

## Examining Christian Doctrine

### Lesson 19: The Doctrine of the Holy Spirit Part 1 – The Person of the Holy Spirit

We will now begin a new section in our teaching of the doctrines of the Christians faith: the doctrine of the Holy Spirit. In this lesson we will explore the person of the Holy Spirit, showing His personhood, His relationship to the Trinity, and the names, titles, and metaphors used for the Holy Spirit throughout Scripture.

#### Defining the Nature of the Holy Spirit

The word 'spirit' is the Hebrew word "Ruach" and is "Pneuma" in Greek, both of these words carry the meaning of spirit (the human spirit and Holy Spirit), wind, or breath.

- Genesis 8:1 – "But God remembered Noah... and he sent a wind (ruach) over the earth..."
- Job 12:10 – "In whose hand is the soul of every living thing, and the breath of all mankind.
- John 3:8 – "The wind (pneuma) blows wherever it pleases. You hear its sound, but you cannot tell where it comes from or where it is going. So it is with everyone born of the Spirit (pneuma)."

The use of 'ruach' and 'pneuma' in relation to the Holy Spirit convey the invisible, powerful, and life-giving nature of the Holy Spirit. Like the wind, the Holy Spirit's movements are invisible but its effects are clearly seen. We may not see the Holy Spirit but we can see and feel His presence and His working in our lives. The wind can be powerful and unpredictable to bring about change and transformation. Also like the wind, the movements of the Holy Spirit are free (not bound) and free flowing. The Holy Spirit moves sovereignly as He wills. The wind cannot be controlled by human efforts, but in fact we can be moved by the wind.

Breath, also invisible, is the origin and evidence of life. Thus the Holy Spirit is the one who 'gives us spiritual life' as we are born of the Spirit in an act of new birth. Breath is essential for sustaining life and vitality, thus 'life in the Spirit' is the essential source of life for Christians to live from.

#### Relationship of the Holy Spirit within the Trinity

The ancient Israelites primarily understood the Holy Spirit as an extension or manifestation of Yahweh's divine presence and power rather than a distinct entity separate from Yahweh. However, through the centuries the church adopted the view of co-equality of the Holy Spirit with the Father and Son, affirming the Holy Spirit as the 'third person of the Trinity', distinct in personhood but one in essence.

Trinitarian Doctrinal Statement: The Holy Spirit is the Third Person of the Trinity, eternally existing together with the Father and the Son in the one Godhead. He is fully God, as are the Father and the Son, possessing the same attributes of independence, immutability, omnipresence, omnipotence, omniscience, holiness, love, and more. The three share in the one divine essence. Thus, the Holy Spirit is fully God, coequal with the Father and the Son.

#### Biblical Evidence for the Holy Spirit as the Third Person of the Trinity

- Matthew 3:16-17 As soon as Jesus was baptized, he went up out of the water. At that moment heaven was opened, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and alighting on him. <sup>17</sup> And a voice from heaven said, "This is my Son, whom I love; with him I am well pleased."
- Matthew 28:19 – "Therefore go 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 – "May the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all."
- John 14:16-17 – "And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another advocate to help you and be with you forever—the Spirit of truth."
- 1 Peter 4:14 If you are insulted because of the name of Christ, you are blessed, for the Spirit of glory and of God rests on you.

## Attributes of the Deity of the Holy Spirit

- The Holy Spirit share the divine attributes of the Father and Son that affirm the Holy Spirit's deity and personhood:
  - **Omniscience:** 1 Corinthians 2:10-11 – "The Spirit searches all things, even the deep things of God."
  - **Omnipresence:** Psalm 139:7-10 – "Where can I go from your Spirit? Where can I flee from your presence?"
  - **Omnipotence:** Luke 1:35 – "The Holy Spirit will come on you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you."
  - **Eternality:** Hebrews 9:14 – "How much more, then, will the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself unblemished to God."
  - **Called God:** Acts 5:3-4 Then Peter said, "Ananias, how is it that Satan has so filled your heart that you have lied to the Holy Spirit... You have not lied just to human beings but to God."

## The Role of the Holy Spirit in the Trinity

- The distinct role of the Holy Spirit in the Trinity:
  - **In Creation:** Genesis 1:2 – The Spirit of God hovering over the waters, participating in creation.
  - **In Divine Revelation:** 2 Peter 1:21 – "For prophecy never had its origin in the human will, but prophets, though human, spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit."
  - **In Salvation:** John 3:5-6 – "Jesus answered, 'Very truly I tell you, no one can enter the kingdom of God unless they are born of water and the Spirit. Flesh gives birth to flesh, but the Spirit gives birth to spirit.'"
  - **In Sanctification:** 2 Thessalonians 2:13 – "But we ought always to thank God for you, brothers and sisters loved by the Lord, because God chose you as firstfruits to be saved through the sanctifying work of the Spirit and through belief in the truth."

## Identifying the Person of the Holy Spirit

As a member of the Trinity, the Holy Spirit is a distinct and divine person, not merely an impersonal force, power, or manifestation/mode (modalism). Unlike abstract energy, the Holy Spirit possesses personal attributes such as intellect, will, and emotions. The Bible affirms the Holy Spirit's personhood in many ways. Recognizing the Holy Spirit as a person deepens our understanding of His relational and dynamic presence in our spiritual journey.

## The Personhood of the Holy Spirit

- **Intellect of the Holy Spirit:** This speaks to the scriptures describing the Holy Spirit as having a mind, being able to search out the human mind as well as the mind/thoughts of God, and to teach and reveal to the human mind.
  - **Knows:** Romans 8:27 "And he who searches our hearts knows the mind of the Spirit, because the Spirit intercedes for God's people in accordance with the will of God."
  - **Reveals:** 1 Corinthians 2:10-11: " However, as it is written: "What no eye has seen, what no ear has heard, and what no human mind has conceived"— the things God has prepared for those who love him—<sup>10</sup> these are the things God has revealed to us by his Spirit. The Spirit searches all things, even the deep things of God. <sup>11</sup> For who knows a person's thoughts except their own spirit within them? In the same way no one knows the thoughts of God except the Spirit of God.
  - **Teaches:** John 14:26: "But the Advocate, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you all things and will remind you of everything I have said to you."

· **Will of the Holy Spirit:** Because the Holy Spirit has a will he can lead and guide, permit and forbid, speak and pray, love and be grieved.

- **Can Make Decisions/Determinations:** 1 Corinthians 12:11: "All these are the work of one and the same Spirit, and he distributes them to each one, just as he determines (or, wills)."
- **Can Permit/Forbid:** Acts 16:6-7: "Paul and his companions traveled throughout the region of Phrygia and Galatia, having been kept by the Holy Spirit from preaching the word in the province of Asia. When they came to the border of Mysia, they tried to enter Bithynia, but the Spirit of Jesus would not allow them to."

· **Emotions of the Holy Spirit**

- **Can be Grieved:** Ephesians 4:30: "And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, with whom you were sealed for the day of redemption."
- **Can Love:** Romans 15:30: "I urge you, brothers and sisters, by our Lord Jesus Christ and by the love of the Spirit, to join me in my struggle by praying to God for me."

· **Relational Aspects of the Holy Spirit**

- **Guidance:** John 16:13: "But when he, the Spirit of truth, comes, he will guide you into all the truth."
- **Comfort:** John 14:16: "And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another advocate to help you and be with you forever."
- **Intercession:** Romans 8:26-27: "In the same way, the Spirit helps us in our weakness. We do not know what we ought to pray for, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us through wordless groans. And he who searches our hearts knows the mind of the Spirit, because the Spirit intercedes for God's people in accordance with the will of God."

### Names and Titles of the Holy Spirit

**The Comforter (Paraclete):** John 14:16 – "And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another advocate (parakletos) to help you and be with you forever."

The Greek word *paraklētos* is variously translated as "Helper" (ESV), "Advocate" (NIV), "Comforter" (KJV), and "Counselor" (RSV). The term has a range of meanings, reflecting its rich and multifaceted role:

1. **Helper:** This translation emphasizes the assisting and supporting role of the Holy Spirit, providing believers with aid in their spiritual journey.
2. **Advocate:** This legal term underscores the Holy Spirit's role as a defender or representative, interceding on behalf of believers (cf. 1 John 2:1, where Jesus Himself is called an advocate).
3. **Comforter:** This emphasizes the Spirit's role in providing consolation and encouragement, particularly in times of trouble and distress.
4. **Counselor:** This term highlights the guidance and wisdom provided by the Holy Spirit, leading believers into all truth (John 16:13).

Jesus refers to the Holy Spirit as "another Paraclete" (Greek: *allon paraklēton*), indicating that the Spirit will continue the same work that Jesus has begun. The use of *allon* (another of the same kind) implies that the Holy Spirit will be similar/identical to Jesus in function and presence.

**Spirit of Truth:** John 16:13 – "But when he, the Spirit of truth, comes, he will guide you into all the truth."

**Spirit of God:** 1 Corinthians 3:16 – "Don't you know that you yourselves are God's temple and that God's Spirit dwells in your midst?"

**Spirit of Christ:** Romans 8:9 – "You, however, are not in the realm of the flesh but are in the realm of the Spirit, if indeed the Spirit of God lives in you. And if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, they do not belong to Christ."

**Spirit of Adoption:** Romans 8:15 – "The Spirit you received does not make you slaves, so that you live in fear again; rather, the Spirit you received brought about your adoption to sonship. And by him we cry, 'Abba, Father.'"

**Spirit of Grace:** Hebrews 10:29 – "How much more severely do you think someone deserves to be punished who has trampled the Son of God underfoot, who has treated as an unholy thing the blood of the covenant that sanctified them, and who has insulted the Spirit of grace?"

**Eternal Spirit:** Hebrews 9:14 How much more, then, will the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself unblemished to God, cleanse our consciences from acts that lead to death...

**Spirit of Glory:** 1 Peter 4:14 If you are insulted because of the name of Christ, you are blessed, for the Spirit of glory and of God rests on you

**The Spirit of Life:** Romans 8:2 because through Christ Jesus the law of the Spirit who gives life has set you free from the law of sin and death.

**The Spirit of Wisdom and Revelation:** Ephesians 1:17 keep asking that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the glorious Father, may give you the Spirit of wisdom and revelation, so that you may know him better.

**The Spirit of Holiness:** Romans 1:4 and who through the Spirit of holiness was appointed the Son of God in power by his resurrection from the dead: Jesus Christ our Lord.

### Metaphors for the Holy Spirit

**Dove:** Luke 3:22 – "And the Holy Spirit descended on him in bodily form like a dove."

- Represents peace, purity, and gentleness of the Holy Spirit.

**Wind:** John 3:8 – "The wind blows wherever it pleases. You hear its sound, but you cannot tell where it comes from or where it is going. So it is with everyone born of the Spirit."

- Speaks to the unpredictability and invisible yet powerful nature of the Holy Spirit's work.

**Fire:** Acts 2:3 – "They saw what seemed to be tongues of fire that separated and came to rest on each of them."

- Symbolizes purification, presence, and power of the Holy Spirit.

**Water:** John 7:37-39 – "On the last and greatest day of the festival, Jesus stood and said in a loud voice, 'Let anyone who is thirsty come to me and drink. Whoever believes in me, as Scripture has said, rivers of living water will flow from within them.' By this he meant the Spirit."

- Indicates the life-giving, cleansing, and sustaining presence of the Holy Spirit.

**Oil:** 1 Samuel 16:13 – "So Samuel took the horn of oil and anointed him in the presence of his brothers, and from that day on the Spirit of the LORD came powerfully upon David."

- Symbolizes anointing, consecration, and empowerment by the Holy Spirit.

**Seal:** Ephesians 1:13 – "And you also were included in Christ when you heard the message of truth, the gospel of your salvation. When you believed, you were marked in him with a seal, the promised Holy Spirit."

- Denotes ownership, authenticity, and security given by the Holy Spirit.

**An Earnest:** Eph. 1:14 Which is the earnest of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, unto the praise of his glory.

- Denotes a guarantee. A pledge or down payment that secures a future transaction. Such as earnest money in real estate, which is a small portion of the total payment made upfront to demonstrate commitment and secure the deal.