

Truth and Spirit Ministries

The Holy Spirit

By Denise Bostic

Fact or Fiction? *Is the Holy Spirit a Person or a force?*

There are various beliefs among Christianity today regarding the Godhead. Some believe God to be one divine being that manifests Himself in three ways. (*Unitarianism*) While others believe in two divine beings within the Godhead. (*Binitarianism*). This belief is that there are two distinct beings in the Godhead –The Father and Jesus with the belief that the Holy Spirit is not distinct being, but only the power or force of God. Some with this belief identify Jesus and the Holy Spirit as the same being. And lastly, there is the belief that God is a Trinity (*Trinitarianism*). This belief is that there are three, distinct beings within the Godhead, the Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

The division over these doctrinal beliefs lies in the Bible's statement that God is One and lack of knowledge concerning the Holy Spirit. I personally believe in the Trinity because I believe that it is the one supported by scripture. Although the word Trinity is not found in the Bible, I believe that God has chosen to reveal Himself to man in this manner in His Holy Word and experientially.

God has revealed Himself in plural terminology within the scriptures. At the creation of the earth and man as recorded in *Genesis 1:26*, God said, “**Let us make man in our image, after our likeness...**” As the prophet Isaiah had a vision of the Lord's glory, he heard the voice of the Lord say, “**Whom shall I send, and who will go for us?**” (*Isaiah 6:8*) In the English language the word "us" means more than one.

We find within God's word that the Holy Spirit has all the characteristics of a divine being or attributes of a person. If the Holy Spirit were only a force, these characteristics or emotions could not be attributed to something so impersonal as a force. Below you will find the scriptural support to back up the validity of these statements.

God is a Spirit.

Some argue that the Holy Spirit is a *Spirit* and therefore not a person. God is a Spirit, whether God the Father, God the Son or God the Holy Spirit. (*John 4:24, I Corinthians 15:45-47, II Corinthians 3:17*) So this argument cannot prove that the Holy Spirit is not a distinct, divine being.

The Trinity

God is revealed in scripture as a *Trinity* – or a union of three divine beings in one God. “**For there are three that bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost: and these three are one.**” (*I John 5:7 KJV*) Other scriptures on the Trinity – *Matthew 28:19, John 14:26, 15:26, 2 Corinthians 13:14, I Peter 1:2*

The Holy Spirit- A Divine Witness

The Holy Spirit was sent from heaven by Jesus and the Father to be a witness from the Godhead in the earth. *I John 5:6-9, Romans 8:16* The Spirit testifies that Jesus came by water (baptism) and blood. (*I John 5:6*) A witness is always an individual who can see and speak.

Jesus revered the Holy Spirit above Himself as Son of Man while on earth. (*Matthew 12:31, Mark 3:28-29, Luke 12:10*) The fact that Jesus (God in the flesh) was bestowing this reverence upon the Holy Spirit proves that He was more than just an impersonal force.

The Person and Work of the Holy Spirit

Jesus called the Holy Spirit a “He” and “Him” revealing that He is a divine, distinct being. *John 14:17,26, John 16:7-16*. Jesus also revealed the purpose of the Holy Spirit coming and the work that He would do in and among believers. *John 16:7-16*

The fact that the Holy Spirit has *emotions* proves that He is a person. Only *a person can display emotions*.

The Holy Spirit:

1. Can be provoked to anger. *Hebrews 3:7-12*
2. Can be vexed. *Isaiah 63:10* [6087 Hebrew] vexed means to worry, have pain, anger, displease, hurt, and be sorry.
3. Can be grieved or made sad. *Ephesians 4:30*
4. Can be tempted. *Acts 6:9*
5. Can strive with man. *Genesis 6:3*
6. Has love, joy and peace, etc. *Galatians 5:22*

The Holy Spirit can manifest in different ways:

The Holy Spirit came down out of heaven in the form of a dove to remain on Jesus. *John 1:33* The Holy Spirit came from heaven as a mighty rushing wind on the day of Pentecost. (*Acts 2:1-2*) The Holy Spirit is not the only member of the Godhead to appear in another form. The Lord spoke to Moses through an angel in a burning bush up on Mt. Sinai; the Lord appeared to Abraham in the form of a man in the company of two angels who were also in the form of men. Jesus also appeared to others in another form after His resurrection. (*Exodus 3:1-4, Genesis 18: 1-2, Mark 16:12*)

Every good gift and every perfect gift has come from the Father. (*James 1:17*) The Holy Spirit is a gift of God, *even as Jesus is*. Scriptures on Jesus - *John 3:16, 4:10, Ephesians 4:7* Scriptures on the Holy Spirit – *Acts 2:38, 8:20, 10:45,11:17*

The Holy Spirit convicts the world of sin and judgment. (*John 16:8*)

Jesus taught His believers to follow the Holy Spirit after His departure. The Holy Spirit leads believers into righteousness. (*John 16:10*) Believers are to be led by the Spirit. (*Romans 8:14, Galatians 5:18*) They are to receive teaching, guidance and direction from the Spirit and follow Him. (*John 14:26, John 16:7, 12-15*)

The Spirit led Jesus while He walked on the earth. (*Luke 4:1*) Jesus called the Holy Spirit the Spirit of truth. (*John 16:13*) Jesus also referred to Himself as the Truth. (*John 14:6*)

The Spirit lives and dwells in followers of Christ and *speaks* personally to them.

Romans 8:9,11, I Corinthians 3:16 the fact that the Holy Spirit has a voice or can speak denotes that He is a Person. (*Hebrews 3:7-11*)

Here are some scriptural examples of the Holy Spirit speaking and/or giving directions & instructions *to or through*:

The Evangelist Philip- Acts 8:29 Philip was also transported by the Spirit from one place to another. (*Acts 8:39-40*)

The Apostle Peter- Acts 10:19, 11:12

The Prophet Agabus- Acts 11:28, Acts 21:10-11

The Apostle Paul- Acts 16:7, Acts 21:4 Paul- I Timothy 4:1
The seven Churches of Asia Minor – Revelation 2:7,11,17,29
The Apostle John on the Isle of Patmos- Revelation 14:13
The Holy Spirit and the bride say, Come- Revelation 22:17

The Holy Spirit:

Has a *mind*. Romans 8:27

Is the power of God and demonstrates the power of God. *Romans 15:19, I Cor. 2:4*

Is the love of God? *Romans 15:30*

Raised Jesus up from the dead and will raise us up to as well. *Romans 8:11*

Sanctifies and justifies us, as does Jesus. *I Corinthians 6:11*

The Holy Spirit:

Has a *will*.

The gifts of the Spirit are given to believers *as the Spirit wills*. *I Corinthians 12:11*

The different gifts listed in *I Corinthians 12* are supernatural manifestations of the Holy Spirit operating through the lives of believers. *I Corinthians 12:7*

The Holy Spirit has a ministry.

The Holy Spirit ministers righteousness. (*II Corinthians 3:7-9 NIV*)

The Holy Spirit:

Teaches and guides us in God's truth. (*John 16:13, 14:26, I John 2:27*)

Helps us to pray. (*Romans 8:26-27, Jude 20*)

Warns us of danger. (*Matthew 2:12, 22, Acts 20:22-23*)

Helps us know the future. (*John 16:13, Acts 11:28, Acts 21:10-11*)

Gives dreams and visions to people. (*Acts 2:16-18*)

Convicts people of sin. (*John 16:8*)

Leads believers into righteousness. (*John 16:8, 13*)

Brings judgment. (*John 16:8,11, Acts 5:1-11*)

The Bible says we were created in God's image. I believe it is easier for us as human beings to identify with the Father as God, because we have earthly fathers and Jesus as God because He became a man of flesh and blood like us. I also believe that it is more difficult for us to identify with the Holy Spirit as God though because, although we can experience and feel His presence and see His power manifest in the natural, He is invisible like the wind. We cannot *visibly* see the Spirit with our natural eyes. Jesus described the Spirit this way to Nicodemus. (*John 3: 1-8*)

The Holy Spirit is omnipresent or present everywhere. Because of this fact, I believe this is why Jesus said that we could do greater works than He did because He was sending the Holy Spirit to live and dwell in every believer, thus being able to multiply His earthly work by being everywhere and having greater impact in reaching the entire world for generations to come.

The Book of Acts and the writings of Paul teach us about the Person and work of the Holy Spirit and how He relates to the Church and the work of the Gospel. The Holy Spirit is mentioned almost sixty times in the book of Acts alone! He was sent by Jesus and the Father to dwell within believers and to empower them to continue the Lord's work on the earth.

The Holy Spirit seals the saints of God. (*Ephesians 1:13, 4:30*)

Believers have the first fruits of the Spirit within them. (*Romans 8:23*)

The Holy Spirit empowers believers to preach the Gospel, be effective witnesses for Jesus and display the signs, wonders or miracles from God that authenticate this message.

The Holy Spirit has a great purpose in the lives of all of God's people and is God's Representative in the earth today now that Jesus has went to sit at the right hand of the Father in heaven. (*John 14:25-26, 16:5-8, Acts 2:1-3*)

There is a clear distinction in the scriptures from Genesis to Revelation between the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. The scriptures specifically state which One is speaking and which One is doing a particular action. Even as a husband and wife are two individuals and become *one*, even as within the Church there are many members yet they are *one* body, so the Father, Son and Holy Spirit are three divine beings yet One God. The difference is, unlike fallible mankind, they are never in opposition or disagreement with one another but are always in perfect agreement, unity and harmony at all times. God has chosen to reveal Himself to humanity as being three divine beings but One God-One in purpose, will, mind and heart.