

GOD'S HOLY SPIRIT

Before we get into this article, let me unequivocally state that I firmly believe in the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. In this article I will present what I believe the Bible has to say about God's Holy Spirit. The word "God" will be used sparingly as we try to distinguish who is being mentioned in various verses and passages; that is, **is it talking about the Father or the Son?** It is of the utmost importance that one realizes that the word "God" is the Greek term **θεος** ("Theos" – a transliteration which uses English letters to spell the word), which, historically and biblically, simply means "Deity" in our English language. We could bore you if we were to present the long history of *how* the generic term "God" came to be used as universal as it is today — and we are stuck with it, sadly!

However, let me say that the first use of the English word "God" appears in the first sentence of the first book of the Bible, Genesis 1:1. It should be noted that the Hebrew term is "Elohim" which is a *plural noun* meaning "*Mighty Ones*" (Gods) when used with *plural verbs* in the sentence. For an example Genesis 1:26a says, "And God said, Let **us** make man in **our** image, after **our** likeness..." The word "God" is the *plural noun* "Elohim" and the *plural verbs* are "**us** and **our**." We would be remiss if we didn't include the fact that when "Elohim" is used with *singular verbs* in a sentence it means "*Mighty One*." In fact, every time "God" is used in the first and second chapters of Genesis it is the Hebrew term "Elohim." Also a fact is that Elohim is used over 2,000 times in the Old Testament, and in some instances the word "gods" (a plural word) is used to translate them. **Even Jesus mentions Elohim as a plural (gods) when quoting Psalm 82:6 in John 10:34-35.** But that is enough for now — on with the article. I will use the word "Almighty" in the place of "God" when it is referring to the Father.

Just what is the Holy Spirit? A simple answer is that it is the *essence* of the Almighty's nature and mind. "Essence" means the core nature or most important qualities of a person or thing; in this instance, the **Almighty, invisible Deity** — See 2 Corinthians 6:18 and Colossians 1:15. Remember, "God is a spirit" (John 4:24), and one cannot see a "spirit." We can say that the spirit is the **essence** of the mind of the Father and the Son, just as **our essence** is the working of **our spirit** in **our own being**.

But how does the Almighty's spirit come to us? Again, a simple answer is that it *emanates* from the Almighty. "Emanate" is a verb and means to come from something or someone and sends it forth. Here is an example in a sentence: God's spirit **emanates** power and confidence in believer's minds. Another example of emanate is music coming out of speakers; in other words, **emanates** or sends forth music to the ears of those listening.

We have a "spirit" within us that is from the Almighty, and it is that spirit that animates us (Genesis 2:7 – the "breath of life"). However, at death, that spirit returns to the Almighty (Eccl. 12:7). We can ask at this point, "What does our spirit produce in us?" We answer: It activates, inspires, motivates, impels, encourages, influences (ourselves and others), etcetera; it is what others see outwardly — how we conduct our self and the

attitude we exhibit. Our spirit empowers us; that should be very plain and simple to understand. This applies to all people, believers and unbelievers alike.

The Holy Spirit is the power of the Almighty which, like man's, also empowers. However, there is a great difference between the two. The Almighty's spirit is prefaced with the adjective "holy," i.e., **set apart** — and is quite different from man's spirit. The Almighty's spirit is used to influence us personally *when we accept it*. **It works on our spirit** to produce love, joy, peace, kindness, faithfulness, meekness, self-control and patience. **It causes us** to be able to forgive others, to seek what is good and honorable, to help others in need, and to turn our thoughts to spiritual things and away from material things. The Almighty's spirit works only on believers. Thusly, the Almighty's spirit is pure and good in all those who receive it, and it also activates, inspires, motivates, impels, encourages and magnifies our talents (gifts of the Almighty's spirit).

The term "spirit," itself, indicates an **invisible, immaterial, power**. It is compared to the "wind," as Jesus explains in John 3:8 — "*The wind blows wherever it pleases. You may hear its sound, but you cannot tell where it comes from or where it is going. So it is with everyone born of the spirit.*" Spirit and wind are the same Greek word, *pneuma*, and we can only feel and/or see the results of its action.

The Almighty's spirit, like ours, is invisible; the wind is also invisible, as is the air we breathe. We only see what the wind does, like moving tree limbs or clouds, and sometimes smoke, ash, and dust; and during a storm or tornado we may see the wind carry the various things it destroys, like shingles, or, sad to say, the materials used to build houses. One cannot see the wind moving these things, only what the wind moves.

Back to the "spirit" — just as the invisible wind and air, the Almighty's spirit, which is His power, causes things to happen: like the creation of the Universe and our world in it, including all living things: see Genesis 1:1-31.

First, before we look at the works of the Almighty's spirit in believers, let's look at His work through Jesus, who was "*made both Lord and Christ*" (Acts 2:36). The man we know as Jesus was with the Almighty Father and was Deity before the Creation of the world.

The apostle John tells us that "*In the beginning was the Word (Logos), and the Word (Logos) was with the Deity (the Almighty God), and the word (Logos) was Deity (God). This one was in the beginning with the Deity (the Almighty God). All things through him (the Logos) became, and without him (the Logos) became not one thing which has become*" ... "*No man has ever seen Deity (the Almighty God); the only begotten Deity (the Logos), the one being in the bosom of the Father (the Almighty), that one (the Logos) declared him (the Almighty God)*" (John 1:1-3 and 18 – Greek literal translation. Emphasis mine).

John also tells us "*What was from the beginning, what we have heard, what we have seen with our eyes, what we beheld and the our hands have touched, concerning the Word (Logos) of life, and the life was made known, and we have seen and we bear witness and*

*we announce to you the life of the ageless, which was **with** the Father and was made known to us, what we have seen and we have heard, we announce also to you, in order that you may have fellowship with us. And indeed our fellowship is **with** the Father and **with** his son Jesus Christ” (1 John 1:1-3 – Greek literal translation. Emphasis mine).*

The prophet Isaiah gave a prophecy about the coming of Jesus Christ: “*And there shall come forth a rod out of the stem of Jesse, and a Branch shall grow out of his roots: And the spirit of Yahweh (YHWH) shall rest upon him, the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge and of the fear of Yahweh (YHWH); And shall make him of quick understanding in the fear of Yahweh (YHWH): and he shall not judge after the sight of his eyes, neither reprove after the hearing of his ears: But with righteousness shall he judge the poor, and reprove with equity for the meek of the earth: and he shall smite the earth with the rod of his mouth, and with the breath of his lips shall he slay the wicked. And righteousness shall be the girdle of his loins, and faithfulness the girdle of his reins” (Isaiah 11:1-5 KJV – YHWH is the Tetragrammaton found in the Hebrew OT, and was replaced by “Lord” in the LXX translation around 285 BC – See Strongs Concordance, Hebrew Dictionary #3068. We choose to use the name *Yahweh* in place of the KJV *Jehovah* in the above quote.)*

Isaiah’s prophecy describes Jesus to a “T” and the New Testament Scriptures confirm it by recording Jesus Christ’s words and actions.

The Holy Spirit is the power of our Almighty Father. It is the mind and essence of the Creator Himself; and by which He carries out His will. It is NOT a person or entity as is described in various creeds and church counsels. The Scriptures speak of the spirit as the power of the Almighty, which was bestowed upon Jesus; the power of love and of a sound mind. It emanates from Him and thusly can be said to be “poured out” (Titus 3:6), “breathed on” (John 20:22), “fill” (Acts 2:4) and “anoint” (Acts 10:38), as we see in those verses: see also Isa. 32:15, Ezek. 39:29 and Joel 2:28-29.

The Father is the supreme Ruler of all individuals, whether they believe in Him or not. He is the object and focus of our worship and the ONLY ONE to whom Christians should pray. He sent His Son (the LOGOS or WORD), who gave up his role as Deity, to be born into the world by the Almighty’s power and become the man we call Jesus.

The apostle Paul tells us that Jesus, “*Who, subsisting in the form of Deity (God), deemed it not robbery to be equal **with** (the Almighty God) Deity, but emptied himself, taking the form of a slave, becoming in the likeness of man,” [Eph. 2:6-7, Greek literal translation. Emphasis mine]. Yes, the man we know as Jesus was with the Almighty Father and was Deity before the Creation of the world. If that sounds confusing, read John 1:1-3, 14 and 1 John 1:1-3 again.*

The Father accomplishes His will by means of **His spirit**, by which He calls, regenerates, and through the process of conversion, transforms His new children into His image.

What we are now faced with is the question of “How do we get or receive the Spirit of the Almighty?” To understand this we need to read the Letters or Epistles of the New Testament, and understand some things revealed in the Old Testament. Another question we must ask is, “What is the difference between “Our spirit, the Almighty’s spirit, Christ’s spirit, and all the other descriptions of the term ‘spirit’?” Read on...!

Any study on the “spirit of man”, the “Spirit of the Almighty, Christ, truth, life”, etc., and the “spirit” in all “living creatures” — fish, fowl, animals and creepy-crawly things — needs to be considered and understood in the context of any verse or passage found in both the Old and New Testaments of the Bible.

For example, Ecclesiastes 3:19 which speaks of the death of man and all living creatures, tells us

*“For that which happens to the sons of man happens to animals; even one thing happens to them: as one dies, so dies the other; **yes, they all have one spirit**; so that a man has no preeminence above an animal: for all is vanity.”*

As you can see from the above verse, all living creatures, man included, have a spirit that animates them. This “spirit” or “breath of life” from the Almighty is what makes His creatures come alive, i.e., become “living souls/creatures/beings,” etc. (See Genesis 1:20, 21, 24, 30 and 2:7.) However, there is an aspect of this “spirit” that is only found in man: man was “Made in the image and likeness of Deity.” This aspect of the “spirit” is never applied to any of the other creatures Deity created. And it is this aspect that enables mankind to think, feel, love, design and create things, etc.; an aspect no other “living creature” has.

Job 32:8, in the LXX, literally tells us “*But there is a spirit in mortals, and the breath of the Almighty is the one teaching.*” This “breath” of the Almighty is what gives man (mortals) awareness and intelligence through this spirit in us by **His spirit working on and with our own spirit.**

This is what the Apostle Paul reveals to us in I Corinthians 2:9–14 —

“But as it is written: ‘eye has not seen, nor ear heard, nor have entered into the heart (mind) of man **the things** which (the Almighty) Deity has prepared for those who love Him.’ But the Almighty has revealed (the things) to us through His spirit. For the spirit (of the Almighty) searches all things, yes, the deep things of (the Almighty) Deity. 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 Deity except the spirit of (the Almighty) Deity. Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the spirit which is from (the Almighty) Deity, that we might know the things that have been freely given to us by (the Almighty) Deity. 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 (the Almighty) Deity, for they are foolishness to him; nor can he know (the things) because they are spiritually discerned.” (Notice the mention of **TWO** spirits — The Almighty’s and man’s! The Almighty’s spirit and the holy spirit are the same thing.)

Then in Romans, Chapter 8, verses 5–8, Paul tells us that

“Those who live according to their sinful nature have their minds set on what that nature desires; but those who live in accordance with the spirit (of the Almighty) have their minds set on what the spirit desires. The mind (heart) of sinful man is death, but the mind controlled by the spirit is life and peace, because the sinful mind is hostile to (the Almighty) Deity. It does not submit to (the Almighty) Deity’s law, nor can it do so. Those controlled by their sinful nature cannot please (the Almighty) Deity.”

However, Paul goes on to tell us in verses 9–11 that

“You, however, are controlled not by your sinful nature (the spirit of man) but by the spirit, **if** the spirit of (the Almighty) Deity lives in you. And **if** anyone does not have the spirit of Christ (same as the spirit of the Almighty!), he does not belong to Christ. But **if** Christ (spirit) is in you, your body is dead because of sin, yet your spirit is alive because of righteousness. And **if** the spirit of Him (the Almighty) who raised Jesus from the dead is living in you, He who raised Christ from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through His spirit, who lives in you.”

In addition to this Good News Paul tells us in verses 14–17 that

“Those who are led by the spirit of (the Almighty) Deity are sons of (The Almighty) Deity. For you did not receive a spirit that makes you a slave again to fear, but you received a spirit (of the Almighty) who makes you sons. And by which we cry, ‘Abba, Father’. The spirit itself testifies with **our spirit** that we are (the Almighty) Deity’s children. Now **if** we are children, then we are heirs — heirs of (the Almighty) Deity and co-heirs with Christ, **if** indeed we share in His sufferings in order that we may also share in His glory.”

Yes, the Apostle Paul tells us that the spirit (of the Almighty) itself bears witness with **our spirit** (the one created in us), that we are the children of Deity, **if** we have really put on the spirit of Christ to control our **own spirit**. (Notice the highlighted **IF** in the above quotes from Paul. Emphasis mine.)

Both the Old and New Testaments make it plain that the Almighty has placed within every living creature a “spirit” which animates its body. (See the Genesis 1 and 2 references already given.) There are many verses of Scripture which reveal that mankind has a spirit which gives them something other living creatures do not have — the ability which makes one aware of spiritual things, and which makes it possible for **the spiritual things** of Deity, through the Almighty’s spirit, to interact and allow a spiritual understanding of things that are not possible without the Almighty’s spirit working in or on our **own spirit**.

“The spirit of Christ which a person can **put on** allows that person to have a one-on-one relationship with our Creator.” This is a “**hard saying**” to most people. If one does not have the spirit of Christ within one’s self, one does not belong to Christ; thusly one faces an eternal death. This is the gist of what Paul taught in his letters — and it is very plain and direct, **subject to no objection**.

We raised the question earlier of “How do we get or receive the Spirit of the Almighty?” Another way of asking the question could be phrased this way: “How does one ‘put on’ the holy spirit of the Almighty or Christ?”

The Apostle Peter gives us some insight on this in the sermon he preached to his fellow Jews after they saw what appeared to be tongues of fire resting on the Apostles and heard them speak in a multitude of different languages. This crowd of men came from all the nations in the world, and each of them heard the words spoken in their native language — and they were amazed and marveled to hear the great deeds of the Almighty being spoken by the Apostles who were Galileans. They asked one another, “What does this mean?” Some, (which always seem to appear at gatherings of all kinds throughout the ages) naturally, mocked them and said that they were drunk! (See Acts 2:1–13.)

Peter, hearing this, was quick to stand up and address the crowds to explain what was going on. He said that they were not drunk this early in the morning, and what they see and hear is the fulfillment of the prophecy spoken by the prophet Joel (Joel 2:28–32). He then proceeded to give the first sermon of Christianity and the founding of the first “Assembly of the Christ” on the earth: i.e., “Church” of Christ! (See Acts 2:14–36.)

This sermon really struck the hearers with fear! “What shall we do?” they asked. Peter replied and said: (Greek literal translation.)

“Repent, and let each of you be immersed on the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins and you will receive the gift of the holy spirit.”

Peter continued to say much more that is not recorded, but it is said that he warned and pleaded with them to “Save yourselves from this perverse generation.” Those who believed his words got immersed in water in Christ’s name and were added to the church that same day: about 3,000 people were saved! And more were added on a daily basis, the holy spirit working in and on their own spirit. (See Acts 2:37–47.)

The conversion of Saul (later named Paul) also shows us the way one is to put on the spirit of Christ. Saul was a persecutor of the followers of Christ. One day while he was on the way to Damascus, Syria, to bring back to Jerusalem the Christians who had been captured, a light from the heavens shone around him, he fell to the ground and heard a voice say to him, “*Saul, Saul, why do you persecute me?*” Amazing, isn’t it — persecuting Christians is just like persecuting Jesus, the Lord and Christ! Saul then asked, “*Who are you Lord?*” The voice answered: “*I am Jesus whom you are persecuting. Now get up and go into the city, and you will be told what you must do.*” (Acts 9:4–6.) Let’s find out what Saul was told to do to put on the spirit of Christ.

“In Damascus there was a disciple named Ananias. The Lord called to him in a vision, ‘Ananias!’ ‘Yes, Lord,’ he answered. The Lord told him, ‘Go to the house of Judas on Straight Street and ask for a man from Tarsus named Saul, for he is praying. In a vision he has seen a man named Ananias come and place his hands on him to restore his sight.’

‘Lord,’ Ananias answered, ‘I have heard many reports about this man and all the harm he has done to your saints in Jerusalem. And he has come here with authority from the chief priests to arrest all who call on your name.’

But the Lord said to Ananias, ‘Go! This man is my chosen instrument to carry my name before the Gentiles and their kings and before the people of Israel. I will show him how much he must suffer for my name.’

Then Ananias went to the house and entered it. Placing his hands on Saul, he said, ‘Brother Saul, the Lord — Jesus, who appeared to you on the road as you were coming here — has sent me so that you may see again and be filled with the holy spirit’ Immediately, something like scales fell from Saul’s eyes, and he could see again. He got up and **was immersed**, and after taking some food, he regained his strength.” (Acts 9:10-19, REB)

So, Saul got baptized. Did he receive the spirit of Christ before he got baptized, as various churches teach, or was it like the 3,000 who received the holy spirit after they got baptized? We will let Saul, whom, after many years, was called Paul, tell us the meaning of being immersed, i.e., baptized. (Romans 6.)

“Don’t you know that all of **us** who were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? **We** were therefore buried with him through baptism into death in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, we too may live a new life.” (Verses 3–4.)

“Because anyone who has died has been freed from sin.” (Verse 7.)

“In the same way, count yourselves dead to sin but alive to Deity in Christ Jesus.” (Verse 11.)

“But thanks be to (the Almighty) Deity that, though you used to be slaves to sin, **you wholeheartedly obeyed the form of teaching to which you were committed.**” (Verse 17.)

Paul used the terms **US** and **WE** in reference to being immersed in water, and that immersion was symbolically a death, burial, and resurrection just as Christ Jesus was crucified unto death, buried and resurrected from the grave and death. This symbolic act was the **FORM OF TEACHING** each one of us followed in obeying the command of Christ Jesus as taught to us by the Apostles Peter and Paul. To the Christians of Galatia Paul had this to say about this **form of teaching**: (Galatians 3:26–29.)

“You are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus, for all of you who were united with Christ in baptism have been **clothed with Christ**. There is neither Jew nor Greek, slave nor free, male nor female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus. If you belong to Christ, then you are Abraham’s seed, and heirs according to the promise.” (NIV) [The KJV puts the above bold words as **put on Christ, which is the same as Christ in you!**]

When Paul preached Christ at Jerusalem he told them how he got his sins removed. You can read this in Acts 21:40–22:21, in which is found in 22:16 — “**And now what are you waiting for? Get up, be immersed (baptized) and wash your sins away, calling on His name.**” It seems very clear that Paul believed, got baptized to wash away his sins, and, although not stated, received (from the Almighty) the holy spirit just as did the 3,000 who believed, got baptized to receive the forgiveness of their sins, received the holy spirit and were added to the **ekklesian** of believers that very day — an **assembly or congregation**, which the word ekklesia should be translated as: and is incorrectly called “church” by most people.

However, regardless of the above paragraph, what the Apostles taught about **putting on Christ’s spirit** is what we are talking about. As 1 Cor. 6:17 tells us, “**But he who is joined to the Lord is one spirit with Him.**” Baptism just happens to have an important part in what the writers of scripture have to say about this connection with the Holy Spirit working on and in our own spirit.

Man has a “spirit”, and he is told to “put on” or be “clothed” with the “spirit of Christ.” Does this mean that one has “Two spirits” when putting on the spirit of Christ? Is this “holy spirit” something that one can put on like a piece of clothing?

We have already seen and read that man has a “spirit” as an aspect of the “breath of life” breathed into him when born, or perhaps even earlier when conceived in the womb. Paul

let us know this fact about the “spirit of man”: “For what man knows the things of a man except (through) the spirit of the man which is IN him?” (1 Cor. 2:11). We can also interject this little thought in this question Paul raised (let’s re-quote it): “For what man knows the things of a man (*how can man know or think and understand and perceive and have consciousness of himself*) except (through) the spirit of man which is in him?” **Do you begin to see the need of another spirit to see spiritual “things” of the Almighty?**

The Almighty, through the writers of Scripture, makes is plain that He has placed WITHIN mankind a “spirit” which allows one to have self awareness, and makes it possible for one to have a possible relationship with Him. As we have seen and read, this “spirit in man” is not aware of the things of the Almighty, that is, the spiritual things of Deity, it is possible for the mind of the Almighty, through His holy spirit, to connect, somehow, with this spirit in man and allow an understanding that would not be possible without this connection.

After all, we were created “in His image” to be able to think, feel, love, design and create many things as we grow in knowledge of Deity’s creation and our place in it. It is this aspect that we do not find in any of Deity’s other creatures on this earth. Animals do not carry on a conversation with us, or have created art, designed things, or planned anything spectacular as humans do. Yes, some animals build or create all the time, like birds, ants, bees, etc., but a bird can’t build an ant-hill or a bee hive and neither can an ant or bee build a bird nest, or an ant built a bee hive and vice-versa. They only can do what they were created to do, and have no ability or free will to do anything else.

The spirit the Almighty put in every person gives us the possibility to communicate in an intelligent way with each other, and allows for each person the possibility of connecting with the spirit of the Creator (an aspect of man’s spirit in one’s life) — a one-on-one relationship with the Creator: the Almighty Deity Himself, the one and only invisible supreme Spirit, Yahweh.

Even though this “spirit in man” is not actually aware of the things of the Almighty, nor can it be alive apart from ones life, it is possible for the mind of the Almighty, through His spirit, to make a connection with this “aspect” of man’s spirit, and provide a spiritual understanding not possible without it.

The “spirit in man” makes all the difference between us and all the other creatures the Almighty, (through the Logos/Word) created. It makes us able to think, reason, be self-aware and most importantly to connect to the “spirit of the Almighty” to understand His “spiritual things.” It is His spirit working on our spirit that can save us through faith in Jesus, the Christ (Messiah or Anointed One) of the Almighty Father. Listen to what the Apostle Peter realized about Jesus when the Father’s spirit connected with him: “**You are the Christ, the son of the living Deity**” (Matt. 16:17). This is what we should all come to realize, and really believe it until our last day of life.

This “spirit in man” is not merely “breath” as some would say, but if that was the case, why would the writers of Scripture *personify* it on many occasions? Should the term “spirit” be capitalized as a “personal noun”? Any study on what the “spirit in man” and the “spirit of Christ, God, truth, life,” etc., and the “spirit” given to all “living creatures” must be understood in order for us to define its use in the Old and New Testaments. The word “spirit” comes from the Latin “**spiritus**” which means “breath or wind”. This same definition is found in the Hebrew term “**ruach**” and the Greek term “**pneuma**.”

The Creator is called “The Deity of the spirits of all flesh” (Num. 16:22), and “The Father of spirits” (Heb. 12:9). It is by the Creator’s spirit that a Christian serves and worships God. The Apostle Paul testifies: “For the Deity is my witness, whom I serve with **my spirit** in the Gospel” (Rom. 1:9). Jesus states: “Deity is spirit; and they that worship Him **must worship Him in spirit and in truth**” (John 4:24 – Deity in all the above verses here is the Almighty “Father”).

Man has a “spirit”; and he is told to “put on” or “cloth” one’s self with the “spirit of Christ” — Does this mean that one has “two” spirits when being “clothed” or when “putting on the spirit of Christ”? [See the listing of the usage of the word “spirit” on the last page!]

In what English terms are we supposed to think of this word “spirit”? Let’s now look for the answer to this question.

When the Holy Spirit was given on Pentecost, God manifested it as a mighty wind. It was invisible as wind/air is, and that isn’t a living thing, much less a “person”, but it came to the hearing of those gathered as *the power* of the Almighty Father to carry out His purpose on that occasion. One should notice that this *power*, manifested as a “wind,” not only *filled* the apostles, but it also *filled* the house in which they were gathered.

When recording words about the Holy Spirit the apostles had no reservations about interchangeably using verbs associated with things rather than people. For example, Paul tells Timothy “*to stir up the gift of God which is in you through the laying on of my hands. For God has not given us a spirit of fear*” (2 Timothy 1:6-7). We usually stir liquids and mixtures, not people. Luke, when recording the book of Acts, used the verb “pour” to describe the Almighty’s use of His spirit (Acts 2:17-18, 33). I certainly don’t believe that a “person” can be poured into another “person.”

An examination of Acts 5:1-11

We will only quote the appropriate verses (#) to get to the context of the passage.

(1) “*Now a man named Ananias, together with his wife Sapphira, also sold a piece of property. (2) With his wife’s’ full knowledge he kept back part of the money for himself, but brought the rest and put it at the apostles’ feet. (3) Then Peter said, ‘Ananias, how is it that Satan has so filled your heart that **you have lied to the Holy Spirit** and have kept for yourself some of the money you received for the land? (4) Didn’t it belong to you*

*before it was sold? And after it was sold, wasn't the money at your disposal? What made you think of doing such a thing? **You have not lied to man but to God.***”

Let's look more closely as to what Peter meant when he said, “**You have lied to the Holy Spirit.**” To do this we have to examine the context to understand what he meant. We have highlighted Peter's parallel accusation: “**You have not lied to men but to God.**” (For your information, the generic “God” is the Greek word “*Theos*,” i.e., Deity.) It is important to understand that Peter accuses Ananias of **sinning against the Almighty God.**

(7) “About three hours later his wife came in, not knowing what had happened. (8) Peter asked her, ‘Tell me, is this the price you and Ananias got for the land?’ ‘Yes,’ she said, ‘that is the price.’ (9) Peter said to her, ‘**How could you agree to test the spirit of the Lord?**’ Look! The feet of the men who buried your husband are at the door, and they will carry you out also.”

Notice that when Peter talks to Sapphira later, he repeats the accusation in a different way: “**How is it that you have agreed together to test the spirit of the Lord?**” Peter is saying that the Holy Spirit is a **possession** of the Almighty God.

As you, or anyone, can see in these verses quoted from the passage, Peter actually explains to us what he meant: Ananias and Sapphira had tried to deceive God who was present in the apostles by the power of His spirit. To start, they lied to Peter and the other apostles about the money they claimed to receive from the sale of their property. Did Ananias and Sapphira not realize, Peter asks, that through His Spirit God knew what they were doing? Although not directly mentioned in this passage, it is apparent that Ananias and Sapphira received more money from the sale of their land than they apparently said they had. They tried to deceive the apostles that they had donated **ALL THE MONEY** they had received. Subtly, it sure seems as though they wanted to increase their standing in the community with their act of charity – a very deceptive practice that all should be aware of. **No individual can hide his/her actions from the spirit of the Almighty God (see Psalm 139:7-8).**

Giving the “Holy Spirit” a personality

Many teachers use Scripture verses to impress upon us that “**HE**” (a **personal pronoun to personify the Holy Spirit**) “speaks,” “tells,” “declares,” “convicts,” “guides,” “hears,” etcetera; which verbs, by themselves, cannot give us any conclusive proof that the Holy Spirit is a divine being. This is called “personifying” a non-living “thing.”

But why do many teachers try to make it seem as if the Spirit has a personality? There is a reason, if one accepts it! ***The power of the Almighty's spirit is the vehicle by which He accomplishes His will; be it through the Son, the Apostles and those who believe what the Almighty has revealed through them.*** What the Almighty has revealed is only to be found in the Bible, not in the philosophical reasoning of theologians or credal counsels. The Almighty's spirit is made to take on actions that people do — for example, in attributing verbs to describe the actions of **things**; i.e., “Money talks,” “Power corrupts,”

“Words sting,” etc., all to describe a human personification to **things**. In addition, we hear people use phrases such as “the wind howls,” “the rain dances and/or pours,” “water runs,” “listen to the wind moan,” etc. — all these phrases with verbs do not make these things human, nor are they meant to, they do “personify” those **things**.

Watch how the Apostle Paul personifies the following words:

Death: Romans 5:14, “Death *reigned* from Adam to Moses.”

Law: Romans 7:1, “The law has *dominion/authority* over a man...”

Sin: Romans 7:8, “Sin, *seizing the opportunity*...”

Romans 7:9-10, “...sin *sprang to life* and I died.”

Romans 7:11, “Sin...*deceived me...and put me to death*”

It would be very hard to justify that “Sin, Law and Death” have a personality, even though the above *verses use verbs to personify them*. We absolutely know that none of the above **things** have personality, **so why do we personify them? It’s the same thing that is done to the “spirit” of the Almighty! Doing so to the spirit does not make the spirit a person.**

We should all accept how the entire Bible “speaks” (a pun) about the concept of the Almighty’s spirit. Just because translators “personify” the Holy Spirit in certain verses that “talk” (a pun) of what the spirit does in humans, does not make it a person. (Notice the puns about personifying the Bible!) Using verses that contain a verb that personifies the spirit to prove a doctrine that the spirit has a personality and is a person of the Godhood is called “proof-texting :” — a method that leads to all kinds of errors. The true method to be used is to “*always use verses that are clear to explain verses that are unclear, and put together all the pertinent verses, in context, from the whole revelation of the Bible; then harmonize them before putting forth a conclusion to make a doctrine.*” In doing this one can reach a conclusion that has a Biblical application worthy of belief.

The Almighty Father is revealed in the Bible to have body parts like us, He even sits on a throne in Heaven; the Son, Jesus, we don’t have to speak on, for He was here as a complete human being just like us; but the Spirit is described to be like wind, oil, fire, and water — never having any verbs that would describe a body like a human being. Also, the Spirit has no “family” relationship to Christians. God is our Father and Jesus is our Brother. The Apostle Paul says “Jerusalem above...is the mother of us all” (Galatians 4:26). The spirit of the Almighty is not a person but a gift, the mind and power of the Almighty Supreme Being working in and through us (2 Timothy 1:7).

Now for some interesting facts to show that the Holy Spirit is not a personality or person as we find the Almighty and His Son, the Christ who was with the Father before creation.

John 14:16-17 — “And I will request the Father, and he will give you another Comforter, that he may be with you unto the ages, the Spirit of Truth, which the world cannot accept, because it neither sees nor knows **IT**; you know **IT**, because with you **he (it)** remains and will be in you.” (Zondervan Greek Interlinear Translation, published in 1977. **Bold**

emphasis mine. The “**he (it)**” is not indicated in the Greek version that Zondervan publishers used; but the *context* requires the insertion of the English term “**it**”).

Here is the actual interlinear Greek text with reference to Strong’s Concordance numbers in John 14:15-17 — notice the emphasized Greek terms for the English word **IT**:

	1437	25		1473	3588	1785		3588
14:15	εάν	αγαπάτέ		με	τας	εντολάς		τας
	If	you should love		me,		[³ commandments		
1699	5083			2532	1473	2065	3588	3962
εμάς	τηρήσατε		14:16	και	εγώ	ερωτήσω	τον	πατέρα
² my	¹ give heed to]			And I		will ask	the	father, and
243	3875		1325		1473	2443	3306	
άλλον	παράκλητον	δώσει		υμίν		ινα	μένη	
[³ another	⁴ comforter	¹ he shall give		² to you],		that he should	abide	
3326	1473	1519	3588	165		3588	4151	3588
μεθ’	υμών	εις	τον	αιώνα	14:17	το	πνεύμα	της
with you	into the	eon.		The	spirit	of	truth;	whom
3588	2889	3756	1410	2983	3754	3756	2334	
ο	κόσμος	ου	δύναται	λαβείν	ότι	ου	θεωρεί	
the world	is not able		to receive	for	does not	contemplate		
1473	3761	1097		1473	1473-1161	1097	1473	3754
αυτό	ουδέ	γινώσκει	αυτό	υμεις	δε	γινώσκετε	αυτό	ότι
it.	nor	knows	it.	But you	know	it	for	[² with
1473	3306		2532	1/22	1473	1510.8.3		
υμίν	μένει		και	εν	υμίν	έσται		
³ you	it abides],		and in	you	it will be.			

In John 16:13 we find Jesus saying, “But when *that one* comes, the Spirit of Truth, he will guide you into all the truth...” “That one” is put as a “he” in many versions of the Bible, but the Greek term is ἐκεῖνος which is also found in verses 8 and 14.

It is true that “**IT**” is given a masculine pronoun (he or him) in a few places, but one should also be concerned with what is said about this “spirit of truth” in John 14:16-17 in which “**IT**” is also called “another Comforter” in reference to Jesus who was the first “Comforter.” The term “spirit/pneuma” is **neuter** (an “**IT**”), the **antecedent** of “truth” and “comforter.” (The NIV also mentions this in a note on the above quote.)

Let’s look at Romans 8:26b (NIV) — “We do not know how we ought to pray, but the spirit **himself** intercedes for us with groans that words cannot express.” “Himself” in the Greek is “**αὐτό**, which means “**itself**” in this verse. In Rom. 8:16 the term is also “itself” – “The spirit itself (**αὐτό**) witnesses with the spirit of us that we are children of Deity (God).” See John 14:16-17 again and notice in verse 17 the NIV changes the Greek designation of “**IT**” with the English term “him;” twice we find the Greek “**αὐτό**” as “him” and the reference to the “spirit of truth” as “**he** remains in you” which should be “**it** remains in you.” **Compare** the Greek words “ἐαυτοῦ, which means “**himself**” (**which is not used in the nominative, but rather as a reflexive third person pronoun in a contextual meaning**) with “**αὐτό**, which means “**itself**” and “**αὐτοῖ**, which means “**ourselves**.”

The following was e-mailed to me from a friend who stated, “*This one is interesting, because it talks about the Holy Spirit as being the power that God uses in communicating with us. I never thought of it in that way before. What are your thoughts about the Holy Spirit as being a Power and not a personality?*” This is worthy of serious consideration. Read each of the Scripture verses that are shown. Notice that this individual mentions the Apostles James, Peter, John and Paul.

■ “Adherents of the Trinity doctrine assert that the Holy Spirit is a personality alongside the Father and the Son. Yet, when the apostles — especially Paul — referred to the God Family in their epistles, why is mention of the Holy Spirit totally absent?

James 1:1, 2 Peter 1:2, 1 John 1:3, Romans 1:7, 1 Corinthians 1:3, 2 Corinthians 1:2, Galatians 1:3, Ephesians 1:2, Philippians 1:2, Colossians 1:2, 1 Thessalonians 1:1, 2 Thessalonians 1:2, 1 Timothy 1:1-2, Titus 1:4 and Philemon 1:3.

“Where is the Holy Spirit? Is James not a servant of the Holy Spirit (James 1:1)? Is he a servant only of God and of Jesus Christ? What about “knowledge of the Holy Spirit” in 2 Peter 1:2? Is there no “fellowship with the Holy Spirit” in 1 John 1:3? Why do the apostles ignore it?

“They include a greeting from the Father and the Son in each of these letters, but there is no greeting from the Holy Spirit. These Scriptures were inspired by God! Is it possible that this is evidence that there is no other personality? Little by little, it keeps adding up. We need to see this with our own eyes — the Holy Spirit is *ignored* every time the God Family is mentioned. Father and Son — yes. Holy Spirit — no.

“With a few variations in words, every apostle ignores the holy Spirit. Would it not be gross insubordination for them to recognize two in the highest offices in the universe and totally ignore the third? They did this because they did not know the Holy Spirit as a personality within the God Family, because ***Jesus taught them no such thing***. The Holy Spirit is *the power* God uses to direct and carry out His purposes within His creation.” ■

In absolutely none of the manuscript evidence we have before the 4th century do they indicate that the “Holy Spirit” is a third person and/or personality of the Godhead: and there are over 50,000 manuscripts available as evidence.

The historical record of how the trinity doctrine came to be is open knowledge to the world. The Christian church never completely accepted the idea of the trinity, and even after the early counsels most of the various congregations or assemblies of the Christian church did not embrace it until many centuries later! Even then, after the counsel of 381 AD, it was only accepted as a political concession to the Roman Emperor. Add these facts to its absence in the Scripture, and it is no wonder that so many today reject the doctrine. Even the Catholics who had dogmatically promoted the doctrine for centuries are now, in their *Catholic Encyclopedia and Catholic Dictionary*, admitting that the “Holy Spirit” is simply the power and means that the Almighty uses to fulfill His will. And millions in various denominations, increasingly today, do likewise.

Would you “put on” the spirit of **humility** as you put on the spirit of Christ? What about the spirit of the **world**, can one put that on too? How about putting on the spirit of **bondage and adoption, truth, grace, holiness, meekness, faith, promise, slumber, error, prophecy, fear, power, love, sound mind, wisdom and revelation, infirmity, divination**, or (shudder!) **antichrist**? Which ones are from the spirit of Deity? Do any of these “spirits” *also* come from Deity, or do *some* come from Satan? What about the “spirit of man”? Think about this: How many spirits are there? What does the word “spirit” really mean to you?

Spirit of:

God — Matt. 3:16, 12:28; Rom. 8:11, 8:14; 1 Cor. 2:12, 2:14, 3:16, 6:11, 7:40, 12:3; 2 Cor. 3:3; Eph. 4:30; 1 Pet. 4:14; 1 John 4:2

The Lord — Luke 4:18; Acts 5:9, 8:39; 2 Cor. 3:17, 3:18; 2 Thess. 2:8

The Father — Matt. 10:20 **Jesus Christ** — Phil. 1:19; 1 Pet. 1:11

Truth — John 14:17, 15:26, 16:13; 1 John 4:6 **The Son** — Gal. 4:6

The devil — Luke 4:33 **Antichrist** — 1 John 4:3 **Divination** — Acts 16:16

Infirmity — Luke 13:11 **World** — 1 Cor. 2:12 **Bondage & Adoption** — Rom. 8:15

Man — 1 Cor. 2:11 **Slumber** — Rom. 11:8 **Error** — 1 John 4:6 **Grace** — Heb. 10:29

Holiness — Rom. 1:14 **Meekness** — 1 Cor. 4:21; Gal. 6:1 **Faith** — 2 Cor. 4:13

Promise — Eph. 1:13 **Glory** — 1 Pet. 4:14 **Life** — Rev. 11:11; Rom. 8:2

Prophecy — Rev. 19:10 **Wisdom & Revelation** — Eph. 1:17

Fear, Power, Love, Sound Mind — 2 Tim. 1:7

The other occurrences of the use of “spirit” in the New Testament are all in the “neuter” sense — i.e., neither feminine nor masculine, nor are they connected with any particular word as the above list mentions.

This little exercise is here to get one interested in growing in the knowledge of our Lord and Savior, Jesus, the Christ of God — just as the Apostle Peter urges us to do! It is not the end-all of any study on the term “spirit”, nor necessarily 100% correct. I am not infallible and do ask that anyone who feels moved to respond to what is said. Email me at ken@kenfortier.com with your comments, pro or con.

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