

Is the Holy Spirit God?

Most of the Christian world believes the Holy Spirit to be the third member of a three person Trinity, referred to as "God the Holy Spirit." Others believe the Holy Spirit is just a power or an influence from God. Or that it is the presence of God Himself through His own Spirit. But what does the Bible have to say? There are many theories and opinions in the Christian world, but there is only one truth. Only by prayer and careful studying of the scriptures with an unbiased mind can God ever lead us to the truth.

1. What is the Holy Spirit?

In the Bible the ancient Hebrew word for spirit is "rûach" in the Old Testament. In the New Testament Greek, it is "pneuma". Both of these words mean breath or wind. But who or what exactly is the Holy Spirit?

When studying such an important topic as to the nature of God and the Holy Spirit, there is one thing that we must understand. There are some things that God has not revealed to us:

"The secret things belong to the LORD our God, but the things revealed belong to us and to our children forever, so that we may follow all the words of this law."
(Deuteronomy 29:29)

One thing that God has not revealed to us is: What exactly is the Holy Spirit? Ellen White had this to say about the Holy Spirit:

"It is not essential for us to be able to define just what the Holy Spirit is. Christ tells us that the Spirit is the Comforter, the Spirit of truth, which proceedeth from the Father..."

"The nature of the Holy Spirit is a mystery. Men cannot explain it, because the Lord has not revealed it to them. Men having fanciful views may bring together passages of Scripture and put a human construction on them, but the acceptance of these views will not strengthen the church. Regarding such mysteries, which are too deep for human understanding, silence is golden." (Ellen G. White, The Acts of the Apostles, p. 51).

So, the nature of the Holy Spirit is a mystery; however, the source and identity of the Holy Spirit is not a mystery.

The source:

We know that God the Father (Jehovah) is the source of all things;

"For from Him and through Him and to Him are all things. To Him be the glory forever! Amen. " (Romans 11:36)

therefore, the Holy Spirit comes from God.

"And I will no longer hide My face from them, for **I will pour out My Spirit** on the house of Israel, declares the Lord GOD." (Ezekiel 39:29)

"But when the Comforter is come, whom / will send unto you **from the Father**, even **the Spirit of Truth, which proceedeth from the Father**, He shall testify of Me." (John 15:26-27)

"Exalted, then, 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)

"Anyone, then, who rejects this command does not reject man **but God, the very One who gives you His Holy Spirit.**" (1 Thessalonians 4:8)

The Bible clearly reveals the source of the Holy Spirit as coming from God the Father.

The Identity:

In the Bible, when the "spirit" of a person is mentioned, it is always referring to the nonphysical attributes of that person, their thoughts, emotions, and will:

"And it came to pass in the morning that **his spirit was troubled**; and he sent and called for all the magicians of Egypt, and all the wise men thereof: and Pharaoh told them his dream; but there was none that could interpret them unto Pharaoh." (Genesis 41:8)

"And Hannah answered, "No, my lord, **I am a woman of a sorrowful spirit.** / have neither drunk wine nor strong drink, but have poured out my soul before the LORD." (11 Samuel 1:15)

It is understood that a person's spirit is himself, not another individual. Likewise, when the Spirit of the Lord or the Spirit of God is mentioned in the Bible, it is also referring to God's spiritual attributes, His thoughts, emotions, and will; not to a separate individual or being.

The Bible itself makes this distinction:

"For who knows a person's thoughts except the spirit of that person, which is in him? So also, **no one comprehends the thoughts of God except the Spirit of God.**" (1 Corinthians 2:1)

2. Is "God the Holy Spirit" Biblical?

The short answer is no. In order for a religious doctrine to be "sola scriptura" or the Bible and the Bible alone, there needs to be a clear passage in scripture a, "Thus sayeth the Lord." that confirms that doctrine. There is; however, no verse in the Bible that refers to, "God the Holy Spirit."

The Bible does mention: the Spirit of the Lord, the Spirit of God, and His Spirit, over 68 times. These texts clearly identify the Holy Spirit as belonging to God, but **not** as God the Holy Spirit.

From the Old Testament:

"And the **Spirit of God** moved upon the face of the waters." (Genesis 1:2)

"The Spirit of God has made me, and the breath of the Almighty gives me life."
(Job 33:4)

"Who hath directed the **Spirit of the LORD**, or being His counsellor hath taught Him?" (Isaiah 40:13)

"Here is My Servant, whom I uphold, My Chosen One, in whom My soul delights. **I will put My Spirit on Him**, and He will bring justice to the nations." (Isaiah 42:1)

"The **Spirit of the Lord GOD** is upon Me; because the LORD hath anointed Me to preach good tidings unto the meek; He hath sent Me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound." (Isaiah 61:1)

"But truly I am full of power by the **Spirit of the LORD**, and of judgment, and of might, to declare unto Jacob his transgression, and to Israel his sin." (Micah 3:8)

The New Testament also identifies the Spirit as belonging to God:

"For it is not you who speak, but the **Spirit of your Father** who speaks in you."
(Matthew 10:20)

"The **Spirit of the Lord** is upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor; he hath sent me to heal the brokenhearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised." (Luke 4:18)

"And it shall come to pass in the last days, saith God, I will pour out of **my Spirit** upon all flesh: and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams: And on my servants and on my handmaidens / will pour out in those days of **my Spirit**, and they shall prophesy." (Acts 2:17-18)

"But God has revealed them to us by **His Spirit**, for the Spirit searches all things-even the deep things of God." (1 Corinthians 2:10)

There are many, many other examples too numerous to list here, Scripture clearly shows that the Holy Spirit is the Spirit of God Himself (the Father). It is His Spirit. It is

Holy because God is Holy. Not once in all of God's Holy Word is it ever referred to as "God the Holy Spirit", or as part of a three in one trinity.

3. Is Jesus the Holy Spirit?

As the literal and only begotten Son of God, Jesus also has the Holy Spirit. He received this divine attribute from His Father through inheritance. This is why the Holy Spirit can also be called the "Spirit of Christ" because it is one Spirit shared by the Father and His Son.

"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)

"For in **one Spirit** we were all baptized into one body, whether Jews or Greeks, slave or free, and we were all given one Spirit to drink." (1 Corinthians 12:13)

"For through Him we both have access to the Father by **one Spirit**." (Ephesians 2:18)

The New Testament repeatedly refers to the Holy Spirit as the Spirit of Jesus:

"And when they came to the border of Mysia, they tried to enter Bithynia, but **the Spirit of Jesus** would not permit them." (Acts 16:7)"

"Now **the Lord is that Spirit**: and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty." (2 Corinthians 3:17)

"And because you are sons, God sent **the Spirit of His Son** into your hearts, crying out, "Abba Father!" (Galatians 4:6)

"Because I know that through your prayers and the provision of **the Spirit of Jesus Christ**, my distress will turn out for my deliverance." (Philippians 1:19)

"Concerning this salvation, the prophets who foretold the grace to come to you searched and investigated carefully, trying to determine the time and setting to which **the Spirit of Christ in them** was pointing when He predicted the sufferings of Christ and the glories to follow." (1 Peter 1:10-11)

Once again, the Spirit of Prophecy through Ellen White has given us additional clarity on the Holy Spirit being the Spirit of Jesus Christ.

"The Holy Spirit is the Spirit of Christ; it is His representative." (Ellen White, 13 MR 313.3, 1895)

"Christ has left His Holy Spirit to be His representative in the world, " (Ellen White, Lt84, October 22, 1895)

"The Holy Spirit is the Spirit of Christ, which is sent to all men to give them sufficiency," (Ellen White, 14MR 84.3)

"We want the Holy Spirit, which is Jesus Christ." (Ellen White, Lt 66, April 10, 1894)

"The Holy Spirit, which proceeds from the only Begotten Son of God, binds the human agent, body, soul, and spirit, to the perfect, divine-human nature of Christ." (Ellen White, Review and Herald, April 5, 1906, par. 16)

"But it is the leaven of the Spirit of Jesus Christ, which is sent down from heaven, called the Holy Ghost." (Ellen White, Ms 36-1891)

As followers of Christ, we are also able to partake of this divine nature through the indwelling Spirit of Jesus Christ:

"Through the Spirit the believer becomes a partaker of the divine nature. **Christ has given His Spirit** as a divine power to overcome all hereditary and cultivated tendencies to evil, and to impress His own character upon His church." (Ellen White, Desire of Ages, 671.2)

The Bible confirms the indwelling Spirit of God through His Son Jesus:

"Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that **the Spirit of God dwelleth in you?**" (1 Corinthians 3:16)

"Those controlled by the flesh cannot please God. You, however, are controlled not by the flesh, but by the Spirit, if **the Spirit of God lives in you**. And if anyone does not have **the Spirit of Christ**, he does not belong to Christ." (Romans 8:8,9)

"To them God has chosen to make known among the Gentiles the glorious riches of this mystery, which is **Christ in you**, the hope of glory." (Colossians 1:27)

"Behold, I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears My voice and opens the door, **I will come in** and dine with him, and he with Me." (Revelation 3:20)

"Jesus answered and said unto him, If a man love me, he will keep my words: and my Father will love him, and **We will come unto him, and make Our abode with him.**" (John 14:23)

"When He had said this, He breathed on them and said, **"Receive the Holy Spirit."** (John 20:22)

Look at the example above where Jesus breathed the Holy Spirit into the disciples. Here, He was not breathing into them the third member of the Trinity, He was breathing into them of His own Spirit (breath) which He had received from His Father. He was giving of Himself. This is the very symbolism of eating the bread and drinking the wine at the Lord's Supper, which represents accepting the indwelling Spirit of Christ.

When we accept Jesus in to our hearts it is His Spirit, which He received from the Father, that dwells within us:

"For as many as are led by **the Spirit of God**, they are sons of God. For ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear; but ye have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father." (Romans 8:14 -15)

"What? Know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, and ye are not your own? For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's." (1 Corinthians 6:19-20)

"I ask that out of the riches of His glory He may strengthen you with power through **His Spirit in your inner being**, so that **Christ may dwell in your hearts** through faith. Then you, being rooted and grounded in love, will have power, together with all the saints, to comprehend the length and width and height and depth of the love of Christ, and to know this love that surpasses knowledge, **that you may be filled with all the fullness of God**. (Ephesians 3:16-19)

"For I know that this shall turn to my salvation through your prayer, and the supply of **the Spirit of Jesus Christ**, According to my earnest expectation and my hope, that in nothing I shall be ashamed, but that with all boldness, as always, so now also **Christ shall be magnified in my body**, whether it be by life, or by death." (Philippians 1:19-20)

"And this is His commandment: that we should believe in the name of His Son, Jesus Christ, and we should love one another just as He commanded us. Whoever keeps His commandments remains in God, and **God in him**. And by this we know that **He remains in us: by the Spirit He has given us**." (1 John 3:23-24)

4. Who is the Comforter?

Jesus promised to send His disciples a Comforter after leaving them and ascending to His Father in heaven, since He would no longer be in their presence physically.

"But **the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost**, whom the Father will send in my name, He shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you." (John 14:26)

"Nevertheless / tell you the truth; It is expedient for you that I go away: for if I go not away, **the Comforter** will not come unto you; but if I depart, / will send him unto you." (John 16:7)

Jesus Himself tells us who the Comforter (Holy Spirit) is:

"And / will pray the Father, and He shall give you another Comforter, that He may abide with you forever: Even the Spirit of Truth; whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him: but ye know him; for he dwelleth with you, and shall be in you. I will not leave you comfortless: **I will come to you.**" (John 14:17-18)

Notice how Jesus finishes this thought with "I will come to you". Did Jesus say "God the Holy Spirit will come to you"? No, Jesus promises, "I will come to you."

Ellen White also clearly identifies who the Comforter is:

"The reason why churches are so weak and sickly and ready to die, is that the enemy has brought influences of a discouraging nature to bear up trembling souls. **He has sought to shut Jesus from their view as the Comforter**, as one who reproves, who warns, who admonishes them, saying, "This is the way, walk ye in it." (Ellen White, Review and Herald, August 26, 1890, p. 514, par. 2)

"The Saviour is our Comforter. This I have proved Him to be." (Ellen White, Manuscript Releases, vol 8 page 49)

"Christ is everything to those who receive Him. **He is their Comforter**" (Ellen White, Manuscript Releases, vol 21, page 372)

"There is no Comforter like Christ... the influence of the Holy Spirit is the life of Christ in the soul." (Ellen White, Review and Herald October 26)

"Christ is our guide and Comforter who comforts us in all our tribulations." (Ellen White, Letter 65, 1894)

"Jesus said He would give us the Comforter. [John 14:16.] **What is the Comforter? It is the Holy Spirit of God.** What is the Holy Spirit? **It is the representative of Jesus Christ**, it is our advocate that stands by our side and places our petitions before the Father all fragrant with His merits." (Ellen. White, Letters and Manuscripts, vol 9, M 43, 1894, par. 31)

"After His ascension He was to be absent in person; but **through the Comforter He would still be with them**, and they were not to spend their time in mourning. This was what Satan wanted. He desired them to give the world the impression that they had been deceived and disappointed; but by faith they were to look to

the sanctuary above, where Jesus was ministering for them; they were to open their hearts to the Holy Spirit, His representative, and to rejoice in the light of His presence." (Desire of Ages, p. 277)

So, the promised Comforter in the Gospel of John, is none other than the Spirit of Jesus which dwells within all of those who keep the commandments of God and who have accepted Jesus as their Lord and Savior.

Jesus had to leave the disciples in order to return to them in the form of the Comforter at Pentecost, after He had been glorified and reclaimed the power that He had laid aside during His incarnation here on earth.

"Cumbered with humanity, Christ could not be in every place personally. Therefore, it was for their interest that He should go to the Father, and send the Spirit to be His successor on earth. No one could then have any advantage because of his location or his personal contact with Christ. **By the Spirit the Saviour would be accessible to all.** In this sense He would be nearer to them than if He had not ascended on high." (The Desire of Ages, p. 669 par. 2)

What an incredible thought that Jesus Christ Himself will literally come to us and live in us. This should give us a much greater appreciation for the plan of salvation, knowing that the One True God is living within us through the saving power of His Son. What an honor that truly is!

5. Is the Holy Spirit a Person?

Since the Holy Spirit is the spiritual essence of God (part of God), it can exhibit all of the same attributes of a person that God can including: being grieved, lied to, teach, comfort, instruct, etc. Just like the spirit of a human can be lifted, troubled, sad, etc., so can God's Spirit experience all of these things. This does not make it a different being, any more than it would for the spirit of a human to be a separate being.

The difference is that God's Spirit is omnipresent and can operate independently from Him, thus it can take on all of the attributes of a person.

"Where can I go to escape Your Spirit? Where can I flee from Your presence?" (Psalms 139:7)

"Can any hide himself in secret places that I shall not see him? saith the LORD. **Do not I fill heaven and earth?** saith the LORD. " (Jeremiah 23:24)

Thus, God is everywhere present by His representative, the Holy Spirit.

Jesus received this divine Spirit from His Father and is also able to be everywhere present due to the omnipresent nature of His Spirit:

"The Holy Spirit is Himself (Christ) divested of the personality of humanity and independent thereof. **He would represent Himself as present in all places by His Holy Spirit, as the Omnipresent.** (Ellen G. White, 10LtMs, Lt 119, 1895, par. 18)

He has given His Spirit as a divine power here on earth while His physical form remains at the right hand of the Father in the Most Holy Place of the heavenly sanctuary.

"Sin could be resisted and overcome only through the mighty agency of the Third Person of the Godhead, who would come with no modified energy, but in the fullness of divine power. It is the Spirit that makes effectual what has been wrought out by the world's Redeemer, It is by the Spirit that the heart is made pure. Through the Spirit the believer becomes a partaker of the divine nature. **Christ has given His Spirit as a divine power** to overcome all hereditary and cultivated tendencies to evil, and to impress His own character upon His church. (Ellen G. White, The Desire of Ages, p. 671)

The Holy Spirit is the omnipresent Spiritual attribute of Jesus divested of His physical form. This is how it is possible for Jesus to be in the Holy Sanctuary in heaven while at the same time, through His omnipresent Spirit, He can dwell within us as the Holy Spirit/Comforter here on earth.

6. Is this a Salvational Issue?

Many in the Christian faith including most Seventh Day Adventists will say that the identity of the Holy Spirit, or the belief in the Trinity is not a salvational issue. Once again, we must look to the inspired Word to determine if this is actually true.

Jesus said this when praying to His Father:

"Now **this is eternal life, that they may know You, the only true God**, and Jesus Christ, whom You have sent." (John 17:3)

Here, He clearly identifies His Father as the "Only True God" and that this knowledge, in addition to belief in Jesus as our savior, is essential to salvation or eternal life. It must also be noted here that belief in a trinity or third divine being is not required for salvation.

"Salvation belongs to our God who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb!"
(Revelation 7:10)

Again, we find that salvation belongs to God the Father and to His only begotten Son, the Lamb of God!

So why then is the correct identity of the Holy Spirit so important for salvation?

Because, it is through the lifegiving Spirit of Jesus dwelling within us, that we are saved on that last day.

"So it is written: "The first man Adam became a living being;" **the last Adam a life-giving spirit.**" (1 Corinthians 15:45)

"And if the Spirit of Him who raised Jesus from the dead is living in you, He who raised Christ Jesus from the dead **will also give life to your mortal bodies through His Spirit, who lives in you.**" (Romans 8:11)

It is through the indwelling Spirit of Christ that we are given eternal life at His second coming. If we reject the gift of Christ's Holy Spirit within us, in favor of a different unknown spirit, than Christ is unable to give us salvation from our sins through the redeeming power of His blood. This is what it means to "grieve" the Holy Spirit.

"And grieve not the Holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption." (Ephesians 4:30)

So having the Spirit of Christ dwell within us is a salvational issue, not believing in a third being called "God the Holy Spirit" which is a manmade title and not Biblical.

We are granted eternal life when we accept God as the Father and Jesus, His only begotten Son, as our Savior:

"And this is the record, that God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in his Son. He that hath the Son hath life; and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life." (1 John 5:11,12)

Those who deny the Sonship of Jesus to the Father make God out to be a liar for the Father has declared:

"This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." (Mathew 3:17)

"Whoever believes in the Son of God has this testimony within him; whoever does not believe God has made Him out to be a liar, because he has not believed in the testimony that God has given about His Son. And this is that testimony: God has given us eternal life, and this life is in His Son." (1 John 5:10,11)

Worse yet, the Bible tells us that it is the spirit of antichrist (against Christ) to deny the Father and the Son:

"Who is a liar but he who denies that Jesus is the Christ? **He is antichrist who denies the Father and the Son.** Whoever denies the Son does not have the Father either; he who acknowledges the Son has the Father also. Therefore let that abide in you which you heard from the beginning. If what you heard from the

beginning abides in you, you also will abide in the Son and in the Father. And **this is the promise that He has promised us-eternal life.**" (1 John 2:22 - 25)

"Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God: because many false prophets are gone out into the world. Hereby know ye the Spirit of God: **Every spirit that confesseth that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is of God: And every spirit that confesseth not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is not of God: and this is that spirit of antichrist,** whereof ye have heard that it should come; and even now already is it in the world." (1 John 4:1-6)

We must have the indwelling Spirit of Jesus within us (in our flesh), in order to have eternal life.

Jesus tells us that there is only one path to salvation:

"I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me." (John 14:6)

There is no other way. Jesus is our only Comforter and Mediator between us and the Father. We ask that you study the Word for yourself with prayer and readiness of mind, searching the scriptures daily, to see whether these things are true. God Bless.