

The Person Of The Spirit

Introduction. There are many contradicting beliefs, teachings, and opinions in the religious world concerning the Holy Spirit. Some believe that they have been baptized by the Spirit and are empowered by Him to perform miracles. Others deny that this can happen today. Some believe the Holy Spirit personally and literally dwells in them. Others teach that this is impossible. Some teach that the Holy Spirit is just an influence or a mere manifestation of God -- that He is not real. Others teach that He is a distinct member of the Godhead.

Sadly, some Christians are not equipped to defend the truth about this subject. Compared to the Holy Spirit, we know quite a bit about the Father and Jesus Christ, but the Holy Spirit remains a mystery to most of us. This is unfortunate, for the Holy Spirit is a prominent subject in the Bible, mentioned as early as Genesis 1:2 and as late as Revelation 22:17.

The only facts that we can know for certain about the Holy Spirit are the facts that have been revealed in the Bible by the Holy Spirit. We must be content with what He reveals, as opposed to relying upon denominational doctrines, human opinions, and personal feelings. In our series of lessons, we will discuss the Bible's teaching on various aspects of the Holy Spirit. To serve as an introduction to our subject, this lesson will discuss basic concepts of the Spirit.

I. There Is One God In Three Persons

- A. The Bible reveals only one deity or divine nature (Deuteronomy 6:4-5; Isaiah 43:10-11), but the one God includes three persons; deity is plural as to person or personalities.
 1. The word "us" is used several times (Genesis 1:26-27; 3:22-23; 11:7; Isaiah 6:8).
 2. In Psalm 110:1, one who is divine ("Lord") speaks to another who is divine ("Lord").
 3. In John 1:1-3, 14, God the Father is with God the word. One came in the flesh as Jesus, the other did not come.
- B. One God does not mean only one person (cf. "one" in Genesis 34:16, 2 Samuel 7:23, Matthew 19:5, and Ephesians 4:4). A plurality of persons may be "one" in scripture (Genesis 11:6; John 17:21-22; Romans 15:6; Ephesians 5:31; Philippians 1:27).
- C. Perhaps the biggest issue between Islam and Christ's gospel is the concept of monotheism. Muslims flatly reject the teaching of three individual Beings that make up God.
 1. Is there one God or can there be one God in three Persons? In the Bible, God is triune, not triplex. God is three in the unity of one. In the mind of a strict monotheist this is as impossible as $1+1+1=1$. However, the Godhead is more like $1 \times 1 \times 1 = 1$.
 2. One God in three persons does not exist as three kinds of gods.
 - a) God is one in nature or quality just as humanity is one in nature or quality.
 - b) God includes three divine persons just as humanity includes many persons.

3. The three persons in one God are all included in the work of our salvation (Matthew 28:19; 1 Peter 1:2).

II. *The Holy Spirit Is A Person In The Godhead*

- A. In describing and explaining the doctrine of God being comprised of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, the term “Godhead” is used several times in the New Testament (Acts 17:29; Romans 1:20; Colossians 2:9; cf. Matthew 28:19; John 1:1-2; Acts 5:3-4; Romans 15:16; 1 John 5:7). According to W. E. Vine, the word means, “The Divine essence of Godhood, the personality of God.”
- B. As was previously mentioned, individual personalities are suggested in the Old Testament (Genesis 1:2; Psalm 139:7; Joel 2:28), but the distinction between the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit is definitely revealed more fully in the New Testament.
 1. The three are mentioned in many passages (Matthew 3:16-17; 28:19; John 14:26; 2 Corinthians 13:14; 1 Peter 1:2).
 2. Ephesians 4:4-6 demonstrates the separation of the three.
 - a) One Spirit.
 - (1) There is one person with one message (1 Corinthians 12:2-4). The Holy Spirit is God, but He is also a distinct individual.
 - (2) The Holy Spirit is always referred to with masculine pronouns (John 14:26; 15:26; 16:13). He is not just a mere divine influence.
 - b) One Lord.
 - (1) This is the Savior of the world who came to take away the sins of the world (John 1:29).
 - (2) It is by belief and obedience to Him that men can have their sins washed away by His blood (John 8:24; Hebrews 5:8-9; 1 Peter 1:18-19).
 - c) One Father.
 - (1) This is the Jehovah of heaven (Exodus 20:2; Deuteronomy 6:4; 1 Kings 18:17-40).
 - (2) He is the One who created our world by speaking it into existence (Genesis 1:1; Psalm 33:6, 9; 148:5). He sent His Son into this world as His plan to save men (Matthew 20:28; Luke 19:10; John 3:16).
 3. Although they are three distinct personalities or individuals, they are all equally God.
 - a) The Bible specifically explains relationship between them.
 - (1) The Father is God (John 20:17). He is distinct from the Son (John 8:16) and the Holy Spirit (John 14:26).
 - (2) The Son is God (Hebrews 1:8). He is distinct from the Father (John 8:16) and the Holy Spirit (Acts 10:38).
 - (a) Jesus was not the Holy Spirit. The world saw Jesus and did not understand Him, but neither saw nor understood the Spirit (John 14:17, 19).
 - (b) Blasphemy against the Son is forgiven, but not against the Spirit (Matthew 12:32). Jesus had a body, the Spirit did not (Luke 24:39).

- (3) The Holy Spirit is God (Acts 5:3-4). He is distinct from the Father (John 14:26) and the Son (Acts 10:38).
- b) One example of distinction occurred when Jesus was baptized by John. When this event occurred, the Bible says that the Father was in heaven, the Son was on earth, and the Spirit was seen descending upon the Son in the form of a dove (Matthew 3:16-17).
- c) Although they are separate, they are united in nature, character, and purpose.
 - (1) Oneness Pentecostals affirm there is only one person of God, Jesus.
 - (a) They say God has never been but one person, first manifested in creation as “Father,” in redemption as “Son,” and by emanation or in the church as “Holy Ghost.”
 - (b) Oneness believers also baptize in the name of Jesus Christ, commonly referred to as “Jesus-name baptism.”
 - (2) However, there are serious consequences if this doctrine is true.
 - (a) Peter said that God the Father raised Jesus from the dead (Acts 2:24). But how could that be if Jesus and the Father are the same person?
 - (b) The sin against the Holy Spirit would be more grievous than for the Jews to have sinned against the Father or the Son (Matthew 12:31). Why would that be if the three are one person?

III. *The Names Of The Holy Spirit*

- A. While the following is not an exhaustive list, these names or designations given to the Spirit in the Bible tell us about the Spirit.
 - 1. The Spirit of God (Genesis 1:2).
 - 2. The Good Spirit (Nehemiah 9:20).
 - 3. Spirit of your Father (Matthew 10:20).
 - 4. The Holy Spirit or Ghost (Luke 4:1).
 - 5. The Spirit (Luke 4:1).
 - 6. The Spirit of the Lord (Luke 4:18).
 - 7. The Helper or Comforter (John 16:7).
 - 8. The Spirit of Truth (John 16:13).
 - 9. Promise of the Father (Acts 1:4).
 - 10. The Spirit of Holiness (Romans 1:4).
 - 11. The Spirit of Life (Romans 8:2).
 - 12. The Spirit of Christ (Romans 8:9).
 - 13. The Spirit of the Living God (2 Corinthians 3:3).
 - 14. The Spirit of Jesus Christ (Philippians 1:19).
 - 15. The Eternal Spirit (Hebrews 9:14).
 - 16. The Spirit of Grace (Hebrews 10:29).
- B. We know that He is a spirit. The word “Spirit” is translated from the Greek word *pneuma* which means “a current of air, a spirit.” He is not flesh and blood; not a physical being but a spiritual being.
- C. He is not a “ghost” in the modern use of the word. In 1611, when the King James Version was translated, the word “ghost” meant “the soul as the seat of life or

intelligence; hence, the spirit of man, as distinguished from the body” (Webster). Today the word carries the idea of a disembodied spirit or a spook.

IV. Who Is The Holy Spirit?

- A. The Holy Spirit is God (Acts 5:3-4). He exhibits all the attributes of deity.
 - 1. Eternal (Hebrews 9:14).
 - 2. Omnipresent (Psalm 139:7).
 - 3. Omnipotent (Psalm 104:30).
 - 4. Omniscient (1 Corinthians 2:10-11).
 - 5. Foreknowledge (Acts 1:16).
 - 6. Infinite life (Romans 8:2).
 - 7. Infinite love (Romans 15:30).
 - 8. Infinite holiness (Matthew 28:19).
- B. While these preceding attributes identify the Holy Spirit as deity, the Bible also shows that the Holy Spirit has all of the qualities, characteristics, and attributes of a person or an individual.
 - 1. Strives (Genesis 6:3).
 - 2. Teaches (John 14:26).
 - 3. Reminds (John 14:26).
 - 4. Hears (John 16:13).
 - 5. Guides (John 16:13).
 - 6. Comforts (Acts 9:31).
 - 7. Calls (Acts 13:2).
 - 8. Forbids (Acts 16:6-7).
 - 9. Searches (1 Corinthians 2:10).
 - 10. Justifies (1 Corinthians 6:11).
 - 11. Wills (1 Corinthians 12:11).
 - 12. Speaks (1 Timothy 4:1).
- C. The following list describes what can be done to a person, and subsequently what can be done to the Holy Spirit.
 - 1. Blasphemed (Matthew 12:31).
 - 2. Lied to (Acts 5:3-4).
 - 3. Resisted (Acts 7:51).
 - 4. Grieved (Ephesians 4:30).
 - 5. Insulted (Hebrews 10:29).
- D. The following list describes what a person possesses, and subsequently what the Holy Spirit possesses.
 - 1. Mind (Romans 8:27).
 - 2. Affection (Romans 15:30).
 - 3. Knowledge (1 Corinthians 2:11).
 - 4. Will (1 Corinthians 12:11).

Conclusion. Although the Spirit is not mentioned nearly as many times in the Bible as the Father and the Son, the Spirit is still God. As a member of the Godhead, He deserves our reverence and respect. We have to listen to Him and understand His work, which will be the subject of our next two lessons.