

Systematic Theology #3: The Holy Spirit

THE PERSONHOOD OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

Pneumatology is the study of the person and work of the Holy Spirit.

1. The Holy Spirit is a person, not a force or spiritual principle.

The Scriptures clearly reveal the unique personal identity of the Holy Spirit. He is not an impersonal force, influence, or power. Such unbiblical thinking will negatively affect a person's relationship with the Holy Spirit. For this reason it is not helpful to refer to him as "it."

2. The Holy Spirit has all the attributes of personal identity including knowledge, emotions, and volition.

1 Corinthians 2:10–11 (ESV) *For the Spirit searches everything, even the depths of God. 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.*

Ephesians 4:30 (ESV) *And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, by whom you were sealed for the day of redemption.*

1 Corinthians 12:11 (ESV) *All these are empowered by one and the same Spirit, who apportions to each one individually as he wills.*

3. There are many important implications of the doctrine of the personhood of the Holy Spirit, three of which are:
 - The Holy Spirit should be worshipped as we worship the Father and Jesus.
 - The Holy Spirit should be obeyed as he leads and guides us.
 - The Holy Spirit can be grieved by our sinful actions and attitudes.

THE DEITY OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

1. The following four points establish the deity of the Holy Spirit.

- Various references to the Holy Spirit are interchangeable with references to God.

Acts 5:3–4 (ESV) But Peter said, “Ananias, why has Satan filled your heart to lie to the Holy Spirit... Why is it that you have contrived this deed in your heart? You have not lied to man but to God.”

- Divine attributes belonging to the Father and Jesus are also attributed to the Holy Spirit.

ATTRIBUTE	FATHER	SON	HOLY SPIRIT
Omniscience	Psalm 139:1-6	John 4:17, 18	I Cor. 2:10-12
Omnipotence	Genesis 1:1	John 1:3	Job 33:4
Omnipresence	Jer. 23:23, 24	Matthew 28:20	Ps. 139:7-10
Eternity	Psalm 90:2	John 1:1	Hebrews 9:14
Holiness	Lev. 11:44	Acts 3:14	Matthew 12:32
Love	I John 4:8	Rom. 8:37-39	Galatians 5:22
Truth	John 3:33	John 14:6	John 14:17

- The Holy Spirit performs works that are also ascribed to God.

For example: creation, providence, regeneration, illumination...

- The Holy Spirit is associated with the Father and Jesus on an equal basis in several New Testament texts.

Matthew 28:19 (ESV) Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit...

EXAMPLES OF THE WORK OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

1. The Holy Spirit was involved in creation and continues to sustain it.

Genesis 1:2 (ESV) The earth was without form and void, and darkness was over the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God was hovering over the face of the waters.

Psalm 104:30 (ESV) When you send forth your Spirit, they are created, and you renew the face of the ground.

2. The Holy Spirit inspired the authors of Scripture.

2 Peter 1:20–21 (ESV) [N]o prophecy of Scripture comes from someone's own interpretation. For no prophecy was ever produced by the will of man, but men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit.

2 Timothy 3:16 (ESV) All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness...

3. The Holy Spirit convicts the world of sin.

John 16:8 (ESV) And when he comes, he will convict the world concerning sin and righteousness and judgment...

4. The Holy Spirit brings about our salvation.

John 3:5–6 (ESV) Jesus answered, "Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God. That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit.

Titus 3:5–6 (ESV) [God] saved us, not because of works done by us in righteousness, but according to his own mercy, by the washing of regeneration and renewal of the Holy Spirit, whom he poured out on us richly through Jesus Christ our Savior...

5. The Holy Spirit indwells all genuine repentant believers.

1 Corinthians 6:19 (ESV) Or do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit within you, whom you have from God? You are not your own...

6. The Holy Spirit brings assurance of salvation.

Romans 8:15–16 (ESV) For you did not receive the spirit of slavery to fall back into fear, but you have received the Spirit of adoption as sons, by whom we cry, "Abba! Father!" The Spirit himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God...

7. The Holy Spirit helps us in prayer.

Romans 8:26 (ESV) Likewise the Spirit helps us in our weakness. For we do not know what to pray for as we ought, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us with groanings too deep for words.

8. The Holy Spirit reveals truth to us.

John 16:13 (ESV) When the Spirit of truth comes, he will guide you into all the truth, for he will not speak on his own authority, but whatever he hears he will speak, and he will declare to you the things that are to come.

9. The Holy Spirit sanctifies us. (I Peter 1:2)

Galatians 5:16 (ESV) But I say, walk by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the flesh.

Romans 8:13 (ESV) For if you live according to the flesh you will die, but if by the Spirit you put to death the deeds of the body, you will live.

10. The Holy Spirit empowers us to be his witnesses.

Acts 1:8 (ESV) "But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth."

11. The Holy Spirit manifests spiritual gifts through us.

1 Corinthians 12:7, 11 (ESV) To each is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good... All these [spiritual gifts] are empowered by one and the same Spirit, who apportions to each one individually as he wills.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Why is it important for us to honor the Holy Spirit as a person and as God, and not as a divine force or power?
2. What can you personally do to cultivate a deeper relationship with the Holy Spirit?
3. In what ways would you like to see the Holy Spirit increase his level of activity and influence in your life?

HOMEWORK

1. Read John 14-16, paying close attention to what Jesus says about the Holy Spirit. Write out all the promises Jesus makes to us about the Holy Spirit and then use them to pray to God.