic expression of the One God gives further evidence of this.

Deut 6:4 "Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God ['elohiym], the LORD is one. NIV

The Separate Functions of the Godhead Seen in the Redemption-

1. Jesus' Birth:

Luke 1:30-32

30 But the angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary, you have found favor with God.

31 You will be with child and give birth to a son, and you are to give him the name Jesus.

32 He will be great and will be called the **Son of the Most High**. The Lord God will give him the throne of his father David, NIV

Luke 1:34-35

34 "How will this be," Mary asked the angel, "since I am a virgin?"

35 The angel answered, "**The Holy Spirit will come upon you**, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you. So the holy one to be born will be called the **Son of God**. NIV

2. Jesus' Baptism:

Matt 3:16-17 NIV

16 As soon as **Jesus** was baptized, he went up out of the water. At that moment heaven was opened, and he saw the **Spirit of God** descending like a dove and lighting on him.

17 And a voice from heaven said, "**This is my Son**, whom I love; with him I am well pleased."

3. Jesus' Death:

Heb 9:14

How much more, then, will **the blood of Christ**, who through the **eternal Spirit** offered himself unblemished **to God**, cleanse our consciences from acts that lead to death, so that we may serve the living God! NIV

4. Jesus' Resurrection:

a. Father

Acts 2:32-33

32 God has raised this Jesus to life, and we are all witnesses of the fact.

33 Exalted to the right hand of God, he has received from the Father the promised Holy Spirit and has poured out what you now see and hear. NIV

b. Son

John 2:18-22

18 Then the Jews demanded of him, "What miraculous sign can you show us to prove your authority to do all this?"

19 Jesus answered them, "**Destroy this temple, and I will raise it again in three days.**"

20 The Jews replied, "It has taken forty-six years to build this temple, and you are going to raise it in three days?"

21 **But the temple he had spoken of was his body.**

22 After he was raised from the dead, his disciples recalled what he had said. Then they believed the Scripture and the words that Jesus had spoken. NIV

c. Spirit

1 Peter 3:18

For Christ died for sins once for all, the righteous for the unrighteous, to bring you to God. He was put to death in the body but **made alive by the Spirit**, NIV

Once seen, expressions of the triune Godhead are hard to miss in Scripture.

Acts 10:38 NIV

how **God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit** and power, and how he went around doing good and healing all who were under the power of the devil, because God was with him.

Rom 15:30

I urge you, brothers, by our Lord Jesus Christ and by the love of the Spirit, to join me in my struggle by praying to God for me. NIV

Isa 63:10-16

10 Yet they rebelled and grieved his **Holy Spirit**. So he turned and became their enemy and he himself fought against them.

11 Then his people recalled the days of old, the days of Moses and his people-- where is he who brought them through the sea, with the shepherd of his flock? Where is he who set his Holy Spirit among them,

12 who sent his glorious arm of power to be at Moses' right hand, who divided the waters before them, to gain for himself everlasting renown,
13 who led them through the depths? Like a horse in open country, they did not stumble;
14 like cattle that go down to the plain, they were given rest by the Spirit of the LORD. This is how you guided your people to make for yourself a glorious name.
15 Look down from heaven and see from your lofty throne, holy and glorious. Where are your zeal and your might? Your tenderness and compassion are withheld from us.
16 But you are our Father, though Abraham does not know us or Israel acknowledge us; you, O LORD, are our **Father**, our **Redeemer** from of old is your name. NIV

Eph 2:18 “For through him we both have access to the Father by one Spirit.” NIV

1 Peter 1:2

who have been chosen according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, through the sanctifying work of the Spirit, for obedience to Jesus Christ and sprinkling by his blood: Grace and peace be yours in abundance. NIV

2 Cor 13:14

May the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and **the fellowship of the Holy Spirit** be with you all. NIV [*see Phil 2:1 below for fellowship with the Holy Spirit*]

Phil 2:1

If you have any encouragement from being united with Christ, if any comfort from his love, if any **fellowship with the Spirit**, if any tenderness and compassion, NIV

Such verses abound in Scripture. Once our eyes are open to them, we will see the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit working in perfect unity to redeem mankind.

Different Views of the Godhead-

1. The Godhead – One God, Three Persons

2. Modalism – One God, three names

“While Church leaders and theologians were trying to find the right formulations, Christian belief and forms of liturgy were taking permanent shape in the churches; for by the second century, Christ, as the Redeemer of mankind, was being worshipped at regular Christian gatherings and petitions of prayer were being addressed to him.

For some Monarchists of the Adoptionist school this seemed a dangerous anti-monotheistic tendency. Paul of Samosata, Patriarch of Antioch at the end of the third century, would not allow prayer to Jesus Christ in his church, nor hymns in Christ’s honor. God alone should be worshipped; prayers were to be *through* Christ, as intermediary between God and man.”³

3. Tritheism – Three Gods, three names

4. Unitarianism – One God/Creator, one powerful creature, one impersonal force

In leaving this heresy or in not understanding the nature of the Godhead, many consciously or unconsciously hold the next belief.

³ Joan O’Grady, *Early Christian Heresies*, Barnes & Noble Books, New York, 1985, p. 87

5. Dinatarianism – One God, Two Persons, one impersonal force
Once again, let us view the graphic truth of the Godhead.

6. The Godhead – The Holy Spirit is a Person, not an impersonal force or gift.

The Holy Spirit is a Person-

1. He has knowledge:

1 Cor 2:10-11

10 but God has revealed it to us by his Spirit. The Spirit searches all things, even the deep things of God.

11 For who among men knows the thoughts of a man except the man's spirit within him? In the same way no one knows the thoughts of God except the Spirit of God. NIV

Isa 11:2

The Spirit of the LORD will rest on him-- the Spirit of wisdom and of understanding, the Spirit of counsel and of power, the Spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the LORD-- NIV

2. He has a will:

1 Cor 12:11

But one and the same Spirit works all these things, distributing to each one individually **as He wills.** NKJV

As Jesus subjugated His will to the Father (John 5:30, 19; Matt 26:39), so the Spirit subjects Himself to Jesus Christ (John 16:13-15). And the Father submits Himself to the requests of the Holy Spirit (Rom 8:26-27). 1 Cor 12:11 tells us that the Holy Spirit determines the mode of His expression in us. We know that where the Spirit exerts His will, the will of Jesus is manifest.

Acts 13:2

As they ministered to the Lord and fasted, **the Holy Spirit said, "Now separate to Me** Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them." NKJV

Acts 15:28

For **it seemed good to the Holy Spirit,** and to us, to lay upon you no greater burden than these necessary things: NKJV

Acts 16:6-7

6 Paul and his companions traveled throughout the region of Phrygia and Galatia, **having been kept by the Holy Spirit from preaching** the word in the province of Asia.

7 When they came to the border of Mysia, they tried to enter Bithynia, **but the Spirit of Jesus would not allow them to.** NIV

3. He has emotion:

Eph 4:30 NIV

And do not **grieve the Holy Spirit** of God, with whom you were sealed for the day of redemption.

Rom 15:30

I urge you, brothers, by our Lord Jesus Christ and by the **love of the Spirit**, to join me in my struggle by praying to God for me. NIV

Acts 9:31

Then the church throughout Judea, Galilee and Samaria enjoyed a time of peace. It was strengthened; and **encouraged by the Holy Spirit**, it grew in numbers, living in the fear of the Lord. NIV

James 4:5 NKJV

Or do you think that the Scripture says in vain, "**The Spirit who dwells in us yearns jealously**"?

4. He interacts with mankind:

Acts 7:51

"You stiff-necked people, with uncircumcised hearts and ears! You are just like your fathers: You always **resist the Holy Spirit**! NIV

Acts 5:3

Then Peter said, "Ananias, how is it that Satan has so filled your heart that you **have lied to the Holy Spirit** and have kept for yourself some of the money you received for the land? NIV

Phil 2:1

If you have any encouragement from being united with Christ, if any comfort from his love, if any **fellowship with the Spirit**, if any tenderness and compassion, NIV

Gal 5:25 "Since we live by the Spirit, let us **keep in step with the Spirit.**" NIV

Holy Spirit, Giver or Gift?

On the question of the giver and the gift, we need to examine the pattern of Persons being dispatched from heaven.

John 16:28

I came from the Father and entered the world; now I am leaving the world and going back to the Father." NIV

Is the One who came the same One who stayed, the same One who died, the same One who was raised, the same One who left? YES!!

Eph 4:10

He who descended is the very one who ascended higher than all the heavens, in order to fill the whole universe.) NIV

Heb 13:8 "Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever." NIV

That God sent Jesus didn't change the essence of who He was. Is Jesus the new birth? No. Is the redemption Jesus? No. Is eternal life Jesus? No. They are all works that He has done.

John 14:16-18

16 And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Counselor to be with you forever-
17 the Spirit of truth. The world cannot accept him, because it neither sees him nor knows him.

But you know him, for he lives with you and will be in you.

18 I will not leave you as orphans; I will come to you. NIV

The Holy Spirit comes as another Counselor. Who is the other counselor he is the another to? Jesus! They are the same, this is why he can say, "I will come to you."

John 14:26

But the Counselor, the Holy Spirit, **whom the Father will send in my name**, will teach you all things and will remind you of everything I have said to you. NIV

Here we see the Father sending the Spirit. Who sent the Son? The Father sent Him. He came by way of the Holy Spirit. He determined to come ("here I am, send me").

John 15:26

"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. NIV

John 16:5-7

5 "Now I am going to him who sent me, yet none of you asks me, 'Where are you going?'

6 Because I have said these things, you are filled with grief.

7 But I tell you the truth: It is for your good that I am going away. Unless I go away, the Counselor will not come to you; but if I go, **I will send him to you**. NIV

Jesus told his disciples he had to go, otherwise he could not send the Holy Spirit. Again, is the Holy Spirit divine? Yes. Then how does the divine act of sending him change his nature? How does one who is God become a mere impersonal force/gift by the mere act of being sent?

Acts 2:33

Exalted to the right hand of God, he has received from the Father the promised Holy Spirit and has poured out what you now see and hear. NIV

Peter describes on the day of Pentecost exactly what Jesus told him would happen. Jesus went to the Father and sent the Holy Spirit. Here in Acts it says He was poured out. We will be looking at that in a later message. But Peter says it differently elsewhere.

1 Peter 1:12

It was revealed to them that they were not serving themselves but you, when they spoke of the things that have now been told you by those who have preached the gospel to you **by the Holy Spirit sent from heaven**. Even angels long to look into these things. NIV

Is the baptism of the Holy Spirit the Holy Spirit? No. Is the manifestation of the Holy Spirit the Holy Spirit? No. Are the gifts of the Holy Spirit the Holy Spirit? No. They are all works that

He does. We have confused the evidence and the work for the Person. In this series, we are going to examine the Person of the Holy Spirit through the symbols he uses of himself in Scripture. In this way, I trust we will be better equipped to “fellowship with the Holy Spirit” and keep in step with Him.