

The Deity of the Holy Spirit

In our last lesson we began the study of the Holy Spirit by asking the question, “Who is He?” “Who is the Holy Spirit?” We answered that question by stating, “He is a person!” However, this is only part of the answer. The Holy Spirit is not just any person. What sort of person is He? He is a unique person because He is God very God!

The deity of the Holy Spirit has been part of the orthodox Christian faith from the beginning, from the writing of the Scripture. The Arian controversy during the fourth century helped permanently settle the deity of the Holy Spirit as orthodox doctrine. Certainly the deity of the Holy Spirit is clearly affirmed by the evidence of Scripture.

There are four distinct evidences in the Old and New Testaments which support the deity of the Holy Spirit:

First, Divine Appellations are Assigned to the Holy Spirit.

There are many places in Scripture where divine names and titles are assigned to the Holy Spirit. Certainly the use of divine names and titles for the Holy Spirit affirms His deity.

The Holy Spirit is called God

- **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? “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.**”*

The Holy Spirit is called Lord

- **2 Corinthians 3:17-18**, “*Now **the Lord is the Spirit**, and where **the Spirit of the Lord** is, there is liberty. 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.**”*

This verse is somewhat controversial, but seems to indicate that, “Yahweh of the Old Testament is the same Lord who is saving people in the New Covenant through the agency of the Holy Spirit.” [The MacArthur Study Bible, note p. 1768] My point in bringing it up is that the statement of these verses affirms the deity of the Spirit through the phrases, “the Lord is the Spirit” and “the Spirit of the Lord” and “from the Lord, the Spirit.”

- **Numbers 24:2-4, 12-13**, “*And Balaam lifted up his eyes and saw Israel camping tribe by tribe; and **the Spirit of God** came upon him. He took up his discourse and said, “The oracle of Balaam the son of Beor, And the oracle of the man whose eye is opened; The oracle of him who hears **the words of God**, Who sees the vision of the Almighty, Falling down, yet having his eyes uncovered... Balaam said to Balak, “Did I not tell your messengers whom you had sent to me, saying, 'Though*

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Balak were to give me his house full of silver and gold, I could not do anything contrary to the command of the LORD, either good or bad, of my own accord. What the LORD speaks, that I will speak?"

In Acts 28:25-27 the apostle Paul attributes the words of the Lord in Isaiah 61:1-13 to the Holy Spirit. (Compare Acts 28:25-27 to Isaiah 6:8-10) A similar occurrence can be noted in Hebrews 3:7-11 compared to Psalm 95:6-11.

- **Acts 28:25-27**, *“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, 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; FOR THE HEART OF THIS PEOPLE HAS BECOME DULL, AND WITH THEIR EARS THEY SCARCELY HEAR, AND THEY HAVE CLOSED THEIR EYES; OTHERWISE THEY MIGHT SEE WITH THEIR EYES, AND HEAR WITH THEIR EARS, AND UNDERSTAND WITH THEIR HEART AND RETURN, AND I WOULD HEAL THEM.”**”*

- **Isaiah 6:8-10**, *“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!” He said, “Go, and tell this people: 'Keep on listening, but do not perceive; Keep on looking, but do not understand.' “Render the hearts of this people insensitive, Their ears dull, And their eyes dim, Otherwise they might see with their eyes, Hear with their ears, Understand with their hearts, And return and be healed.”*

The Holy Spirit is spoken of as divine

There are verses that speak of the Holy Spirit in such a way that they affirm His deity.

1-Those guilty of blasphemy against the Holy Spirit are guilty of an eternal sin:

- **Mark 3:29**, *“but whoever blasphemes against the Holy Spirit never has forgiveness, but is guilty of an eternal sin.”*

2-The church is the temple of God in which the Holy Spirit dwells:

- **1 Corinthians 3:16**, *“Do you not know that you are a temple of God and that the Spirit of God dwells in you?”*

This verse speaks of the church as the dwelling place of the Holy Spirit and identifies the dwelling place of the Holy Spirit as God's temple. Since the Spirit is spoken of as God's Spirit and the Holy Spirit's dwelling place is God's temple it affirms the Holy Spirit's deity.

- **Ephesians 2:22**, *“in whom you also are being built together into a dwelling of God in the Spirit.”*

This passage is speaking of the Holy Spirit's role building up believers into a dwelling of God. This verse supports the deity of the Holy Spirit.

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3-The individual believer is the temple of the Holy Spirit:

- **1 Corinthians 6:19**, “*Or do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have from God, and that you are not your own?*”

Just as the church as a whole is the temple of God so is the individual believer a temple of the Holy Spirit, whom we have from God. Certainly this alludes to the Spirit's deity.

The Holy Spirit is addressed in terms related to the other members of the Trinity

There are numerous passages of Old and New Testament Scripture alike that mention the Holy Spirit in terms related to the other two members of the Trinity and thereby lend further support to the Spirit's deity.

1-In relation to the Father, the Holy Spirit is often called “*His Spirit.*”

- **1 Thessalonians 4: 8**, “*So, he who rejects this is not rejecting man but the God who gives **His Holy Spirit** to you.*” (cf. Numbers 11:29; Isaiah 34:16; 48:16; Zechariah 7:12; 1 Corinthians 2:10; Galatians 3:5; Ephesians 3:16; 1 John 4:12-13)

2-In Relation to the LORD (Yahweh) in the Old Testament, the Holy Spirit is called “*My Spirit.*”

- **Zechariah 4:6**, “*Then he said to me, “This is the word of the LORD to Zerubbabel saying, 'Not by might nor by power, but by **My Spirit**, ' says the LORD of hosts.’”* (cf. Genesis 6:3; Isaiah 30:1; 59:21; Ezekiel 36:27; Joel 2:28; Haggai 2:5)

3-The Holy Spirit is frequently called the Spirit of God in both the Old and New Testaments.

- **Genesis 1:2**, “*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.*” (cf. Exodus 31:3; Numbers 24:2; 1 Samuel 11:6; 19:20, 23; 2 Chronicles 15:1; 24:30; Job 33:4; Ezekiel 11:24)
- **Romans 8:14**, “*For all who are being led by **the Spirit of God**, these are sons of God.*” (cf. Romans 8:9; 1 Corinthians 2:11, 14; 3:16; 6:11; 7:40; 1 Peter 4:14; 1 John 4:2)

4-The Holy Spirit is spoken of as the Spirit of Him who raised Jesus from the dead:

- **Romans 8:11**, “*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.*”

Since God raised Jesus from the dead according to Acts 2:24, then Romans 8:11 is calling the Holy Spirit, “the Spirit of God.”

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5-The Holy Spirit is frequently called the Spirit of the LORD (Yahweh) in the Old Testament:

- **Micah 3:8**, “*On the other hand I am filled with power-With **the Spirit of the LORD**-And with justice and courage To make known to Jacob his rebellious act, Even to Israel his sin.*” (cf. Judges 3:10; 6:34; 11:29; 13:25; 14:6, 19; 15:14; 1 Samuel 10:6; 16:13; 2 Samuel 23:2; 1 Kings 18:12; 2 Kings 2:16; 2 Chronicles 20:14; Isaiah 11:2; 40:13; 63:14; Ezekiel 11:5; 37:1)

6-The Holy Spirit is called the Spirit of the Lord in the New Testament:

- **Acts 8:39**, “*When they came up out of the water, **the Spirit of the Lord** snatched Philip away; and the eunuch no longer saw him, but went on his way rejoicing.*” (cf. Luke 4:18; Acts 5:9)

7-The Holy Spirit is called the Spirit of the Living God:

- **2 Corinthians 3:2-3**, “*You are our letter, written in our hearts, known and read by all men; being manifested that you are a letter of Christ, cared for by us, written not with ink but **with the Spirit of the living God**, not on tablets of stone but on tablets of human hearts.*”

8-The Holy Spirit is called the Spirit of Christ:

- **Romans 8:9**, “*However, you are not in the flesh but in **the Spirit**, if indeed **the Spirit of God** dwells in you. But if anyone does not have **the Spirit of Christ**, he does not belong to Him.*”

This verse refers to the Holy Spirit as “the Spirit,” “the Spirit of God,” and “the Spirit of Christ” and therefore clearly affirms the deity of the Holy Spirit.

- **1 Peter 1:10-11**, “*As to this salvation, the prophets who prophesied of the grace that would come to you made careful searches and inquiries, seeking to know what person or time **the Spirit of Christ** within them was indicating as He predicted the sufferings of Christ and the glories to follow.*”

9-The Holy Spirit is called the Spirit of His Son:

- **Galatians 4:6**, “*Because you are sons, God has sent forth **the Spirit of His Son** into our hearts, crying, “Abba! Father!”*”

10-The Holy Spirit is called the Spirit of Jesus:

- **Acts 16:6-8**, “*They passed through the Phrygian and Galatian region, having been forbidden by **the Holy Spirit** to speak the word in Asia; and after they came to Mysia, they were trying to go into Bithynia, and **the Spirit of Jesus** did not permit them; and passing by Mysia, they came down to Troas.*”

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- **Philippians 1:19**, *“for I know that this will turn out for my deliverance through your prayers and the provision of **the Spirit of Jesus Christ**.”*

Scripture very clearly reveals that the Holy Spirit has been assigned divine names and titles. These divine names, titles and associations with the other members of the Trinity clearly provide strong evidence for the Holy Spirit's deity.

Second, Divine Attributes are Appointed to the Holy Spirit.

Not only is the Holy Spirit addressed with divine names and titles, but Scripture also describes the Holy Spirit as possessing the attributes of God. The possession of divine attributes lends further evidence for the Spirit's deity. What divine attributes does the Holy Spirit possess?

1-Sovereignty:

- **1 Corinthians 12:11**, *“But one and the same **Spirit** works all these things, distributing to each one individually just as **He wills**.”*

2-Eternality:

- **John 14:16**, *“I will ask the Father, and He will give you another **Helper**, that **He may be with you forever**;”*
- **Hebrews 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?”*

3-Omniscience:

- **John 14:26**, *“But **the Helper, the Holy Spirit**, whom the Father will send in My name, **He will teach you all things**, and bring to your remembrance all that I said to you.”* (cf. Isaiah 40:13-14; John 16:13; 1 Corinthians 2:10-11)

4-Omnipresence:

- **Psalms 139:7-8**, *“Where can I go from Your Spirit? Or where can I flee from Your presence? If I ascend to heaven, You are there; If I make my bed in Sheol, behold, You are there.”* (cf. John 14:16-17; Ephesians 2:18-22)

5-Omnipotence/Power:

- **Job 33:4**, *“**The Spirit of God** has made me, And the breath of **the Almighty** gives me life.”* (Cf. Zechariah 4:6; Luke 1:35; Isaiah 11:2; Romans 15:13, 19)

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6-Holy:

- **Ephesians 1:13**, *“In Him, you also, after listening to the message of truth, the gospel of your salvation-having also believed, you were sealed in Him with **the Holy Spirit** of promise.”* (cf. Psalm 51:1; Isaiah 63:10-11; Mark 1:8; Luke 1:35; John 14:26; Acts 1:8; 7:15; 10:44; 15:28; 28:25; Romans 1:4; 5:5; 14:17; 15:13, 16; 1 Corinthians 6:19; 1 Corinthians 6:6; 1 Thessalonians 1:5; 2 Timothy 1:14; Titus 3:5; Hebrews 2:4; 10:15; 1 Peter 1:12; 2 Peter 1:21; Jude 20)

7-Truth:

- **John 15:26**, *“When the Helper comes, whom I will send to you from the Father, that is **the Spirit of truth** who proceeds from the Father, He will testify about Me.”* (John 14:16-17; 16:13; 1 John 4:6; 5:6)

8-Goodness:

- **Psalm 143:10**, *“Teach me to do Your will, For You are my God; Let **Your good Spirit** lead me on level ground.”* (cf. Nehemiah 9:20)

9-Love:

- **Romans 15:30**, *“Now I urge you, brethren, by our Lord Jesus Christ and **by the love of the Spirit**, to strive together with me in your prayers to God for me,”*
- **Galatians 5:22-23**, *“But the fruit of the Spirit is **love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law.”***

Certainly Galatians 5:22-23 gives evidence that the Holy Spirit possesses several divine attributes.

10-Glory:

- **1 Peter 4:14**, *“If you are reviled for the name of Christ, you are blessed, **because the Spirit of glory and of God rests on you.”***

11-Grace:

- **Hebrews 10:29**, *“How much severer punishment do you think he will deserve who has trampled under foot the Son of God, and has regarded as unclean the blood of the covenant by which he was sanctified, and has insulted **the Spirit of grace?**”*

12-Life:

- **Romans 8:2**, *“For the law of **the Spirit of life** in Christ Jesus has set you free from the law of sin and of death.”*

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13-Wisdom:

- **Isaiah 11:2**, “*The Spirit of the LORD will rest on Him, The spirit of wisdom and understanding, The spirit of counsel and strength, The spirit of knowledge and the fear of the LORD.*” (cf. Ephesians 1:17)

The Scriptural revelation concerning the attributes of the Holy Spirit points unmistakably to the conclusion that the Holy Spirit is God very God; He possesses full deity.

Third, Divine Actions are Accomplished by the Holy Spirit.

The deity of the Holy Spirit is demonstrated also in His works. Put another way, the work of the Holy Spirit as revealed in Scripture gives evidence to His deity. What works or actions has the Holy Spirit accomplished that give evidence to His deity?

1-The Holy Spirit was involved in creation:

- **Genesis 1:1-2**, “*In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. 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.*” (cf. Psalm 104:30; Isaiah 40:12-14)

- **Job 33:4**, “*The Spirit of God has made me, And the breath of the Almighty gives me life.*”

2-The Holy Spirit was the agent in giving the inspired Scriptures:

- **2 Peter 1:21**, “*for no prophecy was ever made by an act of human will, but men moved by the Holy Spirit spoke from God.*” (cf. 2 Timothy 3:16)

3-The Holy Spirit was involved in the birth of Christ:

- **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.”*

4-The Holy Spirit was involved in the resurrection of Christ:

- **Romans 8:11**, “*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.*” (cf. Romans 1:4; 1 Peter 3:18)

5-The Holy Spirit is involved in the ministry of regeneration:

- **Titus 3:5**, “*He saved us, not on the basis of deeds which we have done in righteousness, but according to His mercy, by the washing of regeneration and renewing by the Holy Spirit,*” (cf. John 3:3-6)

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6-The Holy Spirit is involved in the believers' sanctification:

- **2 Thessalonians 2:13**, “*But we should always give thanks to God for you, brethren beloved by the Lord, because God has chosen you from the beginning for salvation **through sanctification by the Spirit** and faith in the truth.*”
- **1 Peter 1:2**, “*according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, **by the sanctifying work of the Spirit**, to obey Jesus Christ and be sprinkled with His blood: May grace and peace be yours in the fullest measure.*” (cf. Romans 15:16; 1 Corinthians 6:11)

7-The Holy Spirit is involved in the ministry of intercession:

- **Romans 8:26-27**, “*In the same way the Spirit also helps our weakness; for we do not know how to pray as we should, **but the Spirit Himself intercedes** for us with groanings too deep for words; and He who searches the hearts knows what the mind of the Spirit is, because He intercedes for the saints according to the will of God.*”

8-The Holy Spirit is involved in the ministry of conviction:

- **John 16:7-11**, “*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. “And **He**, when He comes, **will convict the world concerning sin and righteousness and judgment**; concerning sin, because they do not believe in Me; and concerning righteousness, because I go to the Father and you no longer see Me; and concerning judgment, because the ruler of this world has been judged.”*”

9-The Holy Spirit is involved in the ministry of indwelling:

- **Galatians 4:6**, “*Because you are sons, God has sent **forth the Spirit of His Son into our hearts**, crying, “Abba! Father!”*”
- **John 14:17**, “*that is **the Spirit of truth**, whom the world cannot receive, because it does not see Him or know Him, but you know Him because **He abides with you and will be in you.**”* (cf. Genesis 41:38; Numbers 27:18; 1 Corinthians 6:19; 1 John 3:24)

10-The Holy Spirit is involved in the ministry of revelation:

- **1 Corinthians 2:9-10**, “*but just as it is written, “**THINGS WHICH EYE HAS NOT SEEN AND EAR HAS NOT HEARD, AND WHICH HAVE NOT ENTERED THE HEART OF MAN, ALL THAT GOD HAS PREPARED FOR THOSE WHO LOVE HIM.**” **For to us God revealed them through the Spirit**; for the Spirit searches all things, even the depths of God.”*”

11-The Holy Spirit is involved in the ministry of filling:

- **Acts 13:52**, “*And the disciples were continually **filled** with joy and **with the Holy Spirit.**”* (Exodus 31:3; Acts 2:1-4; 4:31; 9:17; 13:9; Ephesians 5:18)

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12-The Holy Spirit is involved in the ministry of sealing:

- Ephesians 1:13-14, “*In Him, you also, after listening to the message of truth, the gospel of your salvation-having also believed, **you were sealed in Him with the Holy Spirit of promise**, who is given as a pledge of our inheritance, with a view to the redemption of God's own possession, to the praise of His glory.*” (cf. 2 Corinthians 1:22; 5:5; Ephesians 4:30)

In addition to these divine works, the Holy Spirit is also actively involved in counseling and empowering believers as well as testifying of Christ. Certainly “anyone who accepts Scriptural testimony at its face value comes easily and quickly to the conclusion that the Holy Spirit is God as revealed in His works.” [Walvoord, *The Holy Spirit*, p. 17]

Fourth, Divine Associations are Ascribed to the Holy Spirit.

The Holy Spirit is said to have a divine procession from the other members of the Trinity

The doctrine of procession has to do with the being and eternity of the Holy Spirit in relation to the Father and the Son. This is usually considered as a division of the doctrine of the Trinity.

1-The Holy Spirit proceeds from the Father:

- **1 Corinthians 2:12**, “*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,*” (cf. Psalm 104:30; Romans 8:9)

2-The Holy Spirit proceeds from the Son:

- **John 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.***” (cf. Romans 8:9)

3-The Holy Spirit proceeds from the Father and the Son:

- **John 15:26**, “*When the Helper comes, whom **I will send to you from the Father, that is the Spirit of truth who proceeds from the Father**, He will testify about Me,*” (cf. Luke 24:49; John 16:13-15; Acts 2:33)

4-The Holy Spirit proceeds from heaven:

- **1 Peter 1:12**, “*It was revealed to them that they were not serving themselves, but you, in these things which now have been announced to you through those who preached the gospel to you by **the Holy Spirit sent from heaven-things into which angels long to look.***”

Very clearly the procession of the Holy Spirit from the Father and the Son gives evidence to His deity.

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The Holy Spirit is said to possess equality with the other members of the Trinity

There are several references in Scripture where the Spirit is associated on an equal basis with the Father and the Son and therefore must be God very God.

1-Equality with deity is expressed in the baptismal formula:

- **Matthew 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**.”*

2-Equality with deity is expressed in benediction:

- **2 Corinthians 13:14**, *“The grace of the **Lord Jesus Christ**, and the love of **God**, and the fellowship of the **Holy Spirit**, be with you all.”*

3-Equality with deity is expressed in salvation:

- **1 Peter 1:2**, *“according to the foreknowledge of **God the Father**, by the sanctifying work of the **Spirit**, to obey **Jesus Christ** and be sprinkled with His blood...”*

4-Equality with deity is expressed in the distribution of spiritual gifts:

- **1 Corinthians 12:4-6**, *“Now there are varieties of gifts, but the same **Spirit**. And there are varieties of ministries, and the same **Lord**. There are varieties of effects, but the same **God** who works all things in all persons.”*

5-Equality with deity is expressed in Unity:

- **Ephesians 4:4-6**, *“There is one body and **one Spirit**, just as also you were called in one hope of your calling; **one Lord**, one faith, one baptism, **one God and Father** of all who is over all and through all and in all.”*

The Scripture very clearly associates the Holy Spirit to be on an equal basis with the Father and the Son. Equality with deity certainly proves that the Holy Spirit is indeed God.

CONCLUSION:

The Scripture very clearly reveals that the Holy Spirit is assigned divine names and titles; possesses divine attributes, performs divine actions/works, proceeded from divine persons and is viewed as equal with divine persons. The only conclusion that can be drawn when answering the question, “Who is the Holy Spirit?” is that He is God very God!

APPLICATION QUESTION:

How often do you live your life in light of the Holy Spirit's presence dwelling in you? What needs to change in your life as you face the realization that God very God dwells in you? Does this affect your thoughts, actions and speech?