

## Doctrine of the Holy Spirit

### I. Introduction

- A. Pneumatology comes from the Greek terms *pneuma* (spirit) and *logos* (word).
- B. Pneumatology is the study of the Person and work of the Holy Spirit.

### II. The Holy Spirit is a Distinct Person

- A. The Bible contrasts the Holy Spirit with demonic spirits who are also persons (Matt 12:24-29, 1 John 4:1-3); He must be a person to overpower them (cf. Rev 12:7-8).
- B. The church baptizes disciples “in the name of” (i.e., on behalf of) the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit (Matt 28:19); a representative acts on behalf of someone not something.
- C. He is called the Paraclete (Greek *parakletos*), which refers to a personal representative, advocate or helper (John 14:26).
- D. He performs personal actions:
  - 1. He teaches and guides (John 14:26, 16:13, 1 Cor. 2:13).
  - 2. He hears and speaks information (John 16:13).
  - 3. He testifies about the truth (John 15:26-27, Acts 5:31-32, Rom 8:16).
  - 4. He speaks audibly in the first person (Acts 10:19-20, 13:2).
  - 5. He thinks and knows information (Rom 8:26-27; 1 Cor. 2:10-11).
  - 6. He makes authoritative decisions (Acts 15:28, 16:6-7, 1 Cor. 12:11).
  - 7. He establishes various ministries (Acts 13:2-4, 20:28, 1 Cor. 12:4-11).
- E. He receives personal actions:
  - 1. He can be grieved (Eph 4:30).
  - 2. He can be lied to (Acts 5:3-4).
  - 3. He can be tempted (Acts 5:9).
  - 4. He can be insulted (Heb 10:29).
- F. He is not just another name or mode of the Father or the Son.
  - 1. He is "another Helper" with the Son (cf. John 14:16, 1 John 2:1).
  - 2. He is sent by the Father (John 14:16-17; 14:26, 15:26).
  - 3. He is sent by Jesus Christ (John 15:26; 16:7).
  - 4. He gives glory to Jesus Christ (John 16:13-14).
  - 5. He intercedes with the Father (Rom 8:26-27).
- G. He is mentioned with the Father and the Son:
  - 1. At the baptism of Jesus (Luke 3:21-22)
  - 2. At the baptism of disciples (Matt 28:19)
  - 3. In the gifting of believers (1 Cor. 12:4-6)
  - 4. In the unity of the gospel (Eph 4:4-6)
  - 5. In the work of salvation (1 Pet 1:2)

### III. The Holy Spirit is God

- A. Blaspheming the Holy Spirit is worse than blaspheming Jesus Christ (Matt 12:31-32).
- B. He is commonly equated with God (Yahweh).
  - 1. Lying to the Holy Spirit is lying to God (Acts 5:3-4).
  - 2. We are a temple of God, the Holy Spirit (cf. 1 Cor. 3:16-17, 6:19-20).
  - 3. He is the LORD who spoke to Isaiah (cf. Acts 28:25-27, Isa 6:1-10).
  - 4. He is the LORD who appeared to Moses (cf. 2 Cor. 3:17-18, Ex 34:28-35).
  - 5. He is the LORD who spoke to ancient Israel (cf. Heb 3:7-11, Ps 95:6-11).
  - 6. He is the LORD who spoke to Jeremiah (cf. Heb 10:15-17, Jer. 31:33-34).

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- C. He possesses the unique attributes of God.
  - 1. He is eternal (Heb 9:14).
  - 2. He is omniscient (John 16:13, 1 Cor. 2:10-11).
  - 3. He is omnipresent (Ps 139:7-10).
  - 4. He is omnipotent (Ps 104:30, Rom 15:18-19).
- D. He performs the unique works of God.
  - 1. Creation (Gen 1:2; Job 33:4; Ps 104:30)
  - 2. Incarnation (Matt 1:18-20; Luke 1:35)
  - 3. Resurrection (Rom 1:4; 8:11; cf. Gal 1:1; John 2:19)
  - 4. Inspiration (Acts 1:16, 1 Pet 1:10-11, 2 Pet 1:20-21)
  - 5. Illumination (Ex 28:3, Isa 11:2, 1 Cor. 2:12-14)
  - 6. Revelation (Luke 2:26, Acts 20:23, 21:11, 1 Tim 4:1)
  - 7. Salvation (Rom 8:1-27, 1 Cor. 12:12-13, Titus 3:5)
  - 8. Administration (Acts 13:2-4, 20:28, 1 Cor. 12:4-11)

## IV. Answering Common Objections

- A. The New Testament uses neuter pronouns to refer to the Holy Spirit
  - 1. The Greek term for “spirit” (*pneuma*) is grammatically neuter, but grammatical gender is not always related to natural gender.
  - 2. For example, the New Testament uses neuter pronouns to refer to Jesus and John the Baptist because the Greek term for young child (*paidion*) is also grammatically neuter (Matt 2:13, Luke 1:59, 62).
- B. Personal language is mere personification
  - 1. According to this logic, the Father and the Son would also not be Persons.
  - 2. The Greek term for “spirit” can refer to spiritual attributes or spiritual beings (e.g., angels or demons) depending on the context; therefore, personal language indicates that the Holy Spirit truly is a Person.
  - 3. Throughout the New Testament, the Holy Spirit spoke to people with audible words using first person pronouns, which is impossible for a mere personification.
- C. The New Testament sometimes refers to the Holy Spirit using impersonal language (e.g., as a fire, as a dove, as power, being poured out, or filling human beings).
  - 1. God also appeared to people as a fire (Gen 15:17, Ex 3:2-4).
  - 2. Jesus appeared to John as a slain lamb with seven horns (Rev 5:6).
  - 3. Jesus is also called the power and wisdom of God (1 Cor. 1:24, 30).
  - 4. Other people were also figuratively poured out (Isa 53:12, 2 Tim 4:6).
  - 5. The Father fills the saints; the Son fills all things (Eph 3:17-19; 4:10).
- D. Paul omits the Holy Spirit from the salutations of his epistles.
  - 1. An argument from silence is inherently unreliable if counter evidence exists.
  - 2. Paul associates the Father, Son and Spirit elsewhere (1 Cor 12:4-6, 2 Cor 13:14).
  - 3. Peter also associates the Father, Son and Holy Spirit in his epistle (1 Pet 1:2).
  - 4. The Holy Spirit abides with us forever; no salutation is needed (John 14:16).
  - 5. The Holy Spirit works to glorify the Son rather than Himself (John 16:13-14).

## Sources

*Lectures in Systematic Theology*, Henry C. Thiessen  
*Outlines on Systematic Theology*, Robert M. Bowman, Jr.