

The Personhood of the Holy Spirit

Exploring the Personhood of the Holy Spirit

Jesus announced the Holy Spirit's impending arrival (after His own ascension back to the Father), as the coming of "another helper" (John 14:16). The Greek words for these two terms (*allos* and *paracletes*, respectively) are important in understanding the personhood of the Holy Spirit:

- *Allos* means "another of the same kind," in contrast to *heteros*, which means "another of a different kind." In this, Jesus is communicating that the Holy Spirit is the same in substance, equal in every way.
- *Paraclete* means "helper." Other translations render the word "advocate, counselor, comforter." In this, Jesus said that the Holy Spirit would be another helper in the way that He is a helper. Just as Jesus has personhood, so, too, does the Holy Spirit.

Additionally, the Holy Spirit acts with rationale, rather than impersonally (see 1 Cor. 12:11). He teaches, guides, reveals, and convicts (John 14:26; 16:13; 14; 8, respectively). People relate with Him personally, rather than impersonally, able to resist Him (Acts 7:51), grieve Him (Eph. 4:30), lie to Him (Acts 5:3-4), quench Him (1 Thess. 5:19), and other behaviors that are only possible if the Spirit is a personal Being.

The Deity of the Holy Spirit

After promising the impending arrival of the Holy Spirit, and at the time of His ascension, Jesus affirmed the equality and unity of the Holy Spirit, commanding:

"All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age." (Matt. 28:18-20)

The Work of the Holy Spirit

The Holy Spirit in Creation

In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth. 2 The earth was without form and void, and darkness was over the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God was hovering over the face of the waters. (Genesis 1:1-2)

The Role of the Holy Spirit in Redemption

- Jesus instructed the Jewish teacher Nicodemus, saying “Jesus answered, “Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God” (John 3:5). Jesus taught that spiritual rebirth was necessary to enter the Kingdom of God, and this was only possible by the regenerative work of the Spirit.
- In announcing the arrival of the Holy Spirit, Jesus said, “And when he comes, he will convict the world concerning sin and righteousness and judgment” (John 16:8).
- The Apostle Paul understood that salvation is the work of the Spirit, apart from our own efforts, writing, “he saved us, not because of works done by us in righteousness, but according to his own mercy, by the washing of regeneration and renewal of the Holy Spirit” (Titus 3:5)

Just as the Godhead is completely unified and present in the work of creation, He is completely unified and present in the work of redemption. Just as God the Father, God the Son, and God the Spirit are collaboratively and cooperatively active in creation, they are likewise collaboratively and cooperatively active in redemption!

The Holy Spirit's Role in the Scriptures

All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work. (2 Tim. 3:16-17)

For no prophecy was ever produced by the will of man, but men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit. (2 Peter 1:21)

For the word of God is living and active, sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing to the division of soul and of spirit, of joints and of marrow, and discerning the thoughts and intentions of the heart. (Hebrews 4:12)

The Activity of the Holy Spirit in the Christ-Follower

- Presence – The Holy Spirit automatically indwells the being of the Christ-follower at the moment of salvation, never leaving or forsaking the Believer even for a moment. (John 14:16-17; 1 Cor. 3:16-17; 6:19-20)
- Security – At salvation, the Holy Spirit automatically seals the Christ-follower, providing impenetrable spiritual protection until the Believer arrives safely in heaven. (Ephesians 1:13; 4:30)
- Guarantee – The Holy Spirit's sealing presence is God's unwavering promise to complete everything that He has started in the Believer's life, eventually fulfilling every eternal expectation pledged by God in His Holy Word (Ephesians 1:14; Philippians 1:6)
- Guidance – The Holy Spirit leads Believers through life, bestowing wisdom (Is. 11:2; Eph. 1:17), giving discernment (1 John 4:1; 1 Cor. 2:14), convicting of sin (Rom. 2:15; John 16:33), correcting errant thoughts (Ps. 94:12), offering encouragement (2 Tim. 1:7), and delivering from temptation (1 Cor. 10:13), among many more of His shepherding activities.
- Gifting – The Holy Spirit generously and graciously gifts Christ-followers with supernatural abilities for the purpose of serving others, advancing the Kingdom of God, extending the Gospel, meeting needs, and bringing glory to the name of Jesus. (Galatians 5:22-23)
- Productivity – Not only does God's Holy Spirit give these spiritual gifts, but He works in and through Believers, bringing about supernatural results that accomplish God's purposes. In this, this is God's unhindered work accomplished through Spirit-filled Christ-followers. (John 15:5; Col. 1:9-11)

Relating to the Holy Spirit

- Seek the Spirit's leading – (Jeremiah 29:13; Matthew 6:33; Hebrews 11:6)
- Listen for the Spirit – (Matthew 11:15; Rom. 10:17; Rev. 2:7, 11, 17, 29; 3:6, 13, 22)
- Receive whatever the Spirit offers you – (John 6:33; Romans 8:26-27; 1 John 4:14)
- Be filled with the Spirit – (Ephesians 3:19; Philippians 1:11)
- Be renewed by the Spirit – (2 Corinthians 4:16-18)
- Be changed by the Spirit – (Romans 12:1-2)
- Obey the Holy Spirit promptly – (Luke 11:28; John 8:31-32; Ephesians 6:17)
- Express His Spirit – (Ephesians 3:36)
- Live in the Spirit continually – (Galatians 5:16)