

Who Is the Holy Spirit?

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I. Problems with the "orthodox" view - i.e. the view that "God the Holy Spirit" is "the Third Person of the Trinity," a person different from God the Father.

1. God and Jesus have personal names. The Holy Spirit has no personal name. This witnesses against the Spirit being a distinct person.
2. The Holy Spirit is not a distinctly different person from God in scripture, but Jesus is a distinctly different person.
3. The Holy Spirit is never addressed or prayed to.
4. The Spirit never has a will distinct from God the Father, as Jesus did (Matt. 26:39; Luke 22:42; John 6:38), nor does the Spirit have any other personal traits that establish the Spirit as a separate "person."
5. All the epistles of the scriptures open with reference to "God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ." No Separate mention is made of the Holy Spirit. This would be a great slight to the Holy Spirit if the Spirit were indeed a separate and distinct "person" of the "trinity."
6. If Jesus was conceived of the Holy Spirit, and the Spirit is a different person than the Father, then "the Father" is not "the Father" in the trinity, for the Holy Spirit is the Father! *The answer to this dilemma is simply to acknowledge that the Holy Spirit is actually the Spirit of the Father Himself.*

II. The Holy Spirit is the same person as God. It is God's own Spirit

1. I Cor. 2:11 - "Who among men knows the thoughts of a man except the spirit of the man, which is in him? Even so the thoughts of God no one knows except the Spirit of God" [Scripture quotes from NASB]. It is evident that as the spirit of a man is the man himself, so the Spirit of God is God Himself, not a separate person.

2. A person's spirit is his qualities, nature, and capabilities. The spirit of Elijah is not a separate person from Elijah, but the composite qualities, nature, and abilities of Elijah. Your spirit is the real you - your qualities, nature, and capabilities. Why would the Spirit of God be a "person" different from God Himself rather than God's own qualities, nature, and capabilities?

3. Matt. 10:20 - "For it is not you who speaks, but it is the Spirit of your Father [Luke 12:12 - "the Holy Spirit"] who speaks in you." The synoptic parallel shows that the Holy Spirit is the same as the Spirit of the Father.

4. Matt. 12:28 - "For if I cast out demons by the Spirit [Luke 11:20 - "finger"] of God, then the kingdom of God has come upon you." Obviously, the "finger of God" does not refer to a person separate from God, so "Spirit of God" should be understood similarly as another way of referring to God's own person.

5. The Spirit of God is equated with the presence of God in Hebrew parallelism:

Psalm 51:11 - "Do not cast me away from Thy presence, and do not take Thy Holy Spirit from me."

Psalm 139:7 - "Where can I go from Thy Spirit? Or where can I flee from Thy presence?"

The Spirit of God = the presence of God. There is no separate person here.

6. The presence of the Holy Spirit is equated with the presence of God in the New Testament:

Acts 5:3,4 - In the story of Ananias and Sapphira, to lie to the Holy Spirit is equated with lying to God. They are the same person, not two different persons.

Acts 10:38 - "You know of Jesus of Nazareth, how God anointed Him with the Holy Spirit and with power, and how he went about doing good, and healing all who were oppressed by the devil; for God was with Him."

Conclusion: It is as much nonsense to make God into a Trinity on the basis that the Spirit of God is a "person" separate from God as to make you and me into two persons each because we each have spirit.

III. The Holy Spirit is the self-expressive, creative force, power, or energy of God. Just as a man's spirit is the man's self-expression, creativity, and energy. Some have called the Spirit an "impersonal force," but as God is a person, we might better describe the Spirit as *the personal force or power through which God's activities are undertaken.*

1. Creativity. As God is infinitely creative, so His Spirit imparts creativity. For example,

Ex. 35: 30-35 - "The Lord has called by name Bezalel the son of Uri ... and He has filled him with the Spirit of God, in wisdom, in understanding, and in knowledge and in all craftsmanship to make designs for working in gold and silver and in bronze, and in the cutting of stones for settings and in the carving of wood, so as to perform in every inventive work. He has also put in his heart to teach, both he and Ohliab ... He has filled them with skill to perform every work of an engraver and of a designer and of an embroiderer ... and of a weaver, as performers of every work and makers of designs."

2. Inspiration. The Spirit of God gives ability to speak and write God's thoughts.

II Sam. 23:2 - "The Spirit of the Lord spoke by me, and His word was on my tongue."

Luke 12:12 - "The Holy Spirit will teach you in that very hour what ... to say."

Acts 1:16 - "the Scripture had to be fulfilled, which the Holy Spirit foretold by the mouth of David ..."

II Peter 1:21 - " ... men moved by the Holy Spirit spoke from God."

3. Power. The Spirit of God is equated with the power of God.

Luke 1:35 - "The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you ... "

Luke 4:14 - "Jesus returned to Galilee in the power of the Spirit."

Acts 1:8 - "You shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you."

Acts 10:38 - "God anointed Him with the Holy Spirit and with power ... "

4. Spiritual Abilities. God's Spirit does tasks that are beyond human capabilities and provides wisdom and knowledge beyond human wisdom and knowledge.

I Cor. 12:7-11 - "To each one is given the manifestation of the Spirit ... the word of wisdom ... the word of knowledge ... faith ... gifts of healing ... the effecting of miracles ... prophecy ... the distinguishing of spirits ... various kinds of tongues ... the interpretation of tongues. One and the same Spirit works all these, distributing to each one individually just as He wills."

5. Godly Qualities. The Spirit of God produces fruit that is representative of the nature of God.

Gal. 5:22-23 - "The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control."

IV. "The Holy Spirit" or "[a] holy spirit"?

It is important to note that 46 of the 83 uses of the term pneuma hagian, holy spirit, in the Greek scriptures, do not have the definite article the. Almost all translations render all 83 uses as "the Holy Spirit," adding the and the capitalization, which is somewhat a matter of interpretation. For example, Stephen was "full of faith and (a) holy spirit" (Acts 6:5). Paul

wrote of "righteousness and peace and joy in [a] holy spirit" (Rom. 14:17). Jude actually wrote about "praying in [a] holy spirit" rather than "praying in the Holy Spirit," (Jude 20), if we wish to translate more literally. The term "the Holy Spirit" is certainly valid in many places, but since the article the is used only 45% of the time, we should be careful about building a doctrine based on translators' suppositions in defining "holy spirit" in all contexts.

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