

PERSONALITY AND DIVINITY OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

A study of deity and the divine nature is certainly needful and appropriate. "And this is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent" (John 17:3). A study of the Holy Spirit is especially important in this study because of the numerous misconceptions concerning Him. In fact, this is one of the misconceptions: Is the Spirit a Him or is the Spirit an it?

Jehovah Witnesses have taught that the Spirit is simply a force or power, but there is no person or personality associated with the Spirit.

- ◆ "The Bible's use of 'holy spirit' indicates that it is a controlled force that Jehovah God uses to accomplish a variety of his purposes. To a certain extent, it can be likened to electricity, a force that can be adapted to perform a great variety of operation....No the holy spirit is not a person and it is not part of a Trinity. The holy spirit is God's active force that he uses to accomplish his will. It is not equal to God but is always at his disposition and subordinate to him."¹

Rutherford falsely states:

- ◆ "The holy spirit is not a person and is therefore not one of the gods of the trinity....the holy spirit is the holy power of Jehovah God conferred upon his beloved Son and upon others whom he authorized to represent him."²

Others do not know what to think concerning the Spirit. The term Spirit or the KJV's usage of Ghost conjures up all sorts of speculations concerning Him (almost to the point of some Casper the Ghost type thinking). If we understand that the Spirit is a person, then what type of a person? Is He divine as is God the Father and God the Son? These and other questions need to be studied.

PERSONALITY OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

The Bible always speaks of the Spirit using the masculine personality. The Bible speaks of the Spirit using the masculine gender and singular number (him), but not with the neuter gender (it). This gives us the indication that the Spirit is a person—not a thing, power, or force.

HE HAS PERSONAL ACTIONS

The Bible sets forth actions that the Spirit performs that cannot be said of a force, power, or thing. Paul reveals that **the Holy Spirit speaks**. "Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils" (1 Tim. 4:1).

Next, consider that **the Holy Spirit searches**. "But God hath revealed them unto us by his Spirit: for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God" (1 Cor. 2:10). It takes a mind or a thinking process to search. To *search* something cannot be done by a thing. In this same verse Paul also informs us that **the Holy Spirit reveals**. Thus, the Spirit is a person.

The Scriptures teach that **the Holy Spirit makes intercession** for us (Rom. 8:26). Vines says of intercession, "*to make a petition or intercede on behalf of another.*"³ The only one that can make a petition for someone else and thus intercede for them is a person.

The beloved physician, Luke, reveals that **the Spirit gives comfort** (Acts 9:31). To give comfort the Spirit uses the Word of God. "Wherefore comfort one another with these words" (1 The. 4:18; see also 1 Cor. 2:9-13).

HE HAS PERSONAL TRAITS

First, **the Spirit has a mind**. Paul writes, "And he that searcheth the hearts knoweth what is the mind of the Spirit, because he maketh intercession for the saints according to the will of God" (Rom. 8:27). Some might

want to claim that animals have a mind, thus this does not prove that the Spirit is an individual. However, it cannot be said that a thing, force, power, wind, or breath has mind. These things must be controlled by *mind*, but they themselves do not have such.

The Spirit has knowledge. Paul reveals, "For what man knoweth the things of a man, save the spirit of man which is in him? even so the things of God knoweth no man, but the Spirit of God" (1 Cor. 2:11). As the Spirit searches all things including the deep things of God (1 Cor. 2:10), He learns and comes to a knowledge of these things so He can reveal them by inspiration to the apostles (1 Cor. 2:13) and by their written record to us (Eph. 3:3-5).

The Spirit has a will or the power of volition. "But all these worketh that one and the selfsame Spirit, dividing to every man severally as he will" (1 Cor. 12:11).

The Spirit has affections that can only be associated with a person. "Now I beseech you, brethren, for the Lord Jesus Christ's sake, and for the love of the Spirit, that ye strive together with me in your prayers to God for me" (Rom. 15:30). We know that nonliving entities cannot have affections.

Then, **the Spirit is one with whom we have fellowship**. As Paul ends his second letter to the Corinthian brethren he writes, "The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Ghost, be with you all. Amen" (2 Cor. 13:14).

Finally, the Scriptures affirm that **the Spirit is good**. The sweet singer of Israel (David) implored Jehovah to, "Teach me to do thy will; for thou art my God: thy spirit is good; lead me into the land of uprightness"

(Psa. 143:10).

All of these traits lead us to the conclusion that the Holy Spirit is a person.

HE SUFFERS SLIGHTS AND INJURIES

Jesus warns the Pharisees by saying, "Wherefore I say unto you, All manner of sin and blasphemy shall be forgiven unto men: but the blasphemy against the Holy Ghost shall not be forgiven unto men" (Mat. 12:31). Thus, **the Spirit can be blasphemed**. To blaspheme is defined by Strong's as: "1) slander, detraction, speech injurious, to another's good name; 2) impious and reproachful speech injurious to divine majesty."⁴ By the usage of this word Jesus shows us that the Spirit is a person and that He is God.

The Spirit can be lied to. "But Peter said, Ananias, why hath Satan filled thine heart to lie to the Holy Ghost, and to keep back part of the price of the land?" (Acts 5:3).

Stephen preached, "Ye stiffnecked and uncircumcised in heart and ears, ye do always resist the Holy Ghost: as your fathers did, so do ye" (Acts 7:51). Since Stephen was being led by the Spirit in what he said and they refused to hear his message, they were **resisting the Spirit**.

Paul reveals that **the Holy Spirit can be grieved** (Eph. 4:30).

⇒ "By looking to what precedes, and to what follows, we may see what it is that grieves the Spirit of God. In the previous verses it is intimated that all lewdness and filthiness, lying, and corrupt communications that stir up filthy appetites and lusts, grieve the Spirit of God. In what follows it is intimated that those corrupt passions of bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamour, and evil speaking, and malice, grieve this good Spirit."⁵

Only a person possesses this type of grief.

The Spirit can be quenched. Paul gives the admonition, "Quench not the Spirit" (1 The. 5:19). This admonition was given during the miraculous age and apparently some were trying