

**The Unity Series**

# **One Spirit**

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*I saw a figure  
like that of a man.*

*From what appeared to be  
his waist down  
he was like fire,*

*and from there up  
his appearance was  
as bright as glowing metal.*

*(Ezekiel 8:2)*

## Dedication

This book is dedicated to all of our brothers and sisters in Christ from Colombia, the United States, Oman, El Salvador, and Israel. With you, we've shared genuine experiences in the power of the Holy Spirit—real healings, real miracles, real signs, real dreams, authentic visions, prophecies, interpretations, anointed teachings, tongues, worship and even deliverances. Remain in Christ and he'll remain in you.

... his Anointing teaches you about all things  
and as that Anointing is real, not counterfeit...  
remain in him.

(1 John 2:27)





## Introduction

Ask your Bible-believing friends about the Holy Spirit. Just try it. Ask them who they think he is. Ask them what he does. It's almost certain you'll be disappointed with the response. Why? Because even if you probe with further questions, it's unlikely the conversation will last more than 60 seconds!

Christians are strikingly speechless about the Holy Spirit—but why? What's the reason why Christians know so little about someone they claim is so great?

The Holy Spirit really is *great*. The archangel Gabriel's name appears four times in the Bible (Daniel 8:16; 9:21; Luke 1:19, 26). The “Great Prince” Michael, another archangel, is named five times (Daniel 10:13, 21; 12:1; Jude 1:9; Revelation 12:7)—and despite the fact that they are world famous, what are they compared to the Holy Spirit? What are nine mentions compared to 91 mentions?

The bare term *Holy Spirit* is used 91 times in the LEB version of the Bible, but we're not done counting. In total, the Holy Spirit is mentioned an astounding 365 times in the Bible! You may not have noticed because 80% of the times he appears it's under an alternate name. If we break these alternate names down, we'll discover that there are at least 89 of them—names distinct from “the Holy Spirit.”

These alternate names (in order from most to least common) are: the [One] Spirit (112 occurrences), Yahweh's Spirit (24), God's Spirit—*God* as a pronoun such as “his” or “your” (22), God's Spirit--Belonging to God (20), The Spirit of Truth and Knowledge

(12), The Breath of God (9), God's Promised Gift (8), Jesus' Spirit--Belonging to Jesus (8), One Spirit (7), Spirit of the Gods (6), God's Presence (6), Power (5), The Spirit of the Fear of Yahweh (4), Our Advocate (4), A Guarantee (4), God's Hand / Finger (3), The Spirit Who Is Upon Us (3), The Spirit Given by God (3), A New Spirit (2), Life-Giver (2), The Spirit Who Lives In Us (2), and God's Good Spirit (2).

The following appear only once: The Seed of God, The Spirit of the Living God, The Spirit of the One Who Resurrected Jesus, The Spirit of Your Father, The Spirit of the Lord [God], The Anointing / An Oil Upon Us, The Spirit of Prophecy, The Eternal Spirit, The Spirit of Glory, The Spirit of Grace, The Spirit of Adoption, The Spirit of Supplication, and The Spirit of Holiness.

Anybody who appears more than 365 times in the Bible under 89 alternate names must be extremely important! So why do Christians have so little to say about the Holy Spirit? Since when are Christians speechless about someone so famous? Most Evangelicals could easily speak for 20 minutes about Jesus. They might be able to speak five minutes about Paul. But would they be capable of speaking for a minute about the Spirit?

## Five Key Questions

We have to get Christians thinking and talking about the Holy Spirit. We propose that the best way to do that is asking questions. Here are the five soul-searching questions that shape the layout of this book.

1. Are your beliefs based on revelations from God or the teachings of men?
2. What kind of being is the Holy Spirit?
3. Are you brave enough to turn away from the teachers of the Trinity?
4. Can you describe the Spirit's relationship to God and his relationship to Jesus?
5. Could you state seven things the Spirit does?

We challenge you to prove that you know the Holy Spirit. To do that, study the Bible's answers to these five questions. The answers will guide you into a knowledge of the Holy Spirit. Train yourself to deal with the five questions so that you can ask them to others. We wrote this book to equip you to have conversations about the Holy Spirit. Let's hop into it!





## 1. Are your beliefs based on revelations from God or the teachings of men?

Has God actually *revealed* the truth to you, or is your faith based on man-made teachings? Has God actually spoken to you, or not?

We're not talking about audible voices here. That form of revelation is perfectly legitimate. Abraham heard God speak, Jacob heard him, and so did Elijah. Nobody's knocking it, but audible revelation is not superior to written revelation. What you read is superior to what you hear. The Scriptures are "the prophetic word made more sure."

If you've heard God's audible voice, you have to confirm that it was indeed God speaking to you by checking that the words of that voice agree with the Bible. Yes, God's Word has been confirmed in a collection of prophecies we call "the Bible."

- ... we have the prophetic word made more sure, to which you do well to pay attention as to a lamp shining in a dark place, until the day dawns and the morning star arises in your hearts (2 Peter 1:19; NASB).

Is the Bible the foundation for your faith? We're not going off track here. This question has everything to do with the topic of this book—the Holy Spirit—precisely because the Holy Spirit inspired the Bible!

- ... know this first of all, that no prophecy of Scripture is a matter of one's own interpretation, for no prophecy was ever made by an act of human will, but men moved by the Holy Spirit spoke from God (2 Peter 1:20-21; NASB).

Note also, as the passage says, that anyone moved by the Holy Spirit speaks from God. That's because the Holy Spirit transmits God's teachings to us. That is, God sent the Holy Spirit for the express purpose of teaching us his Word.

- ... the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you all things (John 14:26).

This is why true Christians make the Bible their top source of revelation. If you're learning from the Bible, you're learning from the One Spirit who inspired it. And if you're learning from the One Spirit, you're learning from the One God who sent him.

- All Scripture is God-breathed... (2 Timothy 3:16)

How can we speak about God and the Holy Spirit in the same context? The Trinitarian solution is to say that they are “one and the same” God. However, that statement denies a basic truth: The Father inspires the Holy Spirit. God enlightens the Spirit. The source of the Holy Spirit's message is the Father who sent him, his God.

Yes, if the Father is “the God of our Lord Jesus Christ” (Ephesians 1:17), and Jesus is the Holy Spirit's Boss—then we can safely deduce that the One God and Father is the God of the Holy Spirit.

Back to the point: Although God sent the Holy Spirit to teach us, unfortunately for most people there is a tradition, a theology, a book, a website/app/podcast, or a human teacher they prefer to hear over a simple reading of the Bible. To make sure you're not one of those people, ask yourself whether there any Bible passages you prefer not to hear.

Why ask yourself this question? Because if you are avoiding Bible

truths, then you're avoiding the Holy Spirit. Do you conveniently ignore certain passages, and cancel them out with man-made thoughts? Then you're ignoring the Holy Spirit. Do you argue against certain Bible teachings? Then, you're arguing with the Holy Spirit.

Such opposition to the Holy Spirit is much more common than you may think:

- Mainline Protestants proudly allow gays to lead in their congregations, but the Bible calls homosexuality rebellion against God. It says that, as a result of people turning away from God who "... gave them over to shameful lusts... their women exchanged natural sexual relations for unnatural ones... Men committed shameful acts with other men..." (Romans 1:26-27)
- Catholics cling to their images and statues, even though the second of the Ten Commandments clearly prohibits these objects in worship, saying "You shall not make for yourself an image... [to] bow down to them or worship them" (Deuteronomy 5:8-9).
- Reformed teachers who regard Martin Luther as a great theologian vehemently argue that salvation is *sola fide* (by faith alone) even though the Bible says in black and white that it's "not by faith alone" (James 2:24). They proudly stand alongside a man who called the Book of James "an epistle of straw."
- Jehovah's Witnesses insist that the Holy Spirit is a force or "energy," even though the Bible repeatedly presents him as a spirit with his own body—a spirit being who speaks, teach-

es, feels, guides us, picks people up, and acts according to his own will.

- Evangelicals proudly preach that Jesus was “the God-man.” They say that Jesus came to us as “100% man and 100% God” although his coming to us “fully human in every way” (100% man) is the most basic doctrine of the New Testament (Hebrews 2:14, 17; 4:15).

### **This is a Test**

Now, let’s talk about the last point: that Jesus came in the human nature. Let’s perform an actual test to see whether you’ve been taught by the Holy Spirit or by men.

We’re going to prove that if you are firm in this doctrine, it’s only because the Holy Spirit has revealed it to you! You’re about to get challenged deeply because if your pastor does not acknowledge that Jesus came in the flesh—you must break ties with your pastor. Believing in sound doctrine has a price.

Your refusal to separate from a pastor whose does not teach that Jesus came in the flesh would be doubly evil because it’s not only saying “no” to the Holy Spirit; it is saying “yes” to the spirit of the Antichrist.

- This is how you can recognize the Spirit of God: Every spirit that acknowledges that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is from God, but every spirit that does not acknowledge Jesus is not from God.

This is the spirit of the Antichrist, which you have heard is coming and even now is already in the World (1 John 4:2-3).

Talking about the Antichrist makes most of us uncomfortable, but by discerning the ministry of the Antichrist we can discern the ministry of the Holy Spirit. We have to know the difference between the two because that's how we know which pastor is a liar and which is a true teacher!

So, you've got homework: You need to ask your pastor about what Jesus' nature was when he came. Be prepared: The typical pastor's response is that he was "100% God and 100% man." We have tough news for you if that's your pastor's response: He's a deceiver!

- ... many deceivers, who do not acknowledge Jesus Christ as coming in the flesh, have gone out into the world. Any such person is the Deceiver and the Antichrist... (2 John 7-8).

False pastors have done something John the apostle describes as "running ahead." In other words, they have gone beyond Bible doctrine and have made up their own teachings. They have not remained faithful to the Doctrine of Christ.

- Anyone who runs ahead and does not continue in the Doctrine of Christ does not have God; whoever continues in the Doctrine has both the Father and the Son (2 John 9).

So, what to do? The Bible gives you just one option: Avoid fellowship with these people!

- If anyone comes to you and does not bring this teaching [that Jesus came in the human nature of sin], do not take them into your house or welcome them (2 John 10).

## The Best Teachers

The apostles were men approved by God. They, and those who follow their example today, get revelations from the Holy Spirit. This capacity to get such revelations is precisely what qualifies a man to lead in the Church. It's what made the apostles so special. For example, Paul had the Gospel revealed to him. Alone in the desert of Arabia, Jesus spoke to him!

Do you believe in Paul's Gospel, or do you believe in one of its modern replacements? There's a Catholic Gospel, a "Faith Alone" Gospel, the Prosperity Gospel, a "Presence of God in Worship" Gospel, the PC (Politically Correct) Gospel, or—for those who are members of online churches—a "Log On" Gospel.

- I want you to know, brothers and sisters, that the Gospel I preached is not of human origin. I did not receive it from any man, nor was I taught it; rather, I received it by revelation from Jesus Christ...

... when God, who set me apart from my mother's womb and called me by his grace, was pleased to reveal his Son in me so that I might preach him among the Gentiles, my immediate response was not to consult any human being. I did not go up to Jerusalem to see those who were apostles before I was, but I went into Arabia... (Galatians 1:11-12; 15-17).

We believe in the original Gospel, the one Jesus and the apostles preached: The Gospel of the Kingdom. To understand it, you don't need a college education, an Internet connection, a fancy job, theological studies, musical in-

struments, or money! You only need a revelation from the Holy Spirit. That's it.

- ... we declare God's wisdom, a mystery that has been hidden [the truth about the Kingdom of God, something not obvious to the human mind]... these are the things God has revealed to us by his Spirit (1 Corinthians 2:7, 10).

The Spirit revealed to Peter that Jesus was the Christ. The instant Peter received this revelation, Jesus affirmed Peter to be the Church's first official leader—why? Because leadership is for those who receive revelations. That is, if you are led by God, you can lead men.

- ‘... what about you [Peter]?’ he asked. ‘Who do you say I am?’ Simon Peter answered, ‘You are the Messiah, the Son of the Living God.’ Jesus replied, ‘Blessed are you, Simon son of Jonah, for this was not revealed to you by flesh and blood, but by my Father in Heaven. And I tell you that you are Peter [meaning *rock*], and on this rock I will build my Church’ (Matthew 16:15-18).

The best teachers are those who are taught by God, and the best leaders are those who are led by God. At the Sermon on the Mount, people were not amazed at Jesus' wit, intelligence, or his creativity. They were amazed by his authority. They usually listened to rabbis who would quote the interpretations and commentaries of other rabbis. They were used to hearing debates and opinions. Then came Jesus, inspired by the Holy Spirit, who spoke the Word of God like the prophets before him declaring “Thus says the Lord.” Pastors today must do the same thing.

- ... the crowds were amazed at his teaching, because he taught as one who had authority, and not as their teachers of the Law (Matthew 7:28-29).
- If anyone speaks, they should do so as one who speaks the very Words of God (1 Peter 4:11).

## **Better than Any Human Teacher**

Does complete and utter dependence upon the Spirit sound too challenging for you? It wasn't too challenging for the apostle John. He told believers they had no need of human teachers. It was enough for them (in any and every topic) to have the Anointing teach them!

- ... you have an Anointing from the Holy One, and all of you know the truth... As for you, the Anointing you received from him [Jesus] remains in you, and you do not need anyone to teach you. But as his Anointing teaches you about all things and as that Anointing is real, not counterfeit—just as he<sup>2</sup> [the Spirit] has taught you, remain in him [Jesus] (1 John 2:20, 27).

Do you rely enough on the Spirit that you could do without your current pastor—or are you so dependent upon your pastor that you can't even take a break from him? If that's your circumstance, you have a problem. Repent of your breaking of the First Commandment "You shall have no other gods before me." Go back to cherishing the One who teaches us all things.

- ... the Advocate, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you all things and will remind you of

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<sup>2</sup> The pronoun "he" refers to the Holy Spirit. For a full explanation of why this is the only way to translate the passage, please see Appendix D.



everything I have said to you (John 14:26).

Jesus told his apostles that the Holy Spirit would be our new teacher and his substitute! Do you see the Holy Spirit in that light, or would you prefer to have Jesus right by your side? Do you wish you had Jesus with you instead of the Spirit? If you do, then it's time to remember the words of Jesus:

- But very truly I tell you, it is for your good that I am going away (John 16:7).

Whoa! Why would it be good for Jesus to go away? I thought that we're supposed to long for his Coming! I thought that we're supposed to pray for him to return.

Yes, Jesus' return will be a wonderful event. Our Lord will usher in the Kingdom—and that's another reason why we hope in his Return, the Kingdom. But in the meantime, we're in this age, the Time of the Gentiles, and for it God has already sent us someone: the Spirit. The long-awaited Promise of the Father, the Spirit, came at Pentecost and will remain with us “for the Age” (John 14:16). Having him with us should be enough for us now!

Jesus affirmed the greatness of the ministry of the Holy Spirit. Even as he was wrapping up his exhortation above, he encouraged the apostles to look forward to the coming of the Spirit. Here's how the verse ends:

- Unless I go away, the Advocate will not come to you; but if I go, I will send him to you (John 16:7).

Did you catch that? The Lord Jesus told us that it was better for him to go. This is not any man's opinion. It's a fact, and it's a fact

that doesn't offend Jesus, since he taught it himself. It is better for the Spirit to be with us in Christ's stead!

We already learned from the apostle John that it's better to have the Holy Spirit than a human teacher, but now we must grapple with that same truth in the light of our Lord Jesus' absence. Can you accept Jesus' absence? He said that "it was good for us" that he go away. His reason: So that he might send us someone. By why is it better for you and me to be with someone else, not Jesus? Could it be that there's someone who is *better* than Jesus?

The Holy Spirit is not better than Jesus, but the Spirit serves us better. Yes, Jesus sent us someone who better serves us during this particular period in history. We are still in the flesh, and we have not yet been clothed with the divine nature. Until we have our new nature, we can have someone with the divine nature inside us! Look at it this way: For now it's better to have the Holy Spirit *within* us, than Jesus *with* us. If Jesus is with us *bodily*, he is limited in the number of believers he can speak to, teach, console, and empower. If he is with us *spiritually*, Jesus is unlimited.

Can you see now? How foolish we have been to think that it would be better to have Jesus with us now. We have imagined that the apostles, who had Jesus with them in the flesh, were living under greater grace than ourselves, but that's wrong. How ungrateful of us to think so! We have not trusted in God, whose great plan is being carried out right now through his Spirit.

We have not appreciated the work, ministry, or qualities of the Holy Spirit as we should. There will come a time when we will be clothed with the divine nature. We won't need the Holy Spirit inside us from that point onward. We won't need him to give us

power because we'll have our own power. We won't need him to teach us, because we'll know everything. But until the moment Jesus resurrects us, we need the Holy Spirit!

## **True Doctrine**

What are the basic truths we need to know about God's Holy Spirit? In sum, you've got sound doctrine if you believe four things about the Holy Spirit:

1. He is a spirit.
2. He is holy.
3. He is subordinate to both God and Jesus.
4. He wants to be in us.

That's the sum of sound doctrine concerning the Holy Spirit. Let's take a closer look at each point:

### **Points 1 and 2: He is a Spirit and He is Holy**

Notice how intuitive and inseparable the first two points are: He is the *Holy Spirit*. With that we deduce that he is a *spirit* who is *holy*! Simple.

People often ask: "What does *holy* mean?" And the most common answer is that it means "set apart." That's true, but you have to answer the question: "Set apart from what?" In the case of human beings, *holy* means "set apart from sin," but the Holy Spirit is a "holy" spirit-being because God has set him apart from all other spirit-beings. For example, the Bible never categorizes the Holy Spirit with the angels. Notice how Peter contrasts them here:

- ... things which now have been announced to you through those who preached the Gospel to you by the Holy Spirit sent from Heaven—things into which angels long to look (1 Peter 1:12; NASB).

Peter points out that we know the Gospel through the preachers who shared it with us by the Holy Spirit. That is, the message comes from the Holy Spirit, and angels would love to dig deeper into this message the Spirit knows so well. So the Holy Spirit knows much more than angels. He is set apart from them!

You can also see the “otherness” of the Holy Spirit when you compare him with the “living creatures.” Observe how they are described in the Old and the New Testaments:

- ... in the fire was what looked like four living creatures. In appearance their form was human, but each of them had four faces and four wings. Their legs were straight; their feet were like those of a calf and gleamed like burnished bronze. Under their wings on their four sides they had human hands. All four of them had faces and wings (Ezekiel 1:5-8).
- ... around the throne, were four living creatures, and they were covered with eyes [sequins/lenses], in front and in back. The first living creature was like a lion, the second was like an ox, the third had a face like a man, the fourth was like a flying eagle. Each of the four living creatures had six wings and was covered with eyes all around, even under its wings (Revelation 4:6b-8).

We compare the Holy Spirit to the living creatures because they are the most special of all heavenly creatures. There are no angels

as magnificent as them, but Ezekiel shows us that they are followers of the Holy Spirit. That is, the Holy Spirit is the Leader of the living creatures! How special do you have to be to lead the most special spirits in Heaven?

- ... wherever the Spirit went, they went... Wherever the Spirit went, they would go there (Ezekiel 1:12, 20; LEB).

The point is that when we call the Holy Spirit “Holy” we are not merely saying that he is one of a kind. We’re saying he’s *the only one* of his kind. He’s not one of many angels or “living creatures,” he’s the Leader of angels and living creatures, also called “cherubim.” They guarded the entrance to Eden after the Fall.

There are many millions of holy angels. They are “holy” spirits because they separate from sin. However, there is only One Holy Spirit. The One Spirit is set apart among all spirits. “The Spirit”—meaning: The *One* Spirit—is a title used for him no less than 113 times in the Bible.

Angels were created, and the cherubim are called “creatures,” but the Bible never suggests that the Spirit of God was ever created. The Spirit is not of the angelic “kind” (Genesis 1:21, 24-25) for one thing because the Spirit has a divine nature. He doesn’t have the angelic nature, but something much greater.

### **Point 3: He is subordinate to both God and Jesus**

The third point of our summary is also very intuitive: The Spirit is submissive to God and to Jesus. Why is this truth intuitive? Well, the biggest category of names for the Holy Spirit in the Bible is “Spirit of God.” There are at least 87 occurrences where

some variation of “Spirit of God” is used. What does that mean? It means that the Spirit belongs to God!

Then, there are at least eight instances where the Spirit is called the *Spirit of Jesus*. Considering these passages together, we’re supposed to deduce that the Spirit *belongs* to God and Jesus!

Yes, the *of* in these names (*Spirit of God* and *Spirit of Jesus*) indicates the possessive form. The *possessive* means that God *possesses* the Spirit. The Spirit is “the Spirit *of* (possessed by) God.” He is also possessed by Jesus—which is why the Scriptures call him “the Spirit *of* Jesus.” This isn’t just grammar, it’s a fundamental reality which every Christian needs to believe.

#### **Point 4: He Wants to Be in Us**

The fourth aspect of sound doctrine deals with the desire of the Holy Spirit. What does he want? What is his objective? You only know someone well if you know what they want. What do they pursue? What are their goals and dreams?

The Spirit strives to be *in* us. The main obstacle for his being in us is our apathy! As long as we sincerely want him to dwell within us, he’ll come. Due to our flesh, it’s not easy for us to work up the desire for him to dwell within us. However, if we’re in earnest, we’ll open a path for him by repenting of our sins. If we repent and we get baptized for the cleansing of those sins, the Spirit will be pleased to live within us.



## 2. What kind of being is the Holy Spirit?

### 1. The Holy Spirit is a Spirit

The Holy Spirit is like God who is spirit (John 4:24), like the angels who are spirits (Hebrews 1:13-14), and even like us—yes, humans are also spirits! God created human beings with three dimensions, and the first of those dimensions is the spirit, otherwise known as *the heart*.

Biblical Sources	Dimensions of our Being		
<b>Paul:</b> The Whole of Man (1 Thessalonians 5:23)	<b>spirit</b>	soul	body
<b>Moses:</b> The Shema (Deuteronomy 6:4-5)	<b>heart</b>	soul	strength
<b>Jesus:</b> The Great Commandment (Matthew 22:37; Luke 10:27)	<b>heart</b>	soul	strength-mind

According to Paul, Moses, and Jesus, every human being consists of a spirit, a soul, and a body (1 Thessalonians 5:23). The fundamental reason why we have these three dimensions is simple: God made us like him.

You must understand this great truth: God was the first to have his own spirit, soul, and body. As the Bible puts it, he created us in his *likeness* meaning “similarity.” We are similar to God wanted to make us like him. We came after him.

### The Human Spirit

Each of us has our own spirit, a human spirit. If Jesus is with our spirit, then it will be strong and blessed. That’s why Paul wished this blessing upon his friend Timothy:

- The Lord [Jesus] be with your spirit (2 Timothy 4:22).

## The Lamp of Yahweh

Our human spirit is alive—as such, it probes the rest of our being. God uses our human spirit as a flashlight to search the deepest parts of our being: our emotions, our thoughts, and our mind. Your spirit knows what’s behind your thoughts. God uses your spirit as a lantern to your soul.

- The spirit of man is the lamp of the LORD, searching all the innermost parts of his being (Proverbs 20:27; NASB).

The spirit is superior to all of these aspects of your being. It acts as their examiner, their judge, and their boss.

## A Fine Line

You’ve probably noticed that there’s a fine line between your soul and your spirit. Indeed, it’s very difficult to discern between the two. Psychologists, with their thousands of theories on the nature of man, have not yet agreed on whether we even have a soul and a spirit. We must go to pastors for the answers to life’s deepest questions. Only they are chosen by God to use the Sword of the Spirit. Yes, only the Holy Scriptures can cut deep down to the dividing line between soul and spirit.

- For the Word of God is living and active and sharper than any double-edged sword, and piercing as far as the division of soul and spirit (Hebrews 4:12; LEB).
- Take the helmet of salvation and the sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God (Ephesians 6:17).



## Don't Think

Do you know when your spirit is functioning? Do you know when it's at work? Here's a big clue: When you're using your mind, your spirit is inoperative. When you're thinking things through, you're not using your spirit.

Paul paints a stark contrast between the mind and the spirit in the following passage. He uses the word "but" to demonstrate that they oppose each other, saying:

- ... if I pray in a tongue, my spirit prays, but my mind is unfruitful. So what shall I do?  
I will pray with my spirit, but I will also pray with my understanding;  
I will sing with my spirit, but I will also sing with my understanding (1 Corinthians 14:14-15).

## Spirit to POC

The Bible tells us that God's Spirit "testifies together with" our spirit. In other words, the Spirit confirms truths in conjunction with our spirit. The two interact in this way: Our spirit is the point of contact (POC) of the Holy Spirit for when the Holy Spirit wants to communicate something to us.

- The Spirit Himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God (Romans 8:16; NKJV).

How can you open your heart so that your spirit cooperates better with the Holy Spirit? If you want them to work together, you have to "let go and let God." You have to stop worrying, stop thinking things through, and refuse to use your mind.

If you let him, the Spirit will act and speak through you. The key is to operate by the spirit—your spirit—in conjunction with the Holy Spirit.

- When they bring you before the synagogues and the rulers and the authorities, do not worry about how or what you are to speak in your defense, or what you are to say; for the Holy Spirit will teach you in that very hour what you ought to say (Luke 12:11-12; NASB).

What we've just learned is that your body, soul, and spirit are each magnificent aspects of your being. Each one plays an important role in your life. All have been created by God so that together they would fulfill their ultimate purpose—to serve God. But among the three, your spirit has the deepest purpose of all. If you tap into it, it will connect you to the Holy Spirit of God. Tapping into it is called “being in the spirit.”

### **“Being in the spirit” Obscured**

Sadly, the great majority of Bible translators have obscured the meaning of the NT concept of “being in the spirit.” The result is that Christians lose a valuable lesson on how to access to God. Let's consider the kinds of people who become translators: Most are intellectuals with an overdependence on the mind. Very few of them are Pentecostals. Very few of them claim to have received the baptism of the Holy Spirit. Can you see why it's likely they themselves don't know what it means to be “in the spirit”?

Bible translators reveal their misunderstanding of the Holy Spirit and their disdain for the human spirit through their wrong use of capitalization. In passages such as those that follow, many capital-

ize the *S* of *spirit* and completely change the meaning of the text.

- Paul purposed in the spirit to go to Jerusalem after he had passed through Macedonia... (Acts 19:21; NASB)
- ... when you are praising God in the spirit, how can someone else, who is now put in the position of an inquirer, say “Amen” to your thanksgiving, since they do not know what you are saying? (1 Corinthians 14:16)
- ... in whom [the Lord Jesus] you also are built up together into a dwelling place of God in spirit (Ephesians 2:22; LEB).
- ... pray in the spirit on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests... and always keep on praying for all the Lord’s people (Ephesians 6:18).

For further examples of misuse of capitalization, please see Appendix F, “The Big Error in Your Bible,” where we identify many other passages where translators obscure the meaning of passages with their poor use of capitalization.

## **The Holy Spirit in his Physical Body**

### **Not Limited by a Body**

As a spirit, the Spirit has no physical limitations, but having no physical limitation doesn’t mean that the Spirit doesn’t have a body. To be clear: He is not *limited* by a body, but the Spirit actually does have a body. Why wouldn’t he?

### **The One Who Lifts Up Ezekiel**

The Holy Spirit has manifested himself in his body for all to see. A good solid reading of Ezekiel 1-11 will prove this, but before

you read Ezekiel, please review some key concepts. We don't want you to miss the correct interpretation of those chapters.

The most basic concept is that the One called “the Spirit” throughout the Book of Ezekiel is indeed the Holy Spirit. Although Ezekiel refers to “the Spirit” ten times in the book, in chapter 11 he states specifically that “the Spirit” is not just an angelic being, but the Spirit of God—that is, the Spirit of Yahweh!

- ... the Spirit of Yahweh fell on me, and he said to me, “Say, ‘thus says Yahweh: “This is what you think, house of Israel, and I myself know them, the thoughts of your spirit””’ (Ezekiel 11:5; LEB).
- The Spirit lifted me up and brought me to the exiles in Babylonia in the vision given by the Spirit of God (Ezekiel 11:24).

The second basic concept is that we can prove that the spirit who enters Ezekiel on two occasions is the Holy Spirit. The agreement among commentators that this is the Holy Spirit owes itself to the fact that angels are not allowed to enter the bodies of human beings. God only allows his Holy Spirit to do that. Any Bible passage that describes a spirit sent by God who enters a human body must be the Holy Spirit.

- ... the Spirit came into me and raised me to my feet... (Ezekiel 2:2).
- Then the Spirit came into me and raised me to my feet (Ezekiel 3:24).

In the two previous verses, the Holy Spirit entered Ezekiel's body. He went into Ezekiel in order to raise the prophet to an upright

position just as the “Spirit of Yahweh” entered the bodies of dead people in the Valley of the Dry Bones. It’s noteworthy that the Valley of the Dry Bones vision is from the same book. This proves that the Holy Spirit is definitely the One Ezekiel sees lifting people up.

- Then he said to me, “Prophesy to the Spirit; prophesy, son of man, and say to the Spirit, ‘This is what the Sovereign LORD says: Come, Spirit, from the Four Winds and breathe into these slain, that they may live.’”

So I prophesied as he commanded me, and the Spirit entered them; they came to life and stood up on their feet—a vast army (Ezekiel 37:9-10)

The Spirit who is resurrecting people in the passage we just read is introduced in the chapter as “the Spirit of Yahweh.” And what does the Spirit of Yahweh do at the start of the chapter? He sets Ezekiel down in the middle of a valley.

Now, you can’t “set someone down” somewhere until you’ve first snatched them up from some other place—correct? If that’s true, then the Holy Spirit must first have taken Ezekiel from some other place. Does that sound like something the Holy Spirit would do? Yes.

- The hand of the LORD was on me, and he brought me out by the Spirit of the LORD and set me in the middle of a valley; it was full of bones. He led me back and forth among them, and I saw a great many bones on the floor of the valley, bones that were very dry. He asked me, “Son of man, can these bones live?” I said, “Sovereign LORD, you alone know” (Ezekiel 37:1-3).

So, the Holy Spirit lifted Ezekiel up, and we should note that the Spirit is famous for this kind of *whisking away*. For example, the Spirit snatched away the deacon Philip:

- When they came up out of the water, the Spirit of the Lord snatched Philip away; and the eunuch no longer saw him (Acts 8:39; NASB).

The prophets of Elijah's day knew that God's Spirit would snatch people up. Why don't people know that now?

- ... it will happen that I will go from you and the Spirit of Yahweh will carry you up to where I do not know... (1 Kings 18:12; LEB)
- Perhaps the Spirit of Yahweh has picked him up and set him down on some mountain or in some valley (2 Kings 2:16).

So, we're dealing with a well-known behavior of the Holy Spirit. Not that angels aren't also capable of doing it, but including Ezekiel 37:1 (above), there were seven times the Spirit whisked Ezekiel up off his feet. You'll be hard pressed to find a commentator who questions whether the One lifting Ezekiel up is the Holy Spirit. I know of no commentators who say that this is an angel, a cherubim, or any other kind of spirit.

- Then the Spirit lifted me up and I heard behind me a loud rumbling sound as the glory of the LORD rose from the place where it was standing (Ezekiel 3:12).
- The Spirit then lifted me up and took me away... I came to the exiles who lived at Tel Aviv near the Kebar River... (Ezekiel 3:14-15)

- Then the Spirit lifted me up and brought me to the gate of the House of the LORD... (Ezekiel 11:1)
- The Spirit lifted me up and brought me to the exiles in Babylonia in the vision given by the Spirit of God (Ezekiel 11:24).
- Then the Spirit lifted me up and brought me into the Inner Court, and the Glory of Yahweh filled the Temple (Ezekiel 43:4).

We've read six—but the seventh Bible passage is unique. Not only does it state unequivocally that the Holy Spirit lifted Ezekiel up, but in the preceding verse, Ezekiel actually sees the One who lifts him up. That is, the Holy Spirit is visible in verse 2! We'll get to verse 2 shortly, but for now we invite you to make up your mind about whether verse 3 (below) is the Holy Spirit or not:

- The Spirit lifted me up between Earth and Heaven and in visions of God he took me to Jerusalem (Ezekiel 8:3).

As you decided, consider how verse 3 fits the pattern of the other six passages from the same prophetic book. Consider also how it fits the pattern of the Bible—highlighting the action of the Holy Spirit snatching up God's servants. We are certain that verse 3 is speaking of the Holy Spirit. If you are too, then let's go to verse 2.

## Seeing the Spirit

Who did the prophet Ezekiel see in 8:2? Who was it who had “a figure like that of a man”?

- ... while I was sitting in my house and the elders of Judah

were sitting before me, the hand of the Sovereign LORD came on me there.

I looked, and I saw a figure like that of a man. From what appeared to be his waist down he was like fire, and from there up his appearance was as bright as glowing metal. He stretched out what looked like a hand and took me by the hair of my head. The Spirit lifted me up between Earth and Heaven and in visions of God he took me to Jerusalem... (Ezekiel 8:2-3)

The supernatural being we see here is not Yahweh. Ezekiel sees Yahweh in the next verse, 8:4—where Ezekiel tells us that he sees “the God of Israel.”

- ... there before me was the Glory of the God of Israel, as in the vision I had seen in the plain (Ezekiel 8:4).

The commentators who say that the being who appears in 8:2 was Jesus make that assertion for just one reason: He looks like a man. However, God and angels also look like men in the Bible. Why can't the Spirit look like a man? In fact, why would he *not* look like a man? It's preposterous to think that he would look any different, isn't it? For example, does anyone dare propose that he looks like one of the four-faced “living beings”? Of course not.

Or will we deny him any appearance at all, and so rob the Holy Spirit of an identity?

It's not Jesus in Ezekiel 8:2-3. Jesus doesn't snatch people up and take them around to see visions—not in any other passage of the Bible. Neither does God. These are all things that only angels and the Holy Spirit do. Precisely, the main reason we know this is the



Holy Spirit is because he snatches Ezekiel up—something he does in other parts of the Bible.

For example, the Spirit snatched up Philip the deacon in Acts 8. In that passage, Luke uses the Greek term for “rapture” or “snatch up.” Paul uses that same term when he describes the Rapture in 1 Thessalonians 4:17. We know that angels rapture believers from what Jesus told us in Mark 13 (below).

- When they came up out of the water, the Spirit of the Lord snatched Philip away; and the eunuch no longer saw him, but went on his way rejoicing. But Philip found himself at Azotus, and as he passed through, he kept preaching the Gospel (Acts 8:39; NASB).
- ... we who are still alive and are left will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air (1 Thessalonians 4:17).
- ... he [Jesus] will send his angels and gather his elect from the four winds, from the ends of the Earth to the ends of the heavens (Mark 13:27).

The One who Ezekiel sees standing before him is *also* the one who stretches out his hand, grabs Ezekiel by the hair, and lifts Ezekiel up into the atmosphere. To identify the One standing as two different beings is to do violence to the text. A straightforward reading of the text will lead any simple and unbiased reader to understand this being, described as “the Spirit,” as the Holy Spirit.

It shouldn’t be a surprise to find the Holy Spirit in Ezekiel. Let’s not forget that after a thorough survey of the Bible, we drew the conclusion that term “the Spirit” has the meaning of “the [One] Spirit”—that is, it almost always signifies the Holy Spirit.

We must understand v. 3 as one seamless statement, reading it with the simplicity in which it was written:

- He stretched out what looked like a hand and took me by the hair of my head. The Spirit lifted me up between Earth and Heaven...

### Who is “the Spirit”?

The Spirit we encounter in Ezekiel is the Leader of four prestigious heavenly creatures, cherubim. The spirits of the cherubim are in the great-rimmed wheels that has sequins. The Spirit they follow must be the Holy Spirit—for one reason, because he dwells close to the Throne of God.

- Wherever the Spirit would go, they [the “living beings”] would go, without turning as they went... Wherever the Spirit would go, they would go, and the wheels would rise along with them... (Ezekiel 1:12, 20)

As a point of clarification: “The spirit of the living creatures was in the wheels” (Ezekiel 1:20). The Holy Spirit was not in the wheels. The wheels had the spirit of the creatures in them. The wheels followed the creatures, who in turn followed the Holy Spirit.

The point is that we shouldn’t confuse the Spirit with the spirit in the wheels, and we shouldn’t confuse him with God either. In the next passage, “the Glory of the LORD” is God Himself. God is the One who says “This is the place of my Throne.” The Holy Spirit does his typical snatching up, lifting Ezekiel up to bring him to the Temple.

- The Glory of the LORD entered the Temple through the gate facing east. Then the Spirit [the Holy Spirit] lifted me up and brought me into the Inner Court, and the Glory of the LORD filled the Temple.

While the man

was standing beside me, I heard someone [Yahweh God] speaking to me from inside the Temple. He said: “Son of man, this is the place of my Throne and the place for the soles of my feet...” (Ezekiel 43:4-7)

Again, this “glory of the LORD” is the Lord Yahweh Himself, the Blessed One, the One God and Father. We know that because he is the One who is seated on the Throne. We already were introduced to the One Seated on the Throne in chapter one.

- Above the vault over their [the Living Creatures’] heads was what looked like a Throne of lapis lazuli, and high above on the Throne was a figure like that of a man. I saw that from what appeared to be his waist up he looked like glowing metal, as if full of fire, and that from there down he looked like fire; and brilliant light surrounded him. Like the appearance of a rainbow in the clouds on a rainy day, so was the radiance around him. This was the appearance of the likeness of the Glory of the LORD [Yahweh God] (Ezekiel 1:26-28).

The appearance of the Holy Spirit in 8:2 is strikingly similar to the appearance of God in chapter one, which we just read. That should come as no surprise since the Holy Spirit, like God, has a divine nature. In fact, Jesus also is described with the appearance of a man, and with a bronze fiery appearance too—when we see him in his divine nature.

- ... like a son of man, dressed in a robe reaching down to his feet and with a golden sash around his chest. The hair on his head was white like wool, as white as snow, and his eyes were like blazing fire. His feet were like bronze glowing in a furnace... (Revelation 1:13-15)

## Leader of Angels

A spirit-being who commands God's angelic armies appeared to Joshua. This commander or "captain" allowed Joshua to bow before him, indicating that he was no angel. Was he the Word, the Angel of Yahweh? If he was not, then he must have been the Holy Spirit.

- Now when Joshua was near Jericho, he looked up and saw a man standing in front of him with a drawn sword in his hand. Joshua went up to him and asked, "Are you for us or for our enemies?"  
 "Neither," he replied, "but as Commander of the Army of Yahweh I have now come." Then Joshua fell facedown to the ground in reverence, and asked him, "What message does my Lord have for his servant?"  
The Commander of Yahweh's Army replied, "Take off your sandals, for the place where you are standing is holy." And Joshua did so.

## Jesus and the Spirit in the form of Angels

The Spirit is completely capable of assuming the form of an angel—why wouldn't he? Jesus was known as *the Angel of Yahweh* throughout the OT and often took the form of an angel (Judges 6:11-23; 13:2-23). In similar fashion, the Holy Spirit is called an

angel, specifically *the Angel of Yahweh's Presence*. With a name like that, we are certain that he can take the form of an angel.

The indisputable evidence that *the Angel of Yahweh's Presence* (Isaiah 63:8) is another name for the Holy Spirit is revealed through Hebrew parallelism—that prevalent and consistent principle of OT interpretation. Below we diagram Isaiah 63:8-10 to lay out what this parallelism looks like. Technically, it's called “synonymous chiasmus

parallelism” which means that it uses similar ideas (*synonymous* comes from the word *synonym*) in the form of an X. That is, what was ABC, becomes CBA.

In the example below, lines B and B<sup>1</sup> speak of the same spirit-being, the one who worked so closely with God. In the first line B, the Scriptures speak of the Angel of Yahweh's Presence. We are not sure who that angel is until the corresponding line B<sup>1</sup> resolves the mystery by stating clearly that it's the Holy Spirit.

A) In all their distress he [Yahweh] too was distressed,

B) and the Angel of his Presence saved them.

C) In his love and mercy, he [Yahweh] redeemed them;

C<sup>1</sup>) he [Yahweh] lifted them up and carried them all the days of old.

B<sup>1</sup>) Yet they rebelled and grieved his Holy Spirit.

A<sup>1</sup>) So he [Yahweh] turned and became their enemy and He Himself fought against them.

Observe how A-A<sup>1</sup> and C-C<sup>1</sup> speak of Yahweh, the One God. All lines use the pronoun “he” for Yahweh. These four references to

God demonstrate the preeminence of God and culminate with an emphatic “He Himself” in A<sup>1</sup>.

Meanwhile, the Spirit is central to this portion of Scripture. The X illustration at right shows that he is in the middle position (B and B<sup>1</sup>). When you match up the two Bs, you get a wonderful insight into the Spirit’s identity—that he is *the Angel of God’s Presence*.

### **The One Who Spoke to Ezekiel**

Back to Ezekiel. We were sidetracked because we had to prove that the Holy Spirit is not in any way disparaged if we describe him in his glorious body, looking quite like an angel.

There are many times when Ezekiel hears “One who speaks.” Is this “One who speaks” the same one who entered Ezekiel’s body, and the same one who lifted Ezekiel up? If it is, then it’s the Holy Spirit. If it’s not, then the “One who speaks” is an angel. We believe that it’s the Holy Spirit for three reasons:

1. All of God’s prophets were under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit.

This is a fundamental truth of Scriptures. Prophets have always heard the voice of the Holy Spirit. Peter says that we should know this “first of all.” That is, it’s standard Christian belief.

- ... no prophecy was ever made by an act of human will, but men moved by the Holy Spirit spoke from God (2 Peter 1:21)

As the Nicene Creed says, “He [God] has spoken through the prophets.” That ancient belief summarized by the Nicene fathers is echoed throughout the Scriptures:

- For many years you were patient with them. By your Spirit you warned them through your prophets (Nehemiah 9:30).
- ... [they] would not listen to the Law or to the words that the LORD Almighty had sent by his Spirit through the earlier prophets (Zechariah 7:12).
- In the past God spoke to our ancestors through the prophets at many times and in various ways... (Hebrews 1:1)

Is the same Spirit that lifted Ezekiel up the one who spoke to him in Chapters 1-8, and 11? The most straightforward reading of the text should lead you to that conclusion:

- ... the Spirit lifted me up and brought me to the gate of the House of the LORD... The LORD said to me, “Son of man, these are the men who are plotting evil... Therefore prophesy against them...”

Then the Spirit of the LORD came on me, and he told me to say: “This is what the LORD says: That is what you are saying, you leaders in Israel, but I know what is going through your mind. You have killed many people... but I will drive you out...” (Ezekiel 11:1-7)

Mind you, this same chapter, which begins with the Spirit lifting Ezekiel up, and the Spirit of Yahweh talking to Ezekiel, also has a verse which clarifies that the Spirit of God was the source of the visions Ezekiel saw:

- The Spirit lifted me up and brought me to the exiles in Babylonia in the vision given by the Spirit of God (Ezekiel 11:24).

2. A natural reading of the text makes the speaker the Spirit.

Most commentators think that the One who is speaking is different from the Spirit who lifts up the prophet—but that is unnatural, and there is no grammatical reason to think so. The original Hebrew is not complex. It reads just as it does in English. In both cases, the plain interpretation of the text is that the one who is speaking is also the one who lifts Ezekiel up.

- I heard the voice of One speaking. He said to me, “Son of man, stand up on your feet and I will speak to you.”  
As he spoke, the Spirit came into me and raised me to my feet, and I heard him speaking to me. He said: “Son of man, I am sending you to the Israelites, to a rebellious nation that has rebelled against me... Say to them, ‘This is what the Sovereign LORD says...’ (Ezekiel 1:28b-2:4)<sup>3</sup>

3. Another reason to believe that the One who lifts Ezekiel up is the same one who is speaking is because the One who is speaking is speaking as God! That’s something the Spirit does throughout the Bible. Angels don’t ever do it. They’re not authorized to do so because they’re not God’s spokespeople.

Below are three cases where angels speak in the Bible. Notice that they never presumptuously speak *as* God (in the first person), but they respectfully speak *about* God (in the third person):

- ... he [John the Baptist] will be great in the sight of the

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<sup>3</sup> An intelligent but weak argument against this being the Holy Spirit is that a parallel passage (Revelation 10:9-10) has an angel giving a scroll to John to eat. Why is that argument weak? Because the Holy Spirit can do the same things an angel can do. The fact that an angel does something in one passage does not make it impossible for the Spirit to do it in another passage.



Lord... he will turn many of the sons of Israel to the Lord their God (the angel Gabriel speaking to Zacharias; Luke 1:15-16).

- ...the Lord God will give him the throne of his father David ... nothing will be impossible with God (Gabriel to Mary; Luke 1:32, 37).
- For God has put it in their hearts to execute his purpose... until the words of God will be fulfilled... God has remembered her offenses (an angel to John; Revelation 17:17-18; 18:5).

The question is: Can the Holy Spirit speak with the authority of God? Answer: yes. Can the Spirit speak with God's voice? Yes—the Bible is God's Word, and the Holy Spirit gave the Bible to us. The Spirit has given us God's Word because God speaks through the Spirit.

- All Scripture is God-breathed... (2 Timothy 3:16)

The Holy Spirit has spoken with the very voice of God. He has done this through the prophets in such a way that men spoke from God! Angels do not “speak from God.” They speak about God, but they do not speak with the voice of God.

- ... know this first of all, that no prophecy of Scripture is a matter of one's own interpretation, for no prophecy was ever made by an act of human will, but men moved by the Holy Spirit spoke from God (2 Peter 1:20-21; NASB).

## **How to Think About the Spirit**

What is the Holy Spirit? Simply put: He is a spirit! In addition, the Holy Spirit is a spirit who is set apart—that's why he's called

*holy*. Indeed, he's so set-apart that he is *the* Holy Spirit. But what's so special about him? What sets him apart from other spirits? The main thing is his nature. Angels have an angelic nature, but the Holy Spirit has the divine nature! Angels are spirits, but the Holy Spirit is unique among them.

If it helps, think of the Holy Spirit this way: He's like an angel in appearance, but with much more power, understanding, and authority. The Spirit has a nature greater than the angelic nature—although the Spirit is a spirit in the same sense that angels are spirits.

### **The Spirit is Autonomous**

Let's try to understand a little about how the Spirit works. To understand how he works, you first have to know that the Spirit is free. He makes his own decisions—and that's called *autonomy*. Jesus taught the Spirit comes and goes as he pleases.

- The wind blows wherever it pleases. You 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 (John 3:8).

To illustrate the Spirit's autonomy, let's recall the story of King Saul. First, he was chosen by God to be king of Israel. Because Saul had such an important task, God sent his Holy Spirit to help Saul. When the Spirit came upon Saul, the Spirit transformed him into a different person.

- The Spirit of the LORD will come powerfully upon you, and you will prophesy with them; and you will be changed into a different person... As Saul turned

to leave Samuel, God changed Saul's heart, and all these signs were fulfilled that day.

When he and his servant arrived at Gibeah, a procession of prophets met him; the Spirit of God came powerfully upon him, and he joined in their prophesying.

When all those who had formerly known him saw him prophesying with the prophets, they asked each other, 'What is this that has happened to the son of Kish? Is Saul also among the prophets?' (1 Samuel 10:6, 9-11)

So Saul received the Holy Spirit; but as time progressed, the Spirit would abandon Saul. Why did the Spirit leave Saul? Saul refused to love, to act mercifully, and to be humble. He grew greedy, proud, and jealous. The Holy Spirit decides of his own will not to dwell in a person who is living in sin.

- Now the Spirit of the LORD had departed from Saul, and an evil spirit from the LORD tormented him (1 Samuel 16:14).

At the same time, we have the overlapping story of David. Since David was walking by faith, and God found him worthy, the Spirit came upon David. Precisely, when Samuel anointed David as the next king of Israel, the Spirit came upon David powerfully.

- ... Samuel took the horn of oil and anointed him [David] in the presence of his brothers, and from that day on the Spirit of the LORD came powerfully upon David (1 Samuel 16:13).

The Spirit willingly came upon David—something David understood better than Saul. David knew that he was not beyond error. He knew that if he were to sin, the Holy Spirit could depart from him.

But there was a time when David let down his guard. Having committed adultery with Bathsheba and having murdered a loyal military commander, David arrived at the same point Saul arrived at years before. He was at the point where the Spirit might depart from him. So David cried out to God in prayer:

- Do not cast me from your Presence or take your Holy Spirit from me (Psalm 51:11).

### **What is a Spirit?**

Remember: God is a spirit, Jesus is a spirit, and even *you* are a spirit! Satan is a spirit—one who went from the beauty of perfection to the darkness of sin. Along with him, all demons are spirits.

Ghosts are spirits too. Ghosts are the spirits of the righteous who have received a temporary pass out of Hades. They were in the cool side of Hades—that is, Paradise—and God gave them a temporary pass to leave.

Think about it: No spirits from the Hell side of Hades ever receive passes out of Hades. Therefore, evil ghosts do not exist. If you run into a ghost who is doing evil, it is actually not a ghost but a demon trying to trick you. Demons are liars, and they sometimes call themselves *ghosts*. Other times they call themselves *aliens* or

even *angels*—but they’re still demons. Samuel is the only biblical example of a ghost (1 Samuel 28:11-20).<sup>4</sup>

The proper definition of a *spirit* is “a personal life-force inextricably linked to its own soul and body.” God has his body. Jesus has his. Humans lose theirs at death and get it back at the Resurrection, just like Jesus did.

The Devil will be “cast into the Lake of Burning Sulfur” (Revelation 20:10). Only someone with a body can be hurled into a lake. When the Bible says that “the eternal fire [was] prepared for the Devil and his angels” (Matthew 25:41), and that there the demons will endure “eternal punishment” (v. 46), we can be sure that they will burn in their bodies. Of Satan it says that he will be “tormented day and night for ever and ever” (Revelation 20:10).

## Hovering and Fluttering

The point is that all spirits get their bodies back in the end. So, what about the Holy Spirit? We have to understand that he has a body, he gave it up for a time, and that he will get his body back. Let’s first look at the evidence that he actually has a body.

When we’re first introduced to the Spirit, we find him “hovering” over the surface of the waters.

- ... the Spirit of God was hovering over the surface of the waters (Genesis 1:2; LEB).

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4 Are you a KJV fan who likes to call the Holy Spirit the *Holy Ghost*? If you do, please make sure that the people who hear you aren’t confused by the term *ghost*. In our Appendix B (Two Terms Not to Use for the Spirit), we explain why *ghost* is one of the terms not to use for the Spirit.

To hover, the Spirit must have had a body. Why? Well, let's look at the Hebrew word for *hover*. It's only used three times in the Bible: The first is here in Genesis 1. Then it's used again in Deuteronomy 32:11 to describe how an eagle "hovers" over its young in the nest. Lastly, the prophet Jeremiah fearing God states "... all my bones shake" (23:9; NKJV). That word "shake" is the same one translated the other two times as "hover."

Since the Hebrew word for *hovering* involves a shaking movement, *fluttering* is also a good translation. Indeed, the two most literal translations rightly tell us that in the Beginning the Spirit was "fluttering on the face of the waters" (Genesis 1:2; LSV, YLT). Either way, in every passage it's used, this verb implies movement. That is why at least ten popular versions translate Genesis 1:2 as "the Spirit of God was moving over the surface of the waters."<sup>5</sup>

The question naturally follows: What was the Holy Spirit moving so rapidly that God would use this word "fluttering"? The obvious answer is: his wings. Most Christians will refuse to recognize that the Holy Spirit has wings because they are preconditioned to think of him as bodiless. But what will they do with the NT parallel to Genesis 1:2? In the NT the Holy Spirit hovered over the waters again<sup>6</sup>—and there it tells us that he hovered over the waters "in bodily form."

- ... the Holy Spirit descended on him [Jesus] in bodily form like a dove (Luke 3:22).

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5 The following translations use this wording: KJV, NKJV, NASB, Amplified, ASV, CEV, D-RB, ERV, GNT, and the NET.

6 For a brief examination of the meaning of Noah's dove sent in relation to Genesis 1:2 and the Holy Spirit's appearing as a dove at Christ's baptism, please see Appendix G, The Spirit as a Dove.

Now, the Holy Spirit is no dove—but why did he appear “like a dove”? God wanted him to appear physically, so he did. During the current age, the Spirit will not appear in his glorious body because he has abandoned his own body until the Eternal Kingdom comes (we’ll describe why in a later section of the book). For now, let’s understand that the Spirit’s appearing as a dove proves that if we’re going to compare him to any animal, a dove is the best. That’s in part because doves have wings and they fly.

## Hovering

The earliest evidence that the Holy Spirit has a body is in the second verse of the Bible. We need to define clearly what the word “hovering” means because it is the first activity we find the Holy Spirit doing in the Bible.

- ... the Spirit of God was hovering over the surface of the waters (Genesis 1:2; LEB).

The term *hover* in modern English brings to mind hummingbirds, helicopters, and drones. Hovering is not equal to floating. For example, a balloon floats, but does not hover. Anything or anybody that hovers is more at home flying. Indeed, they hover because in addition to flying they have the unique ability to convert a flying pattern to stationary stillness. The hummingbird, for example, loves to fly from flower to flower, but its flight pattern is unique among birds.

... hummingbird flight is different from other bird flight in that the wing is extended throughout the whole stroke, which is a symmetrical figure of eight, with the wing producing lift on both the up- and down-stroke. Hum-

mingbirds beat their wings at some 43 times per second (Retrieved from [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bird\\_flight#Hovering](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bird_flight#Hovering) on July 10, 2020).

Although it's not the same Hebrew word we find in Genesis 1:2, the verse below describes seraphim hovering. The Hebrew word is translated as “flying.”

- Above him [God] were seraphim, each with six wings: With two wings they covered their faces, with two they covered their feet, and with two they were flying (Isaiah 6:2).

The point is that you need at least one set of wings to hover. We believe that the Holy Spirit has wings because he hovers.

### **Impossible?**

Most Christians find it impossible to conceive that the Spirit would have wings, but what do they do with Psalm 91:4 then? Do they reject it? It says “the Almighty... shall cover you with his feathers, and under his wings you shall take refuge.”

The only reason why the naysayers reject the idea that the Holy Spirit has wings is because they think that the Holy Spirit is God, and they are incapable of imagining that God with wings. But precisely—we need to confront them with this verse that says that Yahweh has wings. Once they hear it, they have two choices: a) They either have to convince themselves that it a symbolic passage—that is, that the wings are merely symbols of God's protection; or b) They have to admit that God literally has wings. There can only be one correct interpretation, but no matter which one is the true interpretation, we can confidently declare that God will



shelter us under his wings. The Bible says it, so we can say it. The Bible says it, so we must say it!

But this book is about the Holy Spirit and the issue we really need to get to is: Why can't we say that the Holy Spirit has wings? If by simply reading the Bible out loud we find ourselves declaring that there is safety under the wings of God Almighty, then why does it offend people when we say that the Holy Spirit has wings?

### **What Does a Being that Flies Do?**

Did not the Holy Spirit “snatch up” (Acts 8:39) Philip the deacon? Angels snatch us up in the Rapture (Mark 13:27) in the same way that the Holy Spirit “caught Philip away” (NKJV). Snatching up is indisputably the action of a being which flies. For example, hawks and eagles can snatch up their prey. Snakes and wolves do not. You never say that a snake “snatches up” its prey unless it's hanging from a branch.

It's important to note that the same Greek word God uses for Philip's being snatched up in Acts 8 is the one Paul uses in 1 Thessalonians 4:17 talking about the Rapture. Below, you can see how the Amplified Bible translates this word as *raptured*.

- Then we who are alive and remain [on the Earth] will simultaneously be caught up (raptured) together with them [the resurrected ones] in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air, and so we will always be with the Lord!

## Like the Wind

Jesus said that the Spirit is like the wind. He taught:

- The wind blows wherever it pleases. You 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 (John 3:8).

The Spirit is like the wind. That means that although he's invisible, we can have some sensory perception of him when he is near. We can feel his presence. It's even possible that we *hear* the Spirit as he moves. The apostles heard "a sound like the blowing of a violent wind" when the Spirit physically stirred the Upper Room surroundings. He was literally in the air around them, altering the atmosphere of the room.

- ... a sound like the blowing of a violent wind came from Heaven and filled the whole house where they [a group of about 132 people] were sitting. They saw what seemed to be tongues of fire that separated and came to rest on each of them. All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues as the Spirit enabled them (Acts 2:2-4).

In the former passage, the Spirit acted similarly to the angel who stirred the waters of the Pool at Bethesda. That is, he stirred up the environment. He was like the wind. He was like fire. The similarity of the Holy Spirit to the angel of Bethesda is that they are both spirits. Humans can feel a spirit's presence even when we can't see that spirit. Thus was the case in both circumstances.

- ... there is in Jerusalem by the Sheep Gate a pool, which is called in Hebrew, Bethesda, having five porches. In these

lay a great multitude of sick people, blind, lame, paralyzed, waiting for the moving of the water. For an angel went down at a certain time into the pool and stirred up the water; then whoever stepped in first, after the stirring of the water, was made well of whatever disease he had (John 5:2-4; NKJV).

## He Lifts Up a Banner

Here's another physical action of the Holy Spirit: He takes up a banner for God. He is a Herald who leads God's armies against God's enemies.

- When the enemy comes in like a flood, the Spirit of the LORD will lift up a standard against him (Isaiah 59:19b; NKJV).

For the Spirit to take up a flag, he needs to have a physical body. In addition, for him to lead armies, he needs to be just as physical as the soldiers he marches in front of. Or is this passage, as some say, "only symbolic." If it's "only symbolic" then they are arguing that the Spirit does *not* really have a body. Why drives Bible teachers to make such an argument?

Why are they so keen on proving that the Spirit has no body? What's the evidence that a spirit cannot have a body? There is none. A more revealing question is: What's their objective? We propose that they are aiming at making the Spirit a mystery. Once again their Trinitarian tendencies override the plain truth of Scriptures. They must repent because any sincere teacher of God's Word must strive to reveal the Spirit, not conceal him. The aim of a true teacher of the Bible is to make the truth known, particularly a fundamental truth like the One Spirit (Ephesians 4:3-6).

## A Task Exclusively for the Holy Spirit

We've just proven that the Spirit can take physical form; so why is it so uncommon for him to manifest himself in his physical body? Answer: It's simply because the Holy Spirit's task right now is to dwell inside believers. His job is not to watch over believers—that's a ministry belonging to angels. Rather, God has assigned to the Spirit the exclusive task of *indwelling* believers.

The Holy Spirit is obedient to God, so while he's busy fulfilling the job God has given him, the Spirit will not allow himself to be seen. Ever since Pentecost, he's been like the wind. We won't see the Spirit in his body until the Kingdom comes. He has decided of his own free will to be invisible. While he's on this mission for God, he has to be in many people at once—therefore he must be free from any physical limitations.

Now, be clear about this: The Spirit is not limited by anyone, not even God! Who gave the Spirit the divine nature? God did—and God did it to allow the Spirit to be capable of anything. So having limitless power and limitless capabilities, the Spirit has willingly limited himself for a time—to serve his God. What is the limitation he has self-imposed? Existing without a body. Why does he limit himself in this way? To be free to serve God in the task of living within every single believer everywhere in the world, at once!

- Guard the good deposit... with the help of the Holy Spirit who lives in us (2 Timothy 1:14).
- Do you not know that you are God's temple and the Spirit of God dwells in you (1 Corinthians 3:16)?

- Do you not know that your bodies are temples of the Holy Spirit, who is in you, whom you have received from God (1 Corinthians 6:18-19)?

So, the unique power the Spirit is exercising at this juncture in history is to be in each of us. Such a power is unique to say the least. In the Bible history, there's nobody else who has ever done such a thing on their own. God and Jesus do it vicariously through the Holy Spirit. They do not do it on their own, although they could. There are many more, but two verses which show that God and Jesus are in us through the Holy Spirit are here:

- ... One God and Father of all, who is... in all (Ephesians 4:6).
- Do you not realize that Christ Jesus is in you (2 Corinthians 13:5)?

Angels have not lived in people—much less every believer in the world. Angels fly down from Heaven and return to God. Some angels are guardian angels, and may remain beside a believer for a time, watching over him or her. However, they never *live in* us.

- If anyone causes one of these little ones—those who believe in me—to stumble... See that you do not despise one of these little ones. For I tell you that their angels in Heaven always see the face of my Father in Heaven (Matthew 18:6, 10).

The Spirit has a very special ministry: He remains in us. He doesn't need to go back and forth, bringing reports to and from God like angels do. He can do that, but his very special task is to live in us. He can do so because God has given him a divine

nature. So God authorizes the Spirit, and *only* authorizes the Spirit to do so—nobody else.

Again, we ask “why?” Why did God give this ministry to only one spirit of the billions of spirits that exist? Could it be because the Holy Spirit is so good? Could it be because he deserves it?

### **Bodies: The Spirit, Jesus, God, and You**

Let’s get back to the main point: Not just that the Holy Spirit has his own body, but that he wants to inhabit our bodies. With the Holy Spirit, we observe something unique among spirit-beings: Only he wields the power to dwell in countless bodies at once.<sup>7</sup> So, the Spirit has a one-of-a-kind ministry—a ministry which God gave him!

Think about this: Even though theologians like to sound wise by telling us that God and Jesus are *omnipresent* (meaning, in all places at all times), the reality is that both God and Jesus dwell in Heaven in real tangible “heavenly” bodies.<sup>8</sup> This truth about God and Jesus is rarely taught in churches, but it must be stated. We have to declare it with

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7 It’s likely that after all we’ve already looked at, you may feel uncomfortable with this topic. You have already studied the Spirit’s freedom of expression, his freedom of movement, and his freedom of will. You know that he does what he wants, so it may seem to you that he’s limiting himself by indwelling people. That’s a very valid concern, but don’t mistake his obedience to God for fragility. He’s not weak, he’s meek. Meekness is not weakness, it’s strength controlled.

Think about it: The Spirit actually *expands* his reach by dwelling in believers! He multiplies his effect through us. When he is in us, we become his very willing helpers.

8 Paul describes the difference between “earthly bodies” and “heavenly bodies” in 1 Corinthians 15:35-44 where he also calls the heavenly bodies “spiritual bodies.”

boldness lest God and Jesus be misunderstood, and the Holy Spirit remain a mystery.

Indeed, every living being—every spirit including the One True God Himself—has his or her own body. In the absence of a body, all spirits seek a body to inhabit. Case in point: You have a body today, but if you die, you’ll become another soul which resides in the Realm of the Dead. If you understand that truth, answer this question: How will you *feel* when you’re in Hades? What’s the first thing you’ll desire? Certainly the first thing you’ll long for will be a body.

- ... I saw under the altar the souls of those who had been slain because of the Word of God and the testimony they had maintained. They called out in a loud voice, “How long, Sovereign Lord, holy and true, until you judge the inhabitants of the Earth and avenge our blood?” (Revelation 6:9-10)

What do the souls in Hades say as they pray to God? “How long... until you judge... the Earth?” What are they waiting for down in Hades? Justice—an end to their subjection to Death. But they long for more. They want the Resurrection. They won’t be content until they have a body again.

Their feelings match the ones our Lord Jesus had when he was in Hades. Do you remember what he did while he was there? He cried out to God. And what did he ask God to do for him? He asked God to free him from Death. His body was resting “in hope.” Jesus was embalmed in the hope of the Resurrection, and he trusted that God wouldn’t aban-

don him in Hades. He was confident that he'd get his body back again, but that didn't stop him from praying for it. In fact, it inspired him to cry out and pray all the more.

- God raised him [Jesus] from the Dead, freeing him from the agony of Death... David said about him [Jesus]: ‘... my heart is glad and my tongue rejoices; my body also will rest in hope, because you will not abandon me to the Realm of the Dead (Acts 2:24-27).

What's the point? Nobody likes to be bodiless, not even Jesus. Every spirit-being longs to dwell within a physical body—and that includes the Holy Spirit!

### **Angels, Demons, and Bodies**

Again, we digress. Let's return to the main idea: The Holy Spirit has a special ability, let's call it “omnipresence.”

We've spoken about how the Holy Spirit has a body—a truth that you've likely never heard before, and a truth you'll likely never hear again. It's so uncommon to hear, that you'll need to set it firmly in your mind.

This truth, that the Holy Spirit has a body, is based on the simple fact that every spirit-being has a body. For example, angels have bodies. If you've ever doubted that, here are four Bible passages showing angels physically touching human beings:

- A hand touched me and set me trembling on my hands and knees. He said, “Daniel... stand up, for I have now been sent to you” (Daniel 10:10-11).



- Then one who looked like a man touched my lips, and I opened my mouth and began to speak... “My strength is gone and I can hardly breathe.”  
Again the one who looked like a man touched me and gave me strength. “Do not be afraid... Be strong now. Be strong.” When he spoke to me, I was strengthened (Daniel 10:16-19).
- ... an angel of the Lord appeared and a light shone in the cell. He struck Peter on the side and woke him up. “Quick, get up!” he said, and the chains fell off Peter’s wrists (Acts 12:7).
- ... immediately an angel of the Lord struck him [Herod] because he did not give God the glory, and he was eaten by worms and died (Acts 12:23; NASB).

You say “Fine, I already knew that angels have bodies.”

But, knowing that demons are angels too, do you recognize that they also have bodies? In fact, their bodies are so real that they have impregnated human women! Their unholy intercourse produced a new race of “mighty men” called the Nephilim. These were human beings fathered by demons. They were men who had supernatural strength.

- ... the sons of God saw that the daughters of men were beautiful; and they took wives for themselves, whomever they chose... The Nephilim were on the Earth in those days, and also afterward, when the sons of God came in to the daughters of men, and they bore children to them. Those were the mighty men who were of old, men of renown (Genesis 6:2-4; NASB).

If the demons who impregnated these women had only possessed the bodies of men, then their offspring would not have had super powers. But the offspring did have superpowers, and their powers were due to the genetics of their supernaturally-powerful fathers. It was in their DNA, transmitted corporally.

### **Internal and External**

Here's another key to understanding the ministry of the Holy Spirit: When God wants to minister to us *internally*, he will send the Holy Spirit to do the job. God will never authorize an angel to minister to us internally. Angels do not work from within, but from without. So, when God wants to minister to us *externally*, he'll often use angels. By *externally* we mean that God wants:

- a) to show something to our eyes<sup>9</sup>

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9 Let's say you're sleeping. In that case, angels can reveal something to your mind's eye. For example, angels appear in dreams. Does that mean that they enter our souls and direct our subconscious thoughts? No. Angels who appear in dreams do not *give* the dreams. Rather, the Holy Spirit gives the dream while angels simply *appear* in the dream.

As an example, consider two dreams of Jesus' surrogate father Joseph. In one dream, an angel told him to keep Mary as his bride. In another, an angel told him to flee with Mary and the baby Jesus to Egypt. In both cases, the Bible tells us that the angel appeared in the dream. It does not say that the angel gave the dream.

- ... an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream and said, "Joseph son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary home as your wife, because what is conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit (Matthew 1:20).
- ... an angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream. "Get up," he said, "take the child and his mother and escape to Egypt" (Matthew 2:13).

- b) to speak something to our ears<sup>10</sup>
- c) to protect our bodies from danger

Angels perform each of these three ministries. Clearly the Holy Spirit can do anything angels can do, but since God has *limited* angels to these three “external” ministries, they are the ones who often manage them. With this distinction between external and internal ministries, we see once again that the Holy Spirit is superior to angels. Do you recognize this? It’s the reason why God has entrusted the Holy Spirit with supremely precious human spirit! God allows the Holy Spirit to indwell a human being but does not allow angels to do so.

Now, indwelling people is a very delicate ministry. As we said, it’s an “internal” ministry. To understand how holy this ministry is, consider how among spirit-beings only demons dare violate God’s design and indwell people to rob them of liberty. Here are three OT passages that illustrate the destructive power demons wield:

- And a man or a woman, if a spirit of the dead or a spirit of divination is in them, they shall surely be put to death; they shall stone them with stones... (Leviticus 20:27; LEB)

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10 An angel who revealed God’s plan to Daniel explained it to him by speaking words to Daniel ears. He taught Daniel verbally. The angel did not do anything within Daniel’s mind. In 10:1 it simply says that “a revelation was given to Daniel.” That revelation was given by the Holy Spirit, not by an angel. The angel said:

- I have come to explain to you what will happen to your people in the future, for the vision concerns a time yet to come (Daniel 10:14).

- ... a spirit of harlotry is within them, and they do not know the LORD (Hosea 5:4; NASB).
- If a man walks about in a spirit of deception and lies, saying “I will preach to you of wine and strong drink,” then he would be a preacher for this people! (Micah 2:11; LEB)

The NT also tells the story of the internal damage demons wreak in people:

- Now in the synagogue there was a man who had a spirit of an unclean demon. And he cried out with a loud voice... (Luke 4:33; NKJV)
- ... there was a woman who had a spirit of infirmity eighteen years, and was bent over and could in no way raise herself up (Luke 13:11; NKJV).
- ... a certain female slave who had a spirit of divination met us, who was bringing a large profit to her owners by fortune-telling (Acts 16:16; LEB).

### **Compare and Contrast**

To understand the Holy Spirit, it helps to compare his actions with the actions of other spirits. A comparison of the Holy Spirit’s ministry to the ministry of angels is something woefully lacking in the Church today. The author of Hebrews freely compared Jesus’ ministry to the ministry of angels (see 1:5-13 below) to demonstrate the superiority of Christ, so can’t we compare the ministry of the Spirit to the ministry of angels? If we can compare Jesus to angels, surely we can compare the Spirit to angels.

- For to which of the angels did God ever say, “You are my Son; today I have become your Father? ... In speaking of the angels he [God] says, “He makes his angels spirits, and his servants flames of fire.” But about the Son he says, “Your Throne, O God, will last for ever and ever; a scepter of justice will be the scepter of your Kingdom. You have loved righteousness and hated wickedness; therefore God, your God, has set you above your companions by anointing you with the oil of joy...”

To which of the angels did God ever say, “Sit at my right hand until I make your enemies a footstool for your feet”? (Hebrews 1:5, 7-9, 13)

Once Jesus contrasted the ministry of the Holy Spirit to the actions of the a demon, and another time he contrasted the Holy Spirit with the Devil. Why? Because the Spirit is a spirit-being just like demons are spirit-beings.

- ‘... greater is he who is in you [the Spirit as per vv. 2 and 6] than he who is in the World’ [the Spirit of the Antichrist as per v. 3] (1 John 4:4; NASB).
- ‘... how much more will your Father in Heaven give the Holy Spirit to those who ask him!’ Jesus was driving out a demon that was mute...

‘... you claim that I drive out demons by Beelzebul... But if I drive out demons by the Finger of God, then the Kingdom of God has come upon you.

When a strong man, fully armed, guards his own house, his possessions are safe. But when someone stronger attacks and overpowers him, he takes away the armor in which the man trusted and divides up his plunder’ (Luke 11:13-14, 18-22)

## Sins against the Spirit

We have to be careful not to sin against the Holy Spirit. Cultivating our relationship with him, just as we would cultivate a relationship with any friend, prevents such sinning. Also, just as there are degrees of sins we might commit against a person, there are degrees of sins we are might commit against the Spirit. Some sins have much worse consequences than others. Let's look at five degrees of sin against the Holy Spirit from the lesser to the greater: resisting him, grieving him, quenching him, insulting him, and blaspheming against him.

### Resisting the Spirit

First of all, most people resist the Holy Spirit. There is a constant tendency in their life to fight his influence. Surely, he speaks to them and tries to touch their hearts with signs, instruction, and pricking their conscience. However, these hard-hearted people put up a fight. They will make no spiritual progress until they humble themselves before God. Stephen spoke these words to the Jews who crucified Christ:

- You stiff-necked people! Your hearts and ears are still uncircumcised. You are just like your ancestors: You always resist the Holy Spirit! (Acts 7:51)

### Grieving the Spirit

Secondly, people sadden the Spirit, causing him to grieve. Paul doesn't give the details of how we might do that, but how would you cause your mother to grieve? Mainly by not living up to her expectations. The Holy Spirit has expectations of us. He expects

us to persevere till the day Jesus returns. Any backsliding or apathy in our struggle against sin will cause him to be saddened.

- ... do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, with whom you were sealed for the Day of Redemption (Ephesians 4:30).

Be concerned about the Holy Spirit's feelings. Try not to make him sad! The Bible tells us that the OT Jews made him sad by rebelling against God:

- Yet they rebelled and grieved his [God's] Holy Spirit (Isaiah 63:10).

### **Quenching the Spirit**

Thirdly, just as fire can be extinguished, so can we quench the Spirit.

- Do not quench the Spirit (1 Thessalonians 5:19).

To understand what *quenching* means, let's look at the opposite: *kindling*. For example, we can kindle the Spirit's gifts. We can fan the flame of service to God by igniting our faith and acting according to the gift God has given us.

- I remind you to rekindle the gift of God that is in you through the laying on of my hands (2 Timothy 1:6; LEB).

Other common ways to quench the Spirit would be to promote discouragement, worldly thoughts, unbelief, or laziness. We must avoid these if we're going to live the life God has called us to live.

## Insulting the Spirit

A fourth level of sinning against the Spirit is to insult him. A “backslider”—someone who starts well, but then turns away from God—is in the greatest danger of committing this sin. Since the Bible doesn’t say explicitly what it means by *insulting the Holy Spirit*, let’s consider how one might insult a friend.

If you continue to listen to a friend as he speaks, and show some appreciation for the things he gives you, you will never insult him. It’s the same with the Spirit. We need to keep on listening to him, and we need to be careful not to neglect his gifts. It would be a proverbial “slap in the face” to a friend if you put his gift on a shelf to collect dust.

- How much more severely do you think someone deserves to be punished who has trampled the Son of God underfoot... and who has insulted the Spirit of Grace? (Hebrews 10:29).

Do not insult the Holy Spirit. If you do, you can expect punishment. That’s what the last verse says. To avoid such punishment, you do well to invest your time and resources pleasing the Holy Spirit.

- Whoever sows to please their flesh, from the flesh will reap destruction; whoever sows to please the Spirit, from the Spirit will reap Eternal Life (Galatians 6:8).

## Blaspheming Against the Spirit

We have to take these warnings against sinning against the Holy Spirit seriously. Personally, I can imagine many times in my life



when I've saddened the Spirit by not responding to him, or times when I've quenched him with my selfishness. I hope that I've never insulted him—but there is forgiveness if I have!

Better to never commit any of these sins, because they all lead us in the wrong direction. They lead us to condemnation. Worst of all, they could culminate in the worst of all sins, a sin that has no forgiveness: blasphemy against the Holy Spirit.

- ... blasphemy against the Spirit will not be forgiven... anyone who speaks against the Holy Spirit will not be forgiven, either in this age or in the age to come (Matthew 12:31-32).
- ... everyone who speaks a word against the Son of Man will be forgiven, but anyone who blasphemes against the Holy Spirit will not be forgiven (Luke 12:10).

Blasphemy is defined by Jesus in the passages above as: “Speaking a word against the Spirit” or simply “speaking against the Holy Spirit.” Let’s not fall into the trap of defining this sin differently than Jesus. Many pastors will make a gargantuan effort to try to make blasphemy against the Spirit something much more complicated than it is. In particular, the “once saved, always saved” preachers spend a lot of time trying to prove that believer cannot commit this sin.

Plain and simple: This is a verbal sin. That means that we only need a tongue to commit it. To kill someone, you only need to use a simple knife the wrong way. To blaspheme, you simply need to use your tongue the wrong way.

The same teaching of Christ is found in Mark who reinforces the truth that this sin is all about words. Mark starts the story with “the teachers of the Law... said...” Notice the verb *said*. Subsequently, Mark explains why Jesus rebuked the teachers, telling us “...he said this because they were saying...”

- ... the teachers of the Law who came down from Jerusalem said, “He is possessed by Beelzebul! By the Prince of Demons he is driving out demons...”

“Truly I tell you, people can be forgiven all their sins and every slander they utter, but whoever blasphemes against the Holy Spirit will never be forgiven; they are guilty of an eternal sin.” He said this because they were saying, “He has an impure spirit” (Mark 3:22, 28-30).

So, technically, if someone is acting by the power of the Holy Spirit, and an observer states that the manifestations of the Holy Spirit are demonic in nature, then they are calling the Holy Spirit a demon. That person is guilty of blaspheming against the Holy Spirit.

How close condemnation is to any of us! It’s only a sentence away. How careful we must be with our words. But God does not want us to be paralyzed by dread. He wants us to be strengthened in the fear of the Lord. There are measures we can take to prevent the sin of blasphemy. We can start by cutting short any processes which lead to offending the Spirit.

As we just saw, there’s a process that leads up to blasphemy against the Spirit. It starts by resisting him. Then, someone can fall into grieving the Spirit, then quenching him, and eventually

insulting him. If you avoid this trend, you'll successfully cut off any possibility of committing the unpardonable sin. You'll stop the downward spiral.

You'll overcome blasphemy if you take your words seriously. The following advice from Scriptures demonstrate that God has always tried to instill a sense of responsibility in human beings for what we say. Let's heed the warnings:

### 1. Obey the Third Commandment.

- You shall not take the name of the LORD your God in vain, for the LORD will not hold him guiltless who takes his name in vain (Deuteronomy 5:11; NASB).

Has anybody not heard of the Ten Commandments? Number three is to never use God's name in an empty way. If you can follow this basic life-principle of honoring God, then you'll never dishonor the Spirit of God. Jesus said that taking God's name in vain is a lighter sin than taking the Spirit's name in vain. So, if you don't commit this sin against God, it's unlikely you'll commit it against the Holy Spirit.

### 2. Make your heart good.

- Either make the tree good and its fruit is good, or make the tree bad and its fruit is bad, for the tree is known by its fruit.

Offspring of vipers! How are you able to say good things when you are evil? For from the abundance of the heart

the mouth speaks. The good person from his good treasury brings out good things, and the evil person from his evil treasury brings out evil things (Matthew 12:32-35; LEB).

This is a fundamental life-principle: Work on your inner man. Make sure you're not evil inside. If you are evil, venom will proceed from your mouth. If your heart is bad, you won't be able to resist the natural urge to blurt out ugly words. Check your heart every day. Is it filled with praise and worship? If it's not, then "make the tree good."

### 3. A Day of Reckoning

- I tell you that every worthless word that they speak, people will give an account for it on the Day of Judgment! For by your words you will be vindicated, and by your words you will be condemned (Matthew 12:36-37; LEB).

Don't be deceived into thinking that it's no big deal to speak empty words. It is! God records everything we say for the Day of Judgment. No silliness. No goofing around. No joking. Most of people's jokes are just their fear, pride, or unkindness couched in something that sounds funny. Have you noticed how many jokes are hurtful towards others? Be sure that you'll give an account for each and every word you have not confessed since your baptism.

### 4. Trouble with the Law

- I say to you that everyone who is angry with his brother shall be guilty before the court; and whoever says to his brother, 'You good-for-nothing,' shall be guilty before

the Supreme Court; and whoever says, ‘You fool,’ shall be guilty enough to go into the fiery Hell (Matthew 5:22; NASB).

Don’t be angry with your brothers or sisters in Christ. Don’t use insults. Jesus says that using rude words towards others will make you worthy of the fires of Hell. Twice he uses the word “guilty” in the passage above. Either take this sin seriously or you’ll have serious troubles on the Day of Judgment!

#### 5. Never Say “I swear...”

- I say to you, do not swear at all: neither by Heaven, for it is God’s Throne; nor by the Earth, for it is his footstool; nor by Jerusalem, for it is the City of the Great King. Nor shall you swear by your head, because you cannot make one hair white or black.

But let your ‘Yes’ be ‘Yes,’ and your ‘No,’ ‘No.’ For whatever is more than these is from the Evil One (Matthew 5:34-37; NKJV).

Be a person who says what he means, and means what he says. Cultivate simplicity of speech, not flowery language. Don’t try to add weight to your words by using oaths or words of promise. It’s your reputation as “a man/woman of your word” that causes people to trust you.

Every time you act, you’re either building up or tearing down your reputation. You’re either doing what you said you’d do, or not doing it. The Devil wants you to think that you can take a short-cut to a good reputation by simply swearing or taking oaths, but

you cannot make yourself more trustworthy by intensifying your speech. You only make yourself more trustworthy by *fulfilling* your speech.

## 6. The Rudder

- ... we all stumble in many ways. If anyone does not stumble in what he says, he is a perfect man, able to bridle the whole body as well. Now if we put the bits into the horses' mouths so that they will obey us, we direct their entire body as well.

Look at the ships also, though they are so great and are driven by strong winds, are still directed by a very small rudder wherever the inclination of the pilot desires. So also, the tongue is a small part of the body, and yet it boasts of great things.

See how great a forest is set aflame by such a small fire! And the tongue is a fire, the very world of iniquity; the tongue is set among our members as that which defiles the entire body, and sets on fire the course of our life, and is set on fire by Hell (James 3:2-6; NASB).

How important is a steering wheel in a car? Without it, crashes and injury are inevitable. Look at your tongue as if it were the steering wheel which guides your life. As James said, it “sets... the course of our life.” Use your tongue to steer towards perfection. Make it your goal to control it, knowing that with it, you'll be able to control all of your body! It's the most untamed member of your body, so aim to tame it!

One way to control your tongue is to train it for praise. Try singing songs to God as much as possible. Orient your heart towards worship and your lips will follow.

- ... be filled by the Spirit, speaking to one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and singing praise in your heart to the Lord (Ephesians 5:18-20; LEB).

However, you shouldn't think that being a worshipper alone will free you. You may be very devoted to worship, and you may be very good at singing songs, but you still have to be careful what you do with your mouth when you're not singing.

- With the tongue we praise our Lord and Father, and with it we curse human beings, who have been made in God's likeness. Out of the same mouth come praise and cursing (James 3:9-10).

### **Company to Avoid**

Since patterns of speech are learned from our peers, we have to make sure we're not in the company of people who commit verbal sins. With that in mind, let's identify two groups of people you will want to avoid. These two have teachings which put them at high risk for committing the particular sin of blasphemy against the Spirit:

- Cessationists
- Jehovah's Witnesses

First, you'll want to steer clear of Cessationists—who are they? These are most often from the ranks of the Baptists, those who believe in “Cessationist” doctrine; that is, that the spiritual gifts

have “ceased.” They’re certain that spiritual gifts are not for our generation, and teach that the spiritual gifts stopped functioning with the demise of the apostles.

Cessationists are anti-Pentecostal. Most of them believe that healings are falsified in Pentecostal churches. They teach that delivering people from demons, speaking in tongues, prophesying, and performing miracles are not for the Church now. Such a belief will sometimes lead them to say that tongues or deliverances are “Satanic.” We should feel very uncomfortable if we’re in earshot of such a statement because when the Pharisees said something similar (that Jesus’ healings were from the Devil), Jesus accused them of blaspheming the Holy Spirit.

### **The Jehovah’s Witnesses**

You should also avoid the company of Jehovah’s Witnesses (JWs). They hold that the Holy Spirit is just a force—what they call a “power” or “energy.” You’ve already become convinced that he is much more, but the heresy of the JWs might is very subtle ways. For example, they speak in such a way that might get you to think that *he* is an *it*.

Never call the Holy Spirit an “it.” Jesus referred to the Holy Spirit as “him” or “he.” You do well to follow our Lord’s example.

- Unless I go away, the Advocate will not come to you; but if I go, I will send him<sup>11</sup> to you. When he<sup>12</sup> comes, he will

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11 This is the third person singular masculine possessive pronoun. There is a gender-neutral form of the same pronoun, and a feminine form, but this one is masculine (Greek αὐτὸν, pronounced *auton*)!

12 In John 16:8, Jesus chose to use the singular masculine pronoun “he” here



prove the world to be in the wrong... (John 16:7-8)

The Holy Spirit is much greater than an angel, correct? Yes, and we would refer to angels (such as Michael or Gabriel) with the masculine pronouns *he/him/his* wouldn't we? Of course we would. So, when we use a pronoun for the Spirit, we should refer to the Holy Spirit as *he/him/his* because we need to treat him at least as well as we would treat an angel—right?

Certain deviant groups like the Biblical Unitarians, the Christadelphians, the United Church of God, and the Jehovah's Witnesses insist that the Holy Spirit is simply "the power of God." The Church of the Great God (a splinter group from the Worldwide Church of God) refer to him as "God's mind." On the JW's website, they define the Holy Spirit as "God's energizing force." But a *force*, like lightning, is just energy. The Spirit is definitely not just energy, even if he were "divine energy" or "God's power" as the JWs call him.

Such teachings are heretical. How heretical? So much that Arius, the man the Church has most disparaged as heretic in all of Christian history, never would have made such a blasphemous statement!

### **How Close to Arius?**

We mention Arius because his name comes up a lot. Unfairly, Evangelicals will often refer to JWs as a "Semi-Arian" cult. Others call the JWs "modern-day Arians," but the JW doctrine is nothing like Arius' doctrine. For example, Arius stated of Christ: "by

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with the Greek word *ekeinos* (ἐκεῖνος), the nominative masculine singular demonstrative pronoun.

his own will and counsel he has subsisted before time and before ages as perfect as God, only begotten.”<sup>13</sup>

The JW's agree with a smidgeon of Arius' doctrine—that Jesus was “begotten” and “established” or “purposed” by God, a doctrine Jesus Himself affirmed in Proverbs 8:22-24 when he spoke as Wisdom. However, the JW's differ greatly with Arius on the Spirit. With regards to the Spirit, Arius was much more respectful than they.

Arius was a 4<sup>th</sup>-century Egyptian Bible teacher who stirred up the greatest controversy in the history of the Church—a controversy on the nature of Christ. That controversy prompted a meeting of the leading theologians and pastors of the times—the First Council of Nicaea. It was there in 325 AD that this group of Church leaders drafted the Nicene Creed, a fabulous doctrinal statement—without equal in the history of Christianity.

Now, Arius was a firm monotheist who rightly struggled against Trinitarianism. Its proponents were gaining ground in his day. Arius' teachings garnered a strong following, and Arianism became prevalent in Northern Europe for many centuries. Germany, for example, became theologically Arian through the missionary Ulfilas who the Arian Roman Emperor Constantius II sent in approximately 337-341 to evangelize the Goths in their mother tongue. Ulfilas became the first bishop of the Goths, and went on to minister among other Germanic tribes such as the Lombards and the Vandals. Arianism remained the primary faith of these

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13 Retrieved on September 22, 2020 from [https://biblehub.com/library/theodoret/the\\_ecclesiastical\\_history\\_of\\_theodoret/chapter\\_iv\\_the\\_letter\\_of\\_ariius.htm](https://biblehub.com/library/theodoret/the_ecclesiastical_history_of_theodoret/chapter_iv_the_letter_of_ariius.htm).

tribes up to the 8th century, and then tribal leaders came to adopt the Nicene Creed as orthodoxy.<sup>14</sup>

Arius' doctrinal emphasis was monotheism. The foundation of his teaching was the One "Not-Begotten" God and Father. Upon that foundation, he taught something non-Biblical: that Jesus was created by God, and that the Holy Spirit was created by God and Jesus. Now, such doctrine is wrong, but it's not heretical. If it is, then seven out of ten U.S. Evangelicals are heretics. One survey conducted by Evangelicals pointed out in 2016:

- Seven in ten evangelicals... said that Jesus was the first being God created.<sup>15</sup>

After another survey in 2020, the organization confirmed their previous findings:

- ... nearly two-thirds (65%) [of U.S. Evangelicals] say Jesus is the first and greatest being created by God (a view championed by the ancient heretic Arius and condemned by both the Councils of Nicaea and Constantinople)...<sup>16</sup>

Do you notice the parenthetical comment on "the ancient heretic Arius"? People are always putting him down, but there's no

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14 Retrieved from <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Arianism> on September 20, 2020.

15 Retrieved on April 15, 2021 from an October 10, 2016 article from the Federalist from <https://thefederalist.com/2016/10/10/survey-finds-american-christians-actually-heretics/>.

16 Retrieved from <https://lifewayresearch.com/2020/09/08/the-biblical-doctrines-many-evangelicals-get-wrong/> on April 15, 2021 from the article The Biblical Doctrines Many Evangelicals Get Wrong, published on September 8, 2020

real reason to do so. Arius' teaching was not heretical because a teaching is heretical only if it contradicts a foundational doctrine such as the need for repentance, baptism in the Holy Spirit, or a Resurrection from the Dead. A heresy would deny that there is one Spirit, one Lord, or One God and Father. Arius affirmed all those truths.

Fundamental doctrine about the Spirit does not include who the Spirit was in Eternity Past. It includes that he is the One Spirit God has set apart (made Holy) to dwell within us, and to give us life. Any doctrine related to who the Holy Spirit was in Eternity Past is extra-biblical—that is, it cannot be substantiated by the Scriptures. It goes beyond the Scripture's scope. It's not clear. We simply are not privy to information regarding Eternity Past.

There is practically no historical information available on Arius because of the severe excommunication leaders gave him. But let's recognize that Arius was right in pushing the doctrine of One God and Father. It seems that Arius tried to harmonize that doctrine with the deity of Christ and the Spirit, but that he used human logic to harmonize them. He was mistaken, but at least he attempted to think. Most people never even think through how we could have One God, one Lord, and One Spirit.

Arius' explanation for the deity of the Spirit was that God created the Spirit as a high angel, and that the Holy Spirit is subordinate to God and to Christ. Nobody is really positive of whether the Spirit was ever an angel, but what if he was? The fact that the Arians thought so would not qualify them as heretics. On the other hand, Arius' opponents called God, Jesus, and the Spirit are the One God, and that's an actual heresy! Why? Because it's a denial that the One God is the Father.

Out of the pervading fear of associating themselves with the “heretic” Arius, you’ll very rarely hear anyone give him credit for guiding the Church in a better direction than those who were steering towards the Trinitarian heresy—but that’s precisely what he did. For the purposes of our study, we have to note that his doctrine that the Spirit is subordinate to God and Jesus, is sounder doctrine than the popular Trinitarian doctrine.

It’s hard to believe that Arius was as bad as people have made him out to be. For about 1,700 years Christian theologians have pegged him as the worst heretic in history—but from what we gather, he understood the Holy Spirit as we do—that is, as a spirit-being subordinate to God and Christ. We can only reject a teacher who contradicts the Fundamentals—and there’s no evidence that Arius did so.

On the positive side, Arius’ exploration into the origins of the Holy Spirit proves that he had courage. He was brave enough to question the common beliefs of his day. Today’s theologians are afraid to even address today’s common beliefs. Today’s pastors discourage those who would ask questions relating to the origins of the Holy Spirit.

### **JW Danger**

Arius may have erred in his speculations, but the JWs do something much worse. They actually dishonor the Spirit. The main way they do this is to use lower case for the *Holy Spirit* in their writings. When you see our Blessed Advocate referred to as the *holy spirit*, you must recognize the disrespect. It’s our solemn duty to warn you that such disrespect borders on blasphemy!

Evidence of the JW's using the pronoun *it* for the Holy Spirit can be found all over their website JW.org.<sup>17</sup> Furthermore, their definition of the Spirit highlights their heresy. Read the definition below, which gives proof that the JW's consider the Spirit to be a force, and nothing else.

- The invisible energizing force that God puts into action to accomplish his will. It is holy because it comes from Jehovah, who is clean and righteous to the highest degree, and because it is God's means to accomplish what is holy.

As you can see, the JW's are frighteningly close to committing the unpardonable sin when they speak of the Holy Spirit. You'll want to keep a safe distance from them when they're teaching these lies. The more you allow yourself to hear their false doctrine, the more likely you are to think as they do. God forbid you ever affirm or repeat any of this doctrine.



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<sup>17</sup> One example is when they state "The Bible also compares God's spirit to water and associates it with such things as faith and knowledge" (Retrieved from <https://www.jw.org/en/bible-teachings/questions/what-is-the-holy-spirit/> on June 26, 2021).

### **3. Are you brave enough to resist teachers of the Trinity?**

If you ask who the Holy Spirit is, more than half of the self-proclaimed Christians out there are certainly going to respond that he is the “Third Person of the Trinity.” That’s the default position of Catholics, Protestants, and most Evangelicals—so we have to be equipped to respond to them. Better yet, we need to be equipped to debunk their claim.

An architect cannot build anything new until he has demolished what is old. Your hearers cannot grasp the truth about the Spirit unless they have first renounced the Trinity lie. There will be no dawn in their heart until their night has ended, and the darkness dispelled. This chapter was written to help you undo the Trinity lie. Undoing it, you’ll be able to establish the truth about the Spirit in people’s hearts.

#### **In the Top Three of our List**

From experience, we approximate that 85% of Evangelicals profess faith in the Trinity or go to churches which have a statement affirming the Trinity as the very first of their articles of faith—nonetheless, that doesn’t mean that they are convinced about the doctrine of the Trinity. In fact, surveys prove that they don’t really believe in the Trinity at all!

- Fifty-six percent [of Evangelicals] agreed that “the Holy Spirit is a divine force but not a personal being.” They [the group which performed the survey] also saw a huge increase in evangelicals (28 percent, up from 9 percent)

who indicated that the Third Person of the Trinity is not equal with God the Father or Jesus, a direct contradiction of orthodox Christianity.<sup>18</sup>

It's remarkable that there is an increasingly large number of Evangelicals who override Trinitarianism with common sense and believe that the Holy Spirit is not equal to God or Jesus. That's a very good sign that people are breaking free from the theological straightjacket of the Trinity and are able to think of the Spirit in a logical way.

The same Evangelical group that performed the 2016 survey also conducted a survey in 2020, and the results are the following:

- Almost all evangelicals by belief (96%) say they believe in the classic Christian doctrine of the Trinity—one God in three Persons: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Yet... There was... some confusion over the nature and work of the Holy Spirit. Nearly half (46%) say the Holy Spirit is a force rather than a person.<sup>19</sup>

The trend from 56% to 46% of Evangelicals who believe that the Holy Spirit is a force and not a person is a positive trend. Maybe that's because more Evangelicals are having real encounters with

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18 This quote is from the Evangelical group Lifeway, which performed the survey. Retrieved on April 15, 2021 from an October 10, 2016 article from the Federalist from <https://thefederalist.com/2016/10/10/survey-finds-american-christians-actually-heretics/>.

19 Retrieved from <https://lifewayresearch.com/2020/09/08/the-biblical-doctrines-many-evangelicals-get-wrong/> on April 15, 2021 from the article The Biblical Doctrines Many Evangelicals Get Wrong, published on September 8, 2020.



him—that is, they’re experiencing his supernatural power in Spirit-baptism or through the spiritual gifts.

Considering the manner the survey question was framed, we sympathize with those who don’t want to use the term “person” for the Holy Spirit. If the survey had asked whether he is a “spirit-being like an angel” surely many more people would have responded affirmatively. Why are the only two choices whether he’s a person or a force? We don’t think it’s appropriate to call him either of the two!

### **The Most Harmful Doctrinal Lies**

The Trinity is among Satan’s most damning lies. Each individual’s unique religious and social background will influence which lie most influences their faith, but Trinitarianism is pervasive. It influences people from a Catholic, Orthodox, Protestant, and Evangelical background. Trinitarianism figures among the top three of history’s most harmful Christian deceptions. In our opinion, the following are the worst deceptions in order of their weightiness:

1. thinking that the Bible (in its original texts) contains errors
2. believing that Jesus did not come just as we are (in the human nature)
3. imagining that the One God consists of Three Beings
4. declaring “Salvation is by faith alone”
5. disregarding the New Covenant (baptisms, the Lord’s Supper, and a clear conscience)
6. approaching God through the Old Covenant (Jewish holidays, sabbaths, eating kosher, and circumcision)

7. affirming Original Sin (that is, saying “We’re all born sinners”)
8. making man the center of the Universe, while taking God out of the picture (Humanism)
9. conceding to anti-Creationism theories (like Evolution)
10. exalting Mary (seeing her as our intercessor, allowing for idolatry, and denying Jesus’ sinful human nature)

Of these ten, since the fourth century, the Trinity has always been high among the false doctrines which have misled the Church. Faith in a Trinity spread between the early 4<sup>th</sup> century to the 8<sup>th</sup> century, and has continued to lead people to destruction ever since.

### **Intellectual Suicide**

It’s quite easy to demonstrate the logical failures of the doctrine of the Trinity. Trinitarians have notoriously little commitment to logic. They renounce reason the instant they declare their doctrine to be a mystery. For example, they insist that  $1 + 1 + 1 = 1$ ; and with that, they divorce their themselves from reason.

No Christian should have to renounce reason, and most will not. Practically anybody who affirms faith in the Trinity does so against their own minds. People really only affirm the Trinity due to social pressure. They are locked into communities which have insist that the Spirit is the “Third person of the Trinity.” But this definition makes people think: (a) that the Holy Spirit is God, and (b) that he’s part of a mystery. Those two falsehoods *conceal*—they do not *reveal* the Holy Spirit to us. If we’re going to live as children of light among Christians, then we can’t give approval to those statements.

## Knowing the Truth

We won't learn rightly about the Holy Spirit among today's Christian churches, so how can we get to the truth about the Holy Spirit? The answer is simple: Study the Bible. Believe what the Bible has to say about the Holy Spirit. Be brave in exploring all—and not just part—of what the Bible has to say.

That's a start, but study won't be enough to make you a “child of the light.” You also need to overcome your fears, such as the fear of losing friends. Many of your brothers and sisters in Christ will reject you if you don't subscribe to what they consider to be “orthodox.” Are you prepared for people in your spiritual family to turn away from you?

Are you ready to tell them about what you're discovering in your newfound study? For example, one of the first things that will happen as you focus your studies is that you'll come to grips with the fact that the Spirit is never called “God” in the Bible. This is a Bible truth that sounds blasphemous to most Christians—but if you allow yourself to regress to thinking that the Holy Spirit is God, then your understanding will become blocked, and your potential stifled. You won't be able to grow in an understanding of who the Spirit is. You won't be able to understand how the Spirit does what he does.

For example, Anything the Holy Spirit does, he does with the power given to him by God. If this is true for Jesus, who stated “by myself I can do nothing” (John 5:30) and that “the Son can do nothing by himself” (John 5:19), then how truer is it for the One who is subordinate to Jesus, the Holy Spirit? If Jesus didn't heal

people with his own power, but rather “the power of the Lord was with Jesus to heal the sick” (Luke 5:17), then isn’t the power of the Lord God with the Holy Spirit also? Or is it the Spirit’s own power? Is the Spirit greater than Jesus?

Consider this name for the Holy Spirit: “The Power of the Most High” (Luke 1:35). Why is the Spirit called “God’s Power” if God’s power is not working through him? If you worked for a town hall and your friends gave you the nickname “The Power of the Mayor”—what would others understand by that? They would understand that the mayor exercises his authority through you, would they not? You would be an instrument by which the mayor channels his legal authority—his deputy. You are someone authorized by the mayor to make important decisions for the municipality, but your decisions are not your own.

A second matter of sound doctrine is that God should get the praise for what the Spirit does. Who takes the time to explain basic truths like these about the Holy Spirit? In spite of the negligence of pastors who should be teaching these things, anyone reading the Bible will come to understand that the things the Spirit does, he does to the glory of God the Father. The following passage says so:

- ... you were marked in him [Jesus] with a seal, the promised Holy Spirit, who is a deposit guaranteeing our inheritance until the redemption of those who are God’s possession—to the praise of his [God’s] glory (Ephesians 1:13-14).

## “Trinity” Bible Passages

As a rule, Trinitarians think their case for the Trinity is settled just by citing a few passages that speak of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit together. It’ll take a lot more than that to prove that the One God is not the Father but the Father with the Son and the Holy Spirit together. Here are seven of the most common passages they’ll share with you, followed by brief retorts you can use to counteract their misinterpretation:

- Then God said, “Let us make mankind in our image, in our likeness, so that they may rule...” (Genesis 1:26)
  - Trinitarians say that God is a “plural being” as evidence here in Genesis where he supposedly is speaking to himself using the plural pronouns “us” and “our.” Our response to that claim is that God was speaking to the Word, the Preincarnate Christ, who had equality with God at the time, “being in very nature God” and “existing in the form of God” (Philippians 2:6). If God was including the Holy Spirit in the order to make man in “our image” (as they suggest), then they’re recognizing that the Spirit is a being with a body and soul, just like us. That is, if we’ve been created in the likeness of the Holy Spirit, then this passage would affirm that he has a body, a soul, and a spirit!
- As soon as Jesus was baptized, he went up out of the water. At that moment Heaven was opened, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and alighting on him. And a voice from Heaven said, “This is my Son, whom I love. With him I am well pleased” (Matthew 3:16-17).

- Trinitarians say: “There they are, the Three!” We reply: “Yes, and each one is doing something different. Jesus is being baptized. The Father is giving his approval, and the Spirit is anointing.” Of note is that Jesus pleases God and the Spirit is sent by God. If they both do God’s bidding, then the passage actually proves that Jesus and the Spirit cannot be the One God they serve.
- Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit (Matthew 28:19).
  - Again, the Trinitarians can only point out that the Three are mentioned together. We point out that we’re happy to baptize people in name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Anyone who receives baptism must do it with faith in the One God, the One Lord, and the One Spirit. What do we believe about them? That the Father chose us, the Son died for us, and the Spirit sets us apart.
- There are different kinds of gifts, but the same Spirit distributes them. There are different kinds of service, but the same Lord. There are different kinds of working, but in all of them and in everyone it is the same God at work (1 Corinthians 12:4-6).
  - Trinitarians rightly point out that the Three are mentioned together again, but they’re incapable of recognizing that only One of them is called ‘God.’ And they have a hard time recognizing that God is “at work” through the Spirit (who distributes the spiritual gifts), and “at work” through the Lord Jesus who determines the “kind of service” each

believer gets. This is a passage that not only distinguishes roles very clearly, it proves that God is the Manager of the gifts and ministries. It's far from presenting a mystery, and it certainly does not call the One God "Three."

- May the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all (2 Corinthians 13:14).
  - Trinitarians will say "Gotcha! It's the Trinity." We would reply: Here we see that the blessings of grace, love, and fellowship each come from three distinct sources. Although Jesus, God, and the Spirit are together on the list, they are each named separately. Particularly noteworthy is that since God is named as one of the Three on the list, it's impossible to draw the conclusion that all three must be "One God."
- ... [you] have been chosen according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, through the sanctifying work of the Spirit, to be obedient to Jesus Christ and sprinkled with his blood (1 Peter 1:2).
  - Trinitarians see the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit in this verse, and so do we. We also see that Peter says that "God" is the Father. Peter and no other Bible author ever uses the expression "God the Son" or "God the Holy Spirit." All Christians should honor the Biblical tradition and only use the expression "God the Father."

There is absolutely no confusion about who is who

in this passage. Peter says that the role of the Father is choosing or “predestining” certain people to salvation. Then he tells us that Spirit sanctifies us and Jesus leads us. Each of the Three has a distinct role.

- There is one body and One Spirit, just as you were called to one hope when you were called; One Lord, one faith, one baptism; One God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all (Ephesians 4:4-6).
  - This last passage, states precisely that the One God is the Father—which means that instead of proving Trinitarianism, it destroys the very foundations of it! There is no argument against the One God being the Father. In addition, by calling each one “One,” the individuality of the Spirit, the individuality of Jesus, and the individuality of the Father become clear. That is, Paul here completely eliminates any possibility that the word “One” might refer to all Three at the same time.

For our purposes today, these seven passages prove that the Holy Spirit works with Jesus and the Father. They show the role of the Holy Spirit in relation to his authority Jesus, and his authority the One God and Father. None of them prove that the One God is “three distinct persons.”

### **Summarization**

Let’s rewind and examine the Creation passage in more detail. What happened there? The Father pronounced his fiats—powerful verbal commands. Jesus then responded by actually performing



the handiwork and creating everything as God’s “Master Craftsman” (see Proverbs 8:30 NKJV). As Colossians 1:16 says, “all things have been created through him [Jesus].” The Spirit was there with Jesus, giving life to all the creatures, breathing into them.

Something similarly cooperative, with God at the lead, happened at Christ’s baptism. Jesus fulfilled righteousness. That is, he did what was right. He did the will of God. Accordingly, God gave his word of approval, saying “... I am well pleased.” And finally, how did God demonstrate his approval? By sending the Holy Spirit, who (in obedience to God) anointed our Lord Jesus.

Not one of the passages we’ve described makes the three together out to be the One God. On the contrary, the passages prove that their unity is Jesus and the Holy Spirit acting under the leadership of the Father. Jesus and the Spirit are united with the One God under God’s purpose—that’s the unity. It’s not an ontological mystery, it’s a practical reality. Jesus and the Spirit are perfectly obedient to the One God.

If a Trinitarian says that “each one is God,” then your reply should be: “Each one is divine because the One God loves Jesus and the Holy Spirit, sharing his divine nature with each of them.”

The Trinitarians expect you to draw the same conclusion they do. They think that the above passages instantaneously prove that the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are “the Godhead”<sup>20</sup> simply because

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20 *Godhead* doesn’t work as a biblical term today. When the term [based on the three Greek words [*theion*, *theiotēs*, and *theotēs*]]<sup>20</sup> is used in 17<sup>th</sup>-century versions (such as the King James) in three verses (Acts 17:29; Romans 1:20; Colossians 2:9) its meaning is *godhood*—that is, the divine nature. Just like we

the passages name them the Three together. That's a very weak argument because there are nine NT passages which name God, Jesus, and *believers* together. According to Trinitarian logic, having *believers* named alongside the Father and Jesus should make us members of "the Godhead" too!

## Applying the Same Logic to Us

If the Trinitarian logic is that naming the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit together makes them all One God, then here's a question for them: "Are we the One God also?" Consider the following passages of Scripture. How strongly do they speak of the unity we have with Jesus and God? Read them honestly, and the honest answer will have to be: "Much stronger than the seven passages above which make the Spirit part of the unity." This is because:

- a. no Bible verse says that the Spirit is "in Jesus" and "in God"

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talk about manhood, childhood, and motherhood, Christians of the 17<sup>th</sup> century spoke of *godhood*. The term was understood.

Today, you'll read the words *divine nature* or *deity*, but the term *godhead* never meant and still does not mean "the One God" as Trinitarians use it. It has and will always mean *godhood*, or, as some theologians might call it, the *substance* (Greek *ousia*) of God. Theological abstractions aside, the NKJV translators have made the bad choice of continuing to use the term *Godhead*, but they at least add a footnote in Romans 1:20 which clarifies that the meaning of the term "Godhead" is *divine nature* or *deity*.

In spite of the NKJV footnote, the term has lost its original meaning and has morphed into a term peculiar to Trinitarians. They have essentially hijacked what once was a useful term, and have adopted it as their namesake for the One God. In other words, for them, the One God is not the Father. The One God is the "Godhead"—a being they claim to be "One God in Three Persons."

b. no Bible verse says that the Spirit is one with Jesus “just as” Jesus and the Father are one

c. no Bible verse says that the Spirit will “sit on a throne with Jesus” or God

There are no passages that say these things about the Holy Spirit, but there are such passages which say such things about us! They say that we are in Jesus and Jesus in God, we are one just as Jesus and the Father are one, and that we will sit on Jesus’ Throne just as Jesus has sat on God’s Throne. Here’s the one that declares that we are in Jesus and Jesus in God:

- ... I am in my Father, and you are in me, and I am in you (John 14:20).

Here’s the one which states that we will be one just as Jesus and the Father are one:

- ... [Jesus prayed] “that all of them may be one, Father, just as you are in me and I am in you. May they also be in us...” (John 17:21)

This next one states that we will sit on Jesus’ Throne just as Jesus has sat on God’s Throne:

- To the one who is victorious, I will give the right to sit with me on my Throne, just as I was victorious and sat down with my Father on his Throne (Revelation 3:21).

Wow! Is this possible? Does the Bible say greater things about our unity with the Father and the Son than it does about the Holy Spirit’s unity with the Father and the Son? You decide!

The reason why such a possibility shocks us is because most of us have had the “Trinity idea” engrained in our thinking. That’s why it’s hard for us to comprehend Scripture passages such as the previous three—but there are more!

### **Really Receiving Jesus in Your Heart**

In the following two Scripture passages, Jesus explained that the people who receive those he sends, receive him and they also receive the Father who sent him.

- Anyone who welcomes you welcomes me, and anyone who welcomes me welcomes the One who sent me (Matthew 10:40).
- Very truly I tell you, whoever accepts anyone I send accepts me; and whoever accepts me accepts the One who sent me (John 13:20).

We cherish these two verses because they establish the authoritative Biblical definition of the expression “receiving Jesus”—an expression constantly misused by Evangelicals. Biblically, to “receive Jesus” is to welcome someone sent by him. It’s to open the doors of your home to a missionary, preacher, or evangelist! People should open their home to a messenger of Jesus because welcoming his messenger is welcoming Jesus, and even God!

### **Treating Us, Jesus, and God Badly**

There’s also a passage that describes how evil people who don’t know God, reject Jesus as the Son of God. Consequently, these people mistreat those who serve Jesus. One thing these evil people *do* know is that Christians are united with Jesus. In fact, they’re so aware of it that they hate us together. They hate Jesus and us.

Please read the passage slowly. If you do, you'll appreciate the intimate connection between the persecuted messengers of Christ, the Man the World rejected, and the God who sent him—the God who people refuse to know.

- If they persecuted me, they will persecute you also. If they obeyed my teaching, they will obey yours also. They will treat you this way because of my name, for they do not know the One who sent me (John 15:20-21).

On a positive note, the passage also speaks of a group of people who obey both Jesus' teaching and the teaching of those Jesus has sent. That means our unity with Christ sometimes works out in our favor—but only with people who are obedient to Jesus!

### **Working with God Doesn't Make us God**

To help Trinitarians see the error of reasoning that the Holy Spirit is God, we could ask them a facetious question: “Are we God?” Like the Spirit, we also work alongside Jesus and the Father. In fact, with our ability to do “even greater things” than Jesus did, why would we not be just as divine as the Spirit?

- ... whoever believes in me [any believer] will do the works I [Jesus] have been doing, and they [believers] will do even greater things than these, because I am going to the Father. And I will do whatever you ask in my name, so that the Father may be glorified in the Son (John 14:12-13).

We are so intimately bound to the Father and the Son that Jesus promises that “whatever we ask in his name” he will do, and he'll do it for the glory of the Father. Does the Bible say anywhere that Jesus does whatever the Holy Spirit asks? Does the Bible say

anywhere that the Spirit will do even greater things than Jesus has done? No and no.

In conclusion, the Trinitarian arguments can easily be torn down with Bible truths. Just because there are passages that show that the Holy Spirit working with Jesus and the Father does not mean that there is a Triune God. This, their only argument is easily dismantled when we review the Bible passages that speak of us working with Jesus and the Father.

### **United in Love**

Is there any place the Scriptures highlight more strongly the unity of the Holy Spirit with Jesus and God than they do *our* unity with Jesus and God? The following passage puts great emphasis on our bond of love with the Father and the Son. It works this way: We love Jesus by obeying him; and if we obey Jesus, the Father will love us. Where does the Bible say such things about the Holy Spirit?

- Anyone who loves me will obey my teaching. My Father will love them, and we will come to them and make our home with them (John 14:23).
- As the Father has loved me, so have I loved you. Now remain in my love. If you keep my commands, you will remain in my love, just as I have kept my Father's commands and remain in his love (John 15:9-10).

Our point is not that the Spirit doesn't have unity with Jesus and God. He most certainly does. In fact, we can safely presume that he is in a strong relationship with God and Jesus because if Jesus says that by keeping God's commandments, he remains in God's

love, it's safe to presume that the Holy Spirit needs to keep God's commands to remain in God's love too. We can also presume that the Holy Spirit needs to keep Jesus' commands to remain in Jesus' love. Or is the Spirit less obligated to obey Jesus than Jesus is obligated to obey God?

The point is that the authors of the Bible dedicate considerably more time stressing the unity that *believers* have with Jesus and God than they do to the unity of the *Holy Spirit* with Jesus and God—and 90% of Christians (due to Trinitarian blindness) ignore the passages which demonstrate our unity with Jesus and God, at their own expense! Their theology has blinded them to great truths which otherwise would have blessed them. Instead, they deprive themselves and those who hear them of an understanding of the profound unity with God and Jesus we have as believers.

### **Another Approach**

If you're up to it, you may want to invest some time probing into Acts 5 and Psalm 139—the only two passages in the Scriptures which someone could possibly interpret to mean that the Holy Spirit is God. There is no other substantial biblical text for the Trinitarian argument that “the Holy Spirit is God” besides these two passages. Therefore, for you to respond well to any Trinitarian arguments, you must master these two passages. We have dedicated [Appendix E to](#) explaining the right interpretation of these passages.

### **Understand Jesus, Understand the Holy Spirit**

Get a hold of this vital principle: If you understand who Jesus is, you'll be able to understand who the Spirit is. If you understand

one, you'll understand the other. You can compare and contrast them. To start with, let's compare them. Jesus and the Holy Spirit have at least four things in common:

- They both get their life, power, and instructions from God.
- Their roles<sup>21</sup> are established by God.
- In obedience to God's fiat, they both created the Universe.
- They both served Yahweh God extensively throughout the Old Testament.<sup>22</sup>

Once you're clear on what Jesus and the Spirit have in common, you can move on to what they do not have in common. Let's observe the contrasts. Are you brave enough to recognize the following six differences between Jesus and the Holy Spirit?

- God never exalted the Spirit to the highest place like he did Jesus (Philippians 2:9).
- We have no doubt that God loves the Holy Spirit, but the Scriptures only mention God's love for Jesus. Our Lord Jesus was proud of God's love for him, boldly informing his hearers that "the Father loves the Son" (John 3:35; 5:20). Speaking with God in prayer, Jesus exuberantly declared "You loved me before the Creation of the World" (John 17:24)!

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21 Examples would be Jesus' role of King in the Kingdom, and the Spirit's role of Intercessor for our prayers. Other roles would be Jesus' role as Savior, and the Spirit's role as Distributor of Gifts. In common, Jesus is our Advocate while the Spirit is "Another Advocate" (John 14:16). Matthew 23:10 says "One is your Teacher, the Christ," while the Spirit will "lead us into all truth" (John 16:13) and with the Spirit, we have no need of a teacher (1 John 2:27).

22 Jesus served God as the *Angel of Yahweh*, and the *Word*. The Spirit served God as the *Spirit of Yahweh* and the *Breath of God*.



- The fact that Jesus was “fathered” or “begotten” of God is mentioned at least nine times in the Bible.<sup>23</sup> Jesus is called God’s “Son” dozens of times. The Spirit is never called God’s Son, nor does the Bible speak of the Spirit as being begotten of God.
- God never gave the Spirit the right to sit at his Right Hand. Jesus will sit there.

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23 Here are the nine occurrences:

- Yahweh said to me: “You are my Son; today I have begotten you” (Psalm 2:7; LEB).
- ... before the mountains were settled in place, before the hills, I was given birth (Proverbs 8:25).
- The virgin will conceive and give birth to a son, and will call him Immanuel (Isaiah 7:14).
- ... to which of the angels did he ever say: “You are my Son. Today I have begotten you”? And again: “I will be to him a Father, and he shall be to me a Son”? (Hebrews 1:5; NKJV)
- ... the Power of the Most High will overshadow you. So the Holy One to be born will be called the Son of God (Luke 1:35).
- ... we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father (John 1:14; NKJV).
- God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son... (John 3:16; NASB)
- ... he who does not believe has been judged already, because he has not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God (John 3:18; NASB)
- ... God has sent his only begotten Son into the world so that we might live through him (1 John 4:9; NASB)

- The Scriptures make no mention as to whether the Spirit will rule in the Millennial Kingdom, but they make it abundantly clear that Jesus will rule.
- You'll find the name *Jesus* a whopping 1310 times in the Bible. The names *Holy Spirit / Spirit of God* appear 197 times. That's just 15% of the amount the name *Jesus* appears. Clearly, God wants us to know more about Jesus than he wants us to know about the Spirit. If you think that this offends the Holy Spirit, then you don't know him very well. He dedicates his life to revealing Jesus to us (John 16:14) and his main task is to testify about Jesus to us (John 15:26; 1 John 5:6)! He's very happy to give the glory to Jesus.

Trinitarians argue that God, Jesus, and the Spirit are “coeternal.” What they mean with that term is to say that the Three have existed eternally together. Now, most of us will hear that and make no attempt to argue. Why enter into an argument? But, why just accept it as true? Ask anyone who makes the statement to show a single Bible passage to support their statement. The point is, it could be true that the three are co-eternal, but there's a possibility that God created the Holy Spirit at some point in history. We don't affirm either. We simply don't make confident assertions of things which have not been revealed to us.

Why not recognize that none of us knows what happened in Eternity Past? Trinitarians make bold statements like “the Father, Son, and Spirit are co-eternal” to bolster their version of the One God, that is, to promote their man-made doctrine. They don't stay it because they have any genuine interest in what happened in Eternity Past. They are not interested in a true study of history. They don't want to open minds to God's Word.

The Trinitarians use the “co-eternal” doctrine to promote their lie—one which is so false that it contradicts many Scriptures—that the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are equal. The Trinitarians don’t say things to inspire people to investigate the Bible. They simply attempt to impose their theology on it. That’s why it’s our duty to counter their argument. To that end, you are welcome to use the following facts:

- The Scriptures make no mention of the Spirit’s role in the Eternal Kingdom. They only tell us that Jesus will be God’s Co-Regent forever. For example, God and Jesus will together be the Temple and the Light of the New Jerusalem (Revelation 21:23-24). From the Scriptures we also learn that Jesus will have an Eternal Throne (Psalm 45:6; 132:12; Luke 1:32; Hebrews 1:8) and that he will sit with God on God’s Throne (Revelation 3:21). If that weren’t honor enough for Jesus, in Eternity there will be a Throne called “the Throne of God and of the Lamb” (Revelation 22:1-4). The Bible never mentions a throne for the Holy Spirit.
- The Bible says that Jesus was with God from “the Days of Antiquity” [also translated “from Ancient Times” (NIV)] (Micah 5:2). This is widely interpreted to be a term for Eternity Past. The Bible never mentions anything about the Spirit in the times before “the Beginning” of our World. The Spirit appears in the Bible narrative in Genesis 1:2, at the Creation. Before the Creation we know nothing of him. What he did, what he was called, or what power he had all remain a mystery to us.

Finally, you may hear your Trinitarian friends make the claim that the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are *coequal* meaning “equal with

one another.”<sup>24</sup> We shouldn’t let them get away with such a lie. To counteract the effect of this false doctrine, we can state with confidence that:

- God never gave the Spirit equality with him. If he had done something that grand, there’s no doubt that the Bible would have mentioned it. Indeed, the Bible highlights God’s granting of equality to Jesus on at least four occasions (Philippians 2:6; John 1:1-2; John 17:24; Hebrews 1:2-13).
- God never gave the Spirit equality with Christ either. On the contrary, the Holy Spirit is submissive to Jesus, who sends him (John 15:26). The Spirit doesn’t say what he wants to say. He says what Jesus wants him to say (John 16:13). Furthermore, the Spirit came to us in an act of obedience to God’s command. God sent him with the express purpose of reinforcing Christ’s teachings (John 14:26).

All this to say that the Spirit serves Christ, and this is precisely the reason why the Holy Spirit is called “the Spirit of Jesus” eight times in the NT, with the “of” indicating possession. The Spirit is not equal to Jesus. Rather, the Spirit was sent by God as an answer to Jesus’ prayer to God. What was Jesus seeking when he prayed for the Spirit? Specifically, that his ministry be backed-up and reinforced.

- I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Advocate, in order that he may be with you for the Age (John 14:16; LEB).

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<sup>24</sup> Definition taken from Merriam-Webster Dictionary, and retrieved on October 3, 2020 from <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/coequal>.

## The Ability of Ubiquity

The Spirit has a unique ability, one which marks him as a unique spirit-being. The Spirit can be in any number of places at the same time. Now, this is an *amazing* ability. This is a remarkable ability! Although two other individuals in the Universe could do this, nobody else in the entire Universe actually does it. Only the Holy Spirit can be ubiquitous.

Unfortunately, people misunderstand the Spirit because they don't take the time to think through and analyze his unique ability. They start off on the wrong foot with their vague Trinitarian belief that the Holy Spirit is God. Then, succumbing to their sinful nature, they fall into the trap of intellectually laziness. They don't use a rigorous examination of the Scriptures, but rather imagine omnipresence as an essential aspect of what the Holy Spirit *is*. They are wrong. It's just their imagination. Here's the truth: Omnipresent is not what the Spirit is, omnipresence is something the Spirit does.

People stray from the truth because they start with a theology and try to make Bible verses fit their theology. They believe in a theology that makes them "feel" spiritual: that God is omnipresent. They feel very spiritual when they declare "God is everywhere all the time" much the way Calvinists feel spiritual when they say "God sovereignly predestines people to salvation or condemnation." The only difference is that the Calvinists are right! Neither are justified in their feelings, but only the Calvinists are right.

To avoid the Trinitarians' all-too-common error, let's be clear on this point: It's wrong to say that "God is everywhere." That's pantheism—the religion of the Native Americans. The Native Americans believe that "The Great Spirit" lives in rocks, plants, animals,

the wind, rivers and streams. This “Great Spirit” and Creator of the Earth, pervades everything. Biblical faith is not Native American, it’s Jewish. The Jewish faith says that God *can* be anywhere. It does not say that he is everywhere.

It’s very sad, but most Evangelicals don’t have a clear concept of what God is like. Most simply presume that God is everywhere, but God is not everywhere. He’s actually in Heaven, which the prophets call his “dwelling place” (Deuteronomy 26:15; 2 Chronicles 6:21), the place where the Father sits enthroned (Psalm 123:1).

Tell them what you may, these Bible-toting Evangelicals go full steam ahead with their notion of an ubiquitous God, and conclude that—since for them the Holy Spirit is God—the Holy Spirit must be everywhere too! That’s a false premise. Then they add to this false premise the notion that God’s supposed omnipresence is what proves that the Holy Spirit is God—a false conclusion.

If they dare to seek it, they’ll come to know five truths about God: First, that God has chosen Heaven as his dwelling place. Second, that God wants to be informed about what’s going on everywhere else. If you accept those two simple truths, then move on to a third: To be informed of all things, the Father assigns angels to keep him updated of events around the Universe. Sound good? Here’s the fourth part, that God also has the Holy Spirit! The Holy Spirit is God’s most trusted Informant. Fifthly, for the Spirit to do his job well, God has granted the Holy Spirit the unique ability of omnipresence.

An intelligent believer—one who is not stifled by fear—might now ask: What exactly do we mean by an “ability of omnipres-

ence”? How exactly is the Spirit able to be anywhere at any time? What does omnipresence entail? Those kinds of questions are very good and welcome. They really get to the heart of the matter, so let’s expand on them with four more specific questions:

- Does the Spirit fly around quickly, like an angel?
- Jesus can teleport.<sup>25</sup> Can the Spirit teleport too?
- Is the Spirit able to “spread himself out” like an anointing oil?<sup>26</sup>
- Can the Spirit duplicate or “clone” himself?<sup>27</sup>

You may think that there is no answer to these questions, but there is. Are you prepared to hear it? It’s “yes”! Since the Spirit has the divine nature, he has limitless power; so he can do any combination of these things! Not individually, but *together* these capa-

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25 Yes, Jesus did indeed teleport:

- Though the doors were locked, Jesus came and stood among them and said, “Peace...” (John 20:26).
- When he [Jesus] was at the table with them, he took bread, gave thanks, broke it and began to give it to them. Then their eyes were opened and they recognized him, and he disappeared from their sight (Luke 24:30-31).

26 He’s not called “the Anointing” for nothing!

27 An example of a time when the Spirit “cloned” himself is in the Upper Room on Pentecost when the apostles saw “... tongues of fire that separated and came to rest on each of them. All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues as the Spirit enabled them” (Acts 2:3-4). If one fire can be distributed and not cease being the same fire, then can’t the Spirit who appeared as fire in both the Exodus and at Pentecost do the same thing?

bilities (flying, teleporting, spreading out, and cloning himself) constitute the Spirit's *omnipresence* ability.

In other words, the Spirit doesn't only fly, teleport, spread out, or clone himself. He can tweak his ministry to include any combination of these! He can fly to a location and swoop up Elijah the prophet, then teleport Elijah to another country, while the Spirit is present in the meantime in a "duplicated form" in another city with Elisha, and resurrecting people by Elisha's hands. Yes, the Spirit has the God-given power to do all this. There are no limits on the divine nature. Would you dare put limits on something God has designed to be limitless?

### **Wrong Ideas of Omnipresence**

Christians who don't delve deep into the Scriptures stay stuck in their mistaken idea of omnipresence. They then develop techniques of dealing with the Scriptures. They develop their own systems of denial, with which they cope with the Bible. In other words, they have mechanisms in place which allow them to avoid the truth.

The truth is that the Holy Spirit has an ability to be omnipresent. To avoid that truth, bad teachers use four methods: 1. They exceed what is written, 2. They confuse God with the Spirit, 3. They forget the Father altogether, or 4. They indulge in inconceivable ideas. Let's look at these methods so we recognize them in conversation.

#### **1. Exceeding what is Written**

On one hand, because they do not understand that omnipresence is one of the Holy Spirit's abilities (and *not* an innate quality), they



go beyond what the Bible says. What does it mean to “go too far”? Remember the Early Church pastors who taught that Jesus came in the divine nature? Of those folks, John says that they “run ahead and do not continue in the Doctrine of Christ” (2 John 1:9). Paul speaks of the same kinds of people, saying that they “go beyond what is written” (1 Corinthians 4:6). There are lots of them today!

For those of us who contend for the faith and fight for truth, let’s get it straight: Just as God has given power to Jesus, God has given power to the Holy Spirit. Just as Jesus can do nothing of himself, the Spirit can do nothing of himself! Jesus made no bones about it:

- I am not able of myself to do anything (John 5:30; YLT).

The Spirit is not automatically in every place, as if it were natural for him to exist everywhere. If he were automatically everywhere, he would be impersonal. He’s not. Rather, he is capable of going wherever God wants him to serve as God’s Messenger and Helper. God has filled the Spirit with a special grace, so that the Spirit may accomplish specific tasks. That’s how we must see him. That’s who he is.

## **2. Confusing God with the Spirit**

Once someone believes that the Spirit is everywhere all the time, their jumbled concept of God becomes even more jumbled. Why? Because it’s on this very matter of omnipresence that they confuse the Spirit with the One God. Conceptually, this is where Trinitarians are most blurry—and they love to be blurry! Ambiguity is their favorite tool.

Nonetheless, there are no excuses for botching up fundamental doctrine. There is One God, and there is One Spirit. Anybody who calls himself a Christian must have a clear idea of who is who. Anybody who calls themselves a pastor has to do much more than know—he has to teach. A pastor must battle for sound doctrine. A true pastor must raise up his staff against the heretical “wolves” by defending sound doctrine.

If your idea of the One God is that he is physically in all places at all times, then you’re confused.

### **3. Forgetting the Father-Framework**

Another negative consequence of misunderstanding the Spirit’s omnipresence is that it produces a vague or “fuzzy” idea of the Spirit. Again, since omnipresence is not an innate *quality*, but a God-given *ability*, there’s no need to have fuzzy ideas. Rightly understood, the Spirit’s ability to be anywhere gives us a clear notion of who he is. The key is using the framework of his relationship to the Father.

The confusion of those who imagine that “the Spirit is everywhere automatically” stems from their misunderstanding how God relates to others. They don’t understand how God relates to Jesus, so they don’t understand how God relates to the Spirit either. For example, God has authority over Jesus to send Jesus wherever God wants. The NT repeats about 40 times in the Gospel of John alone that God sent Jesus! One who is sent is subordinate to the one who sends him—Jesus Himself affirmed that.

- Very truly I tell you, no servant is greater than his master, nor is a messenger greater than the one who sent him (John 13:16).

With the verse above, we're sure that God is Jesus' authority. We know that Jesus is subordinate to God because Jesus is God's Messenger, but do we recognize that God has another Messenger, the Holy Spirit? Do we recognize that the Spirit is subordinate to the Almighty God? The Bible tells us at least seven times that God sends and gives the Spirit!

- ... the Holy Spirit, whom God has given to those who obey him (Acts 5:32).
- ... how much more will your Heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask him? (Luke 11:13)
- Now he who prepared us for this very purpose is God, who gave to us the Spirit as a pledge (2 Corinthians 5:5).
- ... does "He who provides you with the Spirit" and works miracles among you, do it by the works of the Law... ? (Galatians 3:5)
- ... the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name... will teach you all things... (John 14:26)
- ... the Father... will give you another Helper, that he may be with you forever; that is the Spirit of Truth... (John 14:16-17)

The following verse shows that the Spirit is not only sent by the Father, but by the Son. That means that the Spirit is subordinate to Jesus too. Here are the Lord's words:

- When the Helper comes, whom I will send to you from the Father, that is the Spirit of Truth who proceeds from the Father, he will testify about me (John 15:26).

This verse lays out very clearly that Jesus is subordinate to the Father, and that the Holy Spirit is subordinate to Jesus. It follows that if the Spirit is subordinate to Jesus, he is also subordinate to the Father. Anyone who does not understand these roles, does not truly know the Spirit.

Think deeply about how Jesus relates to God: 1. Our Lord Jesus “lives because of the Father; 2. He only does what he sees his Father doing; and 3. He needs God to give testimony of him—otherwise, what Jesus says should not be taken as true. Finally, 4. if Jesus glorifies himself, his glory means nothing for the simple reason that 5. his glory, that is, his divine nature, is exclusively from the Father.

1. I live because of the Father (John 6:57).
2. ... the Son can do nothing by himself; he can do only what he sees his Father doing (John 5:19b).
3. If I testify about myself, my testimony is not true. There is Another who testifies in my favor, and I know that his testimony about me is true (John 5:31-32).
4. If I glorify myself, my glory means nothing. My Father, whom you claim as your God, is the One who glorifies me (John 8:54).
5. Father, I want those you have given me... to see my glory, the glory you have given me... (John 17:24)

A summary statement of Jesus' relationship to God is this:

6. Jesus "can do nothing by himself" (John 5:19a, 30).

Nothing means *zero*, but very few Christians believe that Jesus is 100% dependent on God. Even though Jesus taught it, they refuse to believe it.

These truths bring us to a major theme of our book: If few people understand the relationship of Jesus to the Father, then even less people will understand the relationship of the Spirit to the Father. That's why the overwhelming majority of Christians are blind to the fact that the Spirit relates to God with the same subordination Jesus does. They ignore the fact that:

1. The Holy Spirit lives because of the Father.
2. The Spirit does only what he sees God doing, he can do nothing of himself.
3. The Spirit needs God to testify about him, he cannot testify about himself.
4. The Spirit's glory is nothing unless God glorifies him.
5. The Spirit's glory was given to him by God.
6. In sum, the Spirit can do nothing by himself.

We must be able to talk about the Spirit in the same concrete terms we speak about Jesus, another human being, or an angel. He's not a cloud, or a mist, but a living being! We should always be capable of speaking about him clearly. However, we'll only be able to do that if we understand him within the framework of his relationship to the Father.

#### 4. Inconceivable Ideas

The notion that the Spirit is in every place at every time is unfathomable. If the Spirit is everywhere at all times, then he's nowhere in particular! This notion puts a veil of darkness on the revelation of who the Holy Spirit is. This notion makes it impossible for us to see him as he is: a spirit sent by God. For example, most Christians imagine the Spirit as bodiless, but the truth is that nobody has more bodies than the Holy Spirit! The body of every single believer belongs to him because every believer is a "temple of the Holy Spirit" (1 Corinthians 6:19).

The Holy Spirit dwells within the bodies of believers, and because of that, you can see him at work all the time. When a believer practices the gifts of the Spirit, or produces the fruit of the Spirit—there's the Holy Spirit! Do we dare say the Holy Spirit is formless when the dictionary definition of *formless* is "having no physical existence"?<sup>28</sup> The Spirit certainly does have a physical existence! And even before he started dwelling in believers, he had his own body—something we discussed in an earlier chapter.

#### An Approach to Dealing with Trinitarians

We've identified four theological pitfalls. A true teacher of the Bible will teach the truth we call "One Spirit," but the Trinitarian error is so pervasive that Catholic, Orthodox, Protestant, and even Evangelical theology are saturated with it. You can quickly identify the error when you hear someone use the expression "the third person of the Trinity." Just as frequently, you'll notice people mixing up the Holy Spirit with Jesus and God—for example, you'll

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28 That's Merriam-Webster's definition, retrieved on December 2, 2019 from <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/formless>

hear Evangelicals praying to the Spirit instead of to the Father; or you'll hear them worshipping the Spirit, not the Father. We have to deal with their confusion compassionately but convincingly.

## The Big Question

We have to be capable of responding well to the decisive question "Is the Holy Spirit God?" Let's break the right answer down part-by-part so that we will be prepared when someone asks us the big question.

For starters, be very careful. This question is misguided and too vague. The first thing you must do is ask your interlocutor: "What do you mean exactly?" Then clarify. There are only three options. Specifically, do they mean:

- That the Holy Spirit is the One God?
- That the Holy Spirit should be *called* "God"?
- That the Holy Spirit has a divine nature?

## The Answers

Let's now explore the answers to the three questions and then we'll look into the reasoning behind the answers.

- If the question is whether the Holy Spirit is the One God, then the answer is an unequivocal "no." By no means is the Holy Spirit the One God. Neither is Jesus. The Father is "the Only True God" (as per the words of Jesus in John 17:3).

- If the question is whether the Spirit can be called “God,” then let your interlocutor know that he has a very rational question as God indeed shares his name. For example, he shared his name with One called “the Angel of Yahweh” in Exodus 23:21 by stating: “My name is in him.”

Precisely, that “Angel” (also called “The Word”) was revealed in the flesh. He manifested himself to us as Jesus Christ. The fact that God shares his name is one reason why our Lord Jesus is called “God” no less than eight times in the NT!

Praise your friend for asking about the names God has given to the Holy Spirit. Inform them that no less than 365 times different names for the Holy Spirit are presented in the Bible, but then gently invite them to show you a Bible passage in which the Holy Spirit is called “God.” They need to hear this challenge because when they discover that there are no such Bible passages, their eyes will begin to open to the truth.<sup>29</sup>

- If the question is whether the Holy Spirit has a divine nature, then again praise them for asking a very good question. In fact, it’s the most intelligent question of all because the answer is finally going to be “yes.” The Holy Spirit has the divine nature, and God gave it to him!

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<sup>29</sup> If your friend brings you to Psalm 139 or Acts 5, be glad. You can prepare yourself to deal with these challenging passages with some good solid study. We are have a pamphlet that can walk you through these passages verse by verse, and you can be confident that these two passages do not call the Holy Spirit “God.”



## The Divine Nature: Introduction

### Trinitarians on the Divine Nature

Traditionally, Christian theologians have defined the divine nature with ten qualities: omnipotence, omnipresence, omniscience, immutability (unchangeableness), righteousness (being just), sovereignty (rule), mercy, self-sufficiency (not needing anybody), goodness, and love. This is a nice list, but you only get it reading theology books. For example, only theologians use the word “immutable.”

Students of the Bible often hear pastors state that God doesn’t change—and they’ll state it using the theological term “immutability.” But although our dear Lord Jesus amazingly didn’t stop being faithful, loving, and holy even while he was in the human nature (that’s the point of Hebrews 13:8)—Jesus has changed! He is *consistent*, but our Lord has changed. The Word, who manifested himself in the divine nature, changed when he manifested himself in the human nature.

- The Word became flesh (John 1:14).

Likewise, although God isn’t fickle like human beings (see 1 Samuel below), and he means what he says (see Numbers below), he is free to change his plans whenever he wants. If he can change his mind about something, then why should we teach that God is “immutable”?

- He who is the Glory of Israel does not lie or change his mind; for he is not a human being, that he should change his mind (1 Samuel 15:29).

- God is not human, that he should lie, not a human being, that he should change his mind. Does he speak and then not act? Does he promise and not fulfill? (Numbers 23:19)
- So the LORD changed his mind about the harm which he said he would do to his people (Exodus 32:14; NASB).
- Yahweh relented of the disaster that he had spoken against them [Hezekiah and all of Judah] (Jeremiah 26:19; LEB).
- Jehovah hath repented of this, ‘It shall not be,’ said Jehovah. Thus hath the Lord Jehovah shewed me, and lo, the Lord Jehovah is calling to contend by fire, and it consumeth the great deep, yea, it hath consumed the portion, and I say: ‘Lord Jehovah, cease, I pray Thee, How doth Jacob arise -- for he [is] small?’ Jehovah hath repented of this, ‘It also shall not be,’ said the Lord Jehovah (Amos 7:3-6; YLT).

## **Jewish Theology on the Divine Nature**

Jewish theologians take a narrow-minded (albeit Biblical) approach to defining the divine nature with their famed “13 Attributes of God” prayer, used on the High Holidays. This prayer, based on Exodus 34, is called the *Slichot* (literally, the “forgivenesses” or the “pardons”). They use just one passage as their basis, even though it’s a passage which (in all honesty) focuses on just one of God’s attributes: his mercy.

This passage is not a thorough presentation of the divine nature by any stretch of the imagination, and rabbis are not agreed on how to count the thirteen, but I’ve attempted to identify them by underlining the ones most rabbis agree upon:

- And Yahweh passed over before him [Moses], and he proclaimed, “Yahweh, Yahweh, God, who is compassionate and gracious, slow to anger, and abounding with loyal love and faithfulness, keeping loyal love to the thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin... [who cleanses]<sup>30</sup> (Exodus 34:6-7).

## Real Theology on the Divine Nature

The most accurate definition of the divine nature differs greatly from the traditional Christian and the traditional Jewish definitions. That’s because the approach is different. The best approach is not to go to one Bible passage, or to begin with a false concept of the One God—namely, the Trinity. Why not rather identify the divine nature by contrasting it with the human nature?

We should ask ourselves what are the qualities which are unique to God—the qualities which humans don’t have unless God gives them to us? That’s the question! For example, political leaders have authority, but only if it’s given to them by God—therefore authority is a quality of the divine nature. Most people won’t love others. It’s not natural to them unless they know God. That’s how we know that love is also an aspect of the divine nature. On the other hand, how is “not changing” a quality of God? Immutability sounds more like the sin of stubborn humans than a quality of God!

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30 This last of the attributes, God as “Cleanser” is repeated in the Jewish High Holiday prayers, but is not found in the Bible. Instead, the Bible verse ends: “... and he does not leave utterly unpunished, punishing the guilt of fathers on sons and on sons of sons on third and fourth generations” (Exodus 34:7). Regardless of the Bible text, most rabbis consider “cleansing” to be the final attribute of God. In other words, he is a *Purifier*.

## Omnipresence: What is it?

We also take issue with Christian theologians on the doctrine of the omnipresence of God. Most of them will say that “God is everywhere all the time.” However, such a doctrine muddles our understanding of God. It robs him of individuality, and blinds us to the reality that he actually has a body and actually sits on a Throne.

Now, God has given a special ability to the Holy Spirit—an ability to be in many places at the same time. And God did not give that power to the Spirit in vain. The Spirit uses this power to serve God. He moves with freedom around the world to do God’s will, particularly to minister supernaturally and to dwell within those who believe in Jesus. He fills and inspires believers everywhere around the World!

This ability of “being in many places at the same time” is not unique. The Father has also given to Jesus (and he’ll give it to all those he resurrects) a similar ability called *teleporting*. Yes, we will be able to teleport ourselves freely like Jesus does, by disappearing in one place and appearing instantaneously in another.

Does God have the ability to be everywhere all the time? Sure he does! Logically, if he has granted this ability to the Holy Spirit, he must already possess the power himself. A better question would be: Does God *choose* to be everywhere all the time? To which the answer would be “no.”

God has a spiritual body which Ezekiel describes like this: “from... his waist up he looked like glowing metal, as if full of fire, and that from there down he looked like fire” (1:27). God

dwells in Heaven, seated on his Throne. He comes and goes as he pleases, but when he's seated on the Throne, the angelic creatures of Heaven come to him, worship him, and serve him.

The One God exercises sovereign authority over the Universe. He does that by dispatching his angelic servants to serve him everywhere—hence, the reason why God does not need to be physically in other locations. One of his Servants<sup>31</sup> in particular, the Holy Spirit, doesn't even need to travel to different places because he is able to be in multiple different places at the same time.

### **The Divine Nature: UP-A-HIL**

What exactly is the divine nature? The authoritative answer is in the Bible, but we won't find an answer in one verse in particular. Instead, the acrostic UP-A-HIL should serve to remind how the Bible defines the divine nature. This 6-letter mnemonic can serve you as a guideline for times when you have to defend the great truth of “what it means to be divine.”

The six qualities found in UP-A-HIL do not belong only to the One God. He is so generous that he shares all he has. Yes, God is Love! He shares generously. We have to understand that what makes these qualities God's is that he is the first to have them. That is, the One God alone is the original source of these qualities. That's precisely why we boldly affirm that the Father is the “True God” (1 Thessalonians 1:9), “the Only True God” (John 17:3). All things proceed from him. To refresh your memory:

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31 The reason why we can call the Spirit a “Servant” of God is because Jesus—who is greater than the Spirit—is called by that title. Jesus is God's “Servant” (Isaiah 42:1) and God's “Righteous Servant” (Isaiah 53:11).

- ... from him [God] and through him and for him are all things (Romans 11:36).
- ... there is but One God, the Father, from whom all things came (1 Corinthians 8:6).
- ... everything comes from God (1 Corinthians 11:12).
- ... God, for whom and through whom all things exist (Hebrews 2:10).

### **In Whom the Divine Nature Has Its Origin**

There are certain “invisible qualities” (Romans 1:20) which God alone has had since eternity past. For example, immortality. It’s *invisible* because it’s not material. You can’t just put immortality in your pocket. You can’t just place it on a shelf. God gave it to Jesus when he resurrected Jesus from the Dead. Our Lord Jesus did not have that “invisible quality” when he was in Hades, therefore only God has always had it.

The reason why we call the sum of these qualities “the divine nature” is because they originate in the one God and Father. They have their origin exclusively in the One God, being his very nature. So, when the Bible tells us that “God’s... divine nature... [is] clearly seen, being understood from what has been made,” it’s because we know that everything can’t come out of nothing. Rather, everything came from Someone.

- ... what may be known about God is plain to them, because God has made it plain to them. For since the Creation of the World, God’s invisible qualities—his eternal power and divine nature—have been clearly seen, being understood from what has been made (Romans 1:19-20).

The World around us demonstrates that a very powerful Being exists. That Being is a “Higher Power” because he has great power. He is an “Intelligent Designer” because he has intelligence. He must have astoundingly great qualities if he made the Universe.

Remember the expression found in the United States Declaration of Independence: “We hold these truths to be self-evident”? Well, Romans 1 is saying that the qualities of God are *self-evident*. That is, the evidence that these qualities belong to the One God is all around us. It’s obvious that there’s a God. Since only God could have created everything, it is apparent from the natural world that he must be all-knowing, all-powerful, authoritative, holy, immortal, and loving.

God has shared innumerable qualities with Jesus and the Holy Spirit, but there are six general qualities. The Gospel is God’s promise to share these qualities with us. These six qualities make up the divine nature for one fundamental commonsensical reason: No one ever shared these qualities with God! These qualities were never given to God by anyone. Rather, they emanate from him like heat emanates from a fire. Together they constitute his very nature.

- I am God, and there is no other; I am God, and there is none like me (Isaiah 46:9).
- There is none like you, O Yahweh. You are great and your name is great in might (Jeremiah 10:6; LEB).

The UP-A-HIL acrostic will remind you of the six basic qualities of God’s nature.

- **U** - Understanding: God knows all things (1 John 3:20), so he is Light (1 John 1:5).
- **P** - Power: Anything is possible for God (Matthew 19:26),<sup>32</sup> so he is Almighty (Psalm 91:1).<sup>33</sup>
- **A** - Authority: God will rule forever (Daniel 6:26) so he is King (Psalm 47:7).<sup>34</sup>
- **H** - Holiness: God cannot be tempted (James 1:13), so he is holy (Revelation 4:8).<sup>35</sup>
- **I** - Immortality: God gives life to all creatures (Nehemiah 9:6),<sup>36</sup> so he is immortal (1 Timothy 1:17).<sup>37</sup>
- **L** - Love: God does good to those who hate him (Matthew 5:43-48), so he is Love (1 John 4:8).<sup>38</sup>

Father God shares these qualities with others—and his sharing them is further evidence that he is Love. And that’s the next level of understanding: If we look closely at the Scriptures, we’ll discover that God—in his magnificent love—is willing and able to

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32 Also see Jeremiah 32:17, 27.

33 Also see Revelation 1:8.

34 Also see Psalm 145:1.

35 Also see Leviticus 11:44-45; 19:2; Isaiah 6:3; and 1 Peter 1:16.

36 Also see 1 Timothy 6:13.

37 Also see 1 Timothy 6:16.

38 God’s love for others is unmatched (John 3:16; 1 John 3:1).



transmit the six qualities of his divine nature to people like you and me! The following verses prove it.

- **U** – Understanding: Paul said “I shall know fully, even as I am fully known” (1 Corinthians 13:12).
- **P** – Power: After we’re resurrected, we will be like Jesus (1 John 3:2)<sup>39</sup>—but even now we can do greater things than he did (John 14:12; Mark 6:37).
- **A** – Authority: We will rule over the land (Matthew 5:5), cities (Luke 19:17), the animals (Isaiah 11:6), mortals (Matthew 19:28), and even angels (1 Corinthians 6:3).<sup>40</sup>
- **H** – Holiness: God commands us to be holy (Leviticus 11:44)<sup>41</sup> and we can live life “with a perfectly good conscience before God” (Acts 23:1).<sup>42</sup>
- **I** – Immortality: After the Resurrection, we will live forever (John 3:16; Matthew 25:46; John 6:51; 8:51; 1 John 2:17).
- **L** – Love: We will be resurrected in a “spiritual body” free from selfishness, but even now we can be “made perfect in love” (1 John 4:18).<sup>43</sup>

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39 For the sake of illustration, this means that we’ll be able to do things like teleport (John 20:26; Luke 24:30-31)!

40 Contrast this with the authority Adam and Eve had (Genesis 1:26). They only ruled over God’s creatures: fish, birds, livestock, and wild animals.

41 Also see Leviticus 19:2; 20:26; and 1 Peter 1:16.

42 Also see Acts 24:16 and 2 Timothy 1:3. With the human potential for holiness, Christ confidently ordered sinners to “sin no more” (John 5:14; 8:11).

43 That’s why we’re commanded to “pursue love” (1 Corinthians 14:1).


Those of us who will be resurrected to glory will have all of the qualities of the divine nature, so we're going to be transformed—we're going to undergo dramatic changes. Those changes come through the Holy Spirit. He is the one who gives us the understanding, the power, the authority, the holiness, the immortality, and the love. When he resurrects us, the Spirit grants us a complete divine nature.

Now, let's apply this principle: To give the divine nature, the Spirit must first have the divine nature—correct? Indeed, if you study the Scriptures, you'll find that he does have the divine nature. Let's study the Bible passages that prove that the Holy Spirit has each of the six UP-A-HIL qualities.

### **The Divine Nature in the Holy Spirit**

We do not know the precise moment in history when God gave the divine nature to the Holy Spirit, but the Spirit certainly has the divine nature now. Although we have found no Bible passage which addresses what the Spirit was like before he got the divine nature, it goes without saying that he had to earn the privilege. Why? For the simple reason that God is “a Rewarder of those who diligently seek him” (Hebrews 11:6). God has rewarded Jesus and angels. He has promised to reward you and me. He does not change like shifting shadows (James 1:17); that is, his character is firm. Why would God act any differently with the Holy Spirit?

This is a very neglected study, but please follow closely below as we demonstrate how the Spirit manifests each of the six qualities of the divine nature.

- **U - Understanding:** The Spirit teaches us all things (John 14:26). Logically, to teach everything, one must first know everything. The major source of his omniscience is his facetime with God in which he delves into God's deep thoughts (1 Corinthians 2:11)! 
- **P - Power:** Not only is the Spirit able to teleport people (Acts 8:39-40), he himself can be anywhere at any time (Psalm 139:7-10)! More significantly, the Spirit distributes dozens of gifts (1 Corinthians 12:9-11; Romans 12:6-8; 1 Peter 4:10-11) to believers. His capacity to divvy them out means that he has all of those powers in himself!
- **A - Authority:** Did you know that the Holy Spirit leads a group of the most elite heavenly beings? He has authority over the greatest cherubims!
  - ... four living creatures. In appearance their form was human, but each of them had four faces and four wings. Their legs were straight; their feet were like those of a calf and gleamed like burnished bronze. Under their wings on their four sides they had human hands... Wherever the Spirit would go, they would go...
  - Wherever the Spirit would go, they would go, and the wheels would rise along with them... (Ezekiel 1:5-8; 12, 20).
  - ... there before me were four chariots... [an angel says] "These are the Four Spirits of Heaven, going out from standing in the presence of the LORD

of the whole world... the powerful horses went... were straining to go throughout the Earth... [God then said] “Look, those [horses] going toward the north country have given my Spirit rest in the land of the north” (Zechariah 6:1, 5, 8).

Jesus warned us that we must give even more respect to the Spirit than we do to him (Luke 12:10). Paul exhorts us to be led by the Spirit (Galatians 5:18). Indeed, you can tell who the children of God are by this fact: They are led by the Spirit of God (Romans 8:14). That makes the Spirit a leader.

- **H - Holiness:** We call him the *Holy* Spirit not only because he is holy, but because he transmits holiness.<sup>44</sup> God is prepared to take the Spirit away from anyone who will not repent of their sin (Psalm 51:11), and he is prepared to give the Spirit during the purifying rite of baptism (Luke 3:21-22a)—a rite foreshadowed at Creation when the Spirit hovered over the surface of the waters (Genesis 1:2).<sup>45</sup>

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44 The Holy Spirit is not merely one of the “holy angels of God” (Matthew 25:31; Mark 8:38b, and Revelation 14:10b). Rather, he is “the Holy Spirit of God” (Ephesians 4:30) or “his [God’s] Holy Spirit” (1 Thessalonians 4:8). That is, he is a unique spirit belonging to God—a spirit who is particularly “set apart” and “holy”! The Holy Spirit is distinguished among those who serve God!

Isaiah called him “the Spirit of his [God’s] holiness” in the original Hebrew (Isaiah 63:10; LEB). Such a title for the Holy Spirit reveals that he is a spirit who has the holiness of God. That’s why Paul also calls him “the Spirit of Holiness” (Romans 1:4), making a statement: That the Holy Spirit is a spirit who actually transmits holiness. Has he begun to transmit it to you yet?

45 Additionally, baptism is foreshadowed in the story of the Great Flood. Noah dispatched a dove from the Ark (Genesis 8:8-12). The dove represents the Holy Spirit who “passes over the waters” as he did at the Creation.

- **I - Immortality:** God resurrects us by means of the Holy Spirit. For example, after the Two Witnesses have been martyred, the Holy Spirit resurrects them.
  - ... after the three and a half days [dead] the Breath of Life from God entered them, and they stood on their feet (Revelation 11:11).

The resurrection power of the Spirit makes him our supplier of eternal life. To supply it, he must first possess it! This simple logic is proof that the Spirit possesses immortality.

There are other Bible passages that speak to the Spirit's role in resurrecting the Dead. For example, the following confirms that he resurrected Jesus:

- ... through the Spirit of Holiness [Jesus] was appointed the Son of God in power by his resurrection from the Dead (Romans 1:4).

And the following verses confirm that the Holy Spirit will resurrect us:

- ... [God] will also make alive your mortal bodies through his Spirit who lives in you (Romans 8:11).

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In the Noah story, the dove returned with a symbol of hope—an olive leaf. That leaf represented the fact that there was a new world outside just waiting to be inhabited. In similar fashion, people today who (like Noah) seek the World to Come (Hebrews 2:5; 6:5) through baptism receive the Holy Spirit “who is a deposit guaranteeing our inheritance” (Ephesians 1:14).

Just as the dove filled Noah with hope by bringing the promise of a new world, the Spirit fills us with the hope of a new world. Noah received the dove from over the surface of the waters, and that's how we receive the Spirit, in baptism.

- ‘Whoever believes in me [Jesus]... rivers of living water will flow from within them.’ By this he meant the Spirit... (John 7:38)
- L - Love: The Spirit cares for us with the benevolent concern of a caregiver or a father. His placing reasonable demands on us is one sign of his love.
  - ... it seemed good to the Holy Spirit and to us to lay upon you no greater burden than these essentials (Acts 15:28).

The Spirit inspires church leaders to act with tender affection towards believers. That is, he makes pastors gentle-hearted, like parents are towards their kids.

- Just as a nursing mother cares for her children, so we cared for you. Because we loved you so much, we were delighted to share with you... we dealt with each of you as a father deals with his own children... (1 Thessalonians 2:7-12)

Love is the greatest attribute the Spirit produces in a believer (Galatians 5:22), his foremost fruit. Logically, if he produces love, he possesses love. But how did the Spirit obtain such love? Here’s a verse that answers that question:

- God’s love has been poured out into our hearts through the Holy Spirit... (Romans 5:5)

So only after having received love from God does the Spirit pour God’s love into us. That is, the Spirit gives what he gets, and he gets love from God the Father. Indeed, every-

thing the Holy Spirit has comes from God, but specifically, if he loves, it's because he has received it from the One in whom love originates—the Father, who is Love.

### **The Start of His Story**

Does the Holy Spirit have a story? Yes, but the Scriptures do not present his story as clearly as they do Jesus' story. For example, the Spirit's story has no incarnation. He never became human like Jesus, who was "the Word became flesh" (John 1:14).

The Spirit's story is not as clearly presented as our individual stories either. We can trace our story from sinners to saints. We can identify our repentance, our belief, and our baptisms. Our history has a conversion and a new birth. We can look ahead, and what do we see? We see the path God has laid before us: ministry, carrying our cross, a resurrection, and a judgment. That's our story. It hasn't all played out yet, but based on Jesus' story, we know how it will conclude: "When he appears, we will be like him" (1 John 3:2; NLT).

Unlike Jesus, we never read that God ever gave the Spirit "equality with" him (Philippians 2:6). We never read that God ever "gave glory" to the Spirit (John 17:22, 24). Nor do we read that God ever gave the Spirit "all authority in Heaven and on Earth" (Matthew 24:19). So far, God has only given those privileges to Jesus.

However, we do know that the Holy Spirit:

- was with God at Creation
- has the power to create
- can be in any place at any time
- sees all
- knows all

If these things are true, then the big question is: How did the Spirit get such amazing power?

There are only two possible answers to this question: Either God gave it to him or Jesus gave it to him. If God gave authority to the Spirit, then the Spirit's story is similar to that of Jesus who received glory from the Father when Jesus was "The Word."

If the second scenario is correct, then the Spirit owes more to Jesus than we ever imagined. However, since we don't have any details about Jesus' relationship to the Holy Spirit before the Creation of the World, we can't say. We only know that since the time Jesus ascended to Heaven, the Holy Spirit has been subordinate to Jesus. Because that's all we get out of Scripture, we should be conservative and stick with the declaration that the Holy Spirit got his glory from God. Even if such glory was channeled through Jesus, the original source of the Holy Spirit's divine nature is most certainly God.

There is only One True God, the source of life for all beings. Knowing that God is the source of life for Jesus, we know that he is the source of life for the Holy Spirit. Note Jesus' words:

- By myself I can do nothing (John 5:30).
- ... I live because of the Father... (John 6:57)
- I do nothing on my own... (John 8:28)

Jesus is greater than the Spirit. If Jesus is 100% dependent on God, and can do nothing on his own, and lives because of God—then so does the Holy Spirit!



## Inspiring a Knowledge of Jesus, not of Himself

The Spirit inspires us to know Jesus. And what does Jesus do, but inspire us to know the Father? So, a plan for getting to know Jesus and God is established in the Gospel, but what's the plan for getting to know the Spirit? There's no passage of Scripture that talks about God or Jesus revealing the Spirit to us—so do we need the Spirit to enlighten us about himself?

The answer is “yes and no.” Yes—because only the Spirit enlightens us to know the truth. No—because he doesn't testify about himself. The Spirit testifies about Jesus!

- But when he, the Spirit of Truth, comes... He will not speak on his own; he will speak only what he hears... He will glorify me [Jesus]... (John 16:13-14)
- When the Advocate comes, whom I will send to you from the Father—the Spirit of Truth who goes out from the Father—he will testify about me [Jesus] (John 15:26).

With these two passages, we know *why* we don't know! The Spirit's job is to reveal Christ to us, not to reveal himself. He doesn't “speak on his own.” Just as we testify about Christ by talking about him and *not* by talking about ourselves—the Spirit does not talk about himself!

- ... what we preach is not ourselves, but Jesus Christ as Lord... (2 Corinthians 4:5)

So, in other words, the Spirit does not reveal himself to us as Lord. That's not to say that he's not our Lord. He certainly does lord over us. It's just that the Spirit doesn't reveal that aspect of

himself—and that’s why the Spirit is never called “the Lord” in the Scriptures.

Didn’t Paul have authority in the churches? Sure he did; but Paul didn’t spend time speaking about his authority because he was too busy speaking about Christ’s! Likewise, the Spirit is so busy revealing Christ’s authority to us that he doesn’t speak of his own.

Does this all mean that we’ll never understand the intricacies of the history and life of the Holy Spirit? No. We will understand all things fully when the Kingdom has come. But for now, we’ll have to be content with the level of revelation God has ordained.

### **Contrast and Comparison: Jesus and the Holy Spirit**

Jesus and the Spirit have a lot in common, such as their divine nature and their participation in the Creation of the Universe. However, there are some telling differences. If we pay close attention to the differences, we’ll understand God’s wonderful plan of salvation much better. Most significant among these differences is that the Scriptures do not give many details on the history of the Holy Spirit, while they tell much about Jesus. For example:

- At Creation, we know that Jesus “was with God” (John 1:1-3; Proverbs 8:22-31)
  - The Scriptures do not use the powerful expression “was with God” for the Spirit at Creation. They do show that he was on hand. That is, they show that while the Father initiated Creation, the Spirit was nearby, hovering over the surface of the waters (Genesis 1:2), but the expression “was with God” is reserved for the Word. It indicates a unique rela-

tionship to God in which God has granted equality with him.

- Repeatedly, the Scriptures state that all things were created *by, through, and for* Jesus.<sup>46</sup>
  - The Scriptures never say that the Spirit created the light, the land, or plants. They do tell us that the Spirit participated in the creation of space—which they call “the heavens.” For example, God made the stars *by* the Spirit.
    - By his Spirit he [Yahweh] adorned the heavens (Job 26:13; NKJV).
    - By the Word of Yahweh the heavens were made, their starry host by the Breath [Spirit] of his mouth (Psalm 33:6).

Why is this the angle of the Holy Book? God invested only one day on space which has no inhabitants,<sup>47</sup> and the other five on his masterpiece: Earth with its animals and people. Not that the Spirit didn’t give life to animals and people, but he only gets the credit for that first day’s work in Creation. Interesting.

In addition, the Scriptures are careful to use no

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46 These prepositions are used for Jesus in John 1, Romans 11, Colossians 1:15-17, and 1 Corinthians 8. In marked fashion, the Scriptures use the preposition *from* to refer to God’s participation in the Creation. All things are *from* the Father, and they are from no other, not even Jesus. They have their origin in One God who is Father of All.

47 There is no evidence that extra-terrestrials exist.

other preposition but *by* for the participation of the Spirit in Creation. Why only *by*? Well, *by* denotes that the Spirit's role in Creation was instrumental, but it excludes him from being the *source* of creative power. Only of God does the Bible say “*from* whom all things come.” Think about that.

We note that the Bible also paints Jesus as the *channel* of creative power (by using the prepositions *by* and *through* when it talks about how things were created by Jesus). However, only Jesus is pictured as the *purpose* of Creation. The preposition *for*, as in “*for him* all things were created” (Colossians 1:16) is used only for Jesus. *For* is not used for the Spirit. That means that the world was not created for the Holy Spirit.

- The Spirit is the Creator who specifically manages the task of *Life Giver*. For example, when God sends his Spirit, “all creatures” [mammals, fish, birds, reptiles, amphibians, and insects] come to life.
  - When you send your Spirit, they [“all creatures” as per v. 27] are created (Psalm 104:30).

It is to be noted that God makes the decision about who should get life, and dispatches his Spirit to produce that life. The Spirit does not make the decision of giving life independent of the God he serves.

- So, God skillfully forms and shapes animals *through* Jesus, while he invigorates animals *by* the Holy Spirit. The Spirit doesn't make all creatures, but he makes them living beings. What collaboration between Jesus and the Spirit!

You might think that we're wrong when you note that Job states that the Spirit "made" him (33:4). However, if you read closely, you'll see that the same verse clarifies exactly what Job means. Through parallelism we know that "making" Job means that the Spirit gave Job life.

- The Spirit of God has made me; the Breath of the Almighty gives me life.
- From the Garden of Eden, where God gave Adam "the Breath of Life" (Genesis 2:7) to the Valley of the Dry Bones, where God breathed on the bones of a vast army to resurrect them (Ezekiel 37:5, 9), and even to Christ's conception (Luke 1:32-35)—the Spirit is the Giver of Life.

Consider this great truth: We wouldn't have ever had a living breathing Messiah among us if it weren't for the Holy Spirit. He turned Mary's virgin womb into the first abode of the baby Jesus!

- At Creation, Jesus "was God" according to John 1:1-2. The expression "the Word was God" means not only that Jesus had the divine nature, it means that he had equality with God. Research yourself: The other seven times the NT

calls Jesus “God” affirm not only Christ’s divine nature, but his equality with God. Now that Jesus has overcome every temptation and test, God has granted Jesus the right to sit with him on his Throne—and that’s exactly why we call Jesus *our God*.

- In contrast, although the Bible demonstrates that the Holy Spirit has the divine nature, it never says that he “was God” (past tense) or that he “is God” (present tense). Why not? Because God has never given the Spirit equality with him, as he has done with Jesus. God has not shared his Throne with the Holy Spirit.

So again, we call Jesus “God” because of his equality with God, not only because he has the divine nature. Now you know why resurrected Christians, who will have the divine nature just the way Jesus does, won’t be called “God.” We’ll only be called “gods” (John 10:35; Psalm 82:6). We will not have equality with God!

- Like the Father, Jesus is “the Alpha and the Omega.”<sup>48</sup> Of what is he the Beginning and the End? To answer that, consider how Jesus used his great power at Creation, and how he’ll use that power again at the end of the World. That’s what makes him the Beginning of all created things (their Creator) and the End of all created beings (their Judge).

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48 There are four passages which state that God is the “Beginning and the End” (Revelation 1:8; 21:6-7; Isaiah 44:6; and 48:12) and there are two which say this about Jesus (Revelation 1:17-18; 22:13).

- What about the Holy Spirit? Although the Spirit indeed generated life in the Creation, he has not been tapped by God to be a Judge in the End. Therefore, he is not called “Alpha and Omega.” He’s mostly an “Alpha”! The Spirit’s role in the Judgment of this World is not clear. Surely, he’ll play a role, but not anything that would warrant the name “Alpha and Omega”—only God and Jesus get that title.
- Jesus was very active in the OT, visiting people like Adam, Eve, Cain, Abraham, Sarah, Jacob, Moses, Shadrach, Meshach, Abednego, Gideon, Manoah and his wife (Samson’s parents), and little Samuel. Have you noticed him in the stories of these OT believers? He appeared to them as the Angel of Yahweh.
  - Likewise, the Spirit was very active in the OT. He filled Bezalel to do the work of building the Tabernacle (Exodus 31:3), and he anointed leaders in the Book of Judges: Othniel (3:10), Gideon (6:34), Jephthah (11:29), and Samson (13:25; 14:6; 15:14). The Holy Spirit anointed kings such as Saul (1 Samuel 10:10) and David (1 Samuel 16:13). He also inspired the prophets to speak (2 Peter 1:21).
- Jesus is often presented as “Yahweh” in the OT. It’s complicated to interpret those passages, but the simple reason why the Father would do it is because he’s Jesus’ Father. Fathers like to give their names to their sons. The Father declared that “his name was in him” (Exodus 23:21). In other words, God shares his name with Jesus. Get used to

God sharing his name with Jesus, because God's going to do it again—sharing the names “Eternal Father” and “Mighty God” with Jesus in the Kingdom (Isaiah 9:6)!

- On the other hand, the Spirit is never called “Yahweh” in the Bible. Neither has God ever said that he would put his name in the Spirit, or stated that he ever will share any of his names with the Holy Spirit. God only has one “Junior.” He will not share his name with any other—only Jesus. It's enough for the Holy Spirit to be called “the Spirit of God.”
- Jesus is called “the Son of God.”
  - The fact that Jesus is God's “Only Begotten” (John 1:14, 18; 3:16, 18; 1 John 4:9) means that there is no other being in the Universe uniquely born of God like Jesus—not even the Holy Spirit!
  - Let's consider how unique it is for the Spirit to never be called a “Son of God” in the Scriptures. God uses the term “sons of God” for good angels (Job 38:7). God uses the term for bad angels (Genesis 6:1-5; Job 1:6; 2:1)! God often uses the term “children of God” for Christians (John 1:12; Galatians 3:26; 2 Corinthians 6:18; Romans 8:14; 1 John 3:10), and he uses the expression “sons of God” for the Jews (Jeremiah 31:20; Deuteronomy 14:1; Psalm 82:6). The Scriptures even speak of unbelievers as “God's offspring” or “God's descendants” (Acts 17:29).



So why doesn't the Spirit get called a son? There's only one possible answer: The Spirit was never born.<sup>49</sup>

- Something we explain at length in the book *One Lord* is that Jesus was never called the “Son of God” until his conception. That’s simply because he had not been born yet. The Angel Gabriel explained to Mary that Christ’s miraculous birth is the reason why we call Jesus “the Son of God” by saying:
  - The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; for that reason also the holy child will be called the Son of God (Luke 1:35; NASB).
- Believers had waited expectantly for thousands of years to see who the Son of Man would be, but that Son was not revealed until he was born. God gave Eve the promise that her Seed—a “Son of Eve”—would eventually destroy the Devil (Genesis 3:15). Daniel got a vision of what the “Son of Man” would do (Daniel 10) although the individual who would become this “Son of Man” had not yet

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49 Likewise, Jesus had never been born until Mary became his mother. Before his incarnation, Jesus was never called a “Son of God,” so he wasn’t created. Angels and people were created. This is a solid argument against Arius’ doctrine that Jesus was created, a doctrine which the Jehovah’s Witnesses still teach.

been revealed. Hundreds of years earlier, Solomon wondered who the “Son of Man” might be, saying:

- Who has established all the ends of the Earth? What is his name, and what is the name of his Son? Surely you know (Proverbs 30:4)!

The point is that there are only two beings in the history of the Universe who were not called “Sons of God.” They are the Holy Spirit and the Pre-Incarnate Christ. The latter acquired the title “Son of God” when he was born of Mary, so now there is only one being in the Universe who has never been called a “Son of God,” the Holy Spirit.

- We’re affirming the opposite of Arianism here.<sup>50</sup> We’re affirming that along with the One God there are Two Beings who were never created. We’re also stating that One of those Two was born of God: Jesus.
- The Holy Spirit is neither called a “son of God” (like humans and angels) nor is he called “the Only Begotten Son of God” (like Jesus). This makes the Spirit *greater* than humans and angels (because he is not created), but *less* than Jesus (because the

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<sup>50</sup> We are not Arians because there is nothing in the Bible upon which one could base the teaching that Jesus was created—Arius taught it with no Bible verse to substantiate his teaching. He based his teaching only on human reason. We use reason, but we cannot forget that: a) Eternity Past goes beyond the limits of human reason and b) We should only “speak of what we know” (John 3:11).

Spirit isn't the "Son of Man"). We repeat: The Holy Spirit is greater than people, greater than angels, but less than Jesus.

- Our final comparison is that God gave glory to Jesus before the Creation of the World. At that time, Jesus' name was *the Word*. The Word's glory did not only consist of his divine nature, it was much more than that. In great measure, Jesus' glory was his "equality with God" (Philippians 2:6 and John 17:24)—an equality which the One God gave him!
  - On the other hand, the Scriptures never say that the God gave the Spirit equality with him. They never even say that God gave the Spirit glory. We recognize that surely God did give the Spirit glory because we know that God granted the divine nature to the Holy Spirit. However, the Bible doesn't say so. Did God ever give the Spirit equality with him? We simply don't know.

But why doesn't the Bible give us any information about God glorifying the Holy Spirit? The reason is because God's glorification of the Holy Spirit is not essential to our salvation. On the other hand, God's glorification of Jesus is essential to our salvation. The Bible was not written to give us all information about everything in the history of the Universe, but to give us all the information relevant to our salvation! Only Jesus, who came as a man, can redeem mankind. Only the One who came in the flesh can deliver us from slavery to the flesh.

This topic may sound complicated and theological, but it is completely relevant to whether you and I get redeemed by God or not. Why? Because the Good News is not about why God exalted a spirit, but about why God exalted a *man*. That man is Jesus.

## God Lives in Us

We freely declare the great truth that God lives in us. However, we don't declare it in a vague way like the Trinitarians do. We declare it knowing full well what it means: It means that God lives in us through the Holy Spirit.

If anyone is going to say "God lives in me" rightly, they need some background information. To start, they need to understand that God doesn't give someone his Spirit automatically. God has his terms, terms upon which he gives us the Spirit: We must obey God.

It's likely that nobody has ever told you this before, but God gives us the Spirit only if we keep his commandments. That is, the Spirit will dwell within us only if we're obedient to God. When we're holy, God will live in us through the Holy Spirit.

- The one who keeps God's commands lives in him [God], and he [God] in them. And this is how we know that he lives in us: We know it by the Spirit he gave us (1 John 3:24).

Let's break this passage down. It says that God lives in us if we keep his commandments, right? It's also saying that God lives in

us “by the Spirit”—that is, “the Spirit he [God] gave us.” Let’s read another verse, a parallel one:

- Whoever lives in love, lives in God, and God in them (1 John 4:16).

Did you notice how the Scriptures again address not only the truth of God being in us, but the truth of *how* such a thing is possible? They do! Paraphrasing the passage above, it tells us that “if you live in love, then God lives in you.” It’s a conditional statement: God lives in us through the Holy Spirit if we obey him by loving others. It’s time for an illustration.

### **The Ambassador**

If a president sends his ambassador to a foreign country, upon arrival, that president “lives in that country” through that ambassador. The president sent the ambassador, so he is present vicariously through the ambassador. However, if the foreign country is closed to diplomatic relations,<sup>51</sup> then the president can’t send an ambassador. Consequently, he cannot be in that country.

What would be a solution to such a predicament? If the president can get the foreign country to agree with his country’s laws, then he could send an ambassador! So it is with anyone who will have God in their heart. Every person is a “host country.” We have to open ourselves up to relations with God by conforming to his law of love. If we do, then he’ll send his ambassador, the Holy Spirit. Then, with the presence of the Spirit, we can declare with confidence that “God lives in us.”

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51 As of the writing of this book, you could think of North Korea, Syria, or Iran as illustrations. All of them have been closed to diplomatic relations with the United States.

## Living in God

“Living in God” is not a physical action, it’s a spiritual one. We are “in” God when we are doing things his way. “Living in God” is consistently keeping his commands. For example, it’s every day keeping his great command to love others. If we do that, he’ll live in us—just like he did with Jesus.

- ... God was in Christ reconciling the World to himself...  
(2 Corinthians 5:19; LEB)

At this point, *how* God was in Jesus should be no mystery to us. He was in Jesus through the Holy Spirit God gave him! You probably already figured that out. But are you capable of recognizing that it happened the exact same way it happens to you and me? That is, Jesus kept God’s commandments and “lived in God,” therefore God reciprocated and lived in Christ! God gave Jesus the Holy Spirit when Jesus was 30 years old—why? Because that was enough time for Jesus to have proved his obedience to God.

We just learned how God lives in us through the Holy Spirit. We also learned that our experience is no different from the Lord Jesus Christ. Now we understand what the Bible means when it tells us “God was in Christ.” It means that Jesus got the Holy Spirit.

## The Unity of the Three

We’re looking (likely more closely than you bargained for) at the unique three-way relationship that exists between the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. Would you rather just hear us say “there is One God in Three Distinct Persons”? We won’t.

Trinitarianism is a lie which reduces what otherwise would be a fruitful study of the subordinate relationships Jesus and the Holy Spirit have with God, to a heretical statement. The Trinitarian dogma is that the One True God is not the Father, but that God is “Three Persons in One.” Anyone teacher who denies that the One True God is the Father is a heretic.

The mysterious God, whom Trinitarians often refer to as the “Godhead,” is not the Father, but a *Unity of Three*, where they get the word “Trinity.” Their Trinity doctrine is all-important to them. It has the status of a non-negotiable dogma<sup>52</sup> among Catholics, Protestants, and the majority of Evangelical leaders.

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52 In contrast, Monotheism is *the Bible’s* gold standard for doctrine. Historically, monotheism has brought unity, while Trinitarianism has caused division. For example, prior to the debates between the followers of Athanasius [d. 373 AD] and the followers of Arius [d. 336], the most popular doctrinal statement of the Church was the Nicene Creed [325 AD]. It starts with “We believe in One God, the Father Almighty.”

Then came Athanasius, the father of Trinitarianism, and innumerable debates took place, about a dozen Church councils, numerous exiles [more times for Athanasius (5) than for Arius (at least twice)], and the entire Roman Empire was split in two! The debate revolved around one central question: Whether God is One or “Three in One.”

In the meantime, monotheism was still producing unity among Jews. Then, in the 7<sup>th</sup> century, it united the Arabs as they converted to Islam. To the embarrassment of Christians, Islam rose up to conquer much of the civilized world precisely when Trinitarians rose to power in the Roman Catholic Church. Was there a connection? Of course there was. Monotheism unites peoples and nations!

In the seventh and eighth centuries the Arabs, led by Mohammad, set out to conquer the world with the simple doctrine of One God, and they were very successful. God granted them success as a rebuke to the Christians who had been losing wars to Muslims. Why were they losing wars? They couldn’t even win debates. The Christians had lost the ability of dialoguing with monotheists. Trinitarianism, being illogical, relegates its adherents to foolish talk, and makes them incapable of debating with Jews or Muslims.

## The Question No One Will Ask

All Christians are all good and fine with the Holy Spirit being divine, but the million-dollar question which no one will ask is: How did the Holy Spirit get his divine nature? That's a question Trinitarians can't even conceive of. An Internet search on that question will provide zero results! Even so, it's a reasonable and a necessary question for anyone who wants to know the Holy Spirit.

If I want to know who the Spirit is, why wouldn't I ask about the source of his power? The Trinitarians would have me presume that there is no source, and that his power is innate. They might answer: "It's because he is God."

Fear of rejection (by the Trinitarian majority) scares most Christians away from investigating the truth about the Holy Spirit, but let's not be cowards. Did not Jesus get his divine nature from the Father? Of course, he did! We draw that conclusion on the basis of common sense: From who else would Jesus get his divine nature but God? But we also draw that conclusion on the basis of the Scriptures. When Jesus prayed to God, he said: "... everything you have given me comes from you" (John 17:7). Our Lord also prayed to God mentioning "...the glory that you [God] gave me..." (John 17:22). And what did Jesus mean when he spoke in prayer to God of "my glory that you have given me because you loved me" (v. 24)?

It's patently true that God gave all things to Jesus—but let's follow the logic of that truth. If we'll draw a new conclusion: that the Spirit has also received all he has from God. The Spirit is, after all,



subordinate to Jesus. If that's so, then the Spirit cannot have greater authority than Jesus. How could Jesus, who is greater than the Spirit, depend on God, and the Holy Spirit be independent from God? That would make the Holy Spirit greater than Jesus—something that cannot be true.

The Holy Spirit is subordinate to Jesus and submits to everything Jesus tells him. Therefore, if Jesus had to submit to God in order to obtain the glory he now has, wouldn't the Holy Spirit likewise have to submit to God to obtain the glory he now has? Yes, he would.

### **With God, You've Got to Deserve It**

We've already discovered (in the book *One Lord*) that God gave the divine nature to Jesus because Jesus earned it. Now, God is no dummy. He only gives honor to those who are worthy. Our Lord Jesus went through 33 years of testing—culminating at Calvary—to be worthy of a resurrection and eternal glory! Knowing that, we're able to take our investigation one step further, asking the question: What might the Holy Spirit have had to do to prove himself worthy of a divine nature? That, dear friends, is a very profound and thought-provoking mystery!

We don't know what the Spirit had to do to get his divine nature, but whatever it was, he did it before the Creation, otherwise known as "the Beginning." The earliest record we have of the Spirit is him "hovering over the surface of the waters" (Genesis 1:2) at the Creation. There he was already creating—and creating is something that only someone with a divine nature can do.

Since the Bible shows no indication that the Holy Spirit was created, it's best not to go there. Arius indeed dared to teach it,<sup>53</sup> and he has been pegged as having sparked the greatest heresy in the history of Christendom—but did he really? Or did he instead resist the first seeds of heresy? Was his great error that he imposed a human system of logic on the unknown? Lots of theologians do that. Arius didn't understand that where the Bible remains silent, a pastor cannot be dogmatic. Arius applied logic on too many vague variables when he applied human reason to the “Days of Eternity” (Micah 5:2; NASB).

Anyone who inspires Bible study brings blessings to the Church. Arius seems to have led his students in the direction of Bible study, although he erred on being dogmatic about teachings not found in the Bible. He led a disciplined life, is reported to have been kind and polite, and taught the Bible with boldness. However, the error of Arius is that he imposed a rigorous system of logic on a period of time that is unknown to man.

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53 Arius' teachings that there is only One God and Father [which is true] and that Jesus and the Holy Spirit were created by God [something never implied in Scriptures] caused a huge controversy in the Church. It was a controversy which peaked at the end of the 4<sup>th</sup> century, but lasted until at least the ninth! Arius was deemed a heretic by the Catholics, and none of his works exist today. By order of the Emperor, they were all burned! In addition, anyone found in possession of his writings would have been killed.

Here's a summary of his beliefs on the Holy Spirit:

Arianism teaches that the Holy Spirit was created by God the Father with the help of Jesus Christ, the Son of God. The Holy Spirit is of separate substance and entity from God the Father and Jesus Christ the Son and is subservient to both (Retrieved from <https://classroom.synonym.com/arianism-beliefs-12085291.html> on September 5, 2019).

That's not to say that Athanasius, Arius' rival, is not guilty of worse things. Athanasius was even more dogmatic than Arius, but with none of the logic of Arius. Contrary to Arius, who imposed reason on the unknown, Athanasius imposed irrationality on what is known. He stigmatized the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit as a mystery—even though they are Three Beings we know very well.

You don't have to choose between imposing reason on the unknown, or imposing irrationality on what is known. Rather, you can call the unknown "unknown" and call what is known, "known." In this case, the origins of the Holy Spirit are unknown, while the One God is known.



## 4. Can you describe the Spirit's relationship to God and his relationship to Jesus?

Do you understand the Spirit's relationship to the One God and to Jesus? For example, did you know that the Spirit has a very intimate relationship with God? He knows God so well, that he searches "the deep things of God" (1 Corinthians 2:10). And how about the Spirit's relationship to Jesus? The Spirit obeys Jesus. He obeys Jesus specifically because God gave Jesus the maximum level of authority.

### The Relationship of the Spirit with God and Jesus

The Spirit is subordinate to the One God. You'll understand that easily if you're grounded in the truth that everyone in the Universe is subordinate to the Father. If you're firm in that truth, then good. Chew on it a minute, and combine it with another truth: that God has given Jesus authority over all.

- All authority in Heaven and on Earth has been given to me (Matthew 28:18).

Now, if you've got these two truths down pat, then it shouldn't be a massive leap of faith for you to believe that the Spirit is subject to Jesus. If you believe so, then good—because he is!

With the basic truths behind us, let's go deeper. Let's ask ourselves whether there was ever a time when the Spirit was *not* subordinate to Jesus. To answer that question, we start by recognizing that when Jesus had "equality with God" (Philippians 2:6), Jesus exercised authority over the Holy Spirit. How do we know that? Simply because *equality* with God means you have the same authority God has, and God has authority over the Spirit. In other

words, Jesus had authority over the Spirit because *God* shared that authority with Jesus.

### Jesus' Authority over the Spirit

Ever since his resurrection, the Father gave Jesus everything. That “everything” includes authority over the Spirit.<sup>54</sup> The following verses express this truth:

- ... the One whom God has sent [Jesus] speaks the words of God, for God gives the Spirit without limit. The Father loves the Son and has placed everything in his hands (John 3:34-35).
- Jesus knew that the Father had put all things under his power (John 13:3).

The timing of the previous verse was before Jesus' crucifixion and resurrection. That raises the question of whether Jesus speaking about what he'd get after the Resurrection, or whether he already had authority over the Holy Spirit. Which was it?

This is one of the few cases where logic takes precedence over grammar. Until Jesus got the divine nature, God would not have

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54 Did Jesus have this same authority when he was with God in the Beginning as the “Word”? We believe that he did since Jesus had *equality* with God (Philippians 2:6). While in the flesh, Jesus expressed his desire to again have the glory that he shared with God before the World was created.

- ... now, Father, glorify me in your Presence with the glory I had with you before the World began (John 17:5)

Those words express that the authority our Lord currently has over the Spirit is not something new, but that his authority matches the authority he wielded before the incarnation.

given Jesus authority over someone with the divine nature—namely, the Holy Spirit. Furthermore, Jesus did not give the baptism of the Holy Spirit until after he had ascended to Heaven.

In this case, grammar does not hold the key to interpretation. We sometimes speak of things that have yet to be fulfilled as if they were ours already. For example, Paul told the Ephesians that God had “blessed us in the heavenly realms with every spiritual blessing in Christ” (Ephesians 1:3) and that “God raised us up with Christ and seated us with him in the heavenly realms in Christ Jesus” (2:6), but the Ephesians had not been resurrected yet.

The logic of passages like these is that when God says he’s going to do something, you can count it “good as done.” He always fulfills his promises. That’s how Jesus felt when he spoke these words at the end of his ministry. He knew that he had done what he needed to do, and he was confident that God was going to complete what he had started. Paul expressed that same kind of realistic confidence:

- ... being confident of this very thing, that he who has begun a good work in you [God] will complete it until the day of Jesus Christ (Philippians 1:6; NKJV).
- I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. Now there is in store for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will award to me on that day (2 Timothy 4:7-8).

### **How Jesus’ Authority over the Spirit Works**

Now that we comprehend the extent of Jesus’ authority, let’s ask ourselves how Jesus’ authority over the Spirit works. There are at least three specific ways the Bible speaks of:

- The Holy Spirit gets revelations from Jesus, and shares them with us.
- The Holy Spirit speaks only what he hears from Jesus.
- The Holy Spirit gives Jesus all the credit, and takes none for himself.

Jesus described these three activities of the Spirit when he spoke to the apostles:

- ... when he, the Spirit of Truth, comes, he will guide you into all the truth. He will not speak on his own; he will speak only what he hears, and he will tell you what is yet to come. He will glorify me [Jesus] because it is from me that he will receive what he will make known to you.

All that belongs to the Father is mine.<sup>55</sup> That is why I said the Spirit will receive from me what he will make known to you (John 16:13-15).

Whoa—time for reflection. Did you get that last statement of Jesus: “That is why I said...”? This is a crucial passage since with it you can understand the basis of the relationship that exists between Jesus and the Spirit. Here our Lord states the reason why the Spirit submits to him. Listen closely: Jesus is saying that just as the Father

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55 Do you get the meaning here? Jesus is implying that the Spirit belongs to the Father, and now the Spirit belongs to Jesus as well. How did the One who belongs to the Father come to belong to the Son? Quite simply, because the Father authorized it. And let’s note that God only authorized it at the end of Jesus’ earthly ministry, after Jesus had proven himself worthy of the honor.

*has had* authority over the Spirit, likewise Jesus currently *has* authority over the Spirit.

This is a real discovery. We've just uncovered the reason why the Spirit is now "the Spirit of Jesus Christ" (Philippians 1:19) or "the Spirit of Christ" (1 Peter 1:11)—because the Spirit *belongs* to Jesus!

To get the full implications of this truth, let's recall that the Spirit was never called "the Spirit of Christ" in the OT. He was only "the Spirit of God" or "the Spirit of Yahweh." That was then, and this is now. Currently, because God has given all that he has to Jesus, and Jesus exercises authority over the Holy Spirit, the Spirit has some new names!

Never in the OT is the Spirit called the "Spirit of the Word" or the "Spirit of the Messiah" or the "Spirit of the Angel of Yahweh." He was never called by those names; but currently he *is* called "the Spirit of the Lord [Jesus]" (2 Corinthians 3:17). Hence, we observe a major shift in the relationship of Jesus with the Holy Spirit.

Since the Lord Jesus now possesses the Spirit, the Spirit takes orders from Jesus. Not only that—but the Spirit obeys *every* order Jesus gives him! Here's why: because the Holy Spirit is completely obedient to the One God who has given his Son Jesus the authority.

### **Jesus Baptizes in the Spirit**

We're going to dig into the Baptism of the Spirit in another book called *One Baptism*, but there's one aspect of that baptism that we need to address here: Baptism in the Spirit is a power which Jesus wields. This power of Jesus to baptize in the Spirit was something John the Baptist really noticed in Jesus. John was amazed and said:



- I baptize you with water for repentance. But after me comes one who is more powerful than I... He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire (Matthew 3:11).

What does John's cryptic statement mean? It talks about baptism with the Holy Spirit and baptism with fire. Few dare to interpret it and less dare to teach it. However, if you dare to dig into this verse, you'll get a great revelation about the special relationship between Jesus and the Spirit.

Do you want that revelation? To get the revelation, you're first going to have to define baptism with the Spirit and baptism with fire. We propose that:

- Baptism in the Spirit has only been available to humanity since Jesus sat down at God's Right Hand in Heaven. That is, after Jesus' ascension to Glory.
- Christ's "baptism of fire" consists of judgments he'll execute when he returns to Earth as King.

Now, since the baptism of the Holy Spirit was only available after Jesus ascended, and his baptism in fire is yet to come—John's statement about Jesus (as seen above in Matthew 3:11) referred to actions Jesus would take later on. What John praised in Christ were not things Christ would do during his ministry in the flesh. The two baptisms Jesus gives, he never gave while in the flesh.

Jesus never baptized anyone in the Holy Spirit while he was in the flesh—but he does now. How does he do it? He sends the Holy Spirit. We challenge you: Name one example of Jesus baptizing someone in the Spirit during his earthly ministry. You won't find any.

Here's a further challenge: Name one example of Jesus baptizing someone in the Spirit after he came back resurrected. You won't find that either—but why not? Didn't he have a divine nature upon being resurrected? He did, but having power doesn't mean that you wield it.

The Father's will has always been that Jesus minister baptism through the Holy Spirit. The Spirit baptizes people for Jesus. That is, Jesus baptizes people in the Spirit, but only *through* the Spirit. Jesus does not minister the baptism of the Spirit directly. For example, Jesus never laid hands on anyone for them to receive the baptism of the Holy Spirit (the way the apostles did).

This all might sound familiar to you. That's because we observe the same pattern of indirect ministry in Creation: God created the Earth through Jesus, not directly. Likewise, Christ creates new people through the Spirit, not directly.

### **Interaction between the Spirit and Jesus**

We must understand the relationship between the Holy Spirit and Jesus. If we can get a clear concept of what goes on between them, then we'll have gone where few men dare to go. What pastor ever teaches on this topic? But things haven't always been like this.

The relationship between Jesus and the Spirit is unheard of in churches today, but in the Middle Ages it was the hottest topic of debate.<sup>56</sup> Here's the reason why it has taken a back seat: Blind

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<sup>56</sup> There was a time in which this was the hottest theological issue in the Church. The Great Schism of 1054 AD was caused by an approximately 500-year-old disagreement between the Church of the East (the Byzantine Church, based in Constantinople) and the Church of the West (the Latin Church, based in Rome). In 1054, the leaders of both Churches excommunicated one another. Believe it or not, the excommunication was only lifted in 1965!

belief in their God “the Trinity” has killed any interest in the topic. False doctrine has blinded Evangelicals to the relationship between Jesus and the Spirit!

In spite of the unfortunate state of Evangelical Christianity, let’s deal with passages others don’t dare to touch. Let’s uncover the relationship between Christ and the Spirit!

The eight topics we’re about to touch upon are the following:

- a) Through the Holy Spirit, Jesus offered himself to God.
- b) The Spirit appointed Jesus the Son of God.
- c) Seated at God’s right hand, Jesus received authority over the Holy Spirit.
- d) God only gave the Spirit to us *after* God had glorified Jesus.
- e) Jesus now sends the Holy Spirit to us.
- f) Jesus sent the Spirit to us to testify about Jesus.
- g) The Spirit only says what Jesus wants him to say.
- h) The Spirit is our second-line defense attorney, after Jesus.

Are you prepared to look into these one-by-one?

- a. Through the Holy Spirit, Jesus offered himself to God.

Read the following Bible verse carefully:

- ... Christ... through the Eternal Spirit offered himself unblemished to God... (Hebrews 9:14)

Do you want to understand this phrase? It'll take some background and some context, so let's set the scene. Jesus ascended to Heaven, and there he stood in front of God and presented himself before God as an offering for the sins of mankind. That is, Jesus literally offered his body, soul, and spirit to God. This action was only possible through the Holy Spirit—but why?

It was through the Holy Spirit that God resurrected our Lord. If the Spirit had not resurrected Christ, then it would have been impossible for Jesus to ascend to Heaven to offer himself to God. “But,” you ask me, “would it really have been impossible?” Your doubt stems from the Trinitarian assertion that “Jesus is the One God.” You imagine Jesus as someone who is independently God, but the truth is that he can do nothing without God. He said “the Son can do nothing of himself” (John 5:19; NASB).

The basic reason it would have been impossible for Jesus to ascend to Heaven is because Jesus was dead. That is, he didn't have a body. Dead people can't do anything in the physical realm because they are just souls. Worse off, they're locked inside Hades. Jesus' offering himself to God was a physical action beyond the dark gates of Hades. He prevailed against those gates, and we'll overcome them someday too!

- [Jesus spoke of]... my Church, and the Gates of Hades shall not prevail against it (Matthew 16:18; NKJV).

Have you ever been taught that Jesus offered himself to God? It's rarely mentioned by pastors, and there's a reason why—Trinitari-

anism. Because of it, most Evangelicals can't fathom the fact that Jesus would offer himself to God. For them, Jesus already *is* God, so they are blinded to this crucial historical event. The Father, Jesus, and the Spirit are "One Being" for them, so it doesn't make any sense for Jesus to offer himself to God. Despite their unbelief, their salvation still depends on this truth, and the Bible still says "Christ... through the Eternal Spirit offered himself unblemished to God..." (Hebrews 9:14).

During his earthly life, Jesus was able to keep himself unstained by sin. His holiness qualified him (in spirit, soul, and in body<sup>57</sup>) as an offering to God. That is, due to his holy lifestyle, Jesus became the spotless and innocent Lamb of God. He had become the single suitable and sufficient offering to God by the time his turn at Calvary arrived.

- John saw Jesus coming toward him and said, 'Look, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the World!' (John 1:29)
- [Jesus is]... the Lamb who was slain from the Creation of the World (Revelation 13:8).
- ... the Lamb will triumph over them [the kings who rule with Antichrist] because he is Lord of lords and King of kings (Revelation 17:14).

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57 This is why it says the following:

- Sacrifice and offering you did not desire, but a body you prepared for me; with burnt offerings and sin offerings you were not pleased. Then I said, 'Here I am—it is written about me in the scroll—I have come to do your will, my God' (Hebrews 10:5-7).

Three days after the crucifixion, God resurrected the dead body of Christ with the life-giving power of the Holy Spirit. This is a very important truth. With it we understand that only through the Holy Spirit's power was Jesus able to ascend to Heaven. Got it?

It was in Heaven that Jesus presented himself to God, not on Earth. Hebrews 9:14 is not talking about Jesus offering himself to God on the Cross. Read the context,<sup>58</sup> and you'll see that it's referring to something that happened afterwards. It's talking about Jesus' job as High Priest on our behalf, a job he carries out in the Heavenly Temple. That is, Jesus is our Priest, interceding for us in God's Presence in the True Temple.<sup>59</sup>

Now, just because your pastor hasn't told you about something, that doesn't mean it didn't happen. Just because there are no books written about an event, that doesn't mean that it didn't occur. Just because you ignore this momentous historic event, doesn't make

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58 Here are some verses to help you grasp the context:

- ... [Christ] went through the greater and more perfect Tabernacle that is not made with human hands, that is to say, is not a part of this Creation. He... entered the Most Holy Place once for all by his own blood... For Christ did not enter a sanctuary made with human hands that was only a copy of the true one; he entered Heaven itself, now to appear for us in God's Presence (Hebrews 9:11-12, 24).

59 One of the most common expressions (part of the current fad) in Evangelical churches is to invite worshippers "to enter into God's presence." For the most part this is psychological manipulation from the pulpit. It is an attempt to get people to believe that by worshipping, they actually change location spiritually. They don't.

No Bible passage teaches that we enter God's presence by worshipping, but since using it is a way to fill a building with people, pastors teach it. The result is that their worship spaces get filled, the worship time takes precedence over the sermon, and the worship team becomes more important than the pastoral team.

it disappear. It was a real event—and thank God it was because without it, you and I would still be in our sins.

If people can deny the Holocaust, they can deny this event. If people can deny that man landed on the Moon, they can ignore this. People even ignore Creation, even though the whole Earth proclaims the glory of a Mighty Creator. But we will not ignore the fact that “Christ... through the Eternal Spirit offered himself unblemished to God...” (Hebrews 9:14).

We will not rob this event of the recognition it merits. We will not steal from the Holy Spirit the credit he deserves! He resurrected Jesus so that Jesus might present himself as our High Priest to God.

**b. The Spirit appointed Jesus the Son of God.**

The moment God resurrected Jesus was the moment God designated Jesus to be “the Son of God.” In other words, in Christ’s resurrection, God wasn’t merely bringing back an innocent man from the Dead. He was proving that Jesus was the Messiah, the Heir of the World.

- ... through the Spirit of Holiness was appointed the Son of God in power by his resurrection from the Dead: Jesus Christ our Lord (Romans 1:4).

God proved to those who roundly *condemned* Jesus as a sinner, that he roundly *approved* of Jesus as Messiah. Although his enemies, acquaintances, friends, and even his family rejected Jesus, God did not! God gave Jesus a seal of approval that no man would ever be able to break—eternal resurrection glory!

Again, this was the work of the Holy Spirit because he is the means by which God instills life in the Dead—whether that dead person be Jesus, you, or me. God worked through the Holy Spirit to resurrect Jesus, thereby establishing Jesus as the Messiah we know him as today.

- ... let all Israel be assured of this: God has made this Jesus, whom you crucified, both Lord and Messiah (Acts 2:36).

c. Subsequent to Jesus sitting down at God’s right hand, God gave him authority over the Holy Spirit.

- Exalted to the right hand of God, he has received from the Father the promised Holy Spirit and has poured out what you now see and hear (Acts 2:33).

What does this verse mean? It’s a monumental verse—one that gives an insight into one of the most important events in the history of the Universe. Let’s reflect on it part-by-part.

First of all, since Jesus already “received” the Holy Spirit the day he was baptized in the Jordan, here we must be talking about a different kind of *receiving*. This time, after being seated on his Throne in Heaven, Jesus “received” the Holy Spirit as his subject—as his Servant. In other words, when Jesus sat down at God’s right hand, God granted him newfound authority—authority over God’s very special Spirit!

Jesus’ decision at the moment he obtained such authority was a selfless one. It’s just like Jesus to share, isn’t it? Yes, so Jesus immediately decided to bless us by pouring out the Spirit on the Church. How do we know that? Firstly, Jesus revealed his plan of what to do with his newfound authority. He did that in the Upper




Room Discourse. There he expressed his deep concern for us feeling abandoned and helpless without him. His precise words to the apostles were these:

- I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Advocate to help you and be with you forever—the Spirit of Truth... you know him, for he lives with you and will be in you. I will not leave you as orphans... (John 14:16-18)

So, Jesus asked the Father to give us the Holy Spirit, and that's because there is a hierarchy in Heaven. God established it in this order: He's the Head of all, then his Son, and then the Holy Spirit. You can examine the nature of this hierarchy with the help of Ephesians 4:6, a foundational Bible verse that speaks of "One God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all." It gives us insight about the hierarchy that exists among God, his Son, and the Spirit.

- i. The Father is "over all" not only because he has authority over all people, but because he has authority over Christ and *over* the Holy Spirit.
- ii. The Father is "through all" not only because he works through all people, but also because he works through Jesus and *through* the Holy Spirit.
- iii. The Father is "in all" not only because he is in all people by virtue of their DNA which contains his image and likeness—but he is also in Jesus and *in* the Holy Spirit. Did he not place his very nature in them?

The point we need to make is that the “all” in Ephesians 4:6 includes the Holy Spirit and Jesus. You probably already knew that the Father is the Head of Christ (1 Corinthians 1 ) , but did you also know that Christ is the Head of the Spirit? You probably don’t have any problem accepting that, but are you willing to go one step further? Dare to ask yourself *how* Jesus became the Spirit’s head. Ask what no Christian dares to ask: How did Jesus get authority over the Holy Spirit?

This is a profound question with a surprisingly simple answer. We’ve already looked at the answer, but it’s worthwhile repeating it. Jesus tells us how he got his authority over the Spirit in the following verse:

- All that belongs to the Father is mine. That is why I said ‘the Spirit will receive from me what he will make known to you’ (John 16:15).

Did you catch the meaning of the words “that is why”? Jesus here gives *the reason* the Spirit obeys him. That is, he tells us *why* the Spirit submits to him. It is because the Father has given Jesus everything the Father has—and included among the “all that belongs to the Father” is the Holy Spirit. In the simplest terms possible: God shares “all that belongs” to him with his Son, *even* the Holy Spirit!

The fact that the Holy Spirit belongs to Jesus became even clearer right after Jesus’ resurrection. For all intents and purposes, in the Upper Room Jesus redefined his relationship with the Spirit. Notice how Jesus, in his trademark masterful style, instructs without words!

- [Jesus said] ‘As the Father has sent me, I am sending you.’ And with that he breathed on them and said, ‘Receive the Holy Spirit...’ (John 20:21-22).

Did you get it? By breathing on them, Jesus declared to the disciples that the Spirit had become *his* Breath. What a statement! The Holy Spirit is the Breath of Christ. For our Lord to teach this truth is tantamount to him saying that the Spirit *proceeds* from him—and he now does! The Spirit has always proceeded from God, but now the Spirit also proceeds from Jesus!

If the Spirit ever did proceed from Jesus before, we have not information about it. What we do know is that Jesus had equality with God when he was the Word.

- ... now, Father, you glorify me at your side with the glory that I had at your side before the World existed (John 17:5; LEB).
- ... [Jesus] did not consider being equal with God something to be grasped... (Philippians 2;6; LEB).

We do not have the details of what Jesus was like when he had equality with God. We’re not privy to much information about Christ’s status before the Creation of the World, but we do have the details of his time in the flesh. When Jesus came to us in the flesh, he did not have authority over the Holy Spirit. Now he does, and that’s what’s important. Right now, Jesus possesses the Spirit like a man possesses his own breath.

### **The Spirit Proceeds from Jesus**

The Spirit proceeds from Jesus. To affirm this position is to take the Latin (Western Church) side of the Great Schism of 1054 AD.

That momentous event in Church history permanently divided the churches of the East from the Churches of the West. It caused Christendom to separate into the Roman Catholic tradition and the Eastern tradition.<sup>60</sup> One scholar said this of the Schism:

- ... whether we like it or not, the question of the procession of the Holy Spirit has been the sole dogmatic grounds of the separation of East and West.<sup>61</sup>

The debate was whether during the church service recitation of the creed, believers should include a statement that the Holy Spirit proceeds from the Father “and from the Son” (three words which in Latin is expressed in one word: *filioque*) or not. This phrase, the *filioque*, was added to the Nicene Creed in the late 6th century by some Latin Churches, but the Eastern Churches opposed it.

Amazingly, this was the only doctrinal reason for the split of these churches. Other issues they debated at the time were not doctrinal—for example the Eastern churches’ unwillingness to submit to the authority of the Roman Pope, celibacy in the clergy, and using leavened or unleavened bread in the Eucharist. All those issues were overcome in the Second Vatican Council in 1962-65.

Can you imagine how serious the early debaters were about their theology? A theological debate that existed on for almost a millennia with the participation of men such as Tertullian (c. 160 – c.

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60 The Eastern Tradition can also be called the Byzantine—which was later to develop into the Syrian, the Aramean, the Maronite, the Arminian, the Greek Orthodox, the Russian Orthodox, and the Coptic churches, among others.

61 Retrieved from [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Filioque#cite\\_ref-FOOTNOTE\\_LaDue200363\\_187-0](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Filioque#cite_ref-FOOTNOTE_LaDue200363_187-0) on November 11, 2020 with references from LaDue, William J. (2003). *The Trinity guide to the Trinity*. Harrisburg, PA: Trinity Press International.

220 AD), Marius Victorinus (c. 280 – 365), Epiphanius of Salamis (c. 310 – 403); the three “Cappadocian Fathers” Basil of Caesarea (330 – 375), Gregory of Nazianzus (329 – 390), Gregory of Nyssa (c. 335 – c. 395); Ambrose of Milan (c. 338 – 397), Jerome (347–420), Augustine of Hippo (354 – 430), and Cyril of Alexandria (c. 376 – 444). These men were serious because they examined Scriptures and debated the topics that had the deepest impact on belief.

For our part, the only thing we need to know is that they hotly debated most of the same passages we’ve already examined in this book: John 20:22; Philippians 1:19; John 14:16, 14:26, 15:26, 16:7; Revelation 22:1; and John 1:29. For example, Hilary of Poitiers put great emphasis on John 16:15, just as we do in this book.

These men were on to the same path we’re on. They were following the same thread we’re following today. We’re walking in their footsteps. It was of the utmost importance for them to resolve the question of whether Jesus had or did not have authority over the Holy Spirit. They wanted to answer the question: Does the Spirit now proceed from Jesus? Is Jesus now our source for getting the Holy Spirit? Did Jesus send the Spirit in the time before his Incarnation, or not?

We take the position that the Spirit does indeed proceed from Jesus now, and we presume that the Spirit proceeded from Jesus (when Jesus was called “the Word”) from Time Eternal, noting that the Spirit obeyed Jesus at Creation.<sup>62</sup> One clarification we are

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62 Now, we know that Jesus had equality with God before Jesus took on the flesh. So, before Jesus came to us in the flesh, the Holy Spirit must have been subject to the Word. We can see this submission of the Spirit when the Word

compelled to make (not found among the writings of theologians) is that the Spirit did not proceed from Christ while Christ was in the flesh.

In conclusion, the current point of origin of the Spirit is relevant to our salvation, while the point of origin of the Spirit in Eternity Past is not relevant to our salvation. That is, what someone thinks about what happened in Eternity Past is inconsequential. It won't make anyone a heretic if they believe that the Spirit was subject to Jesus or not because this matter doesn't compromise any of the Fundamentals (Hebrews 6:1-2) or the Essential Truths (Ephesians 4:3-6). Our salvation hinges on fundamental truths such as how to get the Spirit now. It's through Jesus, and you need to believe it.

**d.** God only gave the Spirit to us after God had glorified Jesus.

Behold how vitally important it was for God to glorify our Lord Jesus. For our sake, God glorified Jesus so that he could send us the Spirit. As it is, God did not want to send the Spirit independently. God would only send the Spirit in a team effort with Jesus.

As you read the following passage, pay close attention to the underlined words: *will*, *later*, *since*, and *not yet*. These words indicate the timing of events. With them, we understand the chronology of the coming of the Holy Spirit, whom Jesus calls “Rivers of Living Water” in the passage.

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breathed into Adam's nostrils, making him a living being. The *Breath of Life* in the following passage is the Holy Spirit, and Jesus was bearing the name “Yahweh” at that time.

- Yahweh God formed the man of dust from the ground, and he blew into his nostrils the Breath of Life, and the man became a living creature (Genesis 2:7; LEB).

- ... Jesus stood and said in a loud voice, ‘Let anyone who is thirsty come to me and drink. Whoever believes in me, as Scripture has said, Rivers of Living Water will flow from within them.’

By this, he meant the Spirit, whom those who believed in him were later to receive. Up to that time, the Spirit had not been given, since Jesus had not yet been glorified (John 7:37-39).

Magnificent. Now, the key word for the correct interpretation of this passage is *since*. As we said, it’s a timing word, indicating that only *after* God glorified Jesus would God give the baptism of the Spirit to believers. In other words, the Spirit would *not* be a wellspring of life in the hearts of believers *until* Christ was up in Heaven seated at God’s right hand.

Jesus explains here why the fullness of the Spirit was not available prior to his ascension to Heaven. God did not give the Spirit until Christ was glorified simply because the Spirit had to be sent by Jesus. Anyone who gets the Holy Spirit, must get him with Christ’s authorization.

Think about this and consider the wisdom of God: A person can only receive the Holy Spirit under orders from the Lord Jesus. Why is this God’s protocol? Because only Christ’s example serves to guide us. Only someone who knows the life of Jesus will know what to do with the Anointing. This is exactly why we have the Gospels. The Gospels of Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John present Christ’s life to us. Once you see the way Christ lived, you are challenged to do with your lives what Christ did with his. And

what exactly did he do? He lived in love, righteousness, and truth. He could do that because he too harnessed the power of the Spirit.

Who gets a football uniform? Only the player who is committed to submit to the coach. The coach issues the uniform. Who get diplomatic immunity? Only a person who has been authorized by the President. The president issues the credentials. Who gets a driver's license? Only a person who has taken the Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV) exam. The DMV issues the license.

We who want Eternal Life must be committed to following the example of Christ. The Holy Spirit will empower us, but first Christ has to send him to us.

e. Jesus sends us the Holy Spirit.

The only way for the Spirit to come to us was for Jesus to first go to the Father—physically! There was no other way God would have sent the Spirit to us, and the reason is that God wanted Jesus to be the Sender. Yes, Jesus had to be the one to send the Spirit. You can read about this wise strategy, God's strategy for blessing us, in the following verse:

- [Jesus speaking to his apostles said] It is to your advantage that I go away; for if I do not go away, the Helper will not come to you; but if I depart, I will send him to you (John 16:7; NKJV).

Do we understand that the coming of the Holy Spirit was conditional upon Jesus' leaving? Jesus said that the Spirit would not come unless Jesus first went away. Jesus explained that only if he departed would he send the Spirit to us.



Now, let's read a similar verse, one that explains how the Father sends the Holy Spirit in Jesus' name. For God to send the Spirit "in Jesus' name" does not mean that God speaks the name of "Jesus" like a magic word. Rather, it means that God sends the Spirit for the *cause* of Christ.

- These things I have spoken to you while being present with you. But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, he will teach you... (John 14:25-26; NKJV)

If you've grasped the idea that God sends the Spirit for the cause of Christ, then the next logical question is: What precisely is Jesus' "cause"? Answer: The cause of Christ is to get us saved, resurrected, and in the Kingdom! Our Lord dedicated his life to preaching the Good News of the Kingdom, the Gospel.

Let's examine another verse. In John 15 (below), Jesus teaches the principle that the Holy Spirit "goes out from the Father." In other words, the point of origin of the Holy Spirit is the One God. Did you get that? The Holy Spirit takes his orders from the God he serves.

- When the Counselor comes, whom I will send to you from the Father, the Spirit of Truth who goes out from the Father, he will testify about me (John 15:26).

So, we've just learned that the Spirit testifies about Christ and is sent by Christ—however, we also learned that the Spirit (in the sense of a true point of origin) is sent by the Father. Another way to word it is like this: The Spirit is sent in Jesus' name, coming from the Father. For example, when a General sends a Colonel

to the warfront, he sends him off under the authority of the Commander in Chief, the President. The Coronel won't go unless he has the approval of both, although he doesn't express concern over the will of the President. Now you understand *how* Jesus sends the Spirit—he sends the Spirit in conjunction with God, fully authorized by God.

f. Jesus sent the Spirit to testify about Jesus.

Let's consider what Jesus is trying to communicate in the following passage:

- [Jesus said] When the Advocate comes, whom I will send to you from the Father—the Spirit of Truth who goes out from the Father—he will testify about me (John 15:26).

This passage states two things: Firstly, it lays out the principle that Jesus has given an order to the Spirit. That very important order is to reveal who Jesus is to us. In other words, the Spirit's job is to help us to understand Jesus. He testifies about Jesus by showing us what kind of man Jesus was when he was in the flesh, who Jesus is now in his resurrected body, and who Jesus is going to be when he returns to Earth to rule in the Kingdom. In sum, if you know anything true about Jesus, it's because the Holy Spirit has revealed it to you.

Do you notice how some journalists tell you what a leader is like by analyzing his policy? Others only criticize a leader and put him down, but there are some reporters who take you into the mind of a leader. Those are the best reporters because they make you feel like you know the person by penetrating his thoughts. The Holy Spirit is the best reporter on Jesus.

The second thing we see in this passage is how Jesus puts weight on the doctrine that the Spirit is *from* the Father. Why does he do that? Is it because the Spirit is *not* from Jesus? No, we've already examined three passages that prove that the Spirit comes from Jesus:

- All that belongs to the Father is mine. That is why I said 'the Spirit will receive from me what he will make known to you' (John 16:15).
- [Jesus said] 'As the Father has sent me, I am sending you.' And with that he breathed on them [using body language to say that the Spirit is his] and said, 'Receive the Holy Spirit...' (John 20:21-22).
- Exalted to the Right Hand of God, he has received from the Father the promised Holy Spirit and has poured out what you now see and hear (Acts 2:33).

So there's our reminder that Jesus sends the Spirit. Now, in the passage under scrutiny (John 15:26), Jesus twice emphasizes that the Holy Spirit has a tight relationship with the Father. His precise words are "I will send to you from the Father the Spirit of Truth who goes out from the Father." In one breath, Jesus reiterated that the Spirit is "from the Father" and that the Spirit "goes out from the Father." Why does Jesus invest so much effort telling us that God is the origin of the Spirit?

Jesus wants us to understand how special it is to get the Spirit. Indeed, we need to reflect more deeply on how special the Spirit is! You'll note that the wording Jesus employs here is very similar to John's Prologue (John 1:1-3), which stresses that Jesus is very

special. Here, in similar fashion, we come to grips with the fact that the Spirit has also been *with* the Father.

Being with the Father is what makes both Jesus and the Spirit special! It's that simple. Both Jesus and the Spirit are to be appreciated, loved, and cherished for one fundamental reason: their closeness to the One God.

**g.** The Spirit only says what Jesus wants him to say.

We touched on this issue above when we cited John 14:25-26 (in point e). That passage proves that the Spirit serves Jesus; but let's be specific: How exactly does the Spirit serve Jesus? By reminding us of Jesus' teachings.

- ... the Helper, the Holy Spirit... will teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all things that I [Jesus] said to you (John 14:26; NKJV).

The Spirit does not speak on his own, but speaks only what he hears from Jesus. He is the supreme Teacher of truth because the Spirit guides us into *all* the truth (John 16:13)—with *all* meaning that the Spirit will remind us of everything Jesus taught us—and that's a lot according to the Apostle John:

- Jesus did many other things as well. If every one of them were written down, I suppose that even the whole World would not have room for the books that would be written (John 21:25).

Since wisdom is knowing how to live, not just what to think, the Spirit reveals the answer to the famous question: "What would Jesus do?" Jesus did, after all, taught mostly by the things he did,

and not just by the things he said. The wisdom we gain by knowing how to live like Jesus comes from the Spirit. He shows us how to act in an infinite variety of circumstances with a variety of people: family, the Church, neighbors, coworkers, peers, colleagues, authorities, subordinates, friends, and even enemies!

The Spirit is obedient and faithful to Jesus, his immediate authority. He tells us what is to come, revealing the future. Of all the topics covered in the Bible (Creation, the history of mankind, psalms, wisdom, the life of Jesus), most students of the Bible agree that the prophecies of the future are the most challenging to understand. For example, the prophecies of the Last Times in Daniel 9 or in Revelation are difficult for most people. The Spirit wants to reveal them to us.

The Spirit gets his information from Jesus. That means that the Spirit does *not* get his information from himself. Now, certainly for the 33 years while Jesus was in the flesh, God was the Spirit's source of information because Jesus was not informing the Spirit at that time. However, the Spirit's current source of information is Jesus.

Why the change? Certainly, it's not because God can't instruct the Spirit. Rather, it's because that's the way God wants it! That's God's protocol, and the Spirit submits to God's will in everything.

When in the army you have a general, a coronel, and a major—the general does not give orders to the major. It's not the way the army works. Although a general could give orders to anyone, he doesn't. He wields authority through the chain of command. Similarly, God has established a chain of command. In it, he has authorized Jesus as his “coronel” over *all*—even over the Spirit.

Think of it this way: The Spirit glorifies Jesus the same way a substitute teacher honors the teacher he is replacing. That is, a good substitute will follow the lesson plan the tenured teacher has left him. Jesus has a lesson plan for the Holy Spirit, and the Spirit follows it “to a t.” The passage below is a charming statement about how the Spirit is the best substitute teacher:

- I [Jesus] have much more to say to you, more than you can now bear. But when he, the Spirit of Truth, comes, he will guide you into all the Truth.

He will not speak on his own; he will speak only what he hears, and he will tell you what is yet to come. He will glorify me [Jesus] because it is from me that he will receive what he will make known to you (John 16:12-14).

This passage has a lot of substance. It’s profound. As we conclude our study of it, let’s mention two key things it reveals to us:

1. The Spirit will specialize in eschatology, the study of the Last Times. As Jesus said, the Spirit will tell us “what is yet to come.” That means that he’ll open our minds to the Book of Revelation, Ezekiel, Zachariah, and Daniel in particular.
2. The Spirit’s purpose in teaching us is not just to teach us. He doesn’t teach for the sake of teaching. The Spirit teaches for the sake of Christ. He teaches to glorify Jesus. He teaches in such a way that we are motivated to give honor and glory to Jesus, who we are supposed recognize as the source of the Spirit’s revelations—but that’s something that practically no Christians ever recognize. How tragic! But that’s precisely what the *because* means in the verse above! The Spirit will

glorify Jesus *because* the Spirit gets his teachings from Jesus!

- He will glorify me [Jesus] because it is from me that he will receive what he will make known to you (John 16:14).

**h.** The Holy Spirit is our second defense attorney, after Jesus.

You'll see in the next passage that the Spirit is called *another* (a word which in Greek means "of the same kind") Advocate.

- ... I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Advocate [another *Helper*], in order that he may be with you for the Age<sup>63</sup>—the Spirit of Truth, whom the world is not able to receive, because it does not see him or

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63 The NIV uses "forever" here; however, the original Greek *aion* is best translated "for the Age." Strong's definition of *aion* is as follows:

- ... properly, an age; by extension, perpetuity... a Messianic period (present or future) -- age, course, eternal, (for) ever(-more) ...

You must decide for yourself whether Jesus was stating that the Holy Spirit would be with the apostles and us for *this* Age (which would be the simplest understanding of the word *aion*), or whether Jesus was telling the apostles that the Holy Spirit would be with them *forever*.

The key is to know the context. Was Jesus' topic the current Age—the Times of the Gentiles (Luke 21:24 culminating in the Gentiles "trampling" Jerusalem [Revelation 11:1-2]) when the "Fullness of the Gentiles" (Romans 11:25) takes place—, or was he talking about Eternity?

In sum, you need to decide whether Jesus was saying that it will be a consolation:

- for us to have the Holy Spirit with us forever, or
- for us to have someone to replace Jesus until he returns.

know him. You know him, because he resides with you and will be in you (John 14:16-17; LEB).

In English, we have one word *another*—but it can have two meanings. You can say “I have *another* child, different from Joey,” and then you can say “It’s *another* year of marriage, just like the last,” using the same word with two meaning. However, the Greek language has two different word for *another*. Those are translated into English as “of a *different* kind” [Greek *allos*] or “of the same kind” [Greek *heteros*].

In this particular verse, God inspired the word *allos* which indicates that the Spirit is “of the *same* kind” as Jesus. So, good preachers must insist that the Spirit is the *same kind* of helper Jesus is. God is saying with *allos* that the Spirit helps us the same way Jesus helps us. So, how does Jesus help us? In this context, we’re stressing that Jesus stands beside us as a defense attorney (DA) stands beside his client, the defendant.

The Spirit is our Second DA. But why do we need two? Well, Jesus acts as our lawyer before the Father in Heaven, while the Holy

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According to the context of John 14, option b is clearly the Jesus’ intent. That also means that the best translation would be the most literal of the two, the translation that uses *for the Age* in verse 16. Observe the congruency and flow of the passage when we use *for the Age* in verse 16:

- ... if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come back and take you to be with me that you also may be where I am... [the Father] will give you Another Advocate to help you and be with you for the Age—the Spirit of Truth...
- I will not leave you as orphans; I will come to you. Before long, the world will not see me anymore, but you will see me... I am going away and I am coming back to you (John 14:3, 16, 18-19, 28; the NIV with our updated v. 16).



Spirit is our lawyer here with us on Earth. The word *advocate* in Greek is *paracletos*, meaning “one who stands by us.” How does the Spirit stand by us on Earth? When we pray, the Spirit reforms our prayers into ones that will be acceptable to God much the same way an editor would make a writer’s text worthy for publication.

- ... by him [the Spirit] we cry, “Abba, Father.” The Spirit himself testifies with our spirit that we are God’s children... In the same way the Spirit also joins to help in our weakness, because we do not know what to pray for as we should, but the Spirit Himself intercedes for us with unspoken groanings (Romans 8:15-16, 26).

Most people overlook the flow of thought in Romans 8, but it’s about all the wonderful things the Spirit does to help us in prayer. Because the Spirit intercedes for us, we feel assured that we are children of God. In other words, we get confident that God really will hear us. This is the effect of the Spirit who stands with us in our struggles in prayer.



## 5. Could you state seven things the Spirit does?

We get to know the Spirit like we get to know anybody. How would you get to know your boss, your neighbor, or your congressman? How do you get to know friend, a student, or a teacher? You get to know them through careful observation of their actions and words. With that model in mind, we'll get to know the Spirit through biblical examples of his actions and words.

But first, let's consider who the Spirit knows. We want to know the Spirit, but who does he know? He knows none other than the One God—and he knows him very well! In 1 Corinthians 2, a chapter all about wisdom, Paul explains how believers have a special wisdom inspired by the Holy Spirit. That's when Paul adds a precious insight into who the Spirit is.

- For the Spirit searches all things, even the depths of God. For who among men knows the things of a man, except the spirit of the man that is in him? Thus also [in the *same way*] no one knows the things of God except the Spirit of God (1 Corinthians 2:10b-11; LEB).

We need to earnestly analyze this passage because it gives us a remarkable definition of the Spirit of God. The concept is this: Just as a man's spirit knows the depths of a man, the Spirit of God knows the deep things of God. Let's interpret this very carefully. It means that—in *the sense* of intimate knowledge—as your spirit is to you, so is God's Spirit to him!<sup>64</sup> In other words, nobody knows God better than the Spirit!

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64 Now, note that the comparison breaks down in the sense that your spirit *is* the real you. It's your essence, your personality, your heart. Indeed, your spirit is the deepest part of your being. If you die, your soul and spirit live on, while the body perishes.

What are the kinds of things the Spirit knows about God, then? For one, he knows God’s plans for the future. He also knows God’s plans for your future. That’s exactly what “the Spirit searches all things, even the depths of God” covers. If you’ve got that, then now let’s put that truth in context: You’ll recall that Jesus is also very close to God. In John 1:18 it says:

- No one has ever seen God—but the One and Only Son, who is himself God and is in closest relationship<sup>65</sup> with the Father, has made him known.

Just by virtue of the fact that Jesus is God’s “Only Begotten Son” makes Jesus an intimate companion of the Father because a son

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Paul is far from saying that the Spirit is “the real God” or God’s essence. It would be a radical departure from sound doctrine to draw that conclusion. We don’t ever know of any Christian sects that would even go so far as to say such a thing—but if there were such a sect, we could easily prove their theory false by quoting Isaiah 40:13, which speaks of God’s spirit as his own spirit—and not the Holy Spirit.

- Who has measured up [weighed, directed, estimated] the spirit of Yahweh, or informed him [Yahweh] as his counselor? With whom has he [Yahweh] consulted, that he enlightened him and taught him the path of justice, and taught him knowledge, and made the way of understanding known to him? (Isaiah 40:13-14; LEB—taken from the context of 40:10-26 which is all about how great God the Father is)

Let’s not miss the point of the passage under scrutiny: “the Spirit searches all things, even the depths of God” (1 Corinthians 2:10; LEB). Paul is addressing what it means to have a *knowledge* of God. With that at his theme, he’s expounding by telling us that the Spirit knows God better than anyone knows God.

65 This expression “in closest relationship to the Father” has alternatively been translated as “is near to the Father’s heart” (NLT) and is most commonly translated as “in the bosom of the Father” (NASB, ESV, KJV). It does not say “in the *one single* closest relationship”—in which case it would be highlighting Jesus’ unique relationship to God.

knows his father. But is Jesus closer to God than the Holy Spirit? That's a great question.

Jesus is closer, but since the Spirit knows God the way your spirit knows you, the Spirit knows God better. But here's the caveat: While the Spirit knows God better, he doesn't have the father-son relationship Jesus has with God!<sup>66</sup>

As evidence of the fact that Jesus doesn't know everything about God, consider how Jesus does not know the day or hour God has determined Jesus should return to Earth. Jesus stated:

- ... about that day or hour [of Christ's coming] no one<sup>67</sup> knows, not even the angels in Heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father... (Matthew 24:36)

So, there's something Jesus doesn't know about God's plans. Is the Spirit informed about the day or hour or Christ's return? How do we harmonize this passage with one that tells us that the Spirit searches "all things, even the depths of God" (1 Corinthians 2:10)? Could it be that the Spirit searches everything in God's heart, including the date God has scheduled for Christ's return, but his search hasn't produced results? The Father seems to want to keep the details of the Last Times to Himself. The fact that the

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66 If you're saddened (as we are) by all the God-Jesus confusion among Evangelicals, and how that demonstrates their cluelessness as to who is who, you'll also feel sad about the confusion that Evangelicals have with the Holy Spirit and God. Since the difference between the two is even more difficult to discern than the difference between God and Jesus, it's no surprise that Evangelicals are just as incapable of discerning between God and the Spirit as they are between God and Jesus.

67 Jesus, although he only mentions humans and angels, must also be including the Holy Spirit among those who do not know the day or hour of his coming because he qualifies his teaching with "only the Father in Heaven."

Bible says that the Spirit searches all things, doesn't mean that God answers all of the Spirit's questions. There's no Bible verse that, speaking of Jesus or the Spirit, states: "They know absolutely everything in the mind of God."

## The Top Seven

Do you really think you know the Holy Spirit? Probably not as well as you could. We propose that the Holy Spirit has done more things than you have ever imagined! Here are seven things the Spirit has done which few people take time to reflect upon:

1. The Spirit has spoken audibly [people could hear his voice] at least seven times in the Bible record.
  - The Spirit told Philip, 'Go to that chariot and stay near it' (Acts 8:29).
  - ... the Spirit said to him, 'Simon [Peter], three men are looking for you. So get up and go downstairs. Do not hesitate to go with them, for I have sent them' (Acts 10:19).
  - ... three men who had been sent to me from Caesarea stopped at the house where I [Peter] was staying. The Spirit told me to have no hesitation about going with them (Acts 11:11-12).
  - While they were worshipping the Lord and fasting, the Holy Spirit said, 'Set apart for me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them' (Acts 13:2).
  - The Spirit and the Bride [the Church] say, 'Come!' (Revelation 22:17)

- Then I heard a voice from Heaven say, ‘Write this: Blessed are the Dead who die in the Lord from now on.’ ‘Yes,’ says the Spirit, ‘they will rest from their labor, for their deeds will follow them’ (Revelation 14:13).
- I heard the voice of One speaking. He said to me, “Son of man, stand up on your feet and I will speak to you.” As he spoke, the Spirit came into me and raised me to my feet, and I heard him speaking to me. He said: “Son of man, I am sending you to the Israelites... [and up to v. 8, Ezekiel hears the voice of the Spirit *inside* him] (Ezekiel 1:28b-2:3)

## 2. He warns us.

- ... [Paul said] ‘in every city the Holy Spirit warns me that prison and hardships are facing me’ (Acts 20:23).
- Whoever has ears, let them hear what the Spirit says to the churches (repeated an amazing 7 times in Revelation 2:7, 11, 17, 29; 3:6, 13, 22).

## 3. The Holy Spirit send apostles, and even Jesus who is called an “Apostle” (Hebrews 3:1).

- The two of them [Paul and Barnabas], sent on their way by the Holy Spirit, went down to Seleucia... (Acts 13:4, cf. v. 2)
- At once the Spirit sent him out into the wilderness, and he was in the wilderness forty days, being tempted by Satan... (Mark 1:12-13)<sup>68</sup>

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68 It’s worth noting that there was a time in which the Spirit led Jesus, and

4. He forbids us from going to certain places, actually keeping us from preaching.

- Paul and his companions traveled throughout the region of Phrygia and Galatia, having been kept by the Holy Spirit from preaching the Word in the province of Asia. When they came to the border of Mysia, they tried to enter Bithynia, but the Spirit of Jesus would not allow them to (Acts 16:6-7).

5. The Spirit actually appoints men to be pastors. He chooses who will lead in the Church.

- Be on guard for yourselves and for all the flock among which the Holy Spirit has appointed you as overseers (Acts 20:28; LEB).

6. He picks people up, and physically transports them to other places. For example, he snatched Philip the deacon up and whisked him to a different place.<sup>69</sup>

- When they [Philip and the eunuch] came up out of the water, the Spirit of the Lord snatched Philip away;<sup>70</sup> and

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not vice-versa! Right now, of course, the Spirit does what Jesus tells him to do, but it was the opposite when Jesus was in the flesh.

69 The Holy Spirit behaves very much like an angel. In Ezekiel, for example, he snatches up the prophet no less than five times (Ezekiel 3:12, 14-15; 8:3; 11:1; 43:4)! Jesus tells us that the angels also snatch believers up:



- ...[Jesus] will send his angels and gather his elect from the four winds, from the ends of the Earth... (Mark 13:27).

70 If this is news to you, it shouldn't be. OT believers also knew that the Holy Spirit was capable of snatching people up. That's why the prophets who knew about Elijah's rapture to Heaven told Elisha:

the eunuch no longer saw him, but went on his way rejoicing. But Philip found himself at Azotus (Acts 8:39-40; NASB).

- ... the Spirit came into me and raised me to my feet... (Ezekiel 2:2)

7. The Holy Spirit performed the greatest miracle of all time when he got a virgin pregnant.<sup>71</sup>

- The Holy Spirit will come on you [Mary], and the Power of the Most High will overshadow you... (Luke 1:35)

It's important to understand that the Spirit got Mary pregnant in an absolutely pure manner. Be sure that there was absolutely no physical contact between the Holy Spirit and Mary. How can we be certain that this miracle involved no sexual contact? It's easy: The Scriptures state that '... the virgin shall be with child.' What does

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- We your servants have fifty able men. Let them go and look for your master [Elijah]. Perhaps the Spirit of the LORD has picked him up and set him down on some mountain or in some valley' (2 Kings 2:16).

Was that a special revelation to the prophets, or was it common knowledge? I submit that in Elijah's day a person didn't have to be a prophet to understand the way the Spirit worked. A believer with a secular job, Ahab's steward Obadiah, also knew what the Holy Spirit was capable of doing. He was worried that if he told Ahab where Elijah was, that when Ahab arrived at the location, that the Holy Spirit would already have taken Elijah away!

- ... it will happen that I will go from you... the Spirit of Yahweh will carry you up to where I do not know (1 Kings 18:12; LEB).

<sup>71</sup> The two expressions *come upon* and *overshadow* mean one thing: Getting close to someone but not touching them. Together, the two expressions constitute synonymous Hebrew parallelism. If you are going to interpret the Bible well, you must understand how parallelism works. In this case, the two expressions reinforce one another, allowing us to get a clear picture of what happened for the Spirit to get Mary pregnant.



that indicate, but that Mary was a *virgin* when she got pregnant? In addition, the Scriptures tell us that Mary *remained* a virgin until Jesus was born.

- Now all this took place to fulfill what was spoken by the Lord through the prophet: ‘Behold, the virgin shall be with child and shall bear a son...’ [Joseph] took Mary as his wife, but kept her a virgin until she gave birth... (Matthew 1:22-25; NASB)

*Virgin* means ‘untouched.’ There’s the evidence that the Holy Spirit did not touch Mary. He performed the miracle, but it involved no physical contact whatsoever.

The following Scriptures use the expressions “*through... from... by... and of the Holy Spirit*” with reference to Mary’s pregnancy. These four prepositions make one thing clear: The Spirit was *instrumental* in getting Mary pregnant. He performed the miracle in the same way that Jesus, the apostles, or an anointed Christian today might perform one of God’s miracles—by being a conduit of God’s power.

- ... she was found to be pregnant through the Holy Spirit (Matthew 1:18).
- ... what is conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit (Matthew 1:20).
- ... when his mother Mary had been betrothed to Joseph, before they came together she was found to be with child by the Holy Spirit... an angel of the Lord appeared to him

[Joseph] in a dream, saying, ‘Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary as your wife; for the child who has been conceived in her is of the Holy Spirit...’ (Matthew 1:18, 20)

With that, we’ve examined seven things the Spirit has done. All but the last one he did independent from any human participation. It’s probably surprising for you to see how the Spirit works independently. To this day, much of his independent labors go unnoticed. Since his activity is greatly ignored, it’s incumbent upon us to present many examples. Here are more:

8. The Spirit investigates the greatest issues by interviewing God. During his sessions with the Almighty, the Holy Spirit probes<sup>72</sup>

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72 How does this “probing” actually take place? It’s not the Spirit and God sharing a telepathic connection. They interact just like people interact, by speaking to one another. The Spirit has interviews with the Father in which he questions the Father face-to-face. During these interviews, he delves deep into God’s thoughts. And God has very deep thoughts!

- For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways... As the heavens are higher than the Earth, so are my ways higher than your ways and my thoughts than your thoughts (Isaiah 55:8-9).

Can you imagine what those sessions are like? Imagine the most famous and highly-reputed journalist in the world interviewing the most righteous and powerful world leader. Who wouldn’t tune in?

Interviews between the Holy Spirit and God should not be difficult for you to picture in your mind because Jesus has facetime with God too. If you can picture Jesus’ interceding for us with God, you should be able to picture the Spirit doing something similar.

- Jesus... who was raised to life—is at the right hand of God and is also interceding for us (Romans 8:34).

into God's deep thoughts.<sup>73</sup>

- The Spirit searches all things, even the deep things of God. For who among men knows the thoughts of a man except the man's spirit within him? In the same way no one knows the thoughts of God except the Spirit of God (1 Corinthians 2:11).



## 9. The Spirit has facetime with Jesus—but how does it work? First, the Spirit listens closely. The Lord Jesus tells the Spirit

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- [Jesus]... is able to save completely those who come to God through him, because he always lives to intercede for them (Hebrews 7:25).
  - Christ did not enter a sanctuary made with human hands that was only a copy of the true one; he entered Heaven itself, now to appear for us in God's presence (Hebrews 9:24).

73 God is so marvelous that this is a dialogue. That is, God interviews the Spirit too. Since the Spirit has his own thoughts, God respectfully asks the Spirit questions, and gets to know what's on the Spirit's mind!

- ... he who searches our hearts [God] knows the mind of the Spirit... (Romans 8:27)

With his mind, the Spirit thinks just as any human being thinks. He processes thoughts, just better than humans. He is, after all, greater than any man but One. If we have our own thoughts, he has his own thoughts as well. He has good, wholesome, intelligent thoughts—focused on God's will.

Now, get this: Our great weakness in prayer is that we don't know what to ask for. Since the Spirit does know what to ask God for, he helps us. He intercedes for us with "wordless groans" which he mixes in with our prayers. The meaning of those deep groanings has its origin in the mind of the Spirit—and the meaning agrees with the will of God.

- ... the Spirit helps us in our weakness. We do not know what we ought to pray for, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us through wordless groans. And he who searches our hearts [God] knows the mind of the Spirit, because the Spirit intercedes for God's people in accordance with the will of God (Romans 8:26-27).

what he wants us to know. Then the Spirit relays Jesus' words to us. The Spirit doesn't say one word on his own—he only speaks what he hears.<sup>74</sup> Then the Spirit leads us through a learning process which only ends when we have 100% of the truth.

- But when he, the Spirit of Truth, comes, he will guide you into all truth. He will not speak on his own; he will speak only what he hears, and he will tell you what is yet to come... it is from me that he will receive what he will make known to you... the Spirit will receive from me what he will make known to you (John 16:13-15).

Why are so many Christians incapable of imagining this process? It's the brainwashing of Trinitarianism which won't allow Christians to see the Holy Spirit as a spirit!

10. He teaches us all things, including what to say. He reminds us of everything Jesus told us and gives us wisdom. You say: "How does he remind us of things? Does he speak to our

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74 This kind of language shouldn't sound strange to you. Jesus submitted to God's authority, so why shouldn't the Spirit submit to Jesus' authority? Remember: Jesus only said what his God told him to say. Jesus only did what his God told him to do! In line with the passage we're looking at above, Jesus said the following:

- My teaching is not my own. It comes from the One who sent me. Anyone who chooses to do the will of God will find out whether my teaching comes from God or whether I speak on my own (John 7:16-17).
- ... the Son can do nothing by himself; he can do only what he sees his Father doing, because whatever the Father does the Son also does (John 15:19).
- For I did not speak on my own, but the Father who sent me commanded me to say all that I have spoken (John 12:45).

minds?” Answer: If the Spirit can live within your spirit and revive it, it’s a small thing for him to put an idea into your brain. Your spirit is deeper than your mind, and he can transform your spirit! Would it then be difficult for the Spirit to fill your mind with words and wisdom? No.

- When you are brought before synagogues, rulers and authorities, do not worry about how you will defend yourselves or what you will say, for the Holy Spirit will teach you at that time what you should say (Luke 12:11-12).
- But the Counselor, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you all things and will remind you of everything I have said to you (John 14:26).
- ... they could not stand up against the wisdom the Spirit gave him [Stephen] as he spoke (Acts 6:10).

11. The Holy Spirit shows us the proper interpretation of the Bible.<sup>75</sup>

- The Holy Spirit was showing by this [the layout of the Temple] that the way into the Most Holy Place had not yet been disclosed... (Hebrews 9:8)

12. He reveals great truths to us. For example, the Holy Spirit revealed to God’s prophets and apostles the fact that Gentiles get the Kingdom along with the Jews. Have you been made

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75 How do you know that what you have learned you learned from the Holy Spirit? It’s easy. If you know something about God, and no human preacher, pastor, theologian, rabbi, or priest has taught it to you, then you’ve received a revelation from God. It must be from God if it has no human origin. If it matches up with what the Bible says, then it came to you *through* the Holy Spirit, who inspired the Scriptures.

aware of that truth? If you have, it's because the Holy Spirit has revealed information to you that was hidden for many generations.

- ... the mystery of Christ [that through the Gospel the Gentiles are heirs together with Israel]... has now been revealed by the Spirit to God's holy apostles and prophets (Ephesians 3:4-6).

13. The Holy Spirit "bears witness with" us. How does he do that? This is something he does with our spirits, so it happens inside us. It happens on a level deeper than our conscience and deeper than our mind. It's the profound sensation that we are right with God. It's him testifying to the reality that we are children of God. Have you sensed him witnessing together with you?

- The Spirit himself testifies with our spirit that we are God's children (Romans 8:16).
- We are witnesses of these things, and so is the Holy Spirit... (Acts 5:32)

14. Anything you have learned about Jesus which is true, you learned through the Holy Spirit, because he testifies about Jesus. Whether you realized it or not, he revealed Christ to you. Think of how dark your mind was when you did not know Christ. If light has come into your life, it's because the Spirit spoke to you about Christ.

- When the Advocate comes, whom I will send to you from the Father—the Spirit of Truth who goes out from the Father—he will testify about me (John 15:26).


15. The Spirit circumcises human hearts. In other words, he marks a person for God on the inside. He leaves a mark upon our spirit. Who else can alter the spirit of a man? Unfortunately, a demon can. So we have a point of comparison: The change wrought within a person by any spirit (be that the Holy Spirit or an unclean spirit) will transform the person.

- ... a person is a Jew who is one inwardly; and circumcision is circumcision of the heart, by the Spirit... (Romans 2:29)

16. The Spirit pours God's love into our hearts. How does he do such a thing? By revealing how forgiving God is, how generous God is, and how God rewards those who seek him. That's how the Spirit inspires the same kind of love in us!

- God's love has been poured out into our hearts through the Holy Spirit (Romans 5:5).

17. He compels us to do things we otherwise would not have done, like blessing our enemies, being hospitable to a stranger, or traveling to a dangerous place. Do you ever feel like you should do something you don't want to do? It may be the Spirit compelling you. You'll know it is him when what you're doing is not what you or others want, and it requires courage.

- ... Paul was compelled by the Spirit, and testified to the Jews... (Acts 18:5) 
- ... compelled by the Spirit, I am going to Jerusalem (Acts 20:22).

18. The Spirit distributes gifts as he pleases. The following passage proves that the Spirit has his own will. Although he only says what Jesus wants him to say, the Spirit can do whatever he wants to do. The result is that in the Church, “who gets what” is up to the Spirit.

- Now to each one, the manifestation of the Spirit is given for the common good. To one there is given through the Spirit a message of wisdom, to another a message of knowledge by means of the same Spirit, to another faith by the same Spirit, to another gifts of healing by that One Spirit... All these are the work of one and the same Spirit, and he distributes them to each one, just as he determines (1 Corinthians 12:7-11).<sup>76</sup>
- God also testified to it [this salvation] by signs, wonders and various miracles, and by gifts of the Holy Spirit distributed according to his<sup>77</sup> will (Hebrews 2:4).
- There are different kinds of gifts, but the same Spirit distributes them. There are different kinds of service, but the same Lord. There are different kinds of working, but in all of them and in everyone it is the same God at work (1 Corinthians 12:4-6).

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76 Another version of the Bible translates the passage as:

- But one and the same Spirit works all these things, distributing to each one individually just as he wills (1 Corinthians 12:11; NASB).

77 This possessive pronoun *his* could refer either to God or to the Holy Spirit. The grammatical structure allows for either, but since 1 Corinthians 12:11 makes it clear that the Holy Spirit distributes gifts according to his will, we can confidently interpret the pronoun *his* to refer to the Holy Spirit.



The Spirit makes his own decisions and determines what he's going to do. That's good for us because he makes his decisions in love. He doesn't burden us.

- It seemed good to the Holy Spirit and to us not to burden you with anything... (Acts 15:28).

### **Not just a Force**

Let's move on, and identify a very important fact that's been proven by all the verses we've investigated so far: that the Spirit is not just energy. He's not an impersonal force! Electricity is an impersonal force, but the Holy Spirit isn't a zap from God. On the contrary, the Spirit possesses his own force!

You shouldn't call the Spirit "a power" if the Spirit *possesses* power, right? Well, the Spirit has his *own* power. Would you call an angel *lightning* because he produces lightning? Of course not. Would you say that an angel *is* fire simply because he manifests himself in fire? No. With these examples in mind, let's read the following verses:

- ... the angel took the censer, filled it with fire from the altar, and hurled it on the Earth; and there came peals of thunder, rumblings, flashes of lightning... (Revelation 8:5)
- There the Angel of Yahweh appeared to him [Moses] in flames of fire from within a bush (Exodus 3:2).

It's obvious from the Scriptures that angels are not lightning or fire even though the angels of the two passages above *possess* the power of lightning and fire. In the same way, the Holy Spirit

possesses magnificent power. That power belongs to him, and the proof that it belongs to him is the fact that the Spirit distributes power to whom he pleases. You can't pass something to others if it doesn't already belong to you.

- Jesus returned to Galilee in the power of the Spirit... (Luke 4:14)
- ... that you may overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit (Romans 15:13).
- ... by the power of signs and wonders, through the power of the Spirit of God... I have fully proclaimed the Gospel of Christ (Romans 15:19).
- My message and my preaching were not with wise and persuasive words, but with a demonstration of the Spirit's power... (1 Corinthians 2:4-5)

In conclusion, the Spirit is not *merely* the power of God. You certainly can say that about him, but you should say much more. Don't waste your time telling Jehovah's Witnesses that the Spirit is *not* the Power of God—he *is* the Power of God! The angel Gabriel used that name for him once, and archangels don't lie.

- The Holy Spirit will come on you, and the Power of the Most High will overshadow you (Luke 1:35).<sup>78</sup>

Could someone tell you that a special forces Green Beret is “the *power* of the U.S. Army”? Yes, and the Green Beret wouldn't feel

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<sup>78</sup> Having any difficulties interpreting this passage? This hint will help: It's based on Hebrew synonymous parallelism. That is, it's based on two similar concepts placed right next to each other.

insulted to hear those words. He wouldn't say that we were dehumanizing him if we made such a statement.

Wouldn't we say that Cristiano Ronaldo was the *power* of the Portuguese national soccer team in 2018? Ronaldo wouldn't mind if we said so. Likewise, we can say that the Holy Spirit is "the Power of God," and we can say it without offending the Holy Spirit. We can say it without ceasing to believe that the Spirit is a spirit with his own will, feelings, and personality.

Jesus spoke of a power which came out of him but was not his power. It was the Holy Spirit. That power healed a woman from bleeding. It was the anointing of the Holy Spirit, and we know that because someone else reacted to the woman's faith—not Jesus! The Lord Jesus was unaware of the lady's faith, so it wasn't Jesus who chose to heal the lady. It was the Spirit.

- As Jesus was on his way, the crowds almost crushed him. And a woman was there who had been subject to bleeding for twelve years, but no one could heal her. She came up behind him and touched the edge of his cloak, and immediately her bleeding stopped.

'Who touched me?' Jesus asked. When they all denied it, Peter said, 'Master, the people are crowding and pressing against you.' But Jesus said, 'Someone touched me; I know that power has gone out from me.'

Then the woman, seeing that she could not go unnoticed, came trembling and fell at his feet. In the presence of all the people, she told why she had touched him and how she had been instantly healed. Then he said to her, 'Daughter, your faith has healed you. Go in peace' (Luke 8:42-48).

Let's think about this: How could Jesus have healed someone without willing it himself? There's only one answer: Someone *else* willed it—and that *someone* was the Spirit. It's apparent that the Spirit took the initiative to heal the woman. Power went out from Jesus, and that power was the anointing of the Spirit. As we've already seen, the Spirit is even called “the Power” (Luke 1:35) or “the Anointing” (1 John 2:20, 27) in the Bible.

To reinforce the truth that Jesus healed others by means of the Holy Spirit, later in the same Gospel Jesus affirmed again that he performed his miracles by “the Finger of God.” He said this while he was casting out demons by the Holy Spirit.

- ... if I drive out demons by the Finger of God, then the Kingdom of God has come upon you. When a strong man, fully armed, guards his own house, his possessions are safe. But when Someone Stronger attacks and overpowers him, he takes away the armor in which the man trusted and divides up his plunder (Luke 11:20-22).

If you have any doubts about whether the expression “Finger of God” here means the Holy Spirit, you need go no further than the parallel passage in Matthew 12:28, where it reads:

- ... if it is by the Spirit of God that I drive out demons, then the Kingdom of God has come upon you.

Not only do we gather from this passage that Jesus performed his miracles by the Holy Spirit, but we gather that the Holy Spirit is the “Someone Stronger” of the parable. The Devil is the “strong man” while the Spirit is the “Someone Stronger.” Jesus' unmistakable point is that the Spirit is more powerful than the Devil. The Devil sends demons to subjugate people, but the Spirit has the au-

thority to bind demons (see Matthew 12:29), deliver people from demon possession, and to take control of a person's body.<sup>79</sup>

## The Spirit Speaks Through Us

Let's continue to reflect upon the things the Spirit *does*. We'll look particularly at some ways he communicates *through* us. We already saw the six Bible passages that show him speaking audibly, but consider further how the Holy Spirit's communication ministry works. He speaks through us!

19. The Spirit enables us to speak in foreign languages. He gives us the ability with the aim that we'll share the Gospel with people from other ethnic groups. Through the Spirit, we can undo the division God established in Babel. Through the Spirit we can build unity with people from other countries. The Spirit undoes the effect of Babel!

- All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues as the Spirit enabled them... (Acts 2:4)

20. The Holy Spirit speaks—and he speaks *clearly*—through the authors of the Bible.

- The Holy Spirit also testifies to us about this. First he says: [quoting the Bible] 'This is the covenant...' Then he adds: 'Their sins and lawless acts...' (Hebrews 10:15-17)

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79 We should note here that anyone who says that it's not the Holy Spirit who performs such deliverance, but the Devil—is more than irrational. He is guilty of a grievous sin (Matthew 12:31-32).

- The Spirit clearly says that in Later Times some will abandon the faith (1 Timothy 4:1).
- So, as the Holy Spirit says: [quoting the Bible] ‘Today, if you hear his voice, do not harden your hearts...’ (Hebrews 3:7-8)
- ... the Scripture had to be fulfilled in which the Holy Spirit spoke long ago through David... (Acts 1:16)
- The Holy Spirit spoke the truth to your ancestors when he said through Isaiah the prophet: “Go to this people and say, ‘You will be ever hearing but never understanding...’” (Acts 28:25-26)
- ... David, speaking by the Spirit, calls him [the Messiah] ‘Lord’? For he says, “The Lord said to my Lord: ‘Sit at my right hand...’” (Matthew 22:43-44; cf. Mark 12:36)
- You [God] spoke by the Holy Spirit through the mouth of your servant, our father David... (Acts 4:25).

21. The Spirit testifies in agreement with “the water and the blood” that Jesus came to us. Jesus has come to us through the Spirit, the water, and the blood. Consider baptism as the water, and the cup of the Lord’s Supper as the blood, of which Jesus said:

- This cup is the New Covenant in my blood, which is poured out for you (Luke 22:20).

Since Jesus was presented to us as the Messiah by means of three baptisms—in water, in the Spirit, and in blood—it’s

fitting that the Spirit testify that we are Christians by baptizing us along with our water baptism and along with our participation in the Lord's Supper. These three testimonies say the same thing: "Jesus has come into my life."

- This is the One who came by water and blood—Jesus Christ. He did not come by water only, but by water and blood. And it is the Spirit who testifies, because the Spirit is the Truth. For there are three that testify: the Spirit, the water and the blood; and the three are in agreement (1 John 5:6-8).<sup>80</sup>

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80 This passage (which in no early versions of the Bible contained the v. 7 Trinitarian statement) states that the Spirit *testifies*—but to what does he testify? That we are children of God. If you have the water, the blood, and the Spirit, you have a complete testimony that you are a child of God.

The Spirit is called *the Truth* because he states the truth [*testifies*] to the reality of your saving faith. He does that especially by granting the baptism of the Holy Spirit [with one or more spiritual gifts], but he also can testify to your saving faith through a prophecy or some other revelation. He tells us that we belong to God (in the same way your baptismal water and your drinking of the blood of Christ "testify" to you belonging to God).

John goes on to explain what the testimony of the Spirit is about. It is based upon "the testimony of God." The Father anointed Jesus and resurrected Jesus as a testimony to the World that Jesus is his Son. If you have that testimony in you, in other words, if you have *demonstrated* faith in what God has said about Jesus being his Son by actually being baptized and partaking in the Lord's Supper, these acts of faith prove that you have received eternal life from the Father.

- ... the testimony of God is this, that he [God] has testified concerning his Son. The one who believes in the Son of God has the testimony in himself... the testimony is this, that God has given us eternal life, and this life is in his Son (1 John 5:9-10, 11; NASB).

Show faith in Jesus as God's Son, and the Holy Spirit will certify you as a child of God. He will say that you are a son of God too! If you believe in God's good testimony about Jesus, then the Spirit will give a good testimony about you too! That's why it says that the testimony is: "God has given us eternal life."

22. The Spirit still speaks through God's prophets in the Church.

- ... a [Christian] prophet named Agabus... took Paul's belt, tied his own hands and feet with it and said, "The Holy Spirit says, 'In this way the Jewish leaders in Jerusalem will bind the owner of this belt...'" (Acts 21:10)
- ... Agabus [a prophet from the church in Jerusalem] stood up and through the Spirit predicted that a severe famine would spread... (Acts 11:27-28)

23. The Spirit gives us words to speak. When we speak his words, it's actually not us speaking, but the Holy Spirit speaking through us. He speaks through us particularly when we are "on the spot" with our enemies. At those times, Jesus urges us not to worry about preparing speeches but to speak impromptu. One of the most difficult debating skills politicians work to develop is ours for free!

- ... when they arrest you, do not worry about what to say or how to say it. At that time you will be given what to say, for it will not be you speaking, but the Spirit of your Father speaking through you (Matthew 10:19-20).
- Whenever you are arrested and brought to trial, do not worry beforehand about what to say. Just say whatever is given you at the time, for it is not you speaking, but the Holy Spirit (Mark 13:11).

24. The Spirit doesn't only speak through prophets, he also speaks through Christians who don't happen to be prophets. That is, he doesn't only speak through those who have a prophetic ministry.



- Through the Spirit they [disciples in Tyre] urged Paul not to go on to Jerusalem... (Acts 21:4).

25. The Spirit predicts future events through prophets. He was *in* the prophets, and pointed to future events such as Christ's Crucifixion and the coming Kingdom. Those prophets carefully and diligently searched the Scriptures to try to figure out when those events would occur.

- Concerning this salvation, the prophets, who spoke of the grace that was to come to you, searched intently and with the greatest care, trying to find out the time and circumstances to which the Spirit of Christ in them was pointing when he predicted the sufferings of the Messiah and the glories that would follow (1 Peter 1:10-11).

26. Servants of God preach the Gospel to us *by* the Holy Spirit.


Fake pastors preach another message. They do not preach by the Holy Spirit—they preach by means of their imaginations, their fleshly desires, and their egos. A person who preaches by the Holy Spirit is not sharing his own ideas. He's not speaking for money or for vainglory. A true preacher will share a message that aligns with the Scriptures, avoiding human theologies and popular trends (such as the Prosperity Gospel or the overemphasis on worship music).

- It was revealed to them [the prophets] that they were not serving themselves but you, when they spoke of the things that have now been told you by those who have preached the Gospel to you by the Holy Spirit sent from Heaven (1 Peter 1:12).

## The Spirit Fills Us

The filling of the Spirit has been available since OT times. It did not arrive under the New Covenant. The baptism of the Holy Spirit arrived with the New Covenant, and that's a topic worthy of its own separate book. The fact that the Holy Spirit fills us is another action of the Spirit, which we're placing here at #27 on our list.

To start, let's review some passages which prove that the Spirit filled Old Testament believers:

- ... Yahweh has chosen Bezalel... and he has filled him with the Spirit of God, with wisdom, with understanding, with knowledge and with all kinds of skills (Exodus 35:30-31).
- Joshua son of Nun was filled with the Spirit of Wisdom because Moses had laid his hands on him (Deuteronomy 34:9).
- ... as for me, I am filled with power, with the Spirit of the LORD, and with justice and might (Micah 3:18). 
- ... he [John the Baptist] will be filled with the Holy Spirit even before he is born (Luke 1:15).
- Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit (Luke 1:41).
- His father Zechariah was filled with the Holy Spirit and prophesied (Luke 1:67).

We should expect the Holy Spirit to fill us as Christians. Precisely, the Holy Spirit should be more willing to fill us under the NT than

he would have for believers under the Old. Here are two reasons:

1. God promised that he would “pour out” his Spirit during the Times of the Gentiles. 2. The level of holiness that we are able to attain surpass the level of holiness OT saints could attain.

- ‘In the Last Days,’ God says, ‘I will pour out my Spirit on all people. Your sons and daughters will prophesy, your young men will see visions, your old men will dream dreams. Even on my servants, both men and women, I will pour out my Spirit in those Days, and they will prophesy’ (Acts 2:17-18).

On the second point, that we can obtain a higher level of holiness than OT believers, consider Abraham, who deceived others by saying that Sarah was his sister. Consider Moses, whose anger brought him to murder a man and later prevented him from entering the Promised Land. Then consider Solomon, who not married idol-worshipping women and then followed them into idolatrous worship. Finally, consider David the King, who became the Nation of Israel’s Worship Leader, but who committed adultery, murdered a loyal subject, and lied to cover up his sin.

What did each of these men discover when they sinned? That God will take his Holy Spirit from us when we will not maintain holiness. Hear David’s request to God after he finally confessed his sins:

- Do not cast me from your Presence or take your Holy Spirit from me... (Psalm 51:11)

We observe in the examples of Abraham, Moses, Solomon, and David that they could not keep a clear conscience because they

were not living under the New Covenant. They fell short of the holiness God demands because they didn't have Christ. They needed the Spirit of Holiness to be with them, but he wouldn't remain with them all the time because they didn't have the required holiness.

Where there is no holiness of spirit, there will be no Holy Spirit. The Spirit stays with New Covenant believers *because* we are able to remain holy. You need to understand that the New Covenant is much more effective than the Old to sanctify us. Why? Simply because Jesus is so clearly revealed in the New Covenant. That revelation makes the New Covenant many times more effective than the Old.

Now, back to this important point: You don't need the baptism of the Holy Spirit to be filled with the Holy Spirit. As we saw earlier, people who were never baptized in the Holy Spirit got the filling of the Spirit: Zechariah, Elizabeth, and John the Baptist. These people didn't have the consistency of New Covenant believers like Paul who declared that he was living "with a perfectly good conscience before God" (Acts 23:1), so the filling didn't always remain with them. Just as a cup can be filled, or half-full, or empty, so has it always been with believers in the OT and in the NT.

But the advantage of people who live under the NT is that we follow a man who was filled with the Spirit (Luke 4:1). We belong to Jesus, so that same fullness is ours to claim. We can claim it because the fullness of the Spirit is something Jesus wants to share with us. To us, it's Christ's example, his gift, and even his *command!*

- Be filled with the Spirit (Ephesians 5:18).

## A Contrast: Getting Drunk

What happens when you're drunk? You're filled with liquor. The difference with being drunk on liquor and being filled with the Holy Spirit is that in one case you lose control, and in the other you are controlled. In one case, you become prone to evil, and in the other you become inclined towards righteousness.

- Do not get drunk on wine, which leads to debauchery. Instead, be filled with the Spirit, speaking to one another with psalms, hymns, and songs from the Spirit. Sing and make music from your heart to the Lord, always giving thanks to God the Father for everything (Ephesians 5:18-20).

Fill yourself with the Spirit instead of filling yourself with wine. If you can go to the liquor store, bring a bottle of wine home, lay a glass on the kitchen counter, and fill your cup, then you can also follow practical steps to be filled with the Spirit. Indeed, the passage above relates precisely how we can fill ourselves with the Spirit:

- Speak to one another with psalms, hymns, and songs from the Spirit.
- Sing and make music in our heart to the Lord.
- Always give thanks to God the Father for everything.

There's the formula! Follow it and you'll be filled with the Spirit.

## No Limitations, No Competition

Central to the issue of the fullness of the Spirit is the question: “Does God put any limit on the amount of anointing you can receive?” The answer is an adamant “No.” To the degree that you are open to the Holy Spirit, he will fill you. God places no limitations on the amount of anointing a believer can get. He is not stingy.

- ... God gives the Spirit without limit (John 3:34).

This is a very encouraging and positive truth: We can receive as much anointing as we are willing to seek. For example, any and all of us could get the prophetic anointing. God would love it if we were all prophets.

In addition, although the anointing is transmitted from one person to another, the person who transmits it does not lose anything. In fact, you can ask an anointed person for a double portion of his anointing, and if he lays hands on you, God will give it to you while taking none of it from the anointed person! That’s because, as we just read: “God gives the Spirit without limit” (John 3:34) the true origin of the anointing is the Almighty Himself—our boundless source!

- Elijah said to Elisha, ‘Tell me, what can I do for you before I am taken from you?’ ‘Let me inherit a double portion of your spirit,’ Elisha replied. ‘You have asked a difficult thing,’ Elijah said, ‘yet if you see me when I am taken from you, it will be yours—otherwise, it will not’ (2 Kings 2:9-10).

That's one example. Here's another: A prophet in the Bible who didn't understand this principle lost the Spirit not because God was stingy, but because the prophet himself was sinful.

- Then Zedekiah son of Kenaanah came near and slapped Micaiah on the cheek and said, “When did the Spirit of Yahweh pass from me to speak with you?” (1 Kings 22:24; LEB)

Boy was Zedekiah wrong! He would have done better believing that “God gives the Spirit without limit.” Indeed, if you get the Spirit at the same time someone loses the Spirit, in love you should try to restore that individual. There is no such thing as competition when it comes to obtaining the Spirit. The correct attitude is to lovingly put others before you.

- ... in humility value others above yourselves (Philippians 2:3).

This is exactly what David did with Saul. He got the Spirit at the same time Saul lost the Spirit. David served Saul nonetheless, ministering to him through serene tunes on the harp.

- Samuel took the horn of oil and anointed him [David] in the midst of his brothers. Then the Spirit of Yahweh rushed upon David from that day on... Now the Spirit of Yahweh departed from Saul and an evil spirit from Yahweh tormented him... whenever the evil spirit from God came to Saul, David would take the stringed instrument and play it with his hand. Then it would bring relief for Saul; he would feel better and the evil spirit would depart from him (1 Samuel 16:13-14, 23; LEB).

## Wanting Others to Be Like You

The passage below is a scenesetter. As you read it, you'll get the background on why Joshua ever would have cried out "Stop them!" while men were prophesying under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit. The events you're about to examine took place in the desert after the Israelites' Exodus from Egypt.

- The LORD therefore said to Moses, "Gather for me seventy men from the elders of Israel, whom you know to be the elders of the people and their officers and bring them to the Tent of Meeting, and let them take their stand there with you.

Then I will come down and speak with you there, and I will take of the Spirit who is upon you, and will put him upon them; and they shall bear the burden of the people with you, so that you will not bear it all alone... (Numbers 11:16-17; NASB)

The scandal that ensued when 70 elders of Israel got the Holy Spirit is shocking for those of us who are Pentecostal. An unnamed young man and Joshua were so unhappy with the power of prophesy among Israel's elders that they tried to stop elders from prophesying!

- Moses... brought together seventy of their elders and had them stand around the Tent. Then the LORD came down in the cloud and spoke with him, and he took some of the power of the Spirit that was on him [Moses] and put it on the seventy elders. When the Spirit rested on them, they prophe-sied—but did not do so again.

However, two men, whose names were Eldad and Medad,



had remained in the camp. They were listed among the elders, but did not go out to the Tent. Yet the Spirit also rested on them, and they prophesied in the camp. A young man ran and told Moses, ‘Eldad and Medad are prophesying in the camp.’

Joshua son of Nun, who had been Moses’ aide since youth, spoke up and said, ‘Moses, my lord, stop them!’

But Moses replied, ‘Are you jealous for my sake? I wish that all the LORD’s people were prophets and that the LORD would put his Spirit on them!’ (Numbers 11:24-30)

Moses corrected young Joshua. Joshua thought that the anointing was only supposed to be for Moses, but Moses made it clear that God desires all people to be anointed with power. Any true Christian leader with the anointing of God will desire to pass it on. Do you remember when Paul said that he wished that everyone could be as he was? Do you remember Paul’s exhortation to the Ephesians about how pastors should equip others for the work of the ministry?

- Agrippa replied to Paul, ‘In a short time you will persuade me to become a Christian.’ And Paul said, ‘I would wish to God, that whether in a short or long time, not only you, but also all who hear me this day, might become such as I am, except for these chains’ (Acts 26:28-29; NASB).
- ... he himself [Jesus] gave some as apostles and some as prophets and some as evangelists and some as pastors and teachers for the equipping of the saints, for the work of the ministry(Ephesians 4:11-12; LEB).

## Examples from the New Testament

Jesus was filled with the Spirit after his baptism. It's significant that the Bible only notes his filling at that particular time in his life. Why? We propose two reasons:

a) because Jesus got the filling immediately following his baptism in the Spirit

- Jesus, full of the Holy Spirit, left the Jordan... (Luke 4:1)

b) because Jesus retained the filling of the Holy Spirit the rest of his life.

- The man on whom you see the Spirit come down and remain... (John 1:33)

In other words, there was no need to speak of his filling again, because Jesus never lost it.

The apostles also got filled with the Spirit as a result of their baptism in the Holy Spirit. This happened after three years of walking with Christ, after his Ascension, at Pentecost. Prior to that, they had their ups and downs. After obtaining the baptism of the Spirit, the apostles left all inconsistency aside.

The apostles interpreted the fullness of the Spirit to be the fulfillment of OT prophecy. Specifically, God said through Joel that he would pour out his Spirit upon all people.

- When the day of Pentecost came, they [the apostles and other believers] were all together in one place. Suddenly a sound like the blowing of a violent wind came from Heaven and filled the whole house where they were sitting.

They saw what seemed to be tongues of fire that separated and came to rest on each of them. All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues as the Spirit enabled them (Acts 2:1-4).

- Then Peter stood up with the Eleven, raised his voice and addressed the crowd: "... let me explain this to you; listen carefully to what I say... this is what was spoken by the prophet Joel: 'In the Last Days, God says, I will pour out my Spirit on all people. Your sons and daughters will prophesy, your young men will see visions, your old men will dream dreams. Even on my servants, both men and women, I will pour out my Spirit in those days, and they will prophesy..." (Acts 2:14-18)

That filling of the Spirit stayed with the apostles. For example, after Peter was restored by Jesus to leadership (he had denied Christ three times), he began to boldly declare Jesus as Messiah.

- Peter, filled with the Holy Spirit, said to them: "Rulers and elders of the people! ... know this, you and all the people of Israel: It is by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom you crucified but whom God raised from the Dead, that this man stands before you healed.

Jesus is 'the Stone you builders rejected, which has become the Cornerstone.' Salvation is found in no one else, for there is no other name under Heaven given to mankind by which we must be saved" (Acts 4:8-12).

Even today, any time the Church asks God for boldness to speak, and seeks power from Above, they should pray to get the filling

of the Holy Spirit. When the Spirit fills our hearts, we are able to speak without any fear!

- ‘Now Lord, consider their threats and enable your servants to speak your Word with great boldness...’ After they prayed, the place where they were meeting was shaken. And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and spoke the Word of God boldly (Acts 4:29-31).

When the apostles felt overworked and needed assistants, they asked the Church body to select additional men. Guess what kind of a reputation these men had to have—being full of the Holy Spirit! Only those kinds of men were allowed to minister alongside the Twelve Apostles. That is, the first men to ever receive a ministry from the Twelve Apostles had to be filled with the Spirit. This is one more example of how essential the filling of the Spirit is to the life of the Church.

- ... the Twelve gathered all the disciples together and said, ‘It would not be right for us to neglect the ministry of the Word of God in order to wait on tables.

Brothers and sisters, choose seven men from among you who are known to be full of the Spirit and wisdom. We will turn this responsibility over to them and will give our attention to prayer and the ministry of the Word.’

This proposal pleased the whole group. They chose Stephen, a man full of faith and of the Holy Spirit; also Philip, Procorus, Nicanor, Timon, Parmenas, and Nicolas from Antioch, a convert to Judaism. They presented these men to the apostles, who prayed and laid their hands on them (Acts 6:2-6).

Stephen, was a man “known to be full of the Spirit and wisdom” and “full of faith and of the Holy Spirit.” Like Jesus, he never stopped being full of the Spirit. Even to the moment of his death, the Bible testifies that this was his reputation.

- Stephen, full of the Holy Spirit, looked up to Heaven and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing at the Right Hand of God (Acts 7:55).

All of Early Church leaders got the filling of the Holy Spirit. For example, Paul got filled with the Holy Spirit on the day of his baptism. The first passage gives this detail, missing in the second.

- 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’ (Acts 9:17).
- A man named Ananias came to see me... and said, ‘Brother Saul, receive your sight!’ And at that very moment I was able to see him. Then he said: ‘The God of our ancestors has chosen you to know his will... And now what are you waiting for? Get up, be baptized and wash your sins away, calling on his name’ (Acts 22:12-16).

Barnabas, Paul’s first missionary companion, was yet another man with a reputation for being full of the Holy Spirit. With Barnabas, we can see that “fullness” was not just considered to be an experience. It was (and still is) a condition of certain people in the Church!

- ... they sent Barnabas to Antioch. When he arrived and saw what the grace of God had done, he was glad and encouraged them all to remain true to the Lord with all their hearts. He was a good man, full of the Holy Spirit and faith... (Acts 11:22-24)

Paul continued to have moments in his life when the fullness of the Spirit came in particularly handy, like the time he confronted the sorcerer Bar-Jesus!

- ... they [Paul and Barnabas] met a Jewish sorcerer and false prophet named Bar-Jesus... [who] opposed them and tried to turn the proconsul from the faith. Then Saul, who was also called Paul, filled with the Holy Spirit, looked straight at Elymas and said, ‘You are a child of the Devil...’ (Acts 13:8-10)!

In conclusion, insults, expulsion, persecution, and suffering bring about more of the filling of the Spirit. When trials come, we get closer to God, and we become more spiritual. So, if you’re asking God to give you the filling, be ready for troubles to come your way!

- ... the Jewish leaders incited the God-fearing women of high standing and the leading men of the city. They stirred up persecution against Paul and Barnabas, and expelled them from their region. So they shook the dust off their feet as a warning to them and went to Iconium. And the disciples were filled with joy and with the Holy Spirit (Acts 13:49-52).

If you are able, you need to see these persecutions as a blessing. For it is through them that you get more of the Holy Spirit!

- If you are insulted because of the name of Christ, you are blessed, for the Spirit of Glory and of God rests on you (1 Peter 4:14).

## **Saving Actions of the Holy Spirit**

Tired yet? Being filled was #27. We hope that you'll be content with more examples of things the Holy Spirit does in and with us. The next category of is related to the Spirit's work in salvation.

28. The Spirit convicts unbelievers of three things: sin, righteousness, and judgment. Because it's not humanly possible to soften up the heart of a sinner, God has delegated this job to the Spirit.

- And when he [the Helper] comes, he will convict the World concerning sin, and concerning righteousness, and concerning judgment (John 16:8; LEB).
- ... the disciples... asked, 'Who then can be saved?' Jesus looked at them and said, 'With man this is impossible, but with God all things are possible' (Matthew 19:25-26).

29. He comes with a revelation of the Gospel. He comes to those who by faith listen to the Good News of the Kingdom, like a messenger.

- ... our Gospel came to you not simply with words but also with power, with the Holy Spirit... (1 Thessalonians 1:5)

30. The Holy Spirit washes us, sets us apart, and justifies us!

That's a lot, a complete work of salvation. Although he doesn't

often get credit for it, the Spirit actually saves us. Few pastors will explain it, but the Spirit a) washes us with the Word of God, b) sets us apart by making us Heavenly-minded, and c) justifies us by inspiring faith in us.

- ... you were washed, you were sanctified, you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of our God (1 Corinthians 6:11).

31. We are justified by faith—but not just any faith. It has to be faith in God’s Word. The giver of that gift of faith is the Spirit.

- ... we maintain that a person is justified by faith... we have been justified through faith... (Romans 3:28; 5:1)<sup>81</sup>

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81 You will notice that this famous verse makes no mention of the Holy Spirit, only of faith. But what is faith? A gift from God which takes the shape of its object. Like wine, faith assumes the shape of the vessel into which it is poured. The object of saving faith is nothing less than the Word of God.

- ... faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God (Romans 10:17; NKJV).

So let’s ask ourselves what makes the Bible the Word of God. The answer is simple: The Bible came to us from holy men inspired by God. Those men were holy because they had the Holy Spirit, who proceeds from God. We say that God “breathed” the Scriptures because his Spirit proceeds from him like breath from a man’s mouth.

- All Scripture is God-breathed (2 Timothy 3:16).

How exactly did the Spirit deliver the Scriptures to mankind? What was his mechanism? Did he drop a book from Heaven? Did he give someone special glasses to read magic scrolls? Did he speak to one individual in an unidentified cave somewhere? No. Rather, he spoke to all the prophets throughout the ages, “carrying them along.” As a result, they speak with one voice, the voice of God. As a result, we can compare Scripture to Scripture, and we discover that there are no contradictions. God was consistent throughout the ages, saying the same thing.



- ... to each one [in the Church] the manifestation of the Spirit is given for the common good. To one there is given through the Spirit a message of wisdom... to another faith by the same Spirit... (1 Corinthians 12:7-9)

32. The Spirit actually *saves* us! People won't understand the Spirit's saving work unless they understand that biblical salvation is freedom from the power of sin. The Holy Spirit saves us from sin. For example, after water baptism the Spirit leads us to a new life, setting us apart from our old life of sin.

- ... [God] saved us through the washing of rebirth [water baptism] and renewal by the Holy Spirit... (Titus 3:5-6)
- God chose you... to be saved through the sanctifying work of the Spirit... (2 Thessalonians 2:13).

33. The Spirit sanctifies us, as we just saw in the previous verse.

To *sanctify* means to set apart. Sanctification takes place when we say "no" to sin and the World, but we don't go back to them because the Spirit won't let us. The new life he gives makes it impossible for us to go on sinning.

- ... that the Gentiles might become an offering acceptable to God, sanctified by the Holy Spirit (Romans 15:16).
- No one who is born of God will continue to sin, because


- 
- ... no prophecy of Scripture came about by the prophet's own interpretation of things... but prophets... spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit (2 Peter 1:20-21).

In conclusion, the Holy Spirit has given us the Bible. Because he proceeds from God and "carried along" the authors of the Bible, the Bible has become the Word of God. Since the Bible is the foundation of the Christian faith, without the Holy Spirit, there is no Christian faith.

God's Seed remains in them; they cannot go on sinning, because they have been born of God (1 John 3:9).

34. Our profession of faith in Jesus is inspired by the Spirit. Likewise, if we speak by the Holy Spirit, we'll never speak evil against Jesus.
- ... I want you to be aware that no one who is speaking by God's Spirit can say, "Jesus is cursed," and no one can say, "Jesus is Lord," except by the Holy Spirit (1 Corinthians 12:3).
35. The Spirit produces "fruit" in us. That is, he transforms our character by instilling virtues in us. Although his gifts come instantaneously, the fruit of the Spirit grows gradually within us. We have to invest time cultivating the love, joy, peace, patience, and kindness that come from the Holy Spirit.
- ... the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, forbearance, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control (Galatians 5:22-23).
36. The Spirit gives joy—which is different from *happiness*. Happiness depends on what's *happen*-ing), but joy is the delight you feel in spite of what's happening to you. You feel it because you know that God is working in your difficulties to make you more worthy of the Kingdom. Look, for example, at how Jesus rejoiced when his teaching fell on deaf ears. Then, notice how the Thessalonians received the Word of God with joy in the midst of persecution.
- At that time Jesus, full of joy through the Holy Spirit, said, 'I praise you, Father, Lord of Heaven and Earth, because

you have hidden these things from the wise and learned...’

(Luke 10: 21) 

- You became imitators of us and of the Lord; in spite of severe suffering, you welcomed the message with the joy given by the Holy Spirit (1 Thessalonians 1:6).

37. The Spirit encourages the Church. The effect of such encouragement is often that the Church experiences numerical growth!

- ... the Church throughout Judea, Galilee and Samaria... was strengthened; and encouraged by the Holy Spirit, it grew in numbers... (Acts 9:31)

38. The Spirit leads us. We don’t know where he’ll lead us—it could be anywhere. He might take us across the world or he might lead us to the next room. Many times he takes us where we don’t want to go. He led Jesus straight into temptation!<sup>82</sup>

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82 Just as a reflection: If you’re being led by a denomination, a pastor, or by any kind of group pressure, don’t mistake these for the Holy Spirit. For example, if you give offerings because everybody in your church gives offerings, then you’re being led by peer pressure. Likewise, if you go to certain meetings because your pastor says you have to be there, then you’re not being led by the Holy Spirit anymore.

How many people are led by human religion, and mistake it for the Spirit’s leading? How many people interpret the Bible according to the teachings of men, and not the doctrines of God? This is the truth: The great majority of so called “Christians” are depending on websites, pamphlets, Bible commentaries, study Bibles, and human theology to interpret the Scriptures. If you depend on those things, you’ve ceased to be led by the Spirit.

The Spirit is always working hard to enlighten us with the Truth. Most people have Bible passages that stir their curiosity, but the fear of losing friends and status within their church community causes them to avoid those passages.

- Jesus was led by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the Devil (Matthew 4:1).
- Jesus, full of the Holy Spirit, left the Jordan and was led by the Spirit into the wilderness, where for forty days he was tempted by the Devil (Luke 4:1-2).
- ... those who are led by the Spirit of God are sons of God (Romans 8:14).
- But if you are being led by the Spirit, you are not under the Law (Galatians 5:18).
- Moved by the Spirit, he [the elder Simon, who saw the baby Jesus] went into the Temple courts... (Luke 2:27).

### **39. The Spirit Administers the New Covenant**

Finally, on our list of things the Holy Spirit does, we're at the last point. We challenged you to name at least seven things he does, and we've looked at 38. We hope you're convinced that he does much more than seven things.

Doing a lot is actually not so hard. Lots of busybodies around the world live a lifestyle of activism, but the Spirit is no activist. He does the most important things, such as administering the New Covenant.

To grasp the importance of the Spirit's role in the New Covenant, we have to go back in history to the Creation. There we learn a

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Denying themselves the opportunity to hear what the Holy Spirit wants to tell them, they drift away from the Spirit and cease to be led by him.

principle: mankind's original life comes from the Spirit. God used the Spirit to make our father Adam a living being.

- Then the LORD God formed a man from the dust of the ground and breathed into his nostrils the Breath of Life, and the man became a living being (Genesis 2:7).

People of faith recognize the Spirit as more than the original source of life for all mankind. They recognize him as the continual source of life for each of us individually.

- The Spirit of God has made me; the Breath of the Almighty gives me life (Job 33:4).

What do we learn from these two verses? That God used his Spirit to form our spirit. Paul knew this. That's why he declared "We are his [God's] offspring" (Acts 17:28). Each one of us has been created by God as a spirit-being.

- The LORD... stretches out the heavens... lays the foundation of the Earth, and... forms the human spirit within a person (Zechariah 12:1).

We are not born sinners. Original sin is a lie, a gigantic false doctrine. We are not born "dead in sin."<sup>83</sup> On the contrary, each of us should declare with confidence, speaking of our childhood: "Once I

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83 No Bible verse which uses this expression (Ephesians 2:1, 5; Colossians 2:13; Revelation 3:1; Luke 9:60; 15:32; 1 John 3:14) uses it for newborn children. On the contrary, this expression is only for mature people who understand God's Law. They are "dead in sin" because they refuse to repent and be converted. Paul, using himself as an example, denies Original Sin. Yes, he actually negates it by stating that he was spiritually *alive* until he understood God's Law. Only then did sin come into Paul's life.

was alive” (Romans 7:9). We come into this world spiritually alive because the Spirit of God makes us living beings. He *forms* the human spirit within us.

From the womb, every human being has a different degree of carnality. Some are more sensitive to the Spirit of God from an earlier age, while other people have stronger tendencies to sin—those people are “more carnal.” Through discipline received in childhood, some of us overcome such tendencies.

Whether we were born more carnal or more spiritual, by the time we reach adolescence, if we infringe God’s Law, it counts as sin for the first time. That’s where the Ten Commandments play an important role: They make us aware of our sins by fortifying our conscience.

- Once I was alive apart from the Law; but when the commandment came, sin sprang to life and I died (Romans 7:9).

After we’ve reached the age of accountability, and we commit sin, we die spiritually. What effect does that spiritual death have on us? We begin to hide from God, just as Adam did. When we die spiritually, we begin to avoid God altogether.

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- ... sin, seizing the opportunity afforded by the commandment, produced in me every kind of coveting. For apart from the Law, sin was dead. Once I was alive apart from the Law; but when the commandment came, sin sprang to life and I died. I found that the very commandment that was intended to bring life actually brought death (Romans 7:8-10).

It was only when Paul voluntarily decided to break God’s Law that he died. People twist this passage to make us think that we are born in sin, when it actually states the contrary! Here’s the untold truth: We are born spiritually alive. Let’s confidently declare with Paul: “Once I was alive.”

## Freed from the Lie

We need to analyze the first lie in the history of mankind. What is that lie? That sin does not bring death. The Devil said that sin does not incur the death penalty, and most people believe him to this day. Don't be naïve like Eve. Recognize right now that your sin incurs capital punishment.

- Now the serpent was more crafty than any of the wild animals the LORD God had made. He said to the woman, “Did God really say, ‘You must not eat from any<sup>84</sup> tree in the Garden’?” The woman said to the serpent, “We may eat fruit from the trees in the Garden, but God did say, ‘You must not eat fruit from the tree that is in the middle of the Garden, and you must not touch it,<sup>85</sup> or you will die.’”

“You will not certainly die,”<sup>86</sup> the serpent said to the wom-

84 For the Devil to say this is deceptive. God never uttered this word “any.” If we believe the Devil’s misquote, then it makes God sound unfair. In Eve’s case, the misquote worked because Eve immediately reciprocated, misquoting God too, and revealing that she had become convinced that God was unfair.

Eve responded to the Devil by telling him that God said “You must not eat fruit from the tree that is in the middle of the Garden, and you must not touch it.” She didn’t realize that this conversation was spiraling out of control. Satan had already clouded the truth and rewrote history, and now Eve was following his lead, questioning what she had heard God said. The seeds of doubt were sown in her heart, and her trust in God had been broken. Satan had successfully convinced her that God was unfair and even selfish!

85 Eve was hooked. She never should have started a conversation with a snake in the first place, but at this instant she demonstrates that she had already forgotten what God had said. She showed that her perception of God was that he was too harsh. Is God really a harsh God? Most people think so.

86 Here the craftiness of the Serpent becomes manifest. Don’t forget that the passage is introduced with the words “Now the serpent was more crafty than any of the wild animals...” You’re supposed to read his words and see craftiness in every sentence. Satan brazenly but oh-so-subtly contradicts God’s com-

an. “For God knows that when you eat from it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil.”

When the woman saw that the fruit of the tree was good for food and pleasing to the eye, and also desirable for gaining wisdom, she took some and ate it. She also gave some to her husband, who was with her, and he ate it.

Then the eyes of both of them were opened, and they realized they were naked; so they sewed fig leaves together and made coverings for themselves.

Then the man and his wife heard the sound of the LORD God as he was walking in the garden in the cool of the day, and they hid from the LORD God among the trees of the Garden.

But the LORD God called to the man, “Where are you?” He answered, “I heard you in the Garden, and I was afraid because I was naked; so I hid.” And he said, “Who told you that you were naked? Have you eaten from the tree that I commanded you not to eat from?” (Genesis 3:2-11)

Here, in the opening chapters of the Bible, we have a story—not of how the human race became corporately guilty, but of the process by which each of us individually might die spiritually. We die spiritually when we allow Satan to deceive us. But stronger is he who is in us! Instead of following the example of Adam, we can follow the example of Jesus.

Adam and Eve established a pattern—that is true. What they did has become stereotypical, but not inevitable. Adam is a man who

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mand—to Eve’s destruction.



died for himself; but there is another man who lives for us, the “Last Adam” (1 Corinthians 15:45). Jesus is a man who was just like you and I are in every way (Hebrews 4:15). He is a man who came in the fallen nature of Adam (Romans 8:3; 1 John 4:2; 2 John 7-11) but who did not conform to the example of Adam.

Our Lord Jesus never sinned. He was free from the lies of the Devil, and we must follow Jesus if we will be free. Only in Christ Jesus can we be free from the power of temptation. Jesus frees us by his example of faith in God, the Kingdom hope he gives us, and the Law of Love he commanded. But he did something even greater: He sent us the Holy Spirit to empower us.

### **Life in the Spirit**

There was a time when we “followed the ways of the World... following [our flesh’s] desires and thoughts.” Those times were not the times of our childhood. They were not the times when we were babies. We were not born in sin.

- As for you, you were dead in your transgressions and sins, in which you used to live when you followed the ways of this World... All of us also lived among them at one time, gratifying the cravings of our flesh and following its desires and thoughts... But... God... made us alive with Christ even when we were dead in transgressions... (Ephesians 2:1-5)

The death the passage above speaks of was being “dead in your transgressions and sins.” In other words, *our* sins killed us spiritually, not Adam’s sin. The “sins in which you used to live” could not refer to some inherent “original” sin. Rather, we’re speaking of the time when our lifestyle was one of sin, a worldly lifestyle.

That time was when “God... made us alive with Christ”!

God saves us from death—but what death? Is it a death *inherited* from Adam and Eve, or is it the death which comes as a *consequence* of following their example? Hint: The Bible says that we are dead in *our* sins, not dead in *their* sins.

- ... you were dead in your sins and in the uncircumcision of your flesh... (Colossians 2:13).

### **Back on Topic**

Let’s not get off track and forget we’re talking about the Holy Spirit here. We’re talking about what he does, particularly what he does in us! We won’t be able to understand what he does unless we understand that a) he’s been working in us from the very start, and b) he intends to finish what he started!

This is true for everybody: We start off life with the Spirit, then we lose him when we turn from God as early as childhood and adolescence. At that time, the Spirit separates from us—yes, he even separates from decent churchgoing folks. They also die spiritually, because “going to church” is not enough.

### **The Role of the Law**

God proves beyond a doubt that all people fall into sin. One big way he proves it to us is by giving us his Law, the Ten Commandments. Although it’s common for Christians to think that the Law is bad, the NT affirms that it is good. Many Christians reject it as “legalism” or “only for the Jews,” but God gave it to Gentiles also to prove rather that we are bad. Indeed, through the commandments, God proves that we are *unspiritual* and *slaves* to sin!

- What shall we say, then? Is the Law sinful? Certainly not! (Romans 7:7)
- So then, the Law is holy, and the commandment is holy, righteous and good (Romans 7:12).
- We know that the Law is spiritual; but I am unspiritual, sold as a slave to sin (Romans 7:14).

The Law is like a mirror to our souls, and studying it is to study something that is truly spiritual (Romans 7:14). Looking at the commandments of God, we feel our spirits inclined towards it, but we also feel our flesh opposing it. Our inner conflict is exposed. What conflict? That while our spirit longs to be with God, our sinful nature won't let us. That's why the Bible says:

- The spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak (Mark 14:38).
- And if I do what I do not want to do, I agree that the Law is good. As it is, it is no longer I myself [that is, Paul's real *self*, his spirit] who do it, but it is sin [his human nature, his flesh] living in me (Romans 7:16-17).

### **Alive to God, Dead to Sin**

So, sin lives in us—but don't dare say that believers are *subject* to it. On the contrary, believers must count ourselves dead to sin.

- ... count yourselves dead to sin but alive to God in Christ Jesus (Romans 6:11).

Sin only abides in a Christian's sinful nature, not in his spirit. In other words, when Christians sin, it's because their flesh gains a

momentary advantage over their spirit. They are doing what they do not want to do.

- ... if I do what I do not want to do... it is no longer I myself who do it, but it is sin living in me (Romans 7:16-17).

If anyone is in the New Covenant. That is, if they've been baptized in Christ and washed of their previous sins (2 Peter 1:9), they need to persevere in the Covenant. How do they do that? By confessing any sins they've committed, and return to the Good Shepherd, Christ.

- We are those who have died to sin; how can we live in it any longer? Or don't you know that all of us who were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? (Romans 6:2-3)



- ... our old self was crucified with him so that the body ruled by sin might be done away with, that we should no longer be slaves to sin—because anyone who has died has been set free from sin (Romans 6:6-7)

~~Both passages above are framed in the conditional tense. In the second one, you'll notice that the word *if* indicates that whatever happens depends on certain conditions. Here are the two conditions: If we do what we *don't* want to do, then sin gets the upper hand. On the contrary, if we do what we *want* to do, we are successful. Success in the Christian life is when our spirit has subjugated our flesh.~~

- Now if we died with Christ, we believe that we will also live with him... count yourselves dead to sin but alive to God in Christ Jesus (Romans 6:8,11).



## Victory and Freedom

The conclusion is that when we consider ourselves to be dead to sin, the victory Jesus obtained at Calvary becomes ours. The first step towards dying to sin is being crucified with Christ, something we do in baptism. If you have died with Christ, then Christ lives in you.

- I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me. The life I now live in the body, I live by faith in the Son of God... (Galatians 2:20)

The expressions “Christ lives in you” or “Christ is in you” mean that you have the Holy Spirit. These two expressions are synonymous. That’s easy to prove: Just notice how “Christ is in you” is placed parallel to “having the Spirit of Christ” in the next passage:

- ... if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, they do not belong to Christ. But if Christ is in you, then... (Romans 8:9-10)

So “Christ being in us” ~~is what makes us Christians, and that’s~~ the same thing as the Holy Spirit being in us administering the New Covenant. What we mean by “administering the covenant” is keeping us free from sin. The Spirit gives us the victory by freeing us from sin!

- Where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom (2 Corinthians 3:17).



## Appendices

A. The Holy Spirit in Exodus

B. Two Terms Not to Use for the Spirit

C. The Holy Spirit and the Kingdom

D. The Anointing is a “He”

E. God’s Body, Soul, and Spirit

F. The Big Error in Your Bible

G. The Spirit as a Dove

## A. The Holy Spirit in Exodus

Throughout the OT it's easy to see men who had the Holy Spirit. Pharaoh noticed the Spirit in Joseph. Moses noticed the Spirit in Joshua. Samson's enemies noticed the Spirit in him!

- Pharaoh asked them [the men of his court], “Can we find anyone like this man [Joseph], one in whom is the Spirit of God? (Genesis 41:38)
- So the LORD said to Moses, ‘Take Joshua the son of Nun, a man in whom is the Spirit, and lay your hand on him...’ (Numbers 27:18; NASB)

But what about the times when the Spirit was not so noticeable? What about the times in the OT when the Spirit was hidden? He was hidden in the Book of Exodus.

- And the LORD went before them by day in a Pillar of Cloud to lead them along the way, and by night in a pillar of fire to give them light, that they might travel by day and by night. The Pillar of Cloud by day and the Pillar of Fire by night did not depart from before the people (Exodus 13:21–22; ESV).

We propose that the Column was the Holy Spirit. The Column had the Angel of the Lord *in* it. That's what the Bible says: “Yahweh... went... in a Pillar of Cloud... and... in a Pillar of Fire...” The Angel [also called *Yahweh* in this passage] was our Lord Jesus, and the Angel must be distinguished from the Column.

Later on in the passage, the Column followed the Angel. That is, the Column went where the Angel went.

- Then the Angel of God, who had been traveling in front of Israel's army, withdrew and went behind them. The Pillar of Cloud also moved from in front and stood behind them... (Exodus 14:19)

Does that behavior sound familiar to you? Doesn't the Spirit belong to Jesus? He listens to Jesus, receives what he hears from Jesus, and glorifies Jesus!

- ... the Spirit of Truth... will speak only what he hears... He will glorify me [Jesus] because it is from me that he will receive what he will make known to you. All that belongs to the Father is mine. That is why I said the Spirit will receive from me what he will make known to you (John 16:13-15).

We are convinced that the Column was the Holy Spirit because the Column put Pharaoh's army in darkness while it lit up the way for the people of Israel. Likewise, the Holy Spirit separates us from evil and enlightens a path for us.

- The Pillar of Cloud also moved from in front and stood behind them, coming between the armies of Egypt and Israel. Throughout the night the Cloud brought darkness to the one side and light to the other side; so neither [Egyptian soldiers or Israelite freed slaves] went near the other all night long (Exodus 14:19-20).

The argument in favor of the Holy Spirit being the Column is strong, but it becomes stronger when we hear from Paul that the Column did something else that the Holy Spirit is known to do—something that only the Spirit does. It baptized the people!



- ... our fathers were all under the Cloud and all passed through the sea; and all were baptized into Moses in the Cloud and in the sea (1 Corinthians 10:1-2; LEB).

The Jews who left Egypt “were baptized... in the Cloud.” Paul, trying to help us understand water and Spirit baptism, chooses the Exodus as an example. The Jews who left Egypt were baptized in the sea, and baptized in the Cloud. Theirs was an experience parallel to ours: We are baptized into Christ through the waters of baptism, and simultaneously in the Holy Spirit.

The conclusion is that the Pillar of Fire and Smoke was the Holy Spirit. The next passage proves it even more. In it, Isaiah mentions the Holy Spirit three times while describing the Exodus with these words: “This is how you guided your people...”

- Where is he who set his Holy Spirit among them [the Israelites], who sent his Glorious Arm of Power to be at Moses’ right hand... they were given rest by the Spirit of the LORD. This is how you guided your people... (Isaiah 63:11-14)

### **Quails of Exodus**

The quails which God sent down on the Israelites to eat in the desert were a huge blessing. They were a wonderful blessing, like the manna, although the manna was more essential. It’s more important for a human being to eat bread than meat, is it not? Likewise, it’s more necessary for a human being to encounter Jesus than the Holy Spirit.

The manna was first, and when the people wanted more, God gave them more. You might respond: “But God punished them for wanting meat!” But their desire for meat was not a sin. The manner in which they demanded meat was the sin. Likewise, if we demand the Holy Spirit greedily, we’ll be guilty of a terrible sin. The story of Simon the Sorcerer illustrates this:

- When Simon saw that the Spirit was given at the laying on of the apostles’ hands, he offered them money and said, ‘Give me also this ability so that everyone on whom I lay my hands may receive the Holy Spirit.’  
Peter answered: “May your money perish with you, because you thought you could buy the gift of God with money! You have no part or share in this ministry, because your heart is not right before God’ (Acts 8:18-21).

Jesus told us that he was the Bread from Heaven.

- Jesus declared, ‘I am the Bread of Life’ (John 6:35).
- I am the Living Bread that came down from Heaven.  
Whoever eats this bread will live forever. This bread is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the World (John 6:51).

So, we’re certain that Jesus is the mana of the Exodus story. But how can we be certain that the quails represent the Holy Spirit?

The analogy of bread falling from the sky is Jesus coming from Heaven to be our spiritual life. It’s an illustration of Jesus as food for our souls. The quails also came down from Heaven, making

it necessary to deal with two-levels of analogy. We find ourselves asking: Who else comes from Heaven? Who else feeds our spirits?

The Holy Spirit is like quail from above just like he was the dove that descended at Christ's baptism. That is a strong parallel, but not an exact one. The difference is that the Exodus illustration pictures God sending both Jesus and the Holy Spirit from Heaven. That is, the Exodus events present a more complete picture of what we must experience spiritually: We need to receive both Jesus and the Holy Spirit from God.

Jesus continues to be the primary spiritual sustenance of God's people. That is, he is our "first course" at God's spiritual table. Jesus came first, like the mana. Jesus is first in the New Covenant, but to enter the Kingdom, the Holy Spirit must be a close second!

- [Jesus] is also the head of the Body, the Church; and he is the Beginning, the firstborn from the Dead, so that he himself will come to have first place in everything (Colossians 1:18; NASB).
- ... no one can enter the Kingdom of God unless they are born of water [that's "receiving Jesus" through baptism in his name] and the Spirit (John 3:5).



## B. Two Terms Not to Use for the Spirit

Older versions of the Bible such as the King James call the Spirit the *Holy Ghost* because *ghost* is the classic English term for “bodiless spirit.” Since the term *ghost* has developed a negative connotation over the years [think Halloween and horror movies], we’d prefer not to use it with reference to the Spirit of God. He is, after all, *the Spirit of Life* (Romans 8:2 and Revelation 11:11) while the modern term *ghost* immediately elicits thoughts of someone who has died.

So, the term *ghost* doesn’t work for the Holy Spirit, but how about *person*? It’s very popular among Trinitarians to call the Holy Spirit a *person*, but we choose not to. We don’t because the term is not from the Bible. It’s borrowed from human theologies—and that’s exactly why using *person* for the Spirit also confuses people! It’s a complex theological term, not a simple biblical term.

Understandably, some honest theologians will strive to prove that the Spirit has a *personality*—and he does. However, if we use the term *person* to describe him, we’re adding to what God has said in the Bible. We’re saying more than the Bible—and that’s not safe! It’s best to call the Holy Spirit a *spirit*, just as the Bible does. If we speak as the Bible speaks we cannot fail, because it’s the Word of God and God will not fail.

Additionally, the word *person* makes the Spirit sound human, but he is not. Jesus is a human to this day (1 Timothy 2:5), so our point is not that there is something wrong with being human. **The**

original human nature, the one Adam and Eve had before they got the sinful nature, was good. God created Adam, and Adam was good. But the point is that regardless of what the human nature is, the Spirit does not have that nature. He is a spirit with the divine nature. “People” have the human nature, so calling the Spirit a *person* promotes confusion and misunderstanding.



## C. The Holy Spirit and the Kingdom

Let's ask ourselves a question hardly anyone ever asks: What will the Spirit be doing in the Kingdom? Does the Bible mention any activities of the Holy Spirit in the Kingdom? It's explicit about how the Father and the Son will be the light of the New Jerusalem, and how we'll rule with Christ and then the Father will come and we'll be with the Father. However, the Bible doesn't highlight any particular role the Spirit will have in eternity.

It appears that the Holy Spirit will act as he did in the Exodus, as a column of fire by night and smoke by day. For that reason, he'll be called "The Spirit of Judgment and the Spirit of Burning" (Isaiah 4:4). The passage below clearly describes Jesus' Millennial Reign, and in it is the Holy Spirit, described in seven different ways: a cloud by day, smoke, flaming fire, a canopy, a shelter, refuge, and protection!

- On that day the Branch of the LORD [Jesus] will be beautiful and glorious... When the LORD has washed away the filth of the daughters of Zion and purged the bloodshed of Jerusalem from her midst, by the Spirit of Judgment and the Spirit of Burning, then the LORD will create over the entire area of Mount Zion and over her assemblies a cloud by day, and smoke, and the brightness of a flaming fire by night.

For over all the Glory [on Mount Zion] will be a canopy. And there will be a shelter to give shade from the heat by day, and refuge and protection from the storm and the rain (Isaiah 4:2-6; NASB).

Scant few Bible passages describe the Spirit's role in the Kingdom. According to Zechariah, he'll be a wall of fire around the Millennial Jerusalem.

- I looked up, and there before me was a man with a measuring line in his hand. I asked, 'Where are you going?' He answered me, 'To measure Jerusalem...'  
 ... another angel came to meet him and said to him: "Run, tell that young man, 'Jerusalem will be a city without walls because of the great number of people and animals in it. And I Myself will be a Wall of Fire around it,' declares the LORD, 'and I will be its glory within'" (Zechariah 2:1-5).

When the Father declares "I Myself will be a Wall of Fire" are we to understand that the One God will transform himself into a fire? That's unlikely. Could it be that this is a metaphor? Also, very unlikely since the rest of the passage is about measurements, literal people, and literal animals inside a real city.

We propose that the One God will have the Holy Spirit be fire for him. That's perfectly in line with the rest of Scripture. The Holy Spirit appeared as fire during both the Exodus and at Pentecost, so we can safely presume that he is also the Millennial Wall of Fire.

Besides that, since a great percentage of the world's population will be in the flesh, they'll need the Spirit in them if they will be renewed. Many people will be converted during the Millennium, and they'll need the Holy Spirit to live within them. That explains why he will not appear in his physical body during the Millennium. He'll be doing the same job of indwelling people that he does in the current times.

But when the Eternal Kingdom comes, we don't doubt that we'll be able to see him, talk with him, to listened to him, and even to touch him! Nobody will need him inside their bodies anymore because everybody will have the divine nature.

So, what will the Holy Spirit look like? It's likely that he will have "a figure like that of a man" and that from "his waist down" he will be "like fire," and "from there up his appearance" will be "as bright as glowing metal" (Ezekiel 8:2).





## D. The Anointing is a “He”

Please read 1 John 2:20, 27 carefully:

- ... you have an Anointing from the Holy One, and all of you know the truth... As for you, the Anointing you received from him [Jesus] remains in you, and you do not need anyone to teach you. But as his Anointing teaches you about all things and as that Anointing is real, not counterfeit—just as he has taught you, remain in him.

See anything curious? It’s likely that the translation above is different from the one in your Bible. For example, the NIV uses “it” in v. 27, saying “just as it has taught you, remain in him.” We think that is a mistake. In our translation, we use the pronoun “he.” Our first reason is because there is no “it” in the original Greek text—there is only the verb *edidaxen* (ἐδίδαξεν) in the third person singular form. There is no pronoun at all (neither “he,” “she,” or “it”).

Although many translations use “it” in 1 John 2:27, there are at least eight that use “he” such as the NLT, CEV, GNT, HCSB, ISV, ABPE, GWT, and NAS 1977. That means that we’re in good company. In addition, there are two translations (the BSB and the YLT) which, recognizing that there is no pronoun at all in the Greek, leave out pronouns completely. How do they do that? They use the passive voice. For example, they say “...as you have been taught.” But the passive voice is not an acceptable translation. The verb *edidaxen* is an active verb.

We conclude that the translations that supply the pronoun “he” do the best job of transmitting the original meaning of the text. Why?

Because respecting the Holy Spirit should always be a top priority for Christians, and using “he” shows a lot more respect to the Holy Spirit than saying “it.” At any rate, the Greek verb demands that we choose between one of the two pronouns “he” or “it.”

All grammar aside, there can be no question that the Holy Spirit is the “Anointing” John speaks of. It’s common sense. The “Anointing” of the passage *teaches* us, and teaching is an action. Indeed, *teaching* is the action of a teacher, and Jesus told the apostles in John 14:26 that the Holy Spirit would teach them all things.

John repeated Christ’s lesson that the Spirit is a teacher. We like the way the NLT handles the wording of 1 John 2:27:

- But you have received the Holy Spirit, and he lives within you, so you don’t need anyone to teach you what is true. For the Spirit teaches you everything you need to know, and what he teaches is true—it is not a lie. So just as he [the Spirit] has taught you, remain in fellowship with Christ.



## E. God's Body, Soul, and Spirit

It's vital to understand that God has a body, soul, and spirit. In fact, God had these three aspects of his being long before we ever did. Logically, being creatures, we don't have more qualities than our Creator. It can't be that we have a body and our Creator doesn't. Nonetheless, the absurd notion that the Almighty God has no body is very popular in Evangelical churches. To resist this misconception, we have to be committed to logic and say: "If we have anything, it comes from God. If we have anything, God had it first"

Here are four passages that prove God has a body:

- ... the Ancient of Days took his seat. His clothing was as white as snow; the hair of his head was white like wool (Daniel 7:9).
- ... high above on the Throne was a figure like that of a man. I saw that from what appeared to be his waist up he looked like glowing metal, as if full of fire, and that from there down he looked like fire... (Ezekiel 1:26-27)
- [Yahweh]... said, 'you cannot see my face, for no one may see me and live.' Then the LORD said, 'There is a place near me where you may stand on a rock. When my glory passes by, I will put you in a cleft in the rock and cover you with my hand until I have passed by. Then I will remove my hand and you will see my back; but my face must not be seen' (Exodus 33:21-23).
- ... there before me was a Throne in Heaven with someone sitting on it. And the One who sat there had the appearance of jasper and ruby... the twenty-four elders fall down before Him who sits on the Throne... I saw in the right hand

of Him who sat on the Throne a scroll... [The Lamb]...  
 went and took the scroll from the right hand of Him who  
sat on the Throne (Revelation 4:2-3, 9-11; 5:1, 7).

Here are three passages that prove God has a soul:

- I will make my dwelling among you, and my soul [*nephshi* = נַפְשִׁי] will not reject you (Leviticus 26:11; NASB)
- I will destroy your high places... and my soul [*nephshi*] shall abhor you (Leviticus 26:30; NKJV).
- I will raise up for myself a faithful priest who will do according to what is in my heart and in my soul [*nephshi*] (1 Samuel 2:35; NASB).

Here are two passages that prove that God has a spirit:

- God is spirit, and the ones who worship him must worship in spirit and truth (John 4:24; LEB).
- Who has measured up [directed] the spirit of Yahweh, or informed him [Yahweh] as his counselor?  
 With whom has he consulted that he enlightened him and taught him the path of justice, and taught him knowledge, and made the way of understanding known to him? (Isaiah 40:13-14; LEB)

This last passage has a very specific context which is apparent in vv. 10-26: The greatness of God. It is easy to understand because it uses lots of parallelism. The first part simply says that the one who directs God's spirit would be God's counselor—an impossibility! The second part of the parallelism, to prove how ridiculous it would be to suggest that God would consult with someone, is compounded with no less than four examples!

- being the one who directs God's spirit = being his counsel-  
or
- being the one with whom God consults = enlightening  
God, teaching God the path of justice, teaching God  
knowledge, making the way of understanding known to  
God

Why are we investing time in the study of God's nature here? It's because if we know God, for example, that he has his own spirit, then we'll be free from the Trinitarian confusion surrounding the Holy Spirit. We'll be certain that the Holy Spirit is not the actual spirit within God—and very few people have come to know that. Most are still vulnerable to tripping on that stumbling block.

There is already a spirit within God, and there is already a spirit within you. That spirit is the real you, your essence. God likewise has an essence, a life force within him, and he doesn't need the Holy Spirit to give him life. You do need the Spirit to give you life because you die spiritually by sinning.

The Father is an autonomous being—he doesn't depend on anyone. You do depend on others. Were it not for your parents, you never would have been born physically. Were it not for the Holy Spirit, you would not have been born spiritually. But God is completely independent. Instead of depending on others, all living beings depend on him. Even the Holy Spirit depends upon God for life!

## F. The Big Error in Your Bible

What if I told you that your Bible has many errors? What if I told you that the translators of your Bible have made dozens of mistakes? You'd want to know what those mistakes are, wouldn't you? And you'd feel very deceived if you found out that I was right, and there are indeed dozens of mistakes in your Bible.

The bad news is that what I've said is true: Your Bible has many errors. The good news is that it's not that the translators have added, removed, or even changed words. It's that they've not used case properly. That is, they haven't used upper-case and lower-case as they ought, specifically with the word *spirit*.

In English, as with most modern languages, capitalization adds significant meaning to a word. For example: Jade/jade. The first is a girl's name, and the second is a green semi-precious stone. Another example is: Cork/cork. The first is a region of Ireland, and the second is a stopper for wine bottles. If you say "I love jade," the meaning is much different from "I love Jade." And if you say "There's nothing like Cork," you're speaking geography while "There's nothing like cork" likely means you're bottling wine and have decided not to use a metallic screw top!

Translating the word *ruach* from the original Hebrew into English, and *pneuma* from the original Greek into the English will normally give you the English word "spirit." It is an easy task for a Bible translator to know where to put the word "spirit," but deciding on whether to capitalize or make "spirit" lower-case involves great hermeneutic and interpretive skills. Translators must decide every time they see the word *spirit* in the original language whether it refers to the Holy Spirit or another spirit, such as the human spirit.

They must do this because neither Hebrew nor Greek utilize capital letters in the original texts.

The rules of grammar dictate that translators must use a capital *S* to indicate the Holy *Spirit*, or a lowercase *s* to indicate a human *spirit*, an angelic *spirit*, or the aspect of being we call the *spirit* (which every being has, even God and animals). If you arrange side-by-side different Bible versions of a verse with that contains the word “spirit,” you’ll see that they often disagree. Take John 4:24 as an example:

- God is spirit, and his worshipers must worship in the Spirit and in truth (John 4:24; NIV).
- God is spirit, and the ones who worship him must worship in spirit and truth (John 4:24; LEB).
- God is Spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth (John 4:24; NKJV).

Can you tell which of the above translations uses the correct capitalization? It’s the second one, the Lexham English Bible. To discover why, you need to follow two basic principles:

1. First, if the passage shows a contrast between the body and the spirit, then *spirit* is lower-case. The contrast may also be between the flesh and the spirit, or material things and spiritual things. Take the following verses as an example:

- [God sent Jesus so that...] the righteous requirement of the Law might be fully met in us, who do not live according to the flesh but according to the spirit (Romans 8:4).
- Those who live according to the flesh have their minds set

on what the flesh desires; but those who live in accordance with the spirit have their minds set on what the spirit desires (Romans 8:5).

- The mind governed by the flesh is death, but the mind governed by the spirit is life and peace. The mind governed by the flesh is hostile to God; it does not submit to God’s Law, nor can it do so (Romans 8:6-7).
- Those who are in the realm of the flesh cannot please God. You, however, are not in the realm of the flesh but are in the realm of the spirit, if indeed the Spirit of God lives in you (Romans 8:8-9).

2. Secondly, study the context. In the case of John 4:24 (above), the Samaritan woman was using the smokescreen of the ethnic conflict between the Jews and the Samaritans to avoid having to deal with her need to repent of sin. Jesus wisely finds a way to “cancel out” her discrimination. He focuses on what is truly important: her spirit, the essence of her being.

Listen to what he says the verse prior:

- ... true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and in truth (John 4:23).

Jesus counters the woman’s argument about places (Samaria/Jerusalem) and ethnic groups (Samaritans/Jews) and focuses in on what is really important: the spirit. Then he shows why the spirit is important. It’s because God Himself is a spirit-being. In other words, he’s saying that like God, we have to act like spiritual beings. If we’re going to worship God—who is a spirit—we have to worship in spirit.



Try this other example to see if you've got the idea:

- The Spirit gives life; the flesh counts for nothing. The words I have spoken to you—they are full of the Spirit and life (John 6:63; NIV).
- The Spirit is the one who gives life; the flesh profits nothing. The words that I have spoken to you are spirit and are life (John 6:63; LEB).
- It is the spirit that giveth life; the flesh profiteth nothing: the words that I have spoken unto you are spirit, and are life (John 6:63; ASV).

Which one is right? Answer: the third. The meaning is best expressed with this orthography: “the spirit gives life.” There is no dramatic switch from one sentence to the next of a different meaning for the same word: *spirit*. Jesus was talking about the same thing: that the spirit is life, and the flesh has no value in Eternity.

Let's consider the context. If you read John **5:32** to 6:62 Jesus is teaching that he is the Bread from Heaven. To get the message across, he contrasts the spiritual eating of his body with the literal eating of his body. Spiritually, we eat his body through the Lord's Supper. To eat it literally would be absurd, and that's exactly what Jesus means when he says “The words that I have spoken to you are spirit and are life.”

Jesus wanted his hearers to understand that he was speaking spiritual words. By *spiritual*, Jesus didn't mean “metaphorical” or “symbolic.” He meant *true*. The spiritual dimension of things is the essential truth of things. The spiritual reality of things is the fundamental reality. It is truth.

The spirit within you is not a metaphor of what you are—it’s your essence, your source of life. Take the Samaritan woman as an example. Her genetics as a descendant of Jacob, her location in Samaria, and her Samaritan ethnicity—they were all superficial matters! Jesus didn’t waste his time with superficial matters. He hit at the heart of each person’s existence—their spirit. That’s what matters.

Back to John 6:63. It’s true that the Holy Spirit is the Life-Giver, and if you isolate the phrase “the spirit gives life,” *spirit* certainly could be capitalized based on that principle—a good principle. However, we are not allowed to simply isolate a Bible verse whenever we want to.

The context of the passage is introduced in 6:27 where Jesus started talking about “food that endures to Eternal Life.” From that point onward, our Lord was speaking spiritual words, which is why he said “the words that I have spoken to you are spirit and life.” If you understand that much, then it’s easy to see what he meant by “the spirit gives life.” It meant the same thing: that his words, if believed, become our spiritual bread. Jesus is the true *mana* from Heaven. We cannot ignore this context.

### Being “In the Holy Spirit”?

When you see the phrase “in the spirit” in the Bible, you should not allow for capitalization.<sup>87</sup> You cannot be “in the Holy Spirit.” Rather, the Holy Spirit can be in you! For example, the following

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87 There is one exception to this rule: Luke 2:27 where it says that Simeon “came in the Spirit into the Temple” (LEB, NASB, YLT). There the word *Spirit* should be capitalized. The context assists us because verse 25 says that the Holy Spirit was upon Simeon and verse 26 says that the Holy Spirit gave him a revelation.

verse states that we should be unified. When it uses *one soul* and *one spirit* together, these two reinforce one another to mean that we're united.

- ... lead your lives in a manner worthy of the Gospel of Christ... standing firm in one spirit, with one soul con-  
tending side by side for the faith of the Gospel (Philippians 1:27).

Here's a more well-known verse:

- I was in the spirit on the Lord's Day... (Revelation 1:10)

Our use of the lower-case "s" in the word "spirit" might shock you if you're used to seeing this verse with a capital "S" for Spirit, but we don't believe that John was speaking of the Holy Spirit in this verse. This puts us at odds with the majority of Bible versions. Of the 28 translations we surveyed,<sup>88</sup> only the Douay-Rheims uses the lower case "s" in Revelation 1:10. That means that 97% of translations use the upper-case "S" causing untold millions of Christians to believe that the passage is referring to the Holy Spirit.

What makes us so sure that John is not speaking about the Holy Spirit? Well, John uses the exact same expression in three other passages in the same book. In other words, we know the context. To understand what John means when he uses this expression, we must consider what he says each time he uses it:

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88 We found these translations at Bible Hub (<https://biblehub.com/revelation/1-10.htm>).

- And immediately I was in the spirit: and, behold, a Throne was set in Heaven, and One sat on the Throne (Revelation 4:2; KJV).<sup>89</sup>
- ... the angel carried me away in the spirit<sup>90</sup> into a wilderness (Revelation 17:3).
- One of the seven angels... came and said to me, “Come, I will show you the Bride...” And he carried me away in the spirit to a mountain great and high, and showed me the Holy City, Jerusalem (Revelation 21:9-10).

Is anybody able to explain what it means for an angel to “carry a person away in the Holy Spirit”? There’s no logic to it, unless you want to make the Holy Spirit a metaphorical basket in the hands of an angel—but we won’t. The only way to interpret John’s repeated use of the phrase “in the spirit” is to understand *spirit* to mean John’s human spirit. John is saying that he had an out-of-body experience! In it, an angel literally picked him up—not his body, but his spirit.

Paul also had such an experience. He describes it in 2 Corinthians 12:2-4 where he says that he knew someone who experienced wonderful things “out of the body.”

- ... a man in Christ who fourteen years ago was caught up to the Third Heaven. Whether it was in the body or out of the body I do not know—God knows. And I know that this

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89 “Or in spirit” is the footnote from the NASB. The NASB translators made this footnote because it’s the most literal translation. The Greek has no article at all, but says *en pneumati* (ἐν πνεύματι), “in spirit.”

90 With this verse, the online LEB adds the footnote “Or ‘in the spirit,’ referring to the human spirit.” Again, as in each case in Revelation, the Greek reads *en pneumati*. The verse has no article “the.”

man—whether in the body or apart from the body I do not know, but God knows—was caught up to Paradise...

The examples go on and on. Translators changing the true meaning of God’s Word is all too common—but why does it happen? The main reason is because being “in the spirit” is a lifestyle too challenging for most people. They don’t want to hear about it, so translators don’t tell them about it. In spite of their aversion, being “in the spirit” was Jesus’ lifestyle and it must be the lifestyle of those who follow Jesus.

God sent Jesus to the Cross precisely to allow us to live in the spirit. The verses below explain that God “condemned sin in the flesh” so that we would be able to fulfill the righteous requirement of the Law. How do we fulfill it? By living in the spirit!

- ... on account of sin, he [God] condemned sin in the flesh, that the righteous requirement of the Law might be fulfilled in us who do not walk according to the flesh but according to the spirit (Romans 8:3-4; modified NASB).

Jesus’ life was an example of how to eliminate sin through sacrifice. The Cross inspires us to deny our flesh and to live “according to the spirit”—that is, spiritually.

Romans 8:4, like the examples we saw in Revelation, uses the expression *en pneumatic* [ἐν πνεύματι], without an article “the” in the original Greek. An overwhelming number of modern translations interpret this to mean “in the Spirit” (with a capital *S*), but the original Greek says *en pneumatī*, literally “in spirit,” without an article. Here are other passages which also say *in spirit* in the Greek:

- ... he who speaks in a tongue does not speak to men but to God, for no one understands him; however, in the spirit he speaks mysteries (1 Corinthians 14:2; NKJV).
- ... the Pharisees were gathered together, Jesus asked them, saying, “What think ye of Christ? Whose son is he?” They say unto him, “The son of David.” He saith unto them, “How then doth David in spirit call him Lord?” (Matthew 22:41-43; KJV similar to the BLB).
- ... though I am absent from you in body, I am present with you in spirit and delight to see how disciplined you are and how firm your faith in Christ is (Colossians 2:5).

### **A Difficult Passage Revealed**

Notice the different ways translators use capitalization and lower-case with 1 Timothy 3:16, which describes “the mystery of godliness.” This passage was written to show us the secret to true piety. It’s closely related to another passage which speaks of “the holiness without which no one will see the Lord” (Hebrews 12:14; NASB).

- He who was manifested in the flesh, justified in the spirit, seen of angels, preached among the nations, believed on in the World, received up in glory (ERV and ASV).
- ... [Jesus] appeared in the flesh, was vindicated by the Spirit, was seen by angels, was preached among the nations, was believed on in the World, was taken up in glory (NIV).

Did the Holy Spirit prove to the enemies of Jesus that Jesus was truly the Messiah? Yes, he did when he resurrected Jesus. Can we

consider this Jesus' vindication? We could, and that would agree with "... through the Spirit of Holiness [Jesus] was appointed the Son of God in power by his resurrection from the Dead" (Romans 1:4). However, the context proves that this is not what this passage is saying.

This passage, like many others, is a contrast between the flesh and the spirit. Jesus was manifested in the *flesh*, and justified in the *spirit*. That is, he came as a man with the human nature inclined towards sin, but after his death God still called him "righteous." That is, Jesus was vindicated.

Where exactly was the Lord vindicated? Not at Calvary. He was condemned at Calvary, but vindicated in Hades. That's why it says he was "vindicated in the spirit," because Jesus was in his spirit in Hades when God called him "righteous." How was he vindicated? By being resurrected! If you were bodiless and waiting in Hades for your resurrection, you'd understand what an important event this is. When the time comes for you to wait in Hades and the resurrection finally comes, you'll declare: "I've been vindicated *in the spirit!*"



## G. The Spirit as a Dove

In the Garden of Eden, the Devil was called a “serpent” (Genesis 3; 2 Corinthians 11:3)—a name which has stuck with him since he is “the Old Serpent” of Revelation 12:9. Considering that, we see that the snake has come to symbolize evil.

Doves have come to symbolize good. Snakes are known for their craftiness while doves are known for their innocence. That’s why Jesus said:

- ... be as shrewd as snakes and as innocent as doves (Matthew 10:16).

Very interestingly, the story of Noah has two birds in it: a raven and a dove. Noah used both birds for the same purpose. He wanted to know whether it was time to leave the Ark or not. Specifically, he wanted to know whether the water had receded from the surface of the Earth. He had no other way of knowing whether the water had dried up or not.

Both birds, the raven and the dove, flew back and forth until they did not return. When they did not return, Noah knew that they had found a home. That is perfectly normal behavior for a bird. When a bird finds a tree where it can build a nest, it nests there. Let’s read the story now:

- The waters continued to recede until the tenth month, and on the first day of the tenth month the tops of the mountains became visible.
- After forty days Noah opened a window he had made in the Ark and sent out a raven, and it kept flying back and forth until the water had dried up from the Earth.



- Then he sent out a dove to see if the water had receded from the surface of the ground. But the dove could find nowhere to perch because there was water over all the surface of the Earth; so it returned to Noah in the Ark. He reached out his hand and took the dove and brought it back to himself in the Ark.
- He waited seven more days and again sent out the dove from the Ark. When the dove returned to him in the evening, there in its beak was a freshly plucked olive leaf! Then Noah knew that the water had receded from the Earth. He waited seven more days and sent the dove out again, but this time it did not return to him (Genesis 8:5-12).

### **A Sign from Above, A Sign from the Dove**

The peculiarity of the story is not that both birds finally nested, but that only the dove brought a leaf to Noah. The bringing of a leaf to Noah would only be normal behavior if the dove wanted to feather his nest in the Ark, but since the dove later nested away from the Ark, we know that it was not normal behavior. Since the olive leaf was not the dove saying that it wanted to be domesticated, it was a sign from God.

Indeed, Noah took the leaf as a sign from God. What did it mean? That a New Earth was ready for his family to inhabit. In other words, the dove, under the inspiration of God (or perhaps in some inkling it had to be domesticated), brought the promise of a Land in which Noah and his family could start over again.

The dove confirmed that humanity had a second chance. If you can get a sense of how much fear of God had filled Noah's heart at

the time—God had just destroyed all life on the face of the planet—then you’ll understand why reaching his hand out to the dove as it flew into the Ark, and seeing the leaf in its beak was such a momentous occasion for Noah! Noah had finally come to know that there would be a new beginning. He had physical confirmation of his hope.

### **The Symbolism**

How do we interpret this story? It’s important to resist the temptation to say that “because doves are white and ravens are black, they represent good and evil.” The Bible does not say that there was a black crow and a white dove. Let’s not add to God’s words. There are many species of ravens which have white spots, and some are almost entirely grey. Likewise, many kinds of doves, like the mourning dove, are grey. Other doves are cinnamon-brown. The rock dove has iridescent colors on its neck which can be green or purple depending on the angle of the viewer. The point is that we should not hastily draw the conclusion that one bird represented a demon and the other represented the Holy Spirit. Rather, one was a raven and one was a dove.

Besides that, why would we interpret the raven as representing evil? The raven actually helped Noah to know the time to exit the Ark just as well as the dove. On the contrary, Noah’s raven represents something positive, and there is another Biblical characterization of ravens as helpers. Remember how ravens brought Elijah meat (1 Kings 17:2-6)? Noah’s raven likewise was a good resource for one of God’s beloved servants.

The raven doesn’t need to represent anything—he was a raven. Likewise, the dove was a real dove. We don’t have to spiritualize

the dove, but it's hard to ignore the similarities the dove has to the Holy Spirit. For example, Noah's dove brought Noah the leaf which signaled that Noah was the head of a new humanity. Likewise, the Holy Spirit—appearing as a dove—descended on Jesus to signal that Jesus is the Head of the new humanity.

Another striking similarity is that during Jesus' baptism, the Holy Spirit hovered over the surface of the waters. Notice that Noah's dove also flew back and forth over the surface of the waters. Didn't it return to Noah twice? And are not both these stories reminiscent of Genesis 1:2 which says "the Spirit of God was hovering over the surface of the waters" (LEB)? Of course they are!

It's remarkable that a dove came to Jesus in the same manner that the dove came to Noah. It's remarkable that in both cases, the dove brought the promise of new life. The Spirit, appearing as a dove, brought to Jesus the same promise the dove brought to Noah: That there would be new life. When Jesus received the Holy Spirit, he became the first to receive this new life. This made him a very unique person, the Anointed One—that is, the Messiah. Jesus could say:

- The Spirit of the Lord is on me, because he has anointed me to proclaim Good News... (Luke 4:18-19)

