

DOCTRINE OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

Deity of the Holy Spirit

Lesson 3

The deity of the Holy Spirit has been a foundational doctrine of Christianity. A doctrine which makes the Holy Spirit coequal with the Father and the Son. The Holy Spirit is described by theologians as the third person of the Trinity, though the Scriptures do not make that specific designation. In this study we will see that Scriptures teach the Holy Spirit is God by giving us direct statements, divine attributes, and divine works. Unlike the deity of Christ, the deity of the Holy Spirit has rarely been contested since the Counsel of Chalcedon in 450 AD which confronted the Arian heresy (what modern day Jehovah's Witness believe). Since Chalcedon, nearly everyone who believes the Holy Spirit is a person, also agrees He is God.

I. DEFINITION OF THE DEITY OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

- A. The Holy Spirit, according to the holy Scriptures, is God. He has the same qualities, attributes and characteristics of God, is called God, and does the works of God. He is coequal with God the Father and God the Son and together they are the one Triune God.
- B. *A Survey of Bible Doctrine* says, "The proof of the personality of the Spirit does not, of course, include the proof that He is God. The reverse is true, however, for if He is God He must also be a person as God is. The denial of deity and personality usually go together, though some believe He is a person without believing that He is also divine."¹

II. THOUGHTS TO PONDER ABOUT THE HOLY SPIRIT'S DEITY

- A. If the Holy Spirit is a person then we must assume that He is God since He existed before creation (**Gen. 1:2; Ex. 20:11**).
- B. When one surveys the Old Testament they discover that often God and the Holy Spirit are used interchangeably in reference to what God says. In the New Testament we have quotes of what God said in the Old Testament, but it is attributed to the Holy Spirit (**Isa. 6:9 cf. Acts 28:25; etc.**).
- C. The Scriptures teach we are a temple of God because the Holy Spirit dwells in us implying the Holy Spirit is God (**Eph. 2:22 cf. I Cor. 6:19**).²

¹Charles Ryrie, *A Survey of Bible Doctrine*, under "Is the Holy Spirit completely God?", Libronix Bible Software.

² R. C. Sproul, *The Mystery of the Holy Spirit*, pg. 26.

III. SCRIPTURAL PROOF OF THE DEITY OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

A. Holy Spirit has the attributes of God

1. **Psa. 139:7-8** Where can I go from Your Spirit? Or where can I flee from Your presence? 8 If I ascend to heaven, You are there; If I make my bed in Sheol, behold, You are there. (The Holy Spirit is omnipresent.)
2. **Luke 1:35** The angel answered and said to her, “The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; and for that reason the holy Child shall be called the Son of God. (The Holy Spirit is omnipotent.)
3. **I Cor. 2:10-12** For to us God revealed them through the Spirit; for the Spirit searches all things, even the depths of God. 11 For 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. 12 Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is from God, so that we may know the things freely given to us by God. (The Holy Spirit is omniscient.)
4. **Eph. 4:30** Do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, by whom you were sealed for the day of redemption. (The Holy Spirit is holy in an absolute sense.)³
5. **Heb. 9:14** How much more will the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered Himself without blemish to God, cleanse your conscience from dead works to serve the living God? (The Holy Spirit is eternal.)

The Scriptures do not stop to prove either the personality or deity of the Holy Spirit. Everywhere, such truth is so clearly expressed and constantly implied that men must be blind to miss or deny it. (Herbert Lockyer, *All About the Holy Spirit*, pg. 36.)

The chart below shows how some of the Holy Spirit’s names reveal His divine attributes.⁴

Names of the Holy Spirit relating to His divine attributes	
There is . . . one Spirit <i>unity</i> (Eph. 4:4)	Spirit of holiness (Rom. 1:4)
Seven Spirits <i>perfection</i> (Isa. 11:1-5)	Holy Spirit (Isa. 51:11; Lk. 11:13)
The Lord the Spirit <i>sovereignty</i> (II Cor. 3:18)	Holy one (I Jn. 2:20)
Eternal Spirit (Heb. 9:14)	Spirit of Life (Rom. 8:2)
Spirit of Glory (I Pet. 4:14)	Spirit of Truth (John 14:17)

³ This designation appears some 93 times in the scriptures.

⁴ The scripture references for this chart were taken from John Walvoord’s book, *The Holy Spirit*, pg. 11.

B. Holy Spirit is called God

1. **Matt. 12:31** “Therefore I say to you, any sin and blasphemy shall be forgiven people, but blasphemy against the Spirit shall not be forgiven. (The Holy Spirit can be blasphemed, therefore the Holy Spirit is God.)
2. **Matt. 28:19** “Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit. (The Holy Spirit is one with the Father and the Son.)
3. **Acts 5:3-4** But Peter said, “Ananias, why has Satan filled your heart to lie to the Holy Spirit and to keep back some of the price of the land? 4 “While it remained unsold, did it not remain your own? And after it was sold, was it not under your control? Why is it that you have conceived this deed in your heart? You have not lied to men but to God.” (To lie to the Holy Spirit is to lie to God.)
4. **II Cor. 3:17-18** Now the Lord is the Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty. 18 But we all, with unveiled face, beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory, just as from the Lord, the Spirit. (The Holy Spirit is called Lord.)

The Holy Spirit’s names are associated with the other members of the Trinity.⁵

Names of the Holy Spirit Relating to God the Father		Names of the Holy Spirit Relating to God the Son
Spirit of God (Gen. 1:2; Mt. 3:16)	Spirit of the Lord God (Isa. 61:1)	Spirit of Christ (Rom. 8:9; I Pet. 1:11)
Spirit of the Lord (Luke 4:18)	Spirit of your Father (Mt. 10:20)	Spirit of Jesus Christ (Phil. 1:19)
Spirit of our God (I Cor. 6:11)	Spirit of the living God (II Cor. 3:3)	Spirit of Jesus (Acts 16:7)
His Spirit (Numb. 1:29)	My Spirit (Gen. 6:3)	Spirit of His Son (Gal. 4:6)
Spirit of Jehovah (Judges 3:18)	Spirit of Him (Rom. 8:11)	Spirit of the Lord (Acts 5:9; 8:3)
Thy Spirit (Psa. 139:7)		

“Probably in most instances when the term *Spirit of God* is used, it is a reference to the Holy Spirit rather than the Father, similarly, when the term *Spirit of Christ* is used it is usually a reference to the Holy Spirit. The reason for this is that if the Father were intended, it would be most normal to use God, Lord, and so forth; if Christ were intended, it would be most normal to use the name Jesus Christ.” (*The Moody Handbook of Theology*, pg. 249)

⁵ The scripture references for this chart were taken from John Walvoord’s book, *The Holy Spirit*, pg. 10.

C. Holy Spirit does the works of God

1. The Holy Spirit who is God is the agent of spiritual birth.

John 1:12-13	John 3:3 & 5
12 But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, even to those who believe in His name, 13 who were born, not of blood nor of the will of the flesh nor of the will of man, but of God.	3 Jesus answered and said to him, "Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born again he cannot see the kingdom of God." . . . 5 Jesus answered, "Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.

2. Demons are cast out by the Holy Spirit who is God.

Matt. 12:28	Luke 11:20
28 "But if I cast out demons by the Spirit of God, then the kingdom of God has come upon you.	20 "But if I cast out demons by the finger of God, then the kingdom of God has come upon you.

3. **Acts 1:16** "Brethren, the Scripture had to be fulfilled, which the Holy Spirit foretold by the mouth of David concerning Judas, who became a guide to those who arrested Jesus. (The Holy Spirit knows the future.)

4. The Holy Spirit is Creator.

- a. **Gen. 1:1-2** In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. 2 The earth was formless and void, and darkness was over the surface of the deep, and the Spirit of God was moving over the surface of the waters.
- b. **Job 33:4** "The Spirit of God has made me, And the breath of the Almighty gives me life.
- c. **Psa. 104:30** You send forth Your Spirit, they are created; And You renew the face of the ground.

5. Only the Holy Spirit who is God can raise the dead.

Rom. 8:11	II Cor. 1:9
11 But if the Spirit of Him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, He who raised Christ Jesus from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through His Spirit who dwells in you.	9 indeed, we had the sentence of death within ourselves so that we would not trust in ourselves, but in God who raises the dead.

D. When God speaks the Holy Spirit speaks

1. **cf.**

Isa. 6:8-10	Acts 28:25-27
8 Then I heard the voice of the Lord, saying, "Whom shall I send, and who will go for Us?" Then I said, "Here am I. Send me!" 9 He said, "Go, and tell this people: 'Keep on listening, but do not perceive; Keep on looking, but do not understand.' . . .	25 And when they did not agree with one another, they began leaving after Paul had spoken one parting word, "The Holy Spirit rightly spoke through Isaiah the prophet to your fathers, 26 saying, 'Go to this people and say, "You will keep on hearing, but will not understand; And you will keep on seeing, but will not perceive;. . .

2. **cf.**

Jer. 31:31-34	Heb. 10:15-17
31 "Behold, days are coming," declares the Lord, . . . 33 "But this is the covenant which I will make with the house of Israel after those days," declares the Lord, "I will put My law within them and on their heart I will write it; . . .	15 And the Holy Spirit also testifies to us; for after saying, 16 "This is the covenant that I will make with them After those days, says the Lord: I will put My laws upon their heart, And on their mind I will write them," He then says, . . .

3. **cf.**

Ex. 16:7; 17:7	Heb. 3:7-9
7 and in the morning you will see the glory of the Lord, for He hears your grumbings against the Lord; and what are we, that you grumble against us?" . . . 7 He named the place Massah and Meribah because of the quarrel of the sons of Israel, and because they tested the Lord, saying, "Is the Lord among us, or not?"	7 Therefore, just as the Holy Spirit says, "Today if you hear His voice, 8 Do not harden your hearts as when they provoked Me, As in the day of trial in the wilderness, 9 Where your fathers tried Me by testing Me, And saw My works for forty years. (Author of Hebrews is quoting Psa. 95:8-10)

4. God speaks when the Holy Spirit speaks through men in the Scriptures.

- a. **II Sam. 23:1-3** 1 David the son of Jesse declares, . . . 2 "The Spirit of the Lord spoke by me, And His word was on my tongue. 3 "The God of Israel said, The Rock of Israel spoke to me, 'He who rules over men righteously, Who rules in the fear of God,
- b. **II Tim. 3:16** 16 All Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness.
- c. **II Pet. 1:20-21** But know this first of all, that no prophecy of Scripture is a matter of one's own interpretation, 21 for no prophecy was ever made by an act of human will, but men moved by the Holy Spirit spoke from God.

IV. ERRORS CONCERNING THE DEITY OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

- A. The Holy Spirit isn't God. This view is also held by those who deny the Holy Spirit is a person.
- B. The Holy Spirit is God but of lesser rank or kind, a god with a little "g".
- C. The Holy Spirit is the same person as God the Father or God the Son.
- D. The Holy Spirit is the energy flowing from God, not God Himself.

V. APPLICATION TO CONSIDER

- A. Because the Holy Spirit is God, and God is all powerful, we know that the Holy Spirit can and will strengthen us to do all that we are called by God to do. All the attributes of God are available to assist us through the Holy Spirit.
- B. We must praise God that when we receive the Holy Spirit as a permanent pledge of our inheritance, the Comforter, and Interpreter, we received the person of God Himself. We must not minimize the resource we always have available to draw upon. The Holy Spirit is such a great resource that Jesus Himself said in **Jn. 16:7**, *"But I tell you the truth, it is to your advantage that I go away; for if I do not go away, the Helper will not come to you; but if I go, I will send Him to you."* Consider that the indwelling Holy Spirit is a greater blessing to the believer than the physical presence of Christ!
- C. Because the Holy Spirit is God, we know that when we pray the Holy Spirit knows our thoughts and can intercede with groanings too deep for words (**Rom. 8:26**). And if the Holy Spirit intercedes for us in prayer we know we will end up receiving what is best for us and what will give God the most glory.

"How much there is of church work that is nothing more than the movement of a galvanized corpse! How much is done as if the church were a piece of machinery. Whole men care little about heart and soul, they look only at outward performances. We can preach, pray, and teach as machines. Men can give mechanically and come to the communion table mechanically. Yes, and we ourselves shall do so unless the Spirit of God is with us. If the spirit of God is absent, all that the church does will be as lifeless as the rustle of leaves above a tomb, like the congregation of the dead turning over in their graves."⁶

⁶ Charles Spurgeon, *What the Holy Spirit Does in a Believer's Life*, pg. 30.