

The Spirit of God
Week 3
The Personality of the Holy Spirit

LBC 8/10/03

Introduction:

Is the Holy Spirit an active Person, or is He an active force? False teachers, such as the Jehovah's Witnesses and Christadelphians, teach that the Holy Spirit neither a person nor God, but an impersonal 'active force' to achieve God's will, like electricity or radio waves. However, the Bible teaches plainly that The Holy Spirit is fully God and has personality.

The Holy Spirit has the three attributes of personality: mind, emotions and will. An 'active force' does not have personal attributes. The Holy Spirit of God is a person, as much as the Father and the Son are persons.

**** Here are 15 Scriptural proofs that the Holy Spirit is a Person:**

1. He has a mind.

Romans 8:27 "And he that searcheth the hearts knoweth what is the mind of the Spirit, because he maketh intercession for the saints according to the will of God."

1 Corinthians 2:11 "For what man knoweth the things of a man, save the spirit of man which is in him? even so the things of God knoweth no man, but the Spirit of God."

How can the Holy Spirit know the things of God if the Spirit does not have a mind? A force does not know things. To know requires a mind.

1 Corinthians 2:10 "But God hath revealed them unto us by his Spirit: for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God."

The Greek word for "searcheth" means to thoroughly investigate a matter, something only the mind of a person can do.

2. He has a will.

1 Corinthians 12:11 "But all these worketh that one and the selfsame Spirit, dividing to every man severally as he will."

The phrase "he will" in Greek means "a decision of the will after previous deliberation." The Holy Spirit chooses which gifts each believer receives. A force has no such will, nor ability to make decisions.

3. He forbids.

Acts 16:6, 7 "Now when they had gone throughout Phrygia and the region of Galatia, and were forbidden of the Holy Ghost to preach the word in Asia, After they were come to Mysia, they assayed to go into Bithynia: but the Spirit suffered them not."

When Paul and his helpers went to go into Asia and preach the Gospel, the Holy Spirit forbade them to do so. It was not His will at that time.

4. He commands.

Acts 11:12 “The Spirit bade me go with them, nothing doubting...”

The word “bade” means commanded; thus, the Holy Spirit commanded Peter to go to Caesarea and preach.

5. He speaks.

Acts 8:29 “Then the Spirit said unto Philip, Go near, and join thyself to this chariot.”

Revelation 2:7 “He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches; To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the tree of life, which is in the midst of the paradise of God.”

Acts 13:2 “As they ministered to the Lord, and fasted, the Holy Ghost said, Separate me Barnabas and Saul for the work whereunto I have called them.”

The Holy Spirit of God speaks to His people. Only a personality speaks, not an impersonal force. How does the Holy Ghost speak?

- a) He speaks through His Word.
 - b) He speaks through His men as they preach the Word.
 - c) He speaks to the heart of the Christian in a still, small voice.
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6. He testifies.

John 15:26 “But when the Comforter is come, whom I will send unto you from the Father, even the Spirit of truth, which proceedeth from the Father, he shall testify of me:”

The same Greek word for testify (or bear witness) used here is also used of:

- a) The disciples testifying about Christ in John 15:27.
- b) John the Baptist bearing witness to the truth in John 5:33.
- c) God the Father bearing witness to Cornelius’ (and the Gentiles’) conversion. (Acts 15:8)

Just as the disciples, John, and God the Father (who are all persons) testified or bore witness, so the Holy Spirit bears witness about Christ. A force cannot bear witness, only a person can. Also, the Holy Spirit bears witness in heaven and on earth - I John 5:7, 8.

7. He grieves.

Ephesians 4:30 “And grieve not the holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption.”

The Holy Spirit is grieved (distressed or made sad) when believers sin. Grief is an emotion that a person feels. A force cannot be grieved – try grieving a beam of light or a pulse of electricity!

8. He prays.

Romans 8:26 “Likewise the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities: for we know not what we should pray for as we ought: but the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered.”

Just as Jesus Christ, a person, intercedes for believers (Romans 8:34; Hebrews 7:25), so the Holy Spirit, as a person, intercedes for believers. A force cannot pray for another; only a person can pray.

9. He hears.

John 16:13 “Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak: and he will show you things to come.”

Try talking to an electric current and see if it hears you!

10. He can be blasphemed.

Mark 3:29, 30 “But he that shall blaspheme against the Holy Ghost hath never forgiveness, but is in danger of eternal damnation: Because they said, He hath an unclean spirit.”

The root word for blaspheme means “to slander, to revile, to curse, or to speak evil of.” Specifically, to blaspheme is to utter contemptuous and irreverent speech about God or things sacred. There are two general forms of blasphemy:

- a) Attributing some evil to God, or denying Him some good that we should attribute to Him.
- b) Giving the attributes of God to a creature. Eg. Idolatry.

People cannot be blasphemed; we can only be slandered. Only God can be blasphemed. Note that God the Father, Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit can all be blasphemed – thus proving the Trinity.

- a) God the Father can be blasphemed. (Revelation 13:6; 16:9)
 - b) God the Son can be blasphemed. (Luke 22:65)
 - c) God the Holy Spirit can be blasphemed. (Matthew 12:31)
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11. He can be lied to.

Acts 5:3, 4 “But Peter said, Ananias, why hath Satan filled thine heart to lie to the Holy Ghost, and to keep back part of the price of the land? Whiles it remained, was it not thine own? and after it was sold, was it not in thine own power? why hast thou conceived this thing in thine heart? thou hast not lied unto men, but unto God.”

Ananias and Sapphira lied to the Holy Spirit, and are then rebuked for lying to the person of the Father. Have you ever lied to electricity and asked electricity to forgive you?

12. He approves some decisions.

Acts 15:28 “For it seemed good to the Holy Ghost, and to us, to lay upon you no greater burden than these necessary things;”

An impersonal force cannot express approval or disapproval.

13. He uses personal pronouns to describe Himself.

Acts 13:2 “As they ministered to the Lord, and fasted, the Holy Ghost said, Separate me Barnabas and Saul for the work whereunto I have called them.”

The Holy Spirit considers Himself a person, not a personification.

Watchtower Objection: The main reason the JW’s say that the Holy Spirit is an ‘active force’ is because the Greek word for ‘spirit’ (*pneuma*) is neuter.

Answer: This is faulty reasoning, because:

- a) The gender of a word relates to the grammatical form of the word, not to its sex or physical gender. Because a word is grammatically neuter does not mean that the object is an 'it' or of neuter sex. For example, in Greek, 'children' is a neuter word.
- b) In John 15:26 and 16:13, the neuter noun '*pneuma*' is referred to by the masculine pronoun '*ekeinos*' recognising the Holy Spirit's masculine personality.
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14. He teaches.

The Holy Spirit teaches believers:

John 14:26 "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."

15. He comforts.

John 14:16-18 "And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever; 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."

This same Greek word '*parakletos*' is used of Christ, who has personality, in John 14:16 and I John 2:1. 'Another Comforter' means 'another of the same kind' as Christ, in contrast to meaning 'another of a different kind'. As Christ has Deity and Personality, so does the Holy Spirit. To comfort requires empathy, understanding, love, compassion and concern for another's well-being, all being attributes of personality.

Review / Discussion:

The New Testament clearly shows the Holy Spirit to have a personality and to be God...

"Jehovah is the Spirit" 2 Corinthians 3:17 (New World Translation)

ANSWERS: