

God the Holy Spirit

“If ye love Me, keep My commandments. And I will pray the Father, and He shall give you another Comforter, that He may abide with you forever; even the Spirit of truth; whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth Him not, neither knoweth Him: but ye know Him; for He dwelleth with you, and shall be in you. I will not leave you comfortless: I will come to you.” John 14:15-18.

The greatest assurance Jesus could give His disciples as He prepared to leave them was that the Father was interested enough in them to send a divine Representative to be among them in His stead. That one is the Holy Spirit—“the Spirit of truth.” Since the Holy Spirit is among us as Christ’s personal representative, the doctrine of the Holy Spirit should be of particular interest to us.¹

For the purposes of our study we shall divide the doctrine into two parts and consider them separately. In this chapter we shall investigate the first part—the Bible teaching on the Deity and the personality of the Holy Spirit. Later, several chapters will be devoted to His work for men in the plan of salvation.

I. The Deity of the Holy Spirit

Beginning with the story of creation (Genesis 1:1, 2), and ending only with the final invitation for men to come to Christ (Revelation 22:17), the Bible presents the presence and the work of the Holy Spirit. In the Old Testament times as well as the New, His work is identified with that of the Father and the Son. And repeatedly it is indicated—usually indi-

¹ “Christ determined that when He ascended from this earth, He would bestow a gift on those who had believed on Him, and those who should believe on Him. What gift could He bestow rich enough to signalize and grace His ascension to the mediatorial throne? It must be worthy of His greatness and His royalty. He determined to give His representative, the Third Person of the Godhead. This gift could not be excelled. He would give all gifts in one, and therefore the divine Spirit, that converting, enlightening, and sanctifying power, would be His donation.”—Ellen G. White, quoted in *The S.D.A. Bible Commentary*, vol. 6, pp. 1052-1053.

rectly—that He, too, is God. In general, the lines of evidence that show His divinity are the same as those that reveal the divinity of Jesus Christ: His attributes, His names, His works, His relation with the Father and the Son.

1. His attributes. The characteristics attributed to the Holy Spirit in Scripture are the characteristics of Deity.² ° Classify the qualities indicated by the following passages under headings similar to those used to describe the attributes of the Father and the Son.

*Psalm 139:7-10	*John 14:16	1 Corinthians 2:10, 11
*Luke 1:35	*John 14:26; 16: 12, 13	2 Peter 1:21
*Luke 2:26	*Romans 8:11	

Other references to attributes of the Spirit are included in texts mentioned later in this chapter.

2. His names. A number of appropriate names are applied to the Holy Spirit. These include some of His attributes as God and reveal something of His relation to the Father and the Son. He is called “the Spirit of the Lord God” (Isaiah 61:1), “the Spirit of truth” (John 14:17), “the Spirit of life” (Romans 8:2), and “the Spirit of Christ” (Romans 8:9).³ ° See for additional names: 1 Corinthians 3:16; Ephesians 1:13; and 1 Peter 4:14.

² “The Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, powers infinite and omniscient, receive those who truly enter into covenant relation with God. They are present at every baptism, to receive the candidates who have renounced the world and have received Christ into the soul temple. These candidates have entered into the family of God, and their names are inscribed in the Lamb’s book of life.”—Ellen G. White, quoted in *The S.D.A. Bible Commentary*, vol. 6, p. 1075.

See *The Desire of Ages*, page 490:5.

Fundamentals of Christian Education, page 365:1.

³ The following are examples of names by which the Spirit is designated.
 “Spirit of the Almighty.”—*The Acts of the Apostles*, page 54:0.
 “Spirit of Christ.”—*The Desire of Ages*, page 210:0.
 “Divine Spirit.”—*The Desire of Ages*, page 102:2.
 “Spirit of grace.”—*The Desire of Ages*, pages 324:2.
 “Spirit of Inspiration.”—*The Desire of Ages*, page 33:1.
 “Spirit of life.”—*The Desire of Ages*, page 268:0.
 “Spirit of the Son of God.”—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, page 667:1.
 “Spirit of truth.”—*The Acts of the Apostles*, page 532:1.
 “Holy Watcher.”—*Counsels to Teachers*, page 370:2.
 “Heavenly Messenger.”—*Counsels to Teachers*, page 370:3.
 “Spirit of heaven.”—*Testimonies to Ministers*, page 476:2.
 “Spirit of the great I AM.”—*Testimonies*, vol. 5, p. 725:2.

3. **His works.** The Holy Spirit is active in the regeneration of human lives (John 3:5), in the resurrection of the dead (Romans 8:11), and in the inspiration of the Holy Scriptures (2 Peter 1:21)—all works that require and reveal the power of divinity.

4. **His relation with the Father and the Son.** The closeness of the relation between God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit is emphasized by the designation of the Holy Spirit as both the Spirit of God (see Romans 8:9; 1 Corinthians 3:16) and the Spirit of Christ. See Romans 8:9; 1 Peter 1:11.⁴ The following texts present the same general idea—the names Spirit and God are often used interchangeably. °Compare the companion texts in the list. What does each pair contribute to the evidence that the Holy Spirit is God?

*2 Samuel 23:2	. 2 Samuel 23:3	Romans 15:19	. Psalm 136:3, 4
*Isaiah 63:10-14	. Numbers 14:11;	*1 Corinthians 6:19
	Deuteronomy 32:12	2 Corinthians 6:16	
Matthew 1:20	. . . Luke 1:35	Hebrews 10:14-16
Acts 5:3 Acts 5:4	Jeremiah 31:32, 33	
Acts 28:25	. . . Luke 1:68-70	*2 Peter 2:21	. . . 2 Timothy 3:16;
*Acts 28:25-27	. . . Isaiah 6:8-10	1 Peter 1:11	

In 1 Corinthians 12:4-6, the Three Members of the Godhead are included in the bestowal, the division, and the manifestations of the gifts of the Spirit that equip church members to develop as Christians and carry out the work of God in the earth. Those who are baptized into Christ are to be baptized in “the name” of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. Matthew 28:19. In chapters 25 and 26 further attention will be given to the relationship between Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit.

°Summarize the Bible evidences that the Holy Spirit is God in the same sense that the Father and the Son are God. What evidences can you add that have not been included in this chapter?

II. The Personality of the Holy Spirit

The Holy Spirit is a divine Person or personality in the same sense as God the Father and God the Son. Some believe that since He is referred

⁴ “When we have accepted Christ, and in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit have pledged ourselves to serve God, the Father, Christ, and the Holy Spirit—the Three Dignitaries and Powers of heaven—pledge themselves that every facility shall be given to us if we carry out our baptismal vows to ‘come out from among them, and be . . . separate, . . . and touch not the unclean thing.’”—Ellen G. White, quoted in *The S.D.A. Bible Commentary*, vol. 6, p. 1075.

to as “Spirit,” this means that He is only a power or influence, not a personality. But this is not the case. We are not to try to define *personality* when we use it concerning divine beings. We cannot judge the nature of God by our knowledge of human personality. The Bible clearly indicates that the Holy Spirit is a personal being without informing us as to the nature of that personality. There are several lines of evidence that reveal His personality.⁵

1. **He is “the Comforter.”** Jesus told His disciples: “I will pray the Father, and He shall give you another Comforter, that He may abide with you forever.” John 14:16. The Greek word translated “Comforter” is the one we have taken into English as the word “paraclete.” *Paraklētos* means literally “one called to the side of.” Its use in the Bible, however, seems to include the more active sense of the corresponding verb *parakaleō*—“to exhort,” or “to comfort.” Thus the thought of “one who exhorts” may accompany “one called to the side of.” *Paraklētos* is applied to Jesus in 1 John 2:1, where it is translated “advocate.” This concept of Jesus as Comforter or Paraclete is implied in John 14:16 when Jesus said, “He shall give you *another* Comforter.” Another would be sent to fill the Saviour’s place at the side of His disciples. Only a personal Being could serve in this capacity—an impersonal influence could not fill the specifications. Since “paraclete” expresses personality when it applies to Christ, it is reasonable to conclude that it does the same when it applies to the Holy Spirit.

2. **He possesses the essentials of personality.** The essentials of personality are attributed to the Holy Spirit in the many Bible texts that speak of Him. He possesses intellect (1 Corinthians 2:11), feelings (Ephesians 4:30), and will (1 Corinthians 12:11). He can be treated as a personality:

*Isaiah 63:10	*Acts 5:3	Hebrews 10:15
*Matthew 12:31, 32	*Acts 5:9	Hebrews 10:29
	Acts 7:51	

Not only can the Holy Spirit be treated as a personality, He acts as a person:

*John 14:26	John 16:13	*Acts 16:6, 7
*John 15:26	John 16:14	Acts 20:28
John 16:8-11	*Acts 13:2	*Romans 8:26

⁵ See *Evangelism*, pages 614:2 to 615:1. *Evangelism*, pages 616:5 to 617:1.

3. **He is associated with the Father and the Son.** The same passages that helped establish the divinity of the Holy Spirit because of His association and identification with the other Members of the Godhead also reveal His personality. This is particularly true of the baptismal formula (Matthew 28:19), the apostolic benediction (2 Corinthians 13:14), and the distribution of the gifts to the church (1 Corinthians 12:4-6). Oneness with the other Persons of the Godhead in name, fellowship, and work implies oneness with Them in personality.

We must keep in mind that when we use such terms as “person,” “personality,” and “being” with reference to any of the Members of the Godhead—except the incarnate Christ—we are using human terms to describe our concept of Deity. It is proper that we should use them if we remember that all we know about their meaning is what has been divinely revealed. We are not to speculate beyond God’s revelation. What has been disclosed to us is not the nature of God, but the relationships of the Members of the Godhead with each other, and relationships between them and us. The revelation of God has apparently been limited to what is necessary to enable us to comprehend the meaning and the operation of the plan of salvation. Under the Holy Spirit’s guidance we should pursue experimental knowledge in this area and not be overly concerned with what has not been revealed.⁶

TOPICS FOR STUDY AND DISCUSSION

1. Can you find any distinctions in the Bible between the attributes of the Father and Son and those of the Holy Spirit? Enumerate the similarities you find and point out any differences.
2. What is the significance of the fact that the Holy Spirit is designated by so many different names and titles in the Bible and the spirit of prophecy writings?
3. Can you find evidence of worship accorded to the Holy Spirit as it is to the Father and the Son?
4. Discuss ways in which the Holy Spirit is affected by the actions of men.
5. Find all you can about the relation between Christ and the Holy Spirit during Christ’s life on earth. Use your Bible concordance and *Index to the Writings of Ellen G. White*.

⁶ See *The Acts of the Apostles*, pages 51:3 to 52:1.

The Angels

Ordinarily the Bible doctrine of angels would not be included under the same general heading as the doctrine of the Godhead. There is a particular reason for doing this, since we wish to make a unified study of all of the supernatural beings involved in the creation of this world, the fall of man, and his restoration to perfection through the plan of salvation. This will give us a complete background for the study of the plan of salvation that makes up the remainder of the book.¹

Logically, the doctrine of angels follows the doctrine of God because angels are created beings engaged in His service. They are supernatural beings usually unseen by men; therefore, the only trustworthy information we have about them has come to us through divine revelation. As the Bible deals primarily with God’s relation to man, and gives us only a general view of God’s relation to the rest of the universe, so in speaking of angels it deals almost entirely with the part angels play in the affairs of men. With the Old Testament mentioning angels more than one hundred times and the New Testament more than 160 times, it seems unnecessary to list separately evidences for their existence. In this chapter we will give attention to the name, the nature, the characteristics, and the activities of angels.

I. The Name “Angel”

The name “angel” came to us from the Greek word used to denote the office and function of these heavenly beings. The word is *aggelos* (pronounced *angelos*) and means “messenger.” *Mal’ak*, the Old Testa-

¹ “The connection of the visible with the invisible world, the ministration of angels of God, and the agency of evil spirits, are plainly revealed in the Scriptures, and inseparably interwoven with human history. There is a growing tendency to disbelief in the existence of evil spirits, while the holy angels that ‘minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation’ (Hebrews 1:14) are regarded by many as the spirits of the dead. But the Scriptures not only teach the existence of angels, both good and evil, but present unquestionable proof that these are not the disembodied spirits of dead men.”—*The Great Controversy*, page 511:1.