



How Does the Holy Spirit Work in a Christian?

by Kyle Pope



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Guardian of Truth Foundation
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Preface



The material presented in this study was originally written in connection with some online discussions I had with denominationalist over a period of weeks in the spring of 2008. Although the topic did not begin with a discussion of the work of the Holy Spirit, it became evident that the views which many in the religious world hold regarding the work of the Holy Spirit color all aspects of their understanding of Biblical topics. These denominational concepts far too often find their way into the church in the language we use, and unscriptural notions we gradually adopt. This study is an attempt to carefully “weed out” concepts which are rooted in the theories and theologies of men in order to isolate the pure revelation of God on this most important question. My prayer is that reader will test all things presented in the pages which follow by the infallible standard of God’s word, accepting only what is found to be true to the Holy Spirit revealed oracles of God.

Kyle Pope



Chapter One

The Triune Nature of God

The question posed in the title of this study is an important matter of consideration for all who would seek to understand the role of the Holy Spirit in the life of a Christian. To address this question we must first consider who the Holy Spirit is. The Bible teaches that the God who made all things is one God (1 Corinthians 8:6), composed of three persons: God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit (Matthew 28:19). This is a difficult concept for our mortal, finite minds to grasp—but it is the teaching of Scripture. Each person of the Godhead, has His own distinct will. Jesus in the garden, prayed to the Father, “**not My will, but Yours be done**” (Luke 22:42, NKJV). He promised His disciples that when the Holy Spirit came upon them, “**He, will not speak on His own authority, but whatever He hears He will speak**” (John 16:13). So, the Holy Spirit is not simply a different manifestation of the Father. Rather, He is a distinct person of the Godhead. The Father is not the Son, the Son is not the Father, the Holy Spirit is neither the Father nor the Son, yet they are not *three gods*—they are all *one God*.

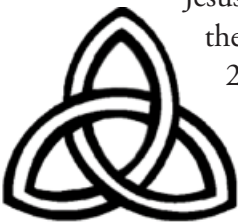
The Triune Nature of God



With regard to the “personhood” (so to speak) of the Holy Spirit, we must concede that it is a difficult concept for man to grasp how there can be one God (1 Corinthians 8:6) composed of three persons. However, the evidence of Scripture demands that we come to this conclusion. Far too many notions in the religious world confuse this truth. Many diminish the Holy Spirit to simply an extension of the Father’s presence. This fails to acknowledge the Spirit as a full and complete member of the Godhead.

Within this Godhead there is distinction, but also unity. Scripture on occasion speaks of Father, Son, and Holy Spirit doing the same thing. A case in point is the indwelling. The body of the Christian is said to be the “**temple of the Holy Spirit**” (1 Corinthians 6:19), yet, the Christian is also told, “**God has sent forth the Spirit of His Son into your hearts**” (Galatians 4:6). To the apostles, it was said of their indwelling, “**it is not you who speak, but the Spirit of your Father who speaks in you**” (Matthew 10:20). This demonstrates clearly that all three persons are divine—all are one God.

Scripture elsewhere makes the distinction of personhood clear in regard to both will and locality. In the texts cited above—first, in Jesus’ statement in the garden, we see the Son say to the Father, “**not My will, but Yours be done**” (Luke 22:42). If Jesus had a *will* that was distinct from the Father’s, then He possessed distinct personhood. Second, it is said of the Holy Spirit that, “**He, will not speak on His own authority, but whatever He hears He will speak**” (John 16:13). If the Spirit were merely an extension of the Father then His words would be under *His own authority*. This distinction is shown in regard to locality in the baptism of Jesus. God the Son (on

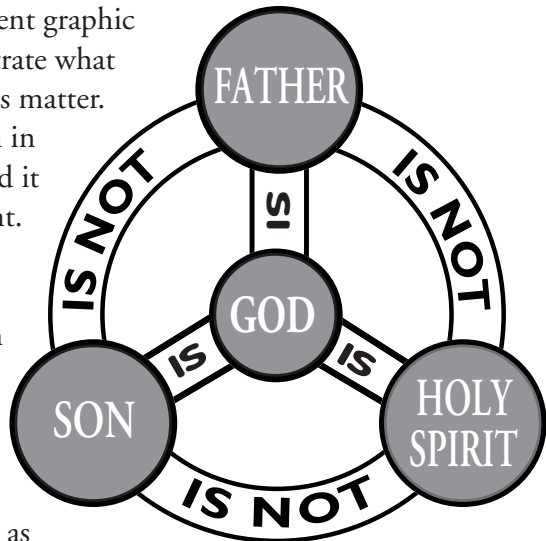


The Triune Nature of God



earth) was baptized. God the Father (in heaven) spoke. God the Holy Spirit descended as a dove (Luke 3:21-22). This may be difficult to conceptualize, but we must accept Scripture for what it says and be content with what Deity has chosen to reveal about itself (cf. Deuteronomy 29:29).

There is a very ancient graphic which attempts to illustrate what Scripture teaches on this matter. It was originally written in Latin, but it is translated it into English on the right. It shows that while all three person are all one God, each bears its own distinction from the other.



The symbol on the previous page, adopted as the logo for New King James Version, published by Thomas Nelson Publishers, is another ancient graphic known as the *triquerta*. It illustrates in the same way that the God of the Bible is one God composed of three persons. To understand the manner in which the Holy Spirit works in a believer, any concepts which are framed to explain this must harmonize with this fundamental truth of Scripture. There is one God, of three distinct persons. The Father is not the Son. The Son is not the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit is neither the Father nor the Son. Yet, they are all one God.

How Does the Holy Spirit Work in a Christian?

The 9th century ivory relief on the right imagines the Catholic Pope Gregory receiving direct inspiration from the Holy Spirit (portrayed as a dove whispering in his ear) as he writes. This beautifully crafted artwork dramatically illustrates the confusion that many people have between the promises given to the apostles and prophets, and the way in which the Holy Spirit works in Christians in general.



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