

The Doctrine of the Holy Spirit: Introduction to Pneumatology

by

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1. The Holy Spirit is the third Person of the Trinity.
2. The Trinity: A technical theological word that designates God as one in essence but three coequal, coinfinite, and coeternal persons: God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit (2 Cor. 13:14).
3. The Trinity came to be understood in the early church through a series of theological controversies and battles which produced some of the greatest theological statements of all times called the ecumenical creeds. They were "ecumenical" because at this stage there were no denominational divisions yet, only one "catholic" which means universal, church. Roman Catholicism did not develop for another 300 years and the split between East and West did not develop for another 700 years. The Protestant Reformation was over 1200 years away.

a. Who was Jesus before He came?

This was answered by the Nicene confession. The issue was the full deity and eternality of the Son. The battle was over the Greek *homoousios* versus *homoiousios*; the first means "same or identical being" the second means, "similar or like-being." The second opens the door to Christ being less than God, with a beginning either in time [full subordinationism, adoptionism] or before time [Arianism (Jehovah's Witnesses are a modern form of Arianism)]. It was the battle with Arius over his teaching that created the theological controversy that gave rise to the Nicene Creed. There they affirmed Christ was "the only begotten Son of God, Begotten of the Father before all worlds; God of God, Light of Light, Very God of Very God, Begotten, not made, Being of one substance [homoousios] with the Father;" Athanasius, the advocate of the true position was victorious.

But the battle wasn't over. Due to the influence of power politics and the lack of real theological understanding by the key bishops at the council, the decision was overthrown, and reversed again several times over the next 50 years. Athanasius, defender of the deity of Christ, was forced into exile four times, but eventually the issues were understood and the Nicene Creed was validated at Constantinople (AD 381).

b. Who was Jesus when He came?

This was the issue that determined the relationship of His deity to His humanity and gave us the terminology "hypostatic union" that in Jesus there is united in one person two natures, undiminished deity and true humanity. This does not relate to the subject of the Holy Spirit.

c. What was the relationship of the Holy Spirit to these other two Persons?

These initial Creeds said little about the Holy Spirit except by Constantinople they were affirming that Christ proceeded from the Father, terminology lifted directly from John 15:26, yet left unexplained.

In the sixth century Arianism still maintained control over certain sections of Europe, among them Spain. Yet, the truth was winning. At the second Synod of Toledo (447) they affirmed but

did not creedalize the procession from the Son. And then, King Reccared of Spain, a recent convert from Arianism, called the fifth Synod of Toledo. There he wished to defeat Arianism for once and all time. So at that synod they included the procession of the Spirit, which in itself affirms a greater understanding of the cosubstantiality of the Spirit with the Son.

Schaff wrote:

The double procession follows inevitably from the consubstantiality of the Father and the Son, and from the identity of the Spirit of God and the Spirit of Christ. It also forms a connecting link between the Trinity and Christology, and between Christology and Anthropology, by bringing the Holy Spirit and His work into more immediate connection with Christ, and through Him, with the church and the believer. It was therefore not accidental that the same Augustine, who first taught clearly the double procession, developed also those profound views of sin and grace, which took permanent root in the West, but had not influence in the East. (*History of The Christian Church III, 288ff*)

4. Names and Titles for the Holy Spirit.

a. The Spirit of God, Gen 1:2; Matt 3:16.

b. The Spirit of the Lord, Lk 4:18.

c. The Spirit of *YHWH*, Judges 3:10.

d. The Spirit of the Lord God, Isa 61:1.

e. The Spirit of the living God, 2 Cor 3:3.

f. My Spirit, Gen 6:3.

g. The Spirit of our God, 1 Cor 6:11.

h. The Lord, the Spirit, 2 Cor 3:18.

i. The eternal Spirit, Heb 9:14.

j. The Spirit of glory, 1 Pet 4:14.

k. The Spirit of life in Christ Jesus, Rom 8:2.

l. He is called God in Eph 4:30, "Furthermore, stop grieving the Holy Spirit, the God, by whom you were sealed for the day of redemption."

Five titles reveal the relationship of the Holy Spirit to the Son.

a. Spirit of Christ (Rom. 8:9; 1 Peter 1:11)

b. Spirit of Jesus Christ (Phil. 1:19)

c. Spirit of Jesus (Acts 16:7)

d. Spirit of His son (Gal. 4:6)

e. Spirit of the Lord (Acts 5:9; 8:39)

Titles that reveal His ministry.

Spirit of Glory (1 Pet. 4:14) reveals his role in glorifying Christ and in bringing all believers into glory.

Spirit of Life (Rom. 8:2) reveals His role as the agent of regeneration (Titus 3:5).

Spirit of Holiness (Rom 1:4); the Holy Spirit (Matt. 1:20 et al); the Holy One (1 John 2:20) all emphasize His role as the agent of our sanctification.

Spirit of Wisdom and Understanding, The Spirit of Counsel and Might, Spirit of Knowledge and of the Fear of the Lord (Is. 11:2); Spirit of Truth (John 14:7; John 15:26); and the Spirit of Faith (2 Cor. 4:13-Faith taken objectively as "what is believed," i.e., doctrine) all emphasize His role to communicate, clarify, teach, guide, and help the believer understand Bible Doctrine.

Spirit of Grace (Heb 10:29) and Spirit of Grace and Supplication (Zech 12:10) all emphasize that the Holy Spirit as co-equal with the other two members of the Trinity in operating exclusively on a grace basis.

Spirit of Adoption (Rom. 8:15) emphasizes His role in the adoption of the believer into the Royal Family of God.

Comforter, To nourish, guide, nurture, strengthen, and assure the believer. This is always done through Bible doctrine which is the communication of Truth.

Conclusion: The names, titles and appellations given the Third Person of the Trinity all emphasize His Deity.

5. The Deity of God the Holy Spirit

He is Identified with *YHWH*. Compare Acts 28:25 and Isa. 6:1-13 to see that the one called *Adonai* and *YHWH* in Isaiah is equated with the Holy Spirit in Acts. Also compare Heb. 10:15-17 with Jer. 31:31-34.

Titles of Deity are used of the Holy Spirit: The Spirit of God, The Spirit of Jesus, the Spirit of *YHWH*.

The Holy Spirit is associated with God the Father and God the Son on equal terms (Matt. 28:19; 2 Cor. 13:14)

6. The Personality of the Holy Spirit: This doctrine has been much attacked in liberal circles as a back end attack on the doctrine of the Trinity.

Attributes of Personality: Intellect and Will (1 Cor. 2:10-11; Isa 11:2; Eph. 1:17; Rom. 8:7; 1 Cor. 12:11)

1Cor. 2:10 For to us God revealed them through the Spirit; for the Spirit searches all things, even the depths of God.

1Cor. 2:11 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.

Is. 11:2 And the Spirit of the LORD will rest on Him, The spirit of wisdom and understanding, The spirit of counsel and strength, The spirit of knowledge and the fear of the LORD.

Eph. 1:17 that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give to you a spirit of wisdom and of revelation in the knowledge of Him.

Rom. 8:7 because the mind set on the flesh is hostile toward God; for it does not subject itself to the law of God, for it is not even able to do so;

1Cor. 12:11 But one and the same Spirit works all these things, distributing to each one individually just as He wills.

b. The Holy Spirit performs the actions of Personality

Guides:

Rom. 8:14 For all who are being led by the Spirit of God, these are sons of God.

Commands:

Acts 8:29 And the Spirit said to Philip, "Go up and join this chariot."

Witnesses: John 15:26

Intercedes:

Rom. 8:26 And in the same way the Spirit also helps our weakness; for we do not know how to pray as we should, but the Spirit Himself intercedes for us with groanings too deep for words;

7. The Procession of the Spirit.

The doctrine of the double procession of the Spirit is related to the being and the eternity of the Holy Spirit in His relation to the Father and to the Son. Just as the Son is eternally begotten from the Father, the Spirit eternally proceeds from Father and Son and the Father and Son eternally spirate the Holy Spirit.

The early Trinitarian confessions hammered out in the great ecumenical councils at Nicea, Ephesus, Constantinople, and Chalcedon indicated that Jesus was the same in substance and essence with the Father. But little was said about the Holy Spirit. By the fifth century it was commonly held that the Holy Spirit proceeded from both, but not creedalized. The Second Council of Toledo affirmed this in AD 447, but did not insert it in the Creed, this was inserted as the *filioque* "and the Son" clause at the Third Synod of Toledo (AD 589).

Only 150 years later under the Patriarch Photius did the Eastern branch challenge Toledo. By that time the authority of the Pope was becoming an issue, and Eastern churches challenged the right of the West to change the creed.

Though this is often painted as an authority issue or a theological issue of little consequence this is done so by those ignorant of history and philosophy. Failure to accept double procession indicated in subtle failure to realize the full implications of the complete equality of the Son in His essence with the Father. So the ultimate metaphysic of the East breaks down in the Trinity and it works itself out in authority

problems and developed a religious system that raises a mystical concept of the Church above all else especially the priesthood of individual believers, and politically in a predisposition toward totalitarian and excessively authoritative systems with no real regard for the rights of individuals.

The Apostles Creed

I believe in God the Father Almighty Maker of heaven and earth. And in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord; Who was conceived by the Holy Ghost, Born of the Virgin Mary, Suffered under Pontius Pilate, Was crucified, dead, and buried; He descended into Hell [lit., Hades]; The third day He rose again from the dead; He ascended into heaven, and sitteth on the right hand of God the Father Almighty; From thence he shall come to judge the quick and the dead. I believe in the Holy Ghost; the holy catholic Church; the communion of saints; the forgiveness of sins; the resurrection of the body; and the life everlasting. Amen.

The Nicene Creed (A. D. 325; revised at Constantinople in A. D. 381)

We believe in one God, the Father Almighty; Maker of heaven and earth, and of all things visible and invisible.

And in one Lord, Jesus Christ, the only begotten Son of God, Begotten of the Father before all worlds; God of God, Light of Light, Very God of Very God, Begotten, not made, Being of one substance with the Father; By whom all things were made; Who, for us men and for our salvation, Came down from heaven, And was incarnate by the Holy Ghost of the Virgin Mary, And was made man; And was crucified also for us under Pontius Pilate; He suffered and was buried; And the third day he rose again, According to the Scriptures; And ascended into heaven, And sitteth on the right hand of the Father; And he shall come again, with glory, To judge both the quick and the dead; Whose kingdom shall have no end.

And we believe in the Holy Ghost, the Lord and Giver of life; Who proceedeth from the Father [and the Son]; Who with the Father and the Son together is worshiped and glorified; Who spake by the prophets. And we believe in one holy catholic and apostolic Church. We acknowledge one baptism for the remission of sins; And we look for the resurrection of the dead, and the life of the world to come. Amen.

The Symbol of Chalcedon (A. D. 451)

We, then, following the holy fathers, all with one consent, teach men to confess one and the same Son, our Lord Jesus Christ, the same perfect in Godhead and also perfect in manhood; truly God and truly man, of a reasonable soul and body; consubstantial with the Father according to the Godhead, and consubstantial with us according to the Manhood; in all things like unto us, without sin; begotten before all ages according to the Godhead, and in these latter days, for us and for our salvation, born of the Virgin Mary, the Mother of God, according to the Manhood; one and the same Christ, Son, Lord, Only-begotten, to be acknowledged in two natures; inconfusedly, unchangeably, indivisibly, inseparably; the distinction of natures being by no means taken away by the union, but rather the property of each nature being preserved, and concurring in one Person and one Subsistence, not parted or divided into two persons, but one and the Son, and only begotten, God the Word, the Lord Jesus Christ, as the prophets from the beginning have declared concerning him, and the Lord Jesus Christ himself has taught us, and the Creed of the holy Fathers has handed down to us.