

The Holy Spirit

- An Introduction -

The debate has continued for almost 2000 years, concerning the nature of the Holy Spirit. The arguments are many, that the Holy Spirit is either a distinct third divine being, or is a third manifestation of one divine being (the Father and the Son being the first and second manifestations), or is the one divine being known as “God”. Whatever the nature of the Holy Spirit, it is clear that the Spirit is a personal being - meaning a being who exhibits personality.

1. He knows the “deep things” of God (*1Cor. 2:11*).
2. He has feelings. He can be “grieved” (*Ephesians 4:30*).
3. He leads (*Acts 20:28*)
4. He acts in an authoratative manner (*Romans 8:26*)
5. He can be tested and lied to (*Acts 5:9*)
6. He would “teach” (*John 14:26*)
7. He would bring to their remembrance things that Jesus taught (*John 14:26*)
8. He speaks (*Acts 13:2, Acts 16:6-7*)
9. He would “testify” of Jesus (*John 15:26*)
10. He would convict concerning sin, judgment (*John 16:8*)
11. He would guide the disciples into truth (*John 16:13*)
12. He would predict things to come (*John 16:13*)
13. He would glorify Jesus (*John 16:14*)
14. He would comfort (*Acts 9:31*)
15. He would “fill” the disciples (*Acts 13:52*)
16. He would pour God’s love into their hearts (*Romans 5:5*)
17. He bears witness that we are children of God (*Romans 8:16*)
18. He helps us with our weakness (*Romans 8:16*)
19. He “makes intercession for the saints” (*Romans 8:27*).
20. He gives us peace and joy (*Romans 14:17*)
21. He gives us hope (*Romans 14:17*)
22. He gives us “fruits” like love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness (*Gal. 5:22*)
23. He gives us “encouragement in Christ” (*Philippians 2:1*)

The wording definitely suggests that the Spirit IS a living personal being.
But which being?

If “God” is one divine being, who manifests as three divine persons, then God (a Father) did not beget a Son in His exact image. He did not then “give” that Son to carry the sins of the world, that whoever believes in Him, might have eternal life.

If God, is three distinct divine persons who have always existed, then again, God (the Father of us all) did not beget a “Son” in His own image. He did not give that Son to carry the sin of all mankind - that all who believe might be saved by believing in Him.

This is why our understanding of the Holy Spirit is so very important. Many years ago, as part of church service, I used to sing, “Praise Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. Amen.” I no longer sing those words. There is no command, and there is no example in Scripture, that we should sing praises to the Holy Spirit, or glorify the Spirit, or thank the Spirit, or pray to the Spirit. We are commanded to pray to the Father, in the name of His Son. We are commanded to thank the Father for all things, in the name of His Son Jesus the Christ.

This is the crux of the matter. What God do we worship? This is why the debate is so important.

As a child, I was taught to sing, “Into my heart, into my heart, come into my heart Lord Jesus”. I still sing those words.

The exact nature of “the Spirit” was and is a mystery. Just exactly how Jesus communicates with us, and lives in us, the disciples could not understand, and we cannot understand, except to say, “by His Spirit”. But I think we can consider the evidence for what the Spirit is not.

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