

THE DEITY OF THE SPIRIT

Theme: The Bible presents the Holy Spirit to us as possessing full deity.

(All Scripture is taken from The New King James Version, unless otherwise indicated.)

In our last study, we established that the Holy Spirit is a Person. What follows in this study is an effort to establish of what kind of Person He is. As we will see, He is deity. (The word ‘deity’, by the way, comes from the Latin *deus*, which means ‘God’.).

The Triune Godhead (the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit—three divine Persons, one in substance but distinct in individual subsistence)—exists eternally. All three Persons are, each one, full deity; and this has been and will be eternally so. But the doctrine of the deity of the Holy Spirit—as is also true of the doctrine of the Trinity itself—is something that mankind has not always known or understood. It is something that is known to human beings by God’s gracious revelation. And it is known by human beings ‘inductively’ through Scripture rather than ‘explicitly expressed’ in Scripture. That is, we understand and know the Holy Spirit’s nature as deity by putting various passages together that speak of the Holy Spirit.

In this way, the doctrine of the deity of the Holy Spirit has been revealed to us ...

I. THROUGH THE ATTRIBUTES HE IS SAID TO POSSESS.

The things that are said to be true of the Holy Spirit are such as can only be said of Someone who is God:

- A. He is said to be omniscient (all-knowing) with respect to the things of God—searching even the deep things of God and knowing them. Concerning the spiritual truths of the faith, 1 Corinthians 2:10-11 tells us, “But God has revealed them to us through His Spirit. For the Spirit searches all things, yes, the deep things of God. For what man knows the things of a man except the spirit of the man which is in him? Even so no one knows the things of God except the Spirit of God.”
- B. He is also said to be omnipresent (everywhere-present)—in such a way that there is not a place anywhere that anyone can go and not be in His presence. In Psalm 139:7, King David asks, “Where can I go from Your Spirit? Or where can I flee from Your presence?”
- C. He is said to be omnipotent (all-powerful) with respect to the workings of God—so that the things God says that He does are also said to be done by His Spirit. In Zechariah 4:6, The Lord affirms, “‘Not by might nor by power, but by My Spirit,’ says the Lord of hosts.”

II. THROUGH THE ACTS HE IS SAID TO PERFORM.

Some of the works that the Holy Spirit are said to perform are—by nature—works that can only be done by Someone who is Himself truly God:

- A. The Holy Spirit, for example, was involved in the creation of the world. Genesis 1:2 tells us that, at creation, “the Spirit of God was hovering over the face of the waters.” In Job 33:4, Elihu testified to Job, “The Spirit of God has made me, and the breath of the Almighty gives me life.” In Psalm 104:30, we’re told of the psalmist’s praise of God

for His providential care for His creatures: “You send forth Your Spirit, they are created; and You renew the face of the earth.”

- B. It was by the Holy Spirit that Jesus Christ—the Son of God in human flesh—was conceived in the womb of Mary. In Matthew 1:20, Joseph was told to take Mary as his wife; because “that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Spirit.” Similarly, in Luke 1:35, Mary was told by the angel, “The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Highest will overshadow you; therefore, also, that Holy One who is to be born will be called the Son of God.” By definition, only Someone who is God can conceive 'the Son of God'. And yet, we're told that the Holy Spirit did this.
- C. Scripture—which is self-declared to be ‘God-breathed’ (2 Timothy 3:16)—was given by the direct agency of the Holy Spirit. In 1 Corinthians 2:10-14, Paul tells us that human wisdom cannot—of itself—discern the wisdom of God or know spiritual realities;

But God has revealed them to us through His Spirit. For the Spirit searches all things, yes, the deep things of God. For what man knows the things of a man except the spirit of the man which is in him? Even so no one knows the things of God except the Spirit of God. Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is from God, that we might know the things that have been freely given to us by God. These things we also speak, not in words which man's wisdom teaches but which the Holy Spirit teaches, comparing spiritual things with spiritual. But the natural man does not receive the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him; nor can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned (1 Corinthians 2:10-14).

Similarly, in 2 Peter 2:21, the apostle Peter affirms that “prophecy never came by the will of man, but holy men of God spoke as they were moved by the Holy Spirit.”

III. THROUGH THE NAMES TO WHICH HE IS CONNECTED.

The very names by which the Holy Spirit is referred to or are associated with in Scripture testify to His deity. This is demonstrated in at least two notable ways:

- A. The same Person is called either “the Lord” or “God” and “the Holy Spirit” in the same immediate context. In Acts 5:2, when Ananias conspired with his wife to lie about an offering they made, and to deceitfully keep back a portion for themselves, Peter asked him, “Ananias, why has Satan filled your heart to lie to the Holy Spirit ...?”; and then in verse 4 said, “You have not lied to men but to God.” In Acts 16—in the Macedonian Call—Paul and his missionary team were forbidden by the Holy Spirit from preaching in Asia (v. 6), and then, were not permitted by the Holy Spirit to go to Bithynia (v. 7). But when Paul heard in a vision the call to come to Macedonia, we read that they sought immediately to go there, “concluding that the Lord had called us to preach the gospel to them” (v. 10). And even the Lord Jesus told His disciples—just before going to the cross;

I will pray the Father, and He will give you another Helper, that He may abide with you forever—the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees Him nor knows Him; but you know Him, for He dwells with you and will be in you (John 14:16-17)

- And He then adds, “I will not leave you orphans; I will come to you” (v. 18).
- B. Things said by God in the Old Testament are said to be spoken by the Holy Spirit in the New Testament. In Exodus 17:2-7, we’re told the story of how the people of Israel contended with God in the wilderness for water; but in Hebrews 3:7-9, we read that the Holy Spirit says that it was against Him that the people hardened their hearts and contended. Likewise, in Isaiah 6:8-10, we’re told of how the Lord told the prophet that He would harden the hearts of the people to whom the prophet preached; but in Acts 28:25-27, the apostle Paul quoted those words to his own unbelieving Jewish brethren and said, “The Holy Spirit spoke rightly through Isaiah the prophet to our fathers ...” (Acts 28:25). Or consider how, in Jeremiah 31:31-34, we read of how the Lord made the great promise of the New Covenant; and yet, in Hebrews 10:15-17, those words of promise are said to have been spoke by the Holy Spirit.

IV. THROUGH THE RELATIONSHIPS TO WHICH HE IS ASSOCIATED.

The Holy Spirit is presented in the Bible as being in a relationship of ‘tri-unity’ with the Father and the Son:

- A. The Holy Spirit was present with the Father at the Son’s earthly baptism—with the voice of the Father declaring, “This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased”; and with the Holy Spirit descending upon Him in the form of a dove (Matthew 3:16-17).
- B. It is in the name of all three Persons that believers are to be baptized. Jesus taught us in the Great Commission to go and make disciples, “baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit” Matthew 28:19).
- C. It is by the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit that Paul offered a blessing to the saints; saying, “The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all. Amen” (2 Corinthians 13:14).
- D. And finally, note that it is not only through the work of the Father (Ephesians 1:3-6), and the Son (vv. 7-12), but also through the Holy Spirit (vv. 13-14) that Paul says our salvation is accomplished.

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These things being true—and the Holy Spirit’s deity being affirmed in Scripture though an inductive study of the things it tells us about Him—consider this: Among the many other ways that God has dignified humanity, God the Holy Spirit has been sent to inhabit those that God the Father has chosen and that God the Son has redeemed. As Jesus said to His followers before going to the cross concerning the Holy Spirit, “He dwells with you and will be in you” (John 14:17).

This means, then, that as redeemed human beings, we are nothing less the dwelling place of God on earth. “Do you not know that you are the temple of God and that the Spirit of God dwells in you?” (1 Corinthians 3:16). What a glorious honor! What a great responsibility we have to live in a manner that is consistent with what we are!