

THE DEITY AND REPRESENTATIONS OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

THE DEITY OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

- When ascribing deity to the Holy Spirit, we mean that He is as fully God as the Son and Father are God
- Orthodox Christianity has always held to the deity of the Holy Spirit...the council of Constantinople (381) affirmed this doctrine, just as the Council of Nicea (325) clarified the doctrine of the deity of Christ

Claims to Deity

- Various references to the Holy Spirit are interchangeable with references to 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."*

1 Corinthians 3:16-17 ~ *Do you not know that you are a temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwells in you? If any man destroys the temple of God, God will destroy him, for the temple of God is holy, and that is what you are.*

2 Corinthians 3:17 ~ *Now the Lord is the Spirit; and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty.*

Names of Deity

- He is called God, a fact that can be seen by comparing the following verses:
 1. Isaiah 6:8-9 with Acts 28:25-26
 2. Jeremiah 31:31-34 with Hebrews 10:15-17
- Also, more than a dozen times in Scripture, the Holy Spirit is related by name to the other two Persons of the Trinity:

Matthew 3:16 ~ *After being baptized, Jesus came up immediately from the water; and behold, the heavens were opened, and he saw the Spirit of God descending as a dove and lighting on Him,*

Acts 5:9 ~ *Then Peter said to her, "Why is it that you have agreed together to put the Spirit of the Lord to the test? Behold, the feet of those who have buried your husband are at the door, and they will carry you out as well."*

Acts 16:6-7 ~ *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*

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.*

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

1 Corinthians 6:11 ~ *...but you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, and in the Spirit of our God.*

1 Peter 1:11 ~ *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.*

Attributes of Deity

Omnipresence

Psalm 139:7-10 ~ *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. If I take the wings of the dawn, If I dwell in the remotest part of the sea, Even there Your hand will lead me, And Your right hand will lay hold of me.*

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*

Omniscience

Isaiah 40:13 ~ *Who has directed the Spirit of the LORD, Or as His counselor has informed Him?*

1 Corinthians 2:11 ~ *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*

Omnipotence

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

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.*

Self Existent

Romans 8:2 ~ *For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has set you free...*

Truthful

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*

1 John 5:7 ~ *And it is the Spirit who bears witness, because the Spirit is the truth.*

Eternal

Hebrews 9:14 ~ *Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered Himself...*

Holiness

Matthew 12:32 ~ *Whoever speaks a word against the Son of Man, it shall be forgiven him; but whoever speaks against the Holy Spirit, it shall not be forgiven him, either in this age or in the age to come*

Works of Deity

Creation

Genesis 1:2 ~ *and the Spirit of God was moving over the surface of the waters.*

Psalm 104:24-26, 30 ~ *O Lord, how many are Your works! In wisdom You have made them all; The earth is full of Your possessions. There is the sea, great and broad, In which are swarms without number, Animals both small and great. There the ships move along, And Leviathan, which You have formed to sport in it... You send forth Your Spirit, they are created; And You renew the face of the ground.*

Spiritual Rebirth

- The Holy Spirit causes a rebirth... Regeneration is entirely the work of the Holy Spirit (monergistic regeneration)

John 3:5 ~ *unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.*

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,*

- Human generation produces human life; spiritual regeneration produces spiritual
- The Holy Spirit produces the new birth, but He does it through the instrumentality of the Word of God (1 Peter 1:23)

Inspiration

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.*

- The writers of Scripture were carried along by the Holy Spirit, guaranteeing the inspiration of the books of Scripture
- There is an analogy between the Holy Spirit's generating Christ's humanity and the Spirit's superintending the writers of Scripture - just as the Holy Spirit overshadowed Mary, guaranteeing the sinlessness of Christ's humanity, so the Holy Spirit superintended the human writers to guarantee an inerrant Scripture.

Virgin Birth

Matthew 1:20 ~ *But when he had considered this, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream, saying, "Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary as your wife; for that which has been conceived in her is of the Holy Spirit.*

- The Spirit brought the humanity of Christ into being
- It is too often assumed that Mary the mother of Christ contributed His humanity and that the Holy Spirit contributed His deity; but a moment's reflection would disclose that the deity of Christ was His own from all eternity and therefore was not originated at the time of His birth.
- The Spirit caused the humanity of Christ to originate

Appointing to Eldership

Acts 20:28 ~ *Be on guard for yourselves and for all the flock, among which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to shepherd the church of God which He purchased with His own blood.*

Raising 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.*

Relationships of Deity

- There is an assumed equality with the Father and the Son

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 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*

1 Corinthians 12:4-6 ~ *Now there are varieties of gifts, but the same Spirit. 5 And there are varieties of ministries, and the same Lord. 6 And there are varieties of effects, but the same God who works all things in all persons.*

1 Peter 1:2 ~ *according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, by the sanctifying work of the Spirit, that you may obey Jesus Christ and be sprinkled with His blood: May grace and peace be yours in fullest measure.*

- Also, Jesus states equality with the Holy Spirit:

John 14:16 ~ *And I will ask the Father, and He will give you another Helper, that He may be with you forever;*

- “another” = another of the same kind (*allos*) not another of a different kind (*heteros*)
- The Holy Spirit was another of the same kind as Christ – He would be taking the place of the Son of God in relation to the disciples
- In other words, if Christ is God, then the Spirit, the other Helper of the same kind, is also God

Implications of the Holy Spirit’s Deity

1. In the Holy Spirit, the Triune God comes close, so close as to actually enter into each believer
 - God is even more intimate with us now than in the incarnation and through the operation of the Spirit he has truly become Immanuel, “God with us”
2. The Holy Spirit, being fully divine, is to receive the same honor and respect that we give to the Father and the Son
 - He should not be thought of as in any sense inferior in essence to them, although His role may sometimes be subordinated to theirs.

THE BIBLICAL REPRESENTATIONS OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

- Symbols are often used to communicate messages or describe things further...this is true today and in biblical times
- Long before most man-made symbols were used to represent and promote worldly things, God used figurative language and symbols to convey spiritual truth
 - The entire OT sacrificial system used symbolic items
 - The writers of wisdom literature used symbolism
 - Jesus used object lessons to explain doctrinal concepts
- In a similar way, God used analogies to describe the Person and work of the Holy Spirit
- As long as we don’t allegorize or stretch these analogies beyond reasonable limits, the use of symbols and illustrations can help a great deal in understanding who the Spirit is and what He is doing

Represented as a Dove

Luke 3:21-22 ~ *Now when all the people were baptized, Jesus was also baptized, and while He was praying, heaven was opened, and the Holy Spirit descended upon Him in bodily form like a dove, and a voice came out of heaven, “You are My beloved Son, in You I am well-pleased.”*

- Was it an actual dove?
- The dove portrayed the Holy Spirit coming upon Christ at the beginning of His public ministry and therefore emphasizes the power of the Holy Spirit on Christ for His work’
- Something in the quality and characteristics of the dove served as a vehicle to portray the Holy Spirit
- The dove symbolizes the Holy Spirit as pure and peaceful and gentle

Represented as Wind

Acts 2:1-4 ~ *When the day of Pentecost had come, they were all together in one place. And suddenly there came from heaven a noise like a violent rushing wind, and it filled the whole house where they were sitting*

- Most commentators agree that this wind was probably not a literal gust of air that could be felt...rather the emphasis is on the vivid word picture used to describe the sound of the Holy Spirit's approaching
- So the disciples probably heard the sound of wind but did not necessarily feel a breeze
- The use of wind as a symbol of the Holy Spirit is also used by Christ in John 3:8 to describe the Spirit's sovereign work in regeneration

John 3:8 ~ *The wind blows where it wishes and you hear the sound of it, but do not know where it comes from and where it is going; so is everyone who is born of the Spirit*

- There is a play on words here in the Greek which is hard to see in the English: the word for "wind" and "Spirit" are the same word in Greek: *pneuma*
- Jesus' point is that the work of the Holy Spirit in regeneration is invisible and mysterious like the blowing of the wind...Man controls neither the wind nor the Spirit in regeneration
- It is mysterious in its recipients – in the same way the wind blows freely where it wants to, so does the Holy Spirit regenerate whom He wishes...no one can cause themselves or anyone else to be born again...it is the sovereign work of Almighty God
- It is mysterious in its effects – in the same way the wind cannot be seen but its effects can, so is the case with the regenerating work of the Spirit...we don't know exactly how the new birth occurs...but the effects of the new birth are obvious
- John 3:8 is also probably an allusion to Ezekiel 37:9-14 where the prophet commands the wind to breathe life into the dead bodies (occurs when Israel experiences the New Covenant)

Represented as a Fire

Acts 2:3-4 ~ *And there appeared to them tongues as of fire distributing themselves, and they rested on each one of them. And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit was giving them utterance.*

- God's revelation of Himself by fire was not unusual and would have been understood by the Jews
- May indicate the Lord's presence and works since there was precedence in the OT for fire indicating this (See Ex 3:2; 13:21; Lev 9:24; 10:2)
- It would have denoted the presence of God...that He was in this event

Represented as One Who Seals

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,*

- This "seal" is undoubtedly a reference to the ancient practice of sealing letters or contracts or important documents with sealing wax and impressing that wax with a seal worn on a ring
- There are a number of things the seal signified:

1. Security or Protection

- A seal on a document in that day represented security
- When we became a Christian, God put His Holy Spirit in us...stamped us with his seal which is the Holy Spirit and said "This one is secure and no one can ever touch them"

2. Authenticity

- A seal signifies it as authentic...It is the presence of the Holy Spirit that proves the believer is genuine

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.*

- The presence of the Holy Spirit proves that we are genuinely children of God
- When God gives us his Holy Spirit, it as if He stamps us with a seal that reads: This one's conversion is authentic and certain...everything I promised in Christ is true of this one...this one is a genuine child of mine

3. Ownership

- Sealing is a demonstration of ownership such as in the case of the 144,000 Jews who will be sealed on their foreheads in the Tribulation (Rev 7:1-4)...That mark, that seal, demonstrates ownership, possession
- And when the Holy Spirit seals believers, He marks them as God's divine possessions, who from that moment on entirely and eternally belong to Him
- We are owned by and possessed by God

Represented as a Pledge

2 Corinthians 5:5 ~ *Now He who prepared us for this very purpose is God, who gave to us the Spirit as a pledge.*

Ephesians 1:14 ~ *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.*

- The word "pledge" in Greek is *arrabon* and it has the idea of a down payment, a deposit to guarantee the final purchase of something
- It's earnest money...money which is given as a pledge that the full amount will subsequently be paid
- That's what the Holy Spirit is...He guarantees that we have been purchased and that God has obligated himself to fulfill his promises...The HS is the guarantee of full future possession of salvation
- God has obligated and committed himself to follow through on all His promises and He won't renege
- So in giving the Holy Spirit to us God is not simply promising us our final inheritance but actually providing us with a foretaste of it

Represented as Water

John 7:37-39 ~ *Now on the last day, the great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried out, saying, "If anyone is thirsty, let him come to Me and drink. He who believes in Me, as the Scripture said, 'From his innermost being will flow rivers of living water.'" But this He spoke of the Spirit, whom those who believed in Him were to receive; for the Spirit was not yet given, because Jesus was not yet glorified*

- During the final ritual at the Feast of Tabernacles the priest brought water from the pool of Siloam and poured it in a funnel beside the altar...the event was a joyous one, in anticipation of Messiah's glorious reign (Zech 14:16-21)
- The OT frequently spoke about this cleansing work of Christ and His Spirit for Israel in anticipation of its millennial blessings:

Zechariah 13:1 ~ *In that day a fountain will be opened for the house of David and for the inhabitants of Jerusalem, for sin and for impurity.*

- Thus, water as a symbol of the Holy Spirit signifies eternal life - In the same way water revives that which is barren or dead, so too does the Holy Spirit revive those who are barren or dead spiritually...He is the source of spiritual and eternal life
- Water also signifies a reception of the Holy Spirit (i.e. in fulfillment of the New Covenant – Ezekiel 36:25-27)

Represented as Clothing

Luke 24:49 ~ *And behold, I am sending forth the promise of My Father upon you; but you are to stay in the city until you are clothed with power from on high*

- Here Jesus clearly has the Holy Spirit in mind when he refers to the “promise” and “power” – the Holy Spirit would “clothe” believers
- Just as clothing covers and protects us, so does the Holy Spirit
- The word “clothed” is passive, indicating that this “clothing of the Holy Spirit” is not done by us, but to us