

The Doctrine of the Deity of the Holy Spirit¹

I. Introduction:

- A. We have previously covered the **Doctrine of the Holy Spirit's ministry in the Old Testament** in Num. 11:25. In this doctrine, we will deal specifically with His deity. That is, God the Holy Spirit is a separate entity from God the Son and God the Father, and He was revealed that way in the Old Testament as well as in the New. Furthermore, not only is He a separate entity, but He is fully God—He is fully equal to God the Father and God the Son.
- B. In order for you to grasp some of this material, you will need to know two Hebrew words: *ʿēlōhîm*² (אֱלֹהִים) [pronounced *el-o-HEEM*], which means *gods* or *God*. This word can refer to the Godhead or to foreign gods. Context determines the correct application. We will often use the more common transliteration, *Elohim*. Strong's #430 BDB #43. When referring to a specific member of the Trinity, we have the name YHWH (יהוה) [pronunciation *unknown*], but this is rendered variously as *Jehovah*, *Yahweh*, *Y^ehowah*. This name refers specifically to one member of the Trinity, Whose identify is sometimes known by the context of the passage. Strong's #3068 Strong's #3069 BDB #217.
- C. I should add that, because of the nature of this material, there will be a lot of overlap between this and the **Doctrine of the Trinity**.
- D. Now, what you must understand is that the three members of the Trinity, although they are co-equal and co-eternal, have different functions. The primary function of the Holy Spirit in the New Testament is to glorify Jesus Christ.
1. For the disciples, the Holy Spirit would bring to mind all of the things which Jesus Christ taught. **“But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, Whom the Father will send in My name, He will teach you all things and He will bring to your remembrance all that I have said to you.”** (John 14:26). By application, the Holy Spirit guides us when it comes to learning and understanding doctrine. Apart from the Holy Spirit, God's Word remains a complete and total mystery.
 2. The Holy Spirit has a three-fold ministry to the church, as expressed by our Lord in John 16:7–11: **“But I tell you the truth, 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 go, I will send Him to you. And He, when He has arrived, will convict the world concerning sin, and righteousness, and judgment: concerning sin, because they do not believe in Me; and concerning righteousness, because I go to the Father and you no longer behold Me; and concerning judgment, because the ruler of this world has been judged.”**
 3. The focus of the ministry of the Holy Spirit on earth during the Church Age is to glorify Jesus Christ. That is, the work and suffering of our Lord is to be brought to the forefront, so that we fully understand that what He has done on our behalf is the central issue of this life. **“[The Spirit of Truth will glorify Me, for he will take of Mine and he will disclose it to you.]”** (John 16:14). As an aside, when you go into a church and the Holy Spirit is (supposedly) being glorified, then you know that you are **not** witnessing the work of the Holy Spirit. Nowhere in Scripture do we have the Holy Spirit glorifying His Own power and glory.
 4. The important thing to recognize in all of this, is that the Holy Spirit is never spoken of as some sort of an impersonal power, or some force; he is referred to always as a *Person*, and never to as a *thing*. For those who watched any *Star Wars* movies, *the force* was always presented as some ethereal force that was out there for one to lay a hold of, but it is never as a person. In Scripture, the Holy Spirit is referred to in quite the opposite way—He is more than just some impersonal (or even personal) force to be mystically obtained through some vaguely-defined, religious process.
- E. Because the ministry of the Holy Spirit is not to glorify Himself, His deity and person are not quite as perspicuous in the Old and New Testaments as say, the Deity of our Lord, but they are there and not difficult to find.

II. Objections to the Deity of the Holy Spirit:

- A. Jewish theologians point to Deut. 6:4, where it reads: **“Hear, O Israel: Y^ehowah is our God— Y^ehowah is One!”** The word for *one* found here is the same one found in Gen. 2:24, where the man and the woman become *one* flesh. The word is *ʿechâd* (אֶחָד) [pronounced *eh-KHAWD*] and it means *one, first*,

¹ I should acknowledge my indebtedness to L.S. Chafer and R.B. Thieme Jr. for their tremendous work in theology, upon which much of this work is based, if not always directly, then as a result of their excellent teaching ministries.

² Since this is so commonly referred to in reference books, we will use the designation *Elohim* as well.

but it can also mean a *composite unity*. Strong's #259 BDB #25. Our Lord used the Greek equivalent when He announced to His disciples, "I and the Father are One." (John 10:30).

- B. Throughout the Old Testament, the exclusivity of God is proclaimed. "To you it was shown that you might know that Jehovah, He is God—there is no other besides Him." (Deut. 4:35). "For Jehovah your God is the God of gods and the Lord of lords, the great, the mighty and the awesome God Who does not sow partiality, nor does He take a bribe." (Deut. 10:17). "Thus says Jehovah, the King of Israel, and His Redeemer, Jehovah of hosts; I am the first and I am the last, and there is no God besides Me...Have I not long since announced it to you and declared it? And you are My witnesses. Is there any God besides Me, or is there any Rock besides Me? I know of none!" (Isa. 44:6, 8b). Thus said Jehovah to Cyrus, His anointed, "I am Jehovah, and there is no other besides Me; there is no God...Who has announced this from of old? Who has long since declared it? Is it not I, Jehovah? And there is no other God besides Me, a righteous God and a Savior—there is none except Me. Turn to me and be saved, all the ends of the earth; for I am God, and there is no other." (Isa. 45:1a, 5a, 21b–22; see also Isa. 46:9–10). We even have this in the New Testament: "For there is salvation in no one else; for there is no other name under heaven that has been given among men, by which we must be saved." (Acts 4:12). What is important to grasp here, is that the exclusivity of God and the Trinity are not mutually exclusive concepts. There is One God and only One God—the Triune God, God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit. The gods of other religions are not simply different names for the same Person(s). They are false gods, and generally gods who are storefronts, as it were, for demons. Furthermore, there is only one Jesus Christ, our only Savior; and apart from Him, there is no other. Just because God the Son took our punishment, this does not preclude the Deity of the Holy Spirit. Again, these are not mutually exclusive concepts.
- C. The third primary objection, voiced mostly by cults (in fact, the only one that I can recall here is the old Armstrong cult, which, insofar as I know, has lost its power and influence; even their old college has become fundamental and evangelical). The old Armstrong cult (called the Worldwide Church of God, if I recall correctly) taught the deity of God the Father and of Jesus Christ, but taught that the Spirit of God was merely some sort of force emanating from either God the Son or God the Father. Therefore, I will deal with this briefly: the functions of the members of the Trinity are different, and therefore the presentations of their persons is different. God the Father is not seen nor felt; He is primarily credited for the planning of the events of the universe (e.g., salvation). God the Son is both seen and felt, and He has always been the visible member of the Trinity, the revealed member of the Godhead. He was the One who actually sculpted man out of clay in Gen. 2:7, and appeared to Moses as the burning bush in Ex. 3:2–6). He is the One Who came unto His own and His own knew Him not (John 1:11). Finally, the Holy Spirit is the person of the Trinity often referred to as being felt but not seen. The purpose of the Holy Spirit is to glorify Jesus Christ (among other things); therefore, you will not find Him glorifying Himself in Scripture or in our lives (and the glorification of the Holy Spirit that you find in holy roller churches is straight out of the pit of hell; they are not glorifying the Spirit of God, but they are glorifying the spirit of Satan and his demon cadre). Bob Thieme made an analogy between the trinity and the three characteristics of light. The reason he used light to illustrate the Trinity is I John 1:5, which reads: **And this is the message we have heard from Him and announce to you: that god is light, and in Him there is no darkness at all.** Light is actinic, which is neither seen nor felt; it is luminiferous, which is both seen and felt; and it is calorific, which is not seen, but it is felt.³ The point here is that the members of the Trinity are presented somewhat differently because they have different functions and responsibilities.

III. In the Old Testament:

- A. The Trinity is mentioned throughout the Old Testament. In Gen. 1:1, we have the noun Elohim, which is plural for God. In Gen. 1:2 we have the Spirit of God warming the waters of the earth (melting the ice which apparently surrounded the earth) and in Gen. 1:26, we have God saying, "Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our pattern."
- B. We have all three members of the Trinity in Psalm 23:2–3: "The Spirit of Jehovah spoke by me and His word was on my tongue. The God of Israel said, The Rock of Israel spoke to me, He who rules over men righteously, Who rules in the fear-respect of God."

³ Bob has taught this many times; this was quoted and/or paraphrased from R. B. Thieme, *The Trinity*; ©1975; p. 14. He also mentions the analogy of time (past, present and future), the egg and chalk (CaCO₃). Since I am not dealing specifically with the Trinity, I will not go into any more detail here, but recommend to you this booklet.

- C. That God the Holy Spirit is a separate entity is presented in several places in the Old Testament, but one of the most clear is in Isa. 48:16, where we have the trinity mentioned: “Come near to Me, listen to this: From the first I have not spoken in secret; from the time it took place, I was there. And now the Lord Y^ehowah has sent Me, and His Spirit.”
- D. Isaiah mentions all three members in Isa. 63:7–10, as well: I will be caused to remember the grace of Jehovah and the glories of Jehovah according to all the Jehovah has given us and the great goodness toward the house of Israel, which He has granted them according to His compassion and according to the multitude of His grace. For He said, “Surely, they are My people, Sons who will not deal falsely.” So he became their Savior. In all their affliction, He was afflicted and the Angel of His presence delivered them. In His love and in His grace, He redeemed them, and He lifted them and carried them all the days of old. However, they rebelled, and they grieved His Holy Spirit. Therefore, He turned Himself to become their enemy. He fought against them.
- E. In our passage, Judges 14–16, we have the phrase *the Spirit of Y^ehowah came upon him* (Samson) (Judges 14:19 15:14), and Samson uses this power and strength to kill 1000 Philistines in the latter reference. In our passage, *Y^ehowah departed from upon him* (Samson). We are dealing with the exact same preposition, the same man Samson, and the same Person Who comes upon Samson and, in the end, departs from upon Samson. This makes the Spirit of God equivalent to Y^ehowah in this passage.

IV. In the New Testament:

- A. The Holy Spirit played an integral part in the conception of Mary, a virgin, of the Christ child (Luke 1:35).
- B. Our Lord commanded His disciples: “Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit.” (Matt. 28:19).
- C. The Holy Spirit reveals to Simeon that he will not die until seeing the Messiah, he holds the baby Jesus in his arms and effectively calls the Holy Spirit *Lord* in Luke 2:25–29.
- D. Ananias and Sapphira are said to lie to the Holy Spirit in Acts 5:3 and to God in Acts 5:4.
- E. The Holy Spirit is called the Comforter of the Church in Acts 9:31 (as well as many other places), and Paul begins the second letter to the Corinthians with: Blessed be God and father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies and God of all comfort (II Cor. 1:3).
- F. The Holy Spirit directs Paul and the others where and where not to preach (Acts 16:6–7) and God is said to do the same thing in Acts 16:10.
- G. God gave Timothy his gift of pastor-teacher (II Tim. 1:6), and God appoints the various spiritual gifts to the Church (I Cor. 12:28–30). These gifts are called the manifestation of the Spirit in I Cor. 12:7 and the same Spirit distributes the gifts of God (I Cor. 12:8–11).
- H. The Spirit of God baptizes us into one body (I Cor. 12:12) and God is said to place us into this body in I Cor. 12:18.
- I. Scripture is said to be inspired by God (actually, *God-breathed*) in II Tim. 3:16 and writers of Scripture are said to be moved by the Holy Spirit in II Peter 1:21.
- J. God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit are spoken of in the same passage as a doxology: *The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit, be with you all* (II Cor. 13:14).
- K. All three members of the Trinity are also mentioned in Acts 2:33 I Peter 1:2–3.
- L. Since two members of the Trinity are mentioned in II Thess. 3:5, that leaves the third member of the Trinity, the Holy Spirit, to be the one referred to as *Lord*. *And may the Lord direct your hearts into the love of God and into the steadfastness of Christ* (II Thess. 3:5).

V. When the testaments are compared:

- A. The Holy Spirit calls Himself Jehovah when Heb. 3:7–9 is compared to Ex. 17:7. Heb. 3:7–9: *Therefore, just as the Holy Spirit says, “Today, if you hear His voice, do not harden your hearts as when they provoked Me as in the day of trial in the wilderness. Where your fathers tried [Me] by testing [Me] and say My works for forty years. Therefore, I was disgusted with this generation and I said, ‘They always go astray in their heart and the did not know My ways.’ As I swore in My wrath, ‘They will not enter into My rest.’”* (Psalm 95:7–11). In Ex. 17:7, we read: *And he [Moses] named the place Massah and Meribah because of the quarrel of the sons of Israel and because they tested Jehovah, saying, “Is Jehovah among us or not?”*

- B. In Num. 12:6, Jehovah says that if there is a prophet among the sons of Israel, then He will make Himself known to that prophet in a dream or vision. In II Peter 1:21, prophecy did not originate from the will of man, but men who **were Moved by the Holy Spirit spoke from God.**
- C. The sons of Israel are said to rebel against the Most High, Jehovah, in Psalm 78:17–21, and they are said to have been rebelling against the Holy Spirit in Acts 7:51.
- D. In Isa. 6:8–9, we read: **Then I heard the voice of Y^ehowah, saying, “Whom shall I sent and Who will go for Us?” Then I said, “Here am I, send me!” And then He said, “Go, and tell this people: ‘Keep on listening, but do not perceive; keep on looking, but do not understand.’”** Acts 28:25–26 reads: **And when they did not agree with one another, they began leaving after Paul had spoken one parting word. “The Holy Spirit spoke through Isaiah the prophet to your fathers, saying, ‘Go to this people and say, you will keep on hearing, but you will not understand. And you will keep on seeing, but you will not perceive.’”** The voice of Jehovah told Isaiah what to say in the Old Testament, and, in the New, the Holy Spirit speaks through Isaiah.
- E. Jer. 31:31–34 reads: **“Behold, days are coming,” declares Y^ehowah, “When I will make the new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah, not like the covenant which I made with their fathers in the day I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt. My covenant which they broke, although I was a husband to them,” declares Y^ehowah. “But this is the covenant which I will make with the house of Israel after those days,” declares Y^ehowah, “I will put My law within them and on their heart I will write it, and I will be their God, and they will be My people. And they will not teach again each man to his neighbor and each man to his brother, saying ‘Know Y^ehowah,’ for they will all know Me, from the least of them to the greatest of them,” declares Y^ehowah, “For I will forgive their iniquity, and their sins I will remember no more.”** In Heb. 10:15–16, we read: **And the Holy Spirit also bears witness to us; for after saying, “This is the covenant that I will make with them: After those days, says the Lord, I will put My laws upon their heart and the upon their mind I will write them. And their sins and their lawless deeds, I will remember no more.”**
- VI. **From the standpoint of Divine Attributes:**⁴
- A. **Introduction:** If the Holy Spirit has the same attributes as God the Father and God the Son, then it could be reasonably asserted that He is co-equal with those two members of the Trinity, and therefore completely and totally God.
- B. The Holy Spirit is **eternal**. In Heb. 9:14, we read: **How much more will the blood of Christ, Who, through the eternal Spirit, offered Himself without blemish to God, cleanse your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?** You will notice how the focus of Scripture is, as we would expect, upon the Person and Work of Christ Jesus; however, slipped into this passage is the fact that God the Holy Spirit is eternal.
- C. The Holy Spirit is **omnipotent**.
1. Psalm 33:6 poetically involves the second and the third Persons of the Trinity in creation of the universe. **By the Word of Y^ehowah the heavens were made and by the Spirit (or, breath) of His mouth, all their host** [i.e., the stars]. The *Word of Y^ehowah* is, of course, Jesus Christ (John 1:1–14); and His breath is the Holy Spirit (The Hebrew word for *Spirit* is the same as the one for *breath*).
 2. The Spirit of God was involved in the restoration of the earth (Gen. 1:2 Psalm 104:30b).
 3. The Holy Spirit is not simply powerful, but He does what we cannot do. It is through the power of the Holy Spirit that Christ was raised from the dead (Acts 2:32 Gal. 1:1 I Peter 3:18).
 4. When God breathes His Spirit into man, he is born, or made alive (Gen. 2:7 Psalm 104:30a).
 5. See also Luke 1:35 Rom. 15:19
- D. The Holy Spirit is **omnipresent**. The psalmist writes: **Where can I go from Your Spirit? Or where can I flee from Your presence? IF I ascend to heaven, You are there; if I make my bed in Sheol, observe, You are there. If I take the wings of the dawn, if I dwell in the remotest part of the sea, even there, You hand will lead me and your right hand will lay hold of me** (Psalm 139:7–10). Now certainly a detractor from God’s Word could argue here that Who is being spoken of the Jehovah God, and that is absolutely true. However, God’s Spirit and God’s person are both spoken of as things from which the psalmist

⁴ For this point, I depended heavily upon Lewis Sperry Chafer, *Systematic Theology; Vol. I*; abridged edition, Victor Books, ©1984, pp. 246–247.

could not flee. Even if the final few sentences refer to the presence of Jehovah, our simple understanding of the passage means that what is said applies to both God the Holy Spirit and to God.⁵

- E. The Holy Spirit is **omniscient**. The Holy Spirit knows both the thoughts of man and the thoughts of God. **For to us God revealed [these things] through the Spirit; for the Spirit searches all things, even the depths of God. For who among men knows the thoughts of a man except the spirit of the man, which is in him? Even so, the thoughts of God, no one knows except the Spirit of God (I Cor. 2:10–11).**
- F. God's attribute of **Divine Love** is attributed to the fruit of the Spirit in Gal 5:22.
- G. The Holy Spirit is called *the Lord* in II Cor. 3:17. Paul is explaining how believers were under a new covenant in Christ, and he wrote: **But to this day, whenever Moses is read, a veil lies over their heart. But whenever a man turns to the Lord, the veil is taken away. Now the Lord is the Spirit; and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty. But we all, with unveiled face beholding, as in a mirror, the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory, just as from the Lord, the Spirit (II Cor. 3:15–18 Ex. 34:34).**
- H. Finally, the very title of *Holy Spirit*, found throughout Scripture, implies the perfection and righteousness which belongs to God.

VII. From the standpoint of the Trinity:

- A. **Introduction:** Much of this is going to appear to be repetitive; however, we are now approaching this material from a different standpoint. There are some things in this life and in the Angelic conflict that are so important that all three members of the trinity are involved. That is what we will examine here. The key is that the most important things of this life require all three members of the Trinity. Insofar as I know, this approach to the deity of the Holy Spirit (and of our Lord Jesus Christ) has not been dealt with as directly as I have done here by anyone else.
- B. The creation of the heavens and the earth. The triune God (Gen. 1:1 Psalm 104:1–5); God the Father (Psalm 33:9); Jesus Christ (Psalm 33:6a John 1:1:1–3, 10); God the Holy Spirit (Psalm 33:6b)
- C. The restoration of the earth. The Triune God (Gen. 1:3–25 104:6–9); God the Father (Psalm 33:9); God the Son (John 1:10); the Holy Spirit (Gen. 1:2 Psalm 104:30b).
- D. The creation of man. The Triune God (Gen. 1:26–27); God the Son (Gen. 2:7a); God the Holy Spirit (Gen. 2:7b Job 33:4⁶).
- E. The life of Christ Jesus on this earth. Jesus, the Son of God, obviously lived His life. However, this was lived in accordance with the plan of God the Father (Psalm 40:7–9 John 4:34 Heb. 10:7) and with the approval of God the Father (Matt. 17:5 Mark 9:7), as well as under the ministry of God the Holy Spirit (Matt. 4:1 Luke 4:1).
- F. The salvation of man. God the Father (John 1:13); Christ Jesus (John 1:12 I Pet. 3:18); and the Holy Spirit (John 3:5–6 I John 5:4). God the Father planned our salvation (Eph. 3:11); Jesus Christ is the object of our faith in salvation (Psalm 32:10 John 3:36 6:28–29 14:1), being the only mediator between God and man (Acts 4:12 I Tim. 2:5); and the Holy Spirit reveals this salvation to us (John 15:26 16:7–11). The securing of our salvation through faith in Christ also means that we have believed in God the Father (John 12:44–45).
- G. All three members of the Trinity indwell the believer: God the Father (John 14:23); God the Son (John 14:20, 23 15:4 17:23); and God the Holy Spirit (John 14:16–17 Rom. 8:9 I Cor. 3:16 Gal. 4:6).
- H. The plan of God for man. Jesus Christ is in charge of Phase One, salvation (Rom. 5:6–8); the Holy Spirit of Phase Two, which is the believer in time (John 16:13–14 I Cor. 2:10); and God the Father is in charge of Phase Three, the believer in eternity (John 14:1–2).
- I. All three members of the Trinity are involved in our sanctification, or setting apart to God. There are three phases of sanctification (1) our sanctification at salvation; (2) our daily sanctification as a believer; and (3) ultimate sanctification, at our death. Since this is pretty much analogous to the previous point, we will just deal with sanctification in general (which incorporates all three): God the Father (I Thess. 4:3); God the Son (I Cor. 1:2, 30 Heb. 10:14); God the Holy Spirit (II Thess. 2:13 Heb. 10:15 I Peter 1:2).
- J. All three members of the Trinity send out ministers: God the Father (I Tim. 1:1); God the Son (Matt. 10:5 28:19); God the Holy Spirit (Acts 13:2, 4 6:6–7 20:28).

⁵ It is actually less clear whether we are speaking of God the Holy Spirit or of God the Son.

⁶ If your translation reads *breath*, this is the word for *Spirit* in the Hebrew.

- K. The raising of Christ from the dead: God the Father (Matt. 22:29 John 5:21 Acts 2:24 3:15 Eph. 1:20 Col. 2:12); God the Son (John 2:9 5:28–29 6:39–40 10:18); God the Holy Spirit (Rom. 8:11 I Pet. 3:18).
 - L. The Holy Scriptures. The Bible is the mind of Christ (Col. 2:16). Those whose writings were recorded as a part of Scripture were moved by the Holy Spirit (Acts 28:25 Heb. 3:7 II Peter 1:21). God the Father first communicated His Word through the prophets (Old Testament Scripture) and more recently through His Son (Heb. 1:1–2). The Bible is revealed to us by God the Holy Spirit (John 14:26 15:13 I Cor. 2:10–14). Let me add what Chafer wrote: *No limited being whether god or man could have inspired the Scriptures, and the nature and fact of the inspiration of Scripture testifies to the deity of the Holy Spirit.*⁷
- VIII. **Conclusion:** Such an important doctrine should not rest upon two or three Scriptures, and I have shown you in 5+ pages that it does not. For the cults that believe that the Holy Spirit is not fully God, they may have a slick explanation for each and every verse—however, what they do not have is any verse which represents God the Holy Spirit as being anything less than God.

⁷ Lewis Sperry Chafer, *Systematic Theology; Vol. ;* abridged edition, Victor Books, ©1984, p. 248.