



## BIBLICAL TRAINING CENTER

August 18, 2019

### The Holy Spirit & Salvation – Nature of the Holy Spirit

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#### 1. Why this class?

- a. Jesus said the Holy Spirit plays a **central role** in our lives today. So, it's important to understand **who He is** and **how He's involved** in our salvation.

*John 14:16–17* – “And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Helper, to be with you forever, even **the Spirit of truth**, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees him nor knows him. You know him, for he dwells with you and **will be in you.**”

- b. We already hear a lot about the Holy Spirit in the church. Most Sunday teaching is on **pastoral theology** (godly living). But it's helpful to also do **systematic theology** on topics like pneumatology (study of the Holy Spirit) where topics are covered more exhaustively.

#### Who is the Holy Spirit?

#### 2. Why is He sometimes called the ‘Holy Ghost?’

- a. The word ‘**ghost**’ today makes us think of the **soul of a dead person**. It is often associated with **fear**. There is at least one passage where it is translated this way (Lk. 24:37, 39). However, that's not the normal use of the word. It's better to translate the word as ‘Spirit’ (as in, non-material being).

Greek word *pneuma* (πνεῦμα) – spirit, breath, wind

Hebrew word *ruah* (רוּחַ) – spirit, air, wind, breath

For some reason, in 1611, the **King James Version translators** chose to translate these words as ‘ghost’ when referring to the Holy Spirit. And therefore, this phrase is still used by some today.

### 3. Deity of the Holy Spirit

#### a. The Holy Spirit is 3<sup>rd</sup> person of the Trinity

Christians believe **God is a Trinity or Tri-Unity**. We believe in **one God** who exists eternally in **three** distinct persons (Father, Son, Holy Spirit).

*There is one God.*

*Isaiah 44:6* – Thus says the LORD, the King of Israel and his Redeemer, the LORD of hosts: “I am the first and I am the last; **besides me there is no god.**

*Isaiah 43:10* – “**Before me no god was formed, nor shall there be any after me.**

*The Father is God.*

“Our **Father** in heaven, hallowed be your name...” (Matt. 6:9)

“Grace, mercy, and peace from **God the Father**...” (1 Tim. 1:2)

*The Son is God.*

*Colossians 2:9* – For in him [Jesus] the whole **fullness of deity dwells** bodily...

*Titus 2:13* – “waiting for our blessed hope, the appearing of the glory of our great **God and Savior Jesus Christ**...”

*The Holy Spirit is God.*

**This is the point of today’s class! See evidence below.**

- b. **The Holy Spirit has the qualities (aka, attributes) of God.** These are **incommunicable attributes** that are unique to God **alone**. **Communicable** attributes are attributes he gives to his creatures (e.g., love, mercy, righteousness). But only God has **incommunicable** attributes.

- **Omnipotence.** The Holy Spirit has unlimited **power**.

Holy Spirit created the world – *Genesis 1:1, 2* – “In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth. The earth was without form and void, and

darkness was over the face of the deep. And the **Spirit of God** was hovering over the face of the waters.”

- **Omniscience.** The Holy Spirit **knows** all things.

*1 Corinthians 2:11* – “...no one comprehends the thoughts of God except the **Spirit of God.**”

- **Omnipresence.** The Holy Spirit is **everywhere** at once.

*Psalm 139:7* – “Where shall I go from **your Spirit**? Or where shall I flee from your presence?”

Can be with all believers at once – *John 14:17* – “...even the **Spirit of truth**, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees him nor knows him. You know him, for he dwells with you and will be in [each of] you.”

- **Eternality.** The Holy Spirit is eternal, has no beginning or **end**.

*Hebrews 9:14* – “...through **the eternal Spirit** offered himself without blemish to God, purify our conscience from dead works to serve the living God.”

- **Holiness.** The Holy Spirit is **pure** and perfect. He is separate from anything unclean.

Called Spirit of Holiness – *Romans 1:4* – “[Jesus] was declared to be the Son of God in power according to **the Spirit of holiness** by his resurrection from the dead...”

Does not dwell with sin – *Psalm 51:11* – “Cast me not away from your presence, and take not your Holy Spirit from me.”

- **Truth.** The Holy Spirit doesn’t just speak the truth, but He **is** truth (cf., Jn. 14:6).

*John 14:17* – “...even **the Spirit of truth**, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees him nor knows him. You know him, for he dwells with you and will be in you.”

*John 16:13* – “When the Spirit of truth comes, **he will guide you into all the truth**, for he will not speak on his own authority, but whatever he hears he will speak, and he will declare to you the things that are to come.”

- **Life** (the Holy Spirit “cannot not be” but exists necessarily; cf., “Pure Actuality” in philosophy).

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

c. The Holy Spirit is called ‘**God**’ in Scripture.

- The Holy Spirit is used interchangeably with the word ‘God.’

*Acts 5:3,4* – “But Peter said, “Ananias, why has Satan filled your heart to **lie to the Holy Spirit**... You have not lied to man but **to God**.”

*1 Corinthians 3:16* – “Do you not know that you are **God’s temple** and that **God’s Spirit** dwells in you?”

- The Holy Spirit is also called the ‘**Lord**.’

*1 Corinthians 12:4–6* – “Now there are varieties of gifts, but the same **Spirit**; and there are varieties of service, but the **same Lord**; and there are varieties of activities, but it is the **same God** who empowers them all in everyone.”

- The Holy Spirit is **named** alongside the Father and Son.

*Matthew 28:19* – “Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the **Father** and of the **Son** and of the **Holy Spirit**...”

*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.”

## 4. The early church believed in deity of the Holy Spirit

The early church believed the Holy Spirit was deity.

Ignatius (AD 50-108) – “Study, therefore, to be established... in the **Son**, and in the **Father**, and in the **Spirit**...”<sup>1</sup>

Justin Martyr (AD 100-165) – Referring to the baptismal formula in Matt 28:19 – “...in the name of **God, the Father** and Lord of the universe, and of our Saviour **Jesus Christ**, and of the **Holy Spirit**, they then receive the washing with water.”<sup>2</sup>

Nicene Creed (AD **325**) – “I believe in the **Holy Ghost**, the Lord and Giver of Life; who proceeds from the Father and the Son; who with the Father and the Son together is **worshipped** and **glorified**; who spoke by the prophets.”<sup>3</sup>

Athanasian Creed (AD 450–600) – “...**we worship one God in Trinity**, and Trinity in Unity; Neither confounding the persons nor dividing the substance. For there is one **person** of the **Father**, another of the **Son**, and another of the **Holy Spirit**... So the Father is God, the Son is God, and the Holy Spirit is God; And yet **they are not three Gods, but one God**.”<sup>4</sup>

## 5. Personhood of the Holy Spirit

Some people tend to think that the Holy Spirit is **impersonal**. They speak of the Holy Spirit as “it” and not “**He**.” The Jehovah’s Witnesses refer to the Holy Spirit as “**God’s active force**” and liken the Holy Spirit to electricity. However, the biblical, historic teaching about the Holy Spirit is that He has **all the elements of personhood**. He has the same qualities of personhood as the Father and the Son.

- a. The Holy Spirit has a mind.

He **teaches** – *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 have said to you.”

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<sup>1</sup> Ignatius of Antioch, “The Epistle of Ignatius to the Magnesians,” in *The Apostolic Fathers with Justin Martyr and Irenaeus*, ed. Alexander Roberts, James Donaldson, and A. Cleveland Coxe, vol. 1, *The Ante-Nicene Fathers* (Buffalo, NY: Christian Literature Company, 1885), 64.

<sup>2</sup> Justin Martyr, “The First Apology of Justin,” in *ibid.*, 183.

<sup>3</sup> “Nicene Creed,” in *Historic Creeds and Confessions*, electronic ed. (Oak Harbor: Lexham Press, 1997).

<sup>4</sup> “Athanasian Creed,” in *ibid.*

He **understands** God's thoughts – 1 Corinthians 2:11 – “For who knows a person's thoughts except the spirit of that person, which is in him? So also no one **comprehends the thoughts of God** except the Spirit of God.”

b. Holy Spirit has a **will**.

1 Corinthians 12:11 – “All these are empowered by one and the same **Spirit**, who apportions to each one individually **as he wills**.”

c. Holy Spirit has **emotions**.

Ephesians 4:30 – “And **do not grieve** the Holy Spirit of God, by whom you were sealed for the day of redemption.”

d. Holy Spirit is referred to by personal **pronouns**.

Acts 13:2 – “While they were worshiping the Lord and fasting, the Holy Spirit said, ‘Set apart for **me** Barnabas and Saul for the work to which **I** have called them.’”

e. His **works** show that He has personhood. **Impersonal forces** cannot do the following:<sup>5</sup>

- Teach (Jn. 16:13)
- Guide (Isa. 48:16; Rom. 8:14)
- Comfort (John 14:26)
- Pray (Rom. 8:26)
- Convince (John 16:8)
- Restrain (Gen. 6:3; Isa. 59:19; 2 Thess. 2:7)
- Command (Acts 8:29; 13:2; 16:7)

## 6. Typology of the Holy Spirit

The Bible uses some interesting words to describe the Holy Spirit. These words seem to emphasize some aspect about His nature and ministry.

a. **Dove**

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<sup>5</sup> John F. Walvoord, *The Holy Spirit* (Galaxie Software, 2008), 6.

All four gospels mention the **Holy Spirit descending on Jesus** in the form of a dove (Matt. 3:16; Mark 1:10; Luke 3:22; John 1:32).

This could be indicating the Holy Spirit's (1) beauty; (2) gentleness; (3) peace; (4) heavenly nature and origin.<sup>6</sup>

b. **Fire**

*Matthew 3:11* – “I [John the Baptist] baptize you with water for repentance, but he who is coming after me [Jesus] is mightier than I, whose sandals I am not worthy to carry. **He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire.**

This probably refers to the fact that people who believe in Jesus' atoning sacrifice are forgiven and made pure. Or, it highlights the Holy Spirit's deity in that “our God is a consuming fire.” (Heb. 12:29)

c. **Water**

John 4:14 – [Jesus talking to woman at the well] but whoever drinks of the water that I will give him will never be thirsty again. **The water that I will give him will become in him a spring of water welling up to eternal life.”**

Another passage makes it clear he was referring to the Holy Spirit:

John 7:37–39 – 37 On the last day of the feast, the great day, Jesus stood up and cried out, “If anyone thirsts, let him come to me and drink. 38 Whoever believes in me, as the Scripture has said, ‘Out of his heart will flow rivers of living water.’ ” 39 Now **this he said about the Spirit**, whom those who believed in him were to receive, for as yet the Spirit had not been given, because Jesus was not yet glorified.

Water probably refers to the abundance of the Spirit's presence and that believers would be washed and made clean through Jesus' atonement.

d. **Wind**

John 3:8 – **The wind blows where it wishes**, and you hear its sound, but you do not know where it comes from or where it goes. **So it is with everyone who is born of the Spirit.”**

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<sup>6</sup> Ibid., 19.

This probably refers to the invisible, non-material nature of the Holy Spirit, as well as His powerful influence in the world.

## 7. Works of Holy Spirit

The Holy Spirit's role in the world and our lives **cannot be overstated**. He was/is involved in **all** of the following:

- Creation (Gen. 1:2; Job 33:4; Ps. 104:30)
- Salvation (covered in classed 2 & 3)
- Biblical Inspiration (1 Pet. 1:21)
- Illumination (1 Cor. 2:13-14)
- Guiding (Acts 13:2; 16:6)
- Comforting (Acts 9:31)
- Resurrecting (Rom. 8:11)
- Sanctifying (Rom. 15:16; 1 Pet. 1:2)
- Performing miracles (Gal. 3:2–5; Heb. 2:4)
- Gifting (Acts 2:4; 1 Cor. 12:11)

### Works of the Spirit Throughout History<sup>7</sup>

Selected work of God the Spirit	OT	Continued in NT	New in NT	Continued Today
<i>Creation</i>	X			
<i>Revelation of Scripture</i>	X	X		
<i>Inspiration of Scripture</i>	X	X		
<i>Restraint of sin</i>	X	X		X
<i>Enablement for service</i>	X	X		X
<i>Indwelling</i>	X	X		X
<i>Baptism</i>			X	X
<i>Filling</i>	X	X		X
<i>Sealing</i>			X	X
<i>Anointing</i>			X	X
<i>Regeneration</i>	X	X		X
(Nicodemus was expected to understand this from the Old Testament)				
<i>Sanctification</i>	X	X		X

<sup>7</sup> Robert P. Lightner, *Handbook of Evangelical Theology: A Historical, Biblical, and Contemporary Survey and Review* (Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel Publications, 1995), 111.



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