

The Blessed Person and Work of God the Holy Spirit

Lesson 1--The Personality of the Holy Spirit

Is the Holy Spirit a Person or is He merely a power, a force, a kind of energy, an influence, or an "it"?

False Views

Many of the cults teach false views about the Person of the Holy Spirit. They deny that He is a Person.

- Arius (early part of the fourth century, 309-336 A.D.) has been called "The First Jehovah's Witness," because his heretical views on the Person of Christ mirrored those of present day Jehovah's Witnesses. He taught that the Holy Spirit is "exerted energy of God."
- Socinus lived in the 16th century and was the founder of what eventually became Unitarianism. He taught that the Holy Spirit is "eternally proceeding energy of God."
- Jehovah's Witnesses in their book called *Let God Be True*: "The holy spirit is the invisible active force of Almighty God which moves his servants to do his will" (p. 108). In their book *The Truth that Leads to Eternal Life* they propagate this error: "He accomplished the creation, not with tools such as men use, but by means of his holy spirit, which is his invisible active force" (p. 20). In the same book, "As for the 'Holy Spirit' the so-called 'third Person of the Trinity,' we have already seen that it is not a person, but God's active force. John the Baptist said that Jesus would baptize with holy spirit even as John had been baptizing with water. Water is not a person nor is holy spirit a person....(the apostles) all became filled with holy spirit. Were they 'filled' with a person? No, but they were filled with God's active force" (p. 24). **This is a very clear denial that the Holy Spirit is a person. They blasphemously refer to the Holy Spirit as an "it," and as merely an "active force."**
- Mormonism teaches that "Jesus Christ, a little babe like all the rest of us have been, grew to be a man, was filled with a divine substance or fluid, called the Holy Spirit" (*Key to Theology* by Parley P. Pratt, p. 38).

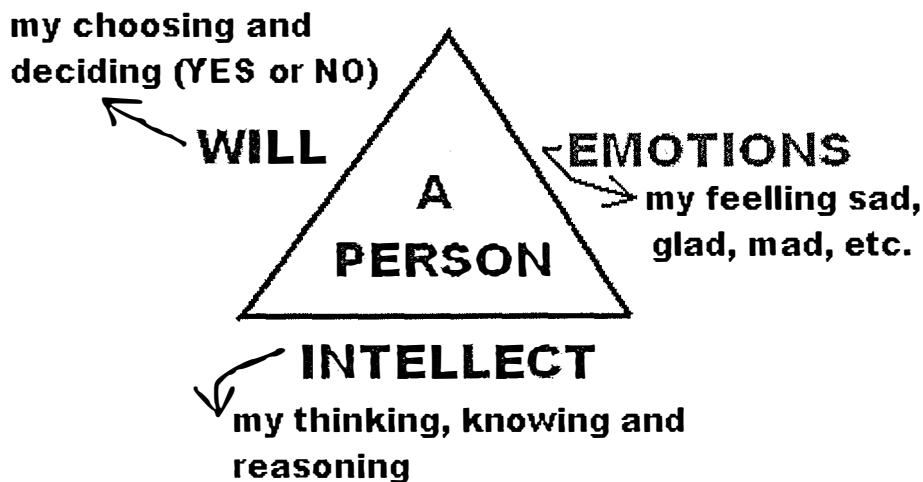
- Christian Science has a bizarre view that "Christian Science is the Holy Comforter" (p. 277). "The Holy Spirit is the Science of Christianity" (p. 351). These quotations are from *Science and Health* by Mary Baker Eddy (1913 edition).
- Christadelphianism teaches that "the Holy Spirit is not a personal God distinct from the Father, but the radiant invisible power or energy from the Father" (quoted in Sanders, *Heresies Ancient and Modern*).

Is the Holy Spirit really an "it," an energy, an active force, a substance, a fluid, Christian Science, invisible power of energy, etc.?

How do we know that the Holy Spirit is a Person?

The Holy Spirit is a Person because He possesses all the distinguishing marks of personality.

What is a person? What is it that makes someone a person? What are the essential characteristics of personality? The following chart shows the three components which make up a person: 1) an intellect, 2) a will, 3) emotion.



THREE COMPONENTS OF A PERSON

Earlier in this lesson there was a quote written by Jehovah's Witnesses in which they compared the Holy Spirit to water. Water is not a person. Water does not think and reason, and water does not know anything. Water does not make choices, nor does it decide anything. Water does not decide which way it is going to travel; it just goes with the flow. Water does not have emotions. When you boil water it does not get mad. On a rainy day, the rain drops are not sad and gloomy. Rain doesn't feel anything, because it is not a person.

What about the Holy Spirit? Does the Holy Spirit have intellect, will and emotions?

Does the Holy Spirit Have Intellect?

1 Corinthians Chapter 2

10: But God hath revealed them unto us by his Spirit: for the Spirit _____ all things, yea, the deep things of God.

11: 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.

12: Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the spirit which is of God; that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God.

13: Which things also we speak, not in the words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost _____; comparing spiritual things with spiritual.

The point of the above passage is that the Holy Spirit **knows** the things of God. No man understands God and what God is like, but the Holy Spirit does. In order to know things, He must have intellect. This passage also emphasizes that the Holy Spirit is our Teacher, the One who reveals the things of God to believers. The first law of teaching is that the teacher must know and must understand what he is teaching. We cannot teach what we do not know. The Holy Spirit is our perfect Teacher who has perfect understanding and intellect.

Read Isaiah 11:2 and notice these seven descriptions of the Spirit of God. In the Bible, the number seven often speaks of completion or perfection. The Spirit of God is perfect in understanding, perfect in counsel, perfect in knowledge, etc. These words all describe intellect.

But intellect alone does not make a person. There must also be will and emotion.

Does the Holy Spirit Have a Will?

Does the Holy Spirit make decisions, choose and decide?

"But all these worketh that one and the selfsame Spirit, dividing to every man severally as he _____" (1 Cor. 12:11). Who decides which believers should be given which spiritual gifts? The Holy Spirit makes these decisions, dividing to each believer individually as He chooses. He has a will!

Read Acts 16:6-7. Who decided that they should not preach the Word of God in Asia?

_____ Who decided that they should not go into Bithynia?

_____ He directed them and led them. They were not led by an "it" or by a force or by some kind of energy. No, they were led by a Person. Have you ever seen an "energy" make a decision? Does the lightning bolt say, "I think I shall decide where I am going to strike"?

Along with intellect and will, there is one more ingredient of personality.

Does the Holy Spirit Have Emotion or Feeling?

The last part of Hebrews 10:29 describes a person who "hath done _____ unto the Spirit of grace." The word "despite" means to insult or enrage. Can you insult someone who does not have feelings? You can only enrage someone if he is capable of having the emotion of anger.

Read Ephesians 4:30. How does this verse show us that the Holy Spirit has emotion or feeling? _____ To "grieve" means to sadden or to cause pain. The word "grieve" is a word that conveys both hate and love. Consider the following illustration:

A policeman **hates** the abuse of alcohol. He has seen the problems that it causes. He has witnessed innocent people dying in car accidents caused by a drunken driver. He has seen broken homes and wrecked marriages result from the abuse of alcohol. The policeman devotes himself to helping people understand the problems that alcohol causes and he often lectures at schools to warn young people about these dangers. Then one day he learns that his own son, whom he **loves** dearly, was involved in a car accident because he was drunk (fortunately no one was seriously hurt). He is **grieved**. He hates what his son did, but he greatly loves his son. Both hate and love are involved in this word "grieved."

The Spirit of God is HOLY (see Eph. 4:30) and He hates sin. If we could only realize that when we sin we grieve a Person who loves us so very much!

The Holy Spirit is a Person because He has all of the components of personality: intellect, will, and emotion.

The Holy Spirit is a Person because He does things that only a Person can do.

"But the Comforter, which is the _____, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall _____ you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you" (John 14:26). The Holy Spirit is a Teacher. When you think of a teacher, you usually think of a person, not an impersonal force. For the believer, it is a very comforting truth to realize that the One who dwells within us (1 Cor. 6:19) is our personal Teacher, who can reveal to us the precious things about our Saviour and can show us spiritual truth that it would be impossible to know apart from Him. Illustration: We can learn much from a book, but how much better it would be if the author of the book could be present with us to personally teach us the material himself! What a joy to know that whenever we read the Bible, the Author of the Bible, God the Holy Spirit, is present to teach and instruct us! Before you read the Bible, do you pray and ask Him to teach you and show you His way?

"Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will _____ you into all truth: for he shall not _____ of himself; but whatsoever he shall _____, that shall he

_____ : and he will _____ you things to come" (John 16:13). He guides; He speaks, He hears; He shows! Only a person can do those things.

Read Acts 8:29. Who gave Philip the command to "Go near, and join thyself to this chariot"? _____ An impersonal force does not give a command. [Has gravity (an impersonal force) ever given you a command?] It was a Person who gave Philip that command, and Philip obeyed this Person and did as he was instructed. Compare also Acts 13:2 (the Holy Spirit sending forth workers).

According to Romans 8:14, who leads the believer? _____ Believers are not led by an impersonal force or by a fluid or by an energy. We are led by a blessed Person, God the Holy Spirit.

In Romans 8:26 we learn that the Holy Spirit makes intercession for us. He prays for us! Only a person can pray.

In Romans 8:26 the King James Version says, "The Spirit itself," which is an unfortunate translation. It could give the wrong impression that the Holy Spirit is an impersonal "it." The reason for the KJV rendering is that the Greek word for Spirit is the word "pneuma" which is not masculine and is not feminine, but is neuter in gender. However, even though the word is neuter, it is used to describe a Person, and as we will see in the next section, masculine personal pronouns are often used to describe the Holy Spirit. Compare Romans 8:26 in the NKJV, NASB and ESV.

The Holy Spirit is a Person because of the Personal Pronouns that are used to describe Him.

"But the Comforter, who is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, _____ shall teach you all things" (John 14:26). It does not say, "**It** will teach you all things."

Find the personal pronoun that is used to describe the Holy Spirit in John 15:26.

Verse 26 _____

Find the personal pronouns that are used to describe the Holy Spirit in John 16:7-8.

Verse 7 _____

Verse 8 _____

The Holy Spirit is described in John 16:13-14. How many times do you read the words "he" and "himself"? _____ As you see these pronouns repeated, what is your conclusion? Is the Holy Spirit an impersonal force (an "it") or is He a Person? _____

The Holy Spirit is a Person because Christ promised that the Father would send "another Comforter" (John 14:26).

In the Greek language there are two words for "another." "**Heteros**" means "another of a different kind, and is used in Galatians 1:6 of a different (false) gospel. "**Allos**" (which is used here in John 14:26) means "another of the same kind."

In John 14:26 the Lord gave His disciples bad news and good news. The bad news was that He was going away. Their divine Companion was going to leave them. The good news was that Another was going to come to take His place. This would be Another of the same kind, another Person just like Christ Himself. When the Holy Spirit came on the day of Pentecost, it was much more than the mere coming of a force or a power or an influence or a fluid. A real Person came on that day. The Comforter came! [The term "Comforter" means One who comes alongside to help. The Holy Spirit is our Companion and Helper.]

The Holy Spirit is a Person because God the Father is a Person and God the Son is a Person and therefore God the Holy Spirit must also be a Person.

It would be absurd to think of Matthew 28:19 saying this: "Baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the impersonal active force." See also 2 Corinthians 13:14. If the Father is a Person and if the Son is a Person, then the Holy Spirit must be a person also. See our study on the Trinity.

Practical questions to think about: Do you really think of the Holy Spirit as a Person? When you sing hymns about the Holy Spirit, are you really worshipping a Person? The Holy Spirit lives within every child of God. Does it make a difference in your life to realize that the One dwelling within you is a Person? A Person is your Comforter, your Companion, your Helper! Do you really know the Holy Spirit as a Person? Do you have a personal relationship with Him? Do you ever pray to the Holy Spirit, thanking Him for who He is and for what He does? Do you ask Him to be your Teacher and your Guide each day?