

The Holy Spirit Is Not a Person Distinct from the Father

As taught throughout the centuries, the commonly held belief is that there is a person called The Holy Spirit who is God, but is neither “the Father” nor “the Son.” In the doctrine of the Trinity this person is viewed as a third person after the Father and the Son and within “the Godhead,” but there are not three gods i.e. tritheism.

However, the Hebrew words *ruach* and *neshamah* and the Greek word *pneuma*, generally rendered as “spirit” in English, have the basic meanings of breath and wind as something powerful, as well as indicating the manifestation of one’s self.

A New Testament Issue Only

Theologian George Eldon Ladd states what all theologians recognize about the “spirit of God” in the Hebrew Scriptures, commonly called the Old Testament, when he says:

- The *ruach* Yahweh in the Old Testament is not a separate, distinct entity; it is God’s power - the personal activity in God’s will achieving a moral and religious object. God’s *ruach* is the source of all that is alive, of all physical life. The spirit of God is the active principle that proceeds from God and gives life to the physical world (Gen.2:7). It is also the source of religious concerns, raising up charismatic leaders, whether judges, prophets, or kings. “The *ruach* Yahweh is a term for the historical creative action of the one God which, though it defies logical analysis, is always God’s action” *A Theology of the New Testament* p. 287.

Additionally, *The New Catholic Encyclopedia* notes that:

- The Old Testament clearly does not envisage God’s spirit as a person...God’s spirit is simply God’s power. If it is sometimes represented as being distinct from God, it is because the breath of Yahweh acts exteriorly...The majority of New Testament texts reveal God’s spirit as something, not someone; this is especially seen in the parallelism between the spirit and the power of God. 14:574, 575.

So, according to all reputable theologians, the spirit of God as spoken of in the Old Testament is not a person. Therefore, this is really only a New Testament issue, leading us to ask: did the writers of the New Testament change the definition of “holy spirit” so that it would now refer to a person separate from God or Jesus? However, indicating that there has been no such change of definition, Church of England Theologian Alan Richardson reasons that:

- To ask whether in the New Testament the spirit is a person in the modern sense of the word would be like asking whether the spirit of Elijah is a person. The spirit of God is of course personal; it is God’s *dunamis* [power] in action. But the Holy Spirit is not a person, existing independently of God...The New Testament (and indeed patristic thought generally) nowhere represents the Spirit, anymore than the wisdom of God, as having independent personality. *Introduction to the Theology of the New Testament*, p.120.

Clearly the spirit of Elijah is not a person separate from Elijah. So, too, logically with the spirit of God — it is not a person separate from God.

Historically, after NT times, but prior to 381 A.D., the holy spirit was generally thought of as the power and presence of God rather than as a substance or a separate person; yet at the Council of Constantinople in 381 A.D., Emperor Theodosius decided that the holy spirit, now viewed as a person, was equal to the Father and to the Son. Nevertheless, this teaching was not widely accepted for many decades.

NOTE: there is no justification for the insertion of the definite article, in many cases, before the terms spirit or holy spirit or for the capitalization of these terms in most translations.

Factors Showing That Holy Spirit Is Not a Third Person

When we examine the Scriptures in some depth we find that the holy spirit is indeed not a person distinct from the Father and the Son, and therefore not part of the unbiblical trinity doctrine. The following factors

should help us to understand that “holy spirit” is, in fact, God’s powerful outreach to His creation through which He performs His activities:

1. Assuming (though falsely) that the holy spirit is a 3rd person — he (?) is **evidently not omniscient** as is the Father, as shown by Jesus when he stated: *“But concerning that day or that hour no one knows (including an imagined 3rd person Holy Spirit) neither the angels in heaven nor the Son...but the Father only”* (Mark 13:32). Also the following statement from Jesus would not be true if the holy spirit were a third person of the Trinity who (?) was also omniscient because he was almighty God. In fact, Jesus’ statement was: *“...no one knows the Son except the Father, and no one knows the Father except the Son”* (Matt. 11:27).

In reality, because the spirit of God is actually God’s own outreach to humanity it is omnipotent. Indeed, according to 1 Corinthians 2:10: *“the Spirit searches everything.”* It is also omnipresent (Ps. 139:7). But there is no third person in a supposed Godhead who is either omnipotent or omnipresent.

2. The Spirit as a Person **Cannot Be Distributed**

However, the spirit as an influence or as power and energy can be described in metaphorical terms as being able to be distributed. So Jesus, and later John, says: *“...for he gives the Spirit without measure”* (John 3:34) and *“...because he has given us of his Spirit”* (1 John 4:13), Or *“given us a share in his Spirit”* NJB. Or *“He has imparted his Spirit to us”* REB.

3. A Person **Cannot Be Given the Attributes** of the elements such as liquid, air or fire. Yet these are used to describe the spirit:

LIKE WATER

❖ *“Rivers of living water will flow from within him.” He said this in reference to the Spirit that those who came to believe in him were to receive”* (John 7:38, 39) and *“...all were made to drink of one Spirit”* (1 Cor. 12:13).

Certainly, persons do not flow as water does and neither can one drink them.

LIKE AIR

❖ *“...he breathed on them and said to them ‘Receive the Holy Spirit...’”* (John 20:22). Also see John 3:8 and Acts 2:2.

LIKE OIL

❖ *“...God declares, that I will pour out my Spirit on all flesh”* (Acts 2:17).
 ❖ *“...the gift of the Holy Spirit was poured out even on the Gentiles”* (Acts 10:45).
 ❖ *“...how God anointed Jesus with the Holy Spirit”* (Acts 10:38) Also Isaiah 61:1.

It was one of God’s arrangements that at the appointment of a new King or Priest in Israel, he was to be anointed with oil and from which time onward he was seen as having God’s spirit and so making the “pouring out of spirit” or “anointing with spirit” an apt metaphor.

LIKE A VISCOUS WRITING MATERIAL

❖ *“...you are a letter...written not with ink but with the Spirit”* (2 Cor. 3:3).

LIKE FIRE OR SOMETHING RED HOT

❖ *“Do not quench the Spirit”* (1 Thess. 5:19). This is similar to extinguishing a fire or something red hot.

LIKE SEALING WAX

❖ *“...you were sealed with the promised Holy Spirit”* (Eph. 1:13).

LIKENED TO SOMETHING HUMANS CAN BE FILLED WITH

❖ *“Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit”* (Luke 1:4).
 ❖ *“...they (the disciples) were all filled with the Holy Spirit”* (Acts 2:4).
 ❖ *“...be filled with the Spirit”* (Eph. 5:18). Here it is likened to wine.
 ❖ *“But he [Stephen], full of the Holy Spirit...”* (Acts 7:55).

LIKE A DOVE

❖ *“...and the skies opened and he saw the spirit of God descending like a dove and coming to rest on him”* (Matt. 3:16).

Of course, none of these expressions mean that “spirit” is a substance, but rather breath, wind, water, oil. and dove are apt metaphors for the invisible powerful presence of God, as are the characteristics of flowing water and the pouring of oil on someone.

Holy Spirit Is Paralleled with Power

The common usage of the Jewish poetic technique of “parallelism” in the Hebrew Scriptures is used by Micah to equate God’s spirit with power: *“I am filled with power, with the Spirit of the LORD”* (Mic. 3:8). Similarly the angel Gabriel uses this same Hebrew technique of “parallelism” in Luke’s account of the conception of Jesus when he says: *“The holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you”* (Luke 1:35 NAB). On this text, the most distinguished professor of biblical studies Raymond E. Brown wrote:

- The combination of spirit and power is very Lucan,... Not knowing the rules of parallelism in biblical poetry which make it clear that “power from the Most High” is synonymous with “Holy Spirit,” some patristic and medieval theologians thought that the references in 35b, c were respectively to the Third and Second Persons of the Trinity, so that “power” was the Second Person descending to take flesh in Mary’s womb. As we shall see, there is no evidence that Luke thought of the incarnation of a Pre-existent

The Birth of the Messiah. p.290.

So indeed, it isn’t the holy spirit as a separate person which causes Jesus’ begetting — his coming into existence, but holy spirit is simply paralleled with God’s power. So God performs His works, including the creation of the universe, through His powerful breath — His spirit. He created Jesus Christ in Mary’s womb (Luke 1:35; Matt. 1:20) by means of His spirit. He empowered the many prophets to accomplish His will by means of His spirit, and further inspired the writers of the Scriptures (2 Pet. 1:21). Outstandingly, God raised Jesus from the dead to immortality (Rom. 1:4; Eph. 1:19, 20) — all by means of His spirit. These are all things that only God who is defined as “the Father” (1 Cor. 8:6) does. Indeed, nowhere in the New Testament is “holy spirit” ever called “God” — there is no person called “God the Holy Spirit” to be found in the pages of the Bible.

The Spirit Is Not Abstract Power but Power Associated with a Person

Although Luke 1:35 and Micah 3:8 make the connection between “The Holy Spirit” and “the power of the Most High” this does not mean that they can be completely equated to each other. The following Scriptures show that power is simply one facet of holy spirit: *“May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, so that you may abound in hope by the power of the holy Spirit”* (Rom. 15:13 NAB). This means that these aspects of the Christian life are caused by God’s personal power and presence operating in their lives. This also included the miracles that God did through the apostles hands: *“...by the power of signs and miracles, through the power of the Spirit”* (Rom. 15:19).

The various facets of ‘spirit’ include: power, energy, extended influence, presence, mind, and thought expressed into words, all of which are personal to an individual i.e. things which belong to them. The following Scriptures are often mistakenly taken by Trinitarians as referring to a third person in the Godhead. Nevertheless, these statements do indicate that the holy spirit is personal i.e. it is God’s own spirit – the Father’s spirit which he now shares with the Son:

- ❖ “And everyone who speaks a word against the Son of Man will be forgiven, but anyone who blasphemes against the Holy Spirit will not be forgiven. ‘When you are brought before synagogues, rulers, and authorities do not worry about how you will defend yourselves or what you will say, for the Holy Spirit will teach you at that time what you should say ’” (Luke 12:10-12).

It makes no sense to speak of blasphemy against an impersonal power that Jesus places as higher than himself. But the blasphemy that “will not be forgiven” is that which is directed to God i.e. Yahweh — the Father. A further point to be made is that if *“a word [spoken] against the Son of Man will be forgiven”* then evidently Jesus cannot be equal to the Father. Indeed, the following texts give more of the personal characteristics of holy spirit:

- ❖ “It seemed good to the Holy Spirit and to us not to burden you with anything beyond the following requirements...” (*Acts 15:28*).
- ❖ “And now, compelled by the Spirit, I am going to Jerusalem, not knowing what will happen to me there. I only know that in every city the Holy Spirit warns me that prison and hardships are facing me” (*Acts 20:22, 23*).
- ❖ “Coming over to us, he took Paul’s belt, tied his own hands and feet with it and said, ‘The Holy Spirit says, ‘In this way the Jews of Jerusalem will bind the owner of this belt and will hand him over to the Gentiles’” (*Acts 21:11*).
- ❖ “So, as the Holy Spirit says: ‘Today, if you hear his voice...’” (*Heb. 3:7*).
- ❖ “The Holy Spirit also testifies to us about this. First he says: ‘This is the covenant I will make with them after that time, says the Lord. I will put my laws in their hearts, and I will write them on their minds. ‘Then he adds: ‘Their sins and lawless acts I will remember no more’” (*Heb. 10:15-17*).

It is obvious that the testifying, the teaching, the decision making, the giving of instructions, the foreseeing of the future, the warnings, and the forgiving of sins cannot have been made by an impersonal force or power, but as will be shown these are the activities of God and/or Jesus i.e. their presence by spirit. However, just to labour the point they are not the activities of a third person.

Holy Spirit Is God’s Powerful Personal Influence also Granted to Jesus

Not only is God’s spirit His power, but also it is His personal presence or the outreach/influence of His mind and is paralleled with “presence” by the Psalmist: “*Where can I go from your Spirit? Where can I flee from your presence? (Ps. 139:7)*.” Also the phrase “*the spirit of God*” (*Matt. 12:28*) is paralleled with “*the finger of God*” in Luke 11:20. So just as an individual’s mind or hand or finger are personal to that individual, but not separate persons from the individual, so too, “*the spirit of God*” as God’s hand (*Ezek. 3:14*) or finger is the extension of His mind — His outreach to make contact with the creation — but is not a separate person. Also because “spirit” (*Gk pneuma*) means ‘breath’ it serves as a metaphor throughout the Scriptures for God’s personal presence — His projected or expressed thoughts — His mind.

Spirit = The Expressed Mind of God

The spirit of God is, in fact, an interchangeable term with mind of God. This is seen by comparing Isaiah 40:13 with Romans 11:34:

- ❖ “Who has measured the Spirit of the LORD, or what man shows him his counsel?” (*Isa. 40:13*).
- ❖ “Who has known the mind of the Lord, or who has been his counsellor?” (*Rom. 11:34 quoting Isa. 40:13*).

So in quoting here from Isaiah, Paul shows that God’s spirit equates with His mind, and so the natural man cannot discern what God is doing, but the Christian can, through Christ (1 Cor. 2:16). Furthermore, Jesus showed the connection between “spirit” and “words” or expressed thoughts by saying: “*The words I have spoken to you are spirit and life*” (*John 6:63*).

Spirit = The Presence or Outreach of God

- In Luke 1:35 the Most High and the holy spirit are not 2 fathers of Jesus, but are closely synonymous terms, whereby God personally extends his mind and power to bring Jesus into existence.
- In Acts 5:3, 4 Ananias did not lie to 2 different persons. The term God is used rather than Father, so these verses do not speak of 2 distinct persons who are God. Therefore, God’s spirit is shown to make decisions because it is God Himself that is making those decisions rather than simply raw power. Furthermore, one cannot lie to ‘power.’

The fact is there is no relationship between the Father and the spirit as with that of one person to another, whereby one would address the other as “you.”

Spirit = The Presence or Outreach of both God and Christ

1. In three parallel accounts in the synoptic gospels:

- ❖ “For it is not you who speak, but the Spirit of your Father speaking through you” (*Matt. 10:20*).
- ❖ “...for it will not be you speaking, but the holy Spirit” (*Mark 13:11*).
- ❖ “...for I [Jesus] will give you a mouth and wisdom” (*Luke 21:15*).

So here Jesus, in speaking by means of God’s spirit, empowers the speech of his disciples.

2. In Acts:

- ❖ “The spirit said to him [Peter] ... God has shown me that I should stop calling anyone “common” or “ritually unclean”” (*Acts 10:19, 28 KGV*).
- ❖ “...the holy Spirit said, “Set apart for me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I [probably Jesus] have called them” (*Acts 13:2 NAB*).
- ❖ “...having been forbidden by the Holy Spirit to speak the word in Asia...they attempted to go into Bithynia, but the Spirit of Jesus did not allow them” (*Acts 16:6, 7 ESV*).

Here in Acts, holy spirit is being used as a means of communication by Jesus. To illustrate: one might say, “The radio said it’s going to rain later today.” From this, one does not conclude that the radio is a person separate from the weather forecaster. A further example is in Luke 11:49 where Jesus says: “*Therefore also the wisdom of God said ‘I will send them prophets...’*” and yet the parallel account in Matthew 23:34 shows that it is Jesus speaking: “*Therefore I send you prophets...*” Clearly Jesus is here being called “*the wisdom of God.*” Similarly with holy spirit as referring to God’s or Jesus’ presence depending on the context of the passage. In fact, Emeritus professor of Divinity James Dunn states that:

- In Jewish thinking, the Spirit of God was more naturally understood as closely identified with God, as a dimension or aspect of God, or as a way of characterizing God’s presence and power.

Did the First Christians Worship Jesus, p. 72

3. “The Lord who is the spirit”

Additionally no 3rd person is mentioned by Paul to the Corinthians when explaining that: “*...the Lord is the Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom ... For this comes from the Lord who is the Spirit*” (*2 Cor. 3:17, 18*). So whether one understands “the Lord” mentioned here as a reference to Jesus or as a reference to God (the scholars and commentators are split on this issue), it is clear that “the Lord who is the Spirit” is a reference to the presence of either Jesus or God, and so is not a reference to a 3rd person. So here we have further evidence that there is no 3rd person.

Spirit = The Presence or Outreach of Christ

1. The spirit is the outreach of Jesus as our intercessor because: “*Christ Jesus is the one ... who indeed intercedes for us*” (*Rom. 8:33, 34*) and so: “*...the Spirit too comes to the aid of our weakness ... but the Spirit itself intercedes with inexpressible groanings*” (*Rom. 8:26, 27 NAB*).

Here the spirit and Jesus are not 2 distinct persons. So when the spirit intercedes for us it is as the outreach of Jesus doing so because it is the intercession of Christ as our High Priest (Heb. 7:25). He alone is our intercessor — our one mediator (1 Tim. 2:5).

NOTE: Just as in the NAB, Romans 8:11, 16, 26 are also correctly translated as “through his Spirit that” and “the Spirit itself” in the KJV, Rotherham, Smith & Goodspeed and Darby. But Moffatt uses neither of these reflexive pronouns.

2. Jesus through the spirit acts as the means of sanctification:

- ❖ “God chose you as the first-fruits to be saved, through sanctification by the Spirit” (*2 Thess. 2:13*).
- ❖ “To those sanctified in Christ Jesus called to be saints” (1 Cor. 1:2).
- ❖ “[God] is the source of your life in Christ Jesus, whom God made our ... sanctification” (*1 Cor. 1:30*).

So when Christians are sanctified by the spirit it is the outreach of Jesus that is sanctifying us or separating us to God.

3. Jesus through the spirit dwells in our hearts: “...he [God] may grant you to be strengthened with power through his Spirit in your inner being, so that Christ may dwell in your hearts...” (Eph. 3:16). So having the spirit in our hearts means that we have Jesus in our hearts through his outreach to us.

4. Jesus through the spirit gives the Revelation:

“This is the message from him [Jesus as in Rev.1:1] who holds the seven stars in his right hand ... But I have this against you ... the Spirit says to the churches” (Rev. 2:1, 4, 7). Then each of the 7 churches receives the words of Jesus. So when the spirit speaks to Christians it is Jesus reaching out from heaven to inform his people.

“The Spirit of Christ” Is Not a Person Distinct from Him

Just as shown earlier, the spirit of Elijah is not a person separate from him, so too, with the spirit of Christ, which is the very same mindset as that of God and which is conveyed to Christians as: “the help of the Spirit of Jesus Christ” (Phil. 1:19). Indeed, Paul also contrasted the Christians old unregenerate life with his life now as spiritual, saying: “You are not in the flesh but in the spirit, if in fact the Spirit of God dwells in you. Anyone who does not have the Spirit of Christ does not belong to him” (Rom. 8:9). Here “the spirit of Christ” is equated with “the spirit of God.” This does not mean that Christ is God, but that he has the same spirit as God with no real difference between them in this respect. Christ has God’s mindset, influence and presence; and so Paul can say that: “God has sent forth the Spirit of his Son into our hearts...” (Gal. 4:6). Yet when the Apostle Peter uses the phrase “the Spirit of Christ” he is not referring directly to Christ himself when he says: “...the time and circumstances that the Spirit of Christ within them [the prophets] indicated when it testified in advance to the sufferings destined for Christ and the glories to follow them” (1 Pet. 1:11). Here Peter means that the Messianic spirit moved the prophets to search for the details of Messiah’s career.

“Another Helper” Is the Spirit of Jesus – Not a Third Person

It is the general Trinitarian view that the “helper” that the apostle John writes about is a third person in the God-head. Certainly, Jesus gives the impression that a person is being spoken of when he says: “...if I don’t go away, the helper won’t come to you, but if I go, I will send him to you” (John 16:7 KGV). However, in the rest of the passages, which mention “the Helper,” there are grammatical factors which give a different picture - one of personification:

- ❖ “...the Father...will give you another helper (Gk *parakletos*) to be with you up to the age to come - the Spirit of truth, which the world isn’t able to welcome, because it neither sees it nor knows it. But you know it, because it remains with you and will be in you” (John 14:16 KGV also note the NAB).
- ❖ “When the helper comes, whom I will send you from the Father — the spirit of truth that proceeds from the Father — that one will testify about me” (John 15:26 KGV also note the NAB).

MASCULINE PRONOUNS TO AGREE WITH ‘PARAKLETOS’ — “HELPER”

The promised *parakletos*, in John 14:16, 17, 26; 15:26; 16:7, 8, 13-15 rendered as “helper,” is masculine; therefore its qualifying pronouns are correctly translated as “he” or “whom.” But because this is typical of the usage of biblical personification, it does not, in itself, prove that the spirit is a person separate from God or Jesus.

NEUTER PRONOUNS TO AGREE WITH ‘PNEUMA’ — “SPIRIT”

As can be seen from the above Scriptures, whenever the pronoun qualifies the term “spirit,” it is correctly translated as “it” or “that.” This is because the Greek word *pneuma* for spirit is always neuter and therefore refers to the personal presence and power of God or of Jesus, as shown by the earlier part of our study.

Now while it is possible in Greek to apply masculine/feminine pronouns to certain inanimate things (as in personification), it is not correct to apply neuter pronouns to personalities. Indeed, except for one verse, the New American Bible is consistent in the correct rendering of all these pronouns. For example: “The Spirit itself bears witness (*intercedes*)...” (Rom. 8:16, 26 NAB). Also, Jesus’ words again, when he says: “...I will ask the Father

and he will give you another Advocate [Helper], the Spirit of truth, which the world cannot accept, because it neither sees nor knows it. But you know it ... The Advocate, the holy Spirit that the Father will send in my name—he will teach you everything...” (John 14:16, 17, 26 NAB). If, in fact, the spirit were a person it would be incorrect to apply neuter pronouns to the word spirit; yet that is exactly what the NT writers do, and so showing that the word spirit does not represent a personality. Marshall’s Interlinear, Rotherham, and Smith & Goodspeed all use neuter pronouns wherever the word spirit occurs. The UBS 4th and the NAB also use neuter pronouns wherever the word spirit occurs (except in 1 Corinthians 6:19); whereas, the KJV is quite inconsistent in this area of grammar. However, the Smith and Goodspeed Bible does translate 1 Corinthians 6:19 accurately as: “...the holy Spirit that is within you, which you have received from God.”

So because neuter pronouns are used, “the spirit” cannot be a person. There is no such thing in the Scriptures that speak of a “God, the Holy Spirit” because the Bible teaches that there is only one God, the Father, who is a singular person.

WHAT JESUS MEANT BY THE TERM “THE HELPER”

Additional to the fact that the Greek word *pneuma* (spirit) is always of neuter gender, the followings texts show that “the helper” is a personification of the power, presence, and influence of Jesus as God’s agent:

- ❖ “...we have a helper (Gk *parakletos*) in the presence of the Father - namely God’s fully approved one, Jesus Christ!” (1 John 2:1 KGV).
- ❖ “...but the helper, the holy spirit, which the Father will send in my name, will teach you everything, ... I [Jesus] am coming back to you” (John 14:26, 28 KGV).
- ❖ “...the Father...will give you another helper (Gk *parakletos*) to be with you up to the age to come - the spirit of truth, which the world isn’t able to welcome, because it neither sees it nor knows it. But you know it, because it remains with you and will be in you ... I [Jesus] won’t leave you as orphans; I will come to you” (John 14:16, 18 KGV).

Because Jesus is currently physically absent, but has been given “all authority in heaven and on earth” (Matt. 28:18), he sends his spirit, which is the same as God’s spirit — personified as a helper. So, in spite of being physically absent, Jesus is saying that he would continue to work with and within his disciples. Indeed, he called the spirit “the Helper” because he intended to work through God’s powerful outreach to be of help to his followers, as he directly told his disciples: “I won’t leave you as orphans. I [Jesus] will come to you” (John 14:18). So the personal outreach or spirit of God was indicated in John by the masculine word “Helper” as a personification because it was to be used by a person, namely, Jesus Christ.

NOTE: Many translations render 1 Corinthians 2:12: “...the Spirit who is from God” (NIV, ESV, NASB, NKJV). However, there is no pronoun here in the Greek text. It reads: “but the spirit from God.” Similarly, other versions read: “but God’s own Spirit.” (NJB) “we have received this Spirit from God” (REB) “we have received God’s Spirit.” (NLT). Sometimes a pronoun and verb are inserted for smoothness of English. But the broad context from other passages shows that it should be a neuter pronoun - either which or that as for example in the KJV and Darby which render it: “the Spirit which is of God,” and Weymouth: “the Spirit which comes from God,” the NRSV: “the Spirit that is from God,” and finally Moffatt and JB: “the Spirit that comes from God.”

Other Factors Showing That Holy Spirit Is Not a Third Person in a Trinity

- It is never called ‘God the Holy Spirit.’
- It is not given a personal name. However, God and the Messiah are persons, and they have the personal names of Yahweh and Jesus. So it seems strange that if the spirit is a person, there is no personal name involved. Even Matthew 28:19 does not refer to a personal name, because the word “name” there means ‘authority’ or ‘representative of.’
- It is never worshipped, prayed to, or sung to. Neither are there any indicators for Christians to worship, pray to or sing to the holy spirit. Yet, if it were part of a trinity of persons it should have the same worship given it as is given to the Father.

- It is missing from John 1:1-3 according to the standard Trinitarian interpretation of these verses.
- It is missing from the salutations in the letters sent by the apostle Paul. (Rom. 1:7; I Cor. 1:3; 2 Cor. 1:2; Gal. 1:3; Eph. 1:2; Phil. 1:2; Col. 1:2; 1 Thess. 1:1; 2 Thess. 1:2; 1 Tim. 1:2; 2 Tim. 1:2; Titus 1:4; Philemon 3.). He mentions only God and Jesus.
- It is missing from the salutations of the other NT writers, who also make mention of God and Jesus in their salutations, but not of the spirit. (James 1:1; 2 Peter 1:2; 1 John 1:3; 2 John 3; Jude 1.). Note: The spirit is noted in 1 Peter 1:2 but not as a person.
- It is missing from the order of responsibility in 1 Corinthians 11:3: “*the head of every man is Christ...the head of Christ is God.*” This would have been a perfect place to express the Trinity if it were a reality.
- It is missing from statements about Jesus sitting at the right hand of God (except Acts 2:33: “[Jesus] *having been exalted at the right hand of God, and having received the promise of holy spirit from the Father...*”).
- It is missing from the vision seen by Stephen when he “*saw the glory of God and Jesus standing at the right hand of God*” (Acts 7:55).
- It is completely missing from the important doctrinal letter to the Colossians. This would be most unlikely in this type of letter if the holy spirit were a person.
- It is missing from 1 Timothy 5:21: “*In the presence of God and of Christ and of the elect angels.*” So if Trinitarian reasoning is applied to the verse the angels as a single body must be the third person in the Trinity.
- It is missing from the scenes that describe God and Jesus as being enthroned or reigning e.g. Rev. 7:10: “*Salvation belongs to our God who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb!*” So the Father and the Son are shown together on the throne. Why, then, is the spirit missing if it were a third person of the Trinity?
- It is missing from the book of Revelation (see next section), and yet God and the Lamb are very closely associated together in this book. It makes no sense for the holy spirit to be missing if it were a person within the God-head.
- As with the exalted Jesus so, too, angels may project God’s spirit and so be called “the spirit,” yet clearly no 3rd person of the Trinity is being spoken of here.: “Now an angel of the Lord said to Philip ... And the spirit said to Philip” (Acts 8:26, 29).
- Furthermore, the spirit is no more distinct from the Father than is His wisdom or love. The References to Spirit/Spirits in the Book of Revelation are:
 1. Lit “The seven spirits who are before the throne” (Revelation 1:4; also see 3:1; 4:5; 5:6). These “seven spirits” in Revelation have generally been interpreted as the sevenfold holy spirit and so as a part of a supposed Trinitarian formula. However, this phrase most likely refers to the seven angels who appear often in the Revelation; for example: “the seven angels who stood before the throne” (Rev. 8:2 and note Heb 1:14). Also “the spirit” (Jesus’ outreach) that speaks to the 7 churches is not sent out into all the earth as is the case with “the seven spirits” (5:6). So along with William Mounce, who understands these to be the seven principle angels, David Aune, in the *Word Biblical Commentary*, states:
 - A second important view, in my opinion certainly the correct one, understands the seven spirits as the seven principal angels of God ... angels are designated “spirits” in the Qumran literature (Sekki, RUAH 145–71). In 1QM 12:8–9 the phrase “host of angels,” is used as a parallel to, “host of his spirits” thy messengers, fire and flame thy ministers,” an important passage in view of the association with the seven spirits of God with seven torches of fire in 4:5. In an explanatory gloss in 4:5, the seven torches of fire burning before the throne are interpreted by John as the seven spirits of God. Again in 5:6 the seven eyes of the Lamb are interpreted as “the seven spirits of God sent out into all the earth.” Though commentators formerly noted the absence of the phrase from the OT and early Jewish literature (Beckwith, 424), that situation has changed with the publication of the Dead Sea Scrolls, for “spirits” is a common designation for angels at Qumran ... In the

NT, only in Heb 1:14 are angels called spirits. The “seven spirits” of Rev 1:4 are equivalent to “the seven spirits of God” of 3:1, 4:5; 5:6 and must be identified with “the seven angels who stand before God” in 8:2. Thus the view that the seven spirits are the seven archangels (TWNT 6:450) seems correct.

2. “*Let anyone who has an ear hear what the Spirit is saying to the churches*” (2:7, 11, 17, 29; 3:6, 13, 22). As shown earlier “the spirit of God” = “the finger of God” (Matt. 12:28/Luke 12:20) – His outreach. This is also true of Jesus - the one who speaks to each of the seven churches (2:1, 8, 12, 18; 3:1, 7, 14). So “what the Spirit is saying” means ‘what Jesus in outreach is saying’.
3. “*In the spirit*” (1:10; 4:2; 17:3; 21:10). This simply means that John was caught up in a prophetic trance — that he was transported mentally into the world of prophetic visions by Jesus as “the spirit.”
4. “The testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy” (19:10). This simply means that it is the essence or inspiration (breath) of prophecy, and so is any true testimony about Jesus and his work. So not one of the 15 occurrences of the word “spirit,” as found in the book of Revelation, implies that there is a person who is called ‘the Holy Spirit’ — there is no ‘God the Holy Spirit’ in the Book of Revelation or indeed in the rest of the Bible.

Answering Other Trinitarian Claims

“ANOTHER HELPER”

“*And I will send you another (Gk allos) helper (Gk parakletos), to be with you forever*” (John 14:16). Because the Greek word *allos* denotes distinction of individuals i.e., another of the same kind, Trinitarians believe this verse to be showing a separating of Jesus as ‘God the Son’ from ‘God the Holy Spirit’ in their reading of Jesus’ words.

REPLY: Indeed, a surface reading of the spirit as “another helper” makes the spirit appear to be a separate person to Jesus. However, this is ignoring the much used Hebrew figure of speech called personification so that “another helper.” is given personal attributes. This is indicated by the fact the word *pneuma* for spirit is neuter and so not a person. Certainly Jesus was a “helper” whilst he was physically with the disciples. But although Jesus was no longer to be with them physically this does not mean that he has abandoned them or left them to someone else. His continuing to be their “helper” is shown when he says: “I will not leave you as orphans; I will come to you.” (vs.18). So, because he is physically absent he comes to the Christian by means of the spirit.

Furthermore, the writer of 1 John 2:1 helps us to appreciate this personification in the Gospel of John when he directly calls the exalted Jesus the *parakletos* — the Helper.

DOES “GRIEVING THE HOLY SPIRIT” INDICATE A THIRD PERSON?

The idea of the holy spirit as a person is supported by the Trinitarian argument that it requires a real person to be able to suffer grief: “*And do not grieve the holy Spirit of God, with which you were sealed...*” (Eph. 4:30 NAB).

REPLY: The neuter pronoun “which” rather than “whom” is correctly used, as in the NAB, KJV, REB, S&G, Young’s Literal, and Rotherham for this verse. Because it is actually the spirit of God, it is actually God Himself through His outreach who is grieved. This is demonstrated by a comparison of Isaiah 63:10 and Psalm 78:40 which state: “... *they (Israel) rebelled, and grieved his holy spirit; so he turned on them like an enemy*” (Isa. 63:10 NAB) and “*How often they (Israel) rebelled against God in the desert, grieved him in the wasteland*” (Ps. 78:40). These two verses from the Hebrew Scriptures show that it was God in His outreach who was grieved and not another person. So evidently the holy spirit that was grieved in Ephesians 4:30 also was God in His outreach and not a separate person. So when men “grieve” the holy spirit of God, they grieve God Himself who is always defined in the Bible as “the Father” (1 Cor. 8:6, John 17:1-3).

Conclusion

Evidently the holy spirit is not a 3rd person within the formula of a trinity; but rather it is God’s own spirit just as described in the Old Testament. It is His mind powerfully expressed into action as outreach to his creation – it is God in action. Furthermore, since Jesus’ exaltation to the right hand of God, he also expresses his own spirit

i.e. his mind into action as outreach to empower his disciples. So when one is filled with the spirit, he is filled with the invisible power and presence of God and Christ Jesus; and because holy spirit also refers to God's thoughts (and therefore also Jesus' thoughts) i.e. His mind projected to the receptive human mind, we can say that we have God's spirit. This occurs when we are considering the holy Scriptures, for example, when one reads/studies them, discusses them, or when one lives one's life in a way that is in harmony with them, including prayer. In this way we are empowered to do God's will in its many aspects so that we acquire the fruit of the spirit (Gal. 5:22). As with the bringing into existence of the entire universe by the spirit, so God's power and presence as spirit (in Christ's hands) will bring "the new heavens and earth" into existence.

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