

The Holy Spirit: His Person



❖ Introduction

- ****Why study the Holy Spirit? Mystery and Misunderstanding!**
 - “Holy Ghost” ~ Impersonal (gravity/electricity)
 - **Illus:** Star Wars “Force”
 - Abuse!
 - **Illus:** Cults and Religions (**Pamphlet**)
 - ◆ JW’s: “invisible active force”
 - ◆ Mormons: “the Holy Ghost is a spirit man, the third god in the Trinity...the Holy Spirit is an impersonal influence that proceeds from the Father”
 - ◆ Islam: many recognize Gabriel as the Holy Spirit (angel of revelation ~ dictated Qur’an word by word to Muhammad)
- Historical Concerns in the Church:
 - **Illus:** James Orr (1844-1913, *The Progress of Dogma*): Doctrine has been developed (as a primary concern) in different time periods of Church history. For example: the early church was more concerned about defending the deity of Christ than in developing millennial positions. This last century has seen events that have brought the Holy Spirit, the Church, and Eschatology to the “fore” →

Holy Spirit

beginnings of Pentecostalism
Charismatic movement
miraculous gifts
Vineyard movement

Church

ecumenism
parachurch organizations
forms of worship
denominationalism
clergy issues: gender, divorce...
contextualization
tele-evangelism
dispensational/covenant theology
role: evangelism, social...

Last Things

the state of Israel
Y2K
date setting
Hell
Universalism
decline of postmillennialism

- ****Topical Series: *Pneumatology* → Systematic Theology → Exegesis (MSA) + Biblical Theology + Historical Theology (Reason and Tradition)**
 - **Examples:** TEDS Notes, Charles Ryrie (DTS), Wayne Grudem (Evangelical), H. Orton Wiley (Arminian), Millard Erickson (Baptist), Louis Berkhof (Reformed) → EFCA ~ ***Evangelical Convictions*** →

- **Outline: **EFCA Statement of Faith (Article 6):**

We believe that the Holy Spirit, in all that He does, glorifies the Lord Jesus Christ. He convicts the world of its guilt. He regenerates sinners, and in Him they are baptized into union with Christ and adopted as heirs in the family of God. He also indwells, illuminates, guides, equips and empowers believers for Christ-like living and service.

- ****So, why study the Holy Spirit? Important for our Christian *understanding* (belief) and *living* (behavior)!**
 - ****Sermon Notes** posted online.
- **Big Idea:** The Holy Spirit, as the third Person of the Trinity, manifests the active presence of God in the world, and especially in the church.

❖ His Deity

- **Summary and Definitions:**

- ****EFCA Statement of Faith (Article 1):**

We believe in one God, Creator of all things, holy, infinitely perfect, and eternally existing in a loving unity of three equally divine Persons: the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. Having limitless knowledge and sovereign power, God has graciously purposed from eternity to redeem a people for Himself and to make all things new for His own glory.

- The **Trinity** (Theology proper): The Holy Spirit is coequal with the Father and the Son in the ontological sense. Christian theology holds that there is one divine nature, and that each member of the Trinity possess fully that divine nature (otherwise = tritheism).
 - Objection: The Trinity is a logical contradiction → we have to define a contradiction → *is* and *is not* at the same time. One God cannot be 3 gods in the same way at the same time. One in *nature*, 3 *persons*...

➤ **Scriptural Support:**

- **OT intimations** of a plurality in the Godhead:
 - Deut. 6:4ff → the word *echad* (vs. *yachid* = singular unity) is a complex unity.
 - Gen. 1:26 → Elohim is a plural form. 3 suggestions: a remnant of polytheism (supported by Wellhausen critical view—document hypothesis + developmental hypothesis {but we devolved to polytheism...}), a proof of the Trinity, an intensive plural of majesty/excellence.
 - ◆ Conclusion: the plural use “hints” (not necessarily proves...) at a plurality in the Godhead. Many times, *elohim* takes a single verb when it refers to God and a plural verb when referring to pagan gods.
 - The use of plural pronouns to refer to God: Gen. 1:26 “let Us” Isa. 6:8 “who will go for Us?” Some will say that the plural indicates a discussion between God and the angels, but the Bible never claims that man is created in the image of “God and angels.” Plural pronouns are not “governed” by a plural of majesty...
 - Gen. 1:2 → the reference to Spirit of God (but does not have to be personal here).
 - ****Conclusion:** A plurality can be perceived in the OT (pronouns) and the NT further defines as the Trinity.
- **NT evidence** for the deity of the Holy Spirit:
 - **Direct statements** supporting the deity of the Holy Spirit
 - ◆ Acts 5:3,4 → “lied to the Holy Spirit...to God”
 - ◆ John 14:16, 17 → “another Paraclete” = allos “another of the same kind”
 - ◆ 1 Cor. 3:16, 17; 6:19 (cf. 2 Cor. 6:16, 17) → “temple of Holy Spirit...living God”
 - **Divine attributes** are ascribed to the Holy Spirit
 - ◆ *Omniscience* → 1 Cor. 2:10, 11 “Spirit searches...the deep things of God” and John 16:13 “guide you into all truth”
 - ◆ *Omnipotence* → Luke 1:35 “come upon you...power of the Highest will overshadow you”; Rom. 15:19 “mighty signs and wonders by the power of the Spirit of God”; John 16:8-11 (cf. Mt. 19:16-26 “with God, all things are possible”)
 - ◆ *Omnipresence* → Psa. 139:6-10 “where can I go from Your Spirit?”
 - ◆ *Eternality* → Heb. 9:14 (cf. Heb. 1:10-12) “through the eternal Spirit”
 - **Divine actions** are ascribed to the Holy Spirit
 - ◆ Creation → Gen. 1:2 “the Spirit of God was hovering”; Job 26:13 “by His Spirit He adorned the heavens”; Psa. 104:30 “Your Spirit...created”
 - ◆ Salvation → John 3:5-8 “born of water and the Spirit”; Titus 3:5 “and renewing of the Holy Spirit”; Rom. 8:11 “life to your mortal bodies through His Spirit”
 - ◆ Scriptures → 2 Pet. 1:21 “spoke as they were moved by the Holy Spirit”; 1 Cor. 2:13 “words...Holy Spirit teaches”
 - **Association** with the Father and Son
 - ◆ The baptismal formula → Matt. 28:19 “baptizing them in the name of the Father...”
 - ◆ The apostolic benediction → 2 Cor. 13:14 “...the communion of the Holy Spirit”
 - ◆ The giving of gifts → 1 Cor. 12:4-7 “the manifestation of the Spirit is...”
 - ◆ The process of salvation → 1 Pet. 1:2 “in sanctification of the Spirit”

❖ **His Personality**

➤ **Summary and Definitions:**

- The Holy Spirit is not some impersonal force or principle. He is a person, co-eternal with the Father and the Son. There are at least two reasons that it is easy to fail to recognize the personality of the Holy Spirit. First,

His names as “Spirit” or “Ghost.” Second, He lacks a body. But, “personhood” does not depend on corporeality, but on possessing the characteristics of personality: intellect, emotions, will.

➤ **Scriptural Support:**

- **Pronouns** referring to the Holy Spirit sometimes violate proper grammatical form.
 - John 16:13, 14 → pronouns are masculine, pneuma is neuter. Also, Jn. 15:26 and 16:8 (but antecedent could be Paraclete).
 - Eph. 1:14 → “who” is masculine in the TR (neut. in NU)
- **Personality Characteristics:**
 - Mind or intelligence
 - ◆ 1 Cor. 2:10-11 “searches the deep things of God”
 - ◆ Rom. 8:27 “He who searches the hearts knows what the mind of the Spirit is”
 - ◆ 1 Cor. 2:13 “Holy Spirit teaches, comparing spiritual...”
 - Emotions or feelings
 - ◆ Eph. 4:30 “do not grieve the Holy Spirit”
 - Will or volition
 - ◆ 1 Cor. 12:11 “distributing to each one individually as He wills”
 - ◆ Acts 16:6-11 “but the Spirit did not permit them”
- Personal **actions** and responses:
 - The actions of the Holy Spirit
 - ◆ He guides by hearing, speaking, and showing—Jn. 16:13
 - ◆ He convicts of sin—Jn. 16:8
 - ◆ He performs miracles—Acts 8:39 “the Spirit took Phillip away”
 - ◆ He intercedes—Rom. 8:26 “groanings which cannot be uttered”
 - The actions of individual toward the Holy Spirit
 - ◆ He can be obeyed—Acts 10:19-21 Peter sent to Cornelius
 - ◆ He can be lied to—Acts 5:3 Ananias and Sapphira
 - ◆ He can be resisted—Acts 7:51 Stephen’s speech “you stiff-necked...”
 - ◆ He can be grieved—Eph. 4:30
 - ◆ He can be blasphemed—Mt. 12:31 The unpardonable sin...
 - ◆ He can be insulted—Heb. 10:29 “and insulted the Spirit of grace...”

❖ **So What?**

- EFCA Article 1: ...God has graciously purposed from eternity to redeem a people for Himself and to make all things new for His own glory...
- ****Practical implications** of the deity and personality of the Holy Spirit
 - Because He is a person, we are able to have a personal relationship with Him.
 - Because He is God, He is worthy of the same respect as the Father and the Son.
 - Because He is God, we can trust His guidance.
 - Because He is God, we can be comforted that God is not far from us.
- **Big Idea:** The Holy Spirit, as the third Person of the Trinity, manifests the active presence of God in the world, and especially in the church.

Soli Deo Gloria