

The Deity of the Holy Spirit - Gen. 1:1-2

Almost as soon as I finished putting my sermon together last week on the deity of Jesus it occurred to me that I should devote a sermon on the same subject regarding the Holy Spirit.

Whereas the the Holy Spirit is often wrongly represented in Pentecostal circles, I believe he is often **under**represented in conservative circles. When asked whether or not we believe that the Spirit is fully God I think we often say yes but we might struggle to point to specific passages to back up that claim.

So my goal for you this morning is that you would be fully convinced from the Bible that the Holy Spirit is fully God - alongside the Father and the Son.

And again, this is not simply so you can win an argument or check a box. There's no quiz at the end here to make sure you crammed and passed the theology exam. The reason we should be fully convinced of anything in the Bible is that the more we rightly understand the Bible and the Triune God, the more our worship is rightly directed to him. And so what is at stake here is worship. Do we worship God rightly?

I said last week that the trinity is a uniquely Christian doctrine. It is denied by every other faith. The Trinity can be boiled down to three simple statements:

- 1 - There is one God.
- 2 - There are three persons who are God.
- 3 - Each person - Father, Son, and Spirit - are fully God.

So here's my contention this morning: That the Holy Spirit is Almighty God: the glorious Creator, eternal, all powerful, all-knowing, omni-present, worthy of all our devotion and praise and worship and adoration. He exists alongside the Father and the Son - not as a lesser god, but as fully glorious as the Father and Son.

And although we are Christians - the definition of who we are revolves around the Son, Jesus Christ - the reason we are in Christ, the reason we have eternal life, the reason we have any inheritance and know God is solely because of the work of the Holy Spirit in bringing us to life. Praise you, Spirit, for raising us from the dead.

So just like last week was a crash course on Christology - the study of Christ, specifically his divine nature. This is a high level overview on pneumatology. The Study of the Holy Spirit is called pneumatology. Pneumonia or pneumatic - refers to wind or air, or here the Spirit. So pneumatology is the study of the Holy Spirit and we're looking at his deity, his divine nature. So let's get to work.

Let's talk about his name first and then unpack some passages. He is the Holy Spirit. What does that mean? First, let's talk about holy. Holy is the quality of perfection. It is something that is set apart, other, without blemish, not for common use. The dishes grandma had and only used for Thanksgiving dinner - they were holy. When holy is used of God the idea is that God is utterly unlike us in glory and perfection.

Isa. 6:1-4 the seraphim are crying out to God seated on the throne, "Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of hosts; the whole earth is full of his glory." The brightness and radiance and holiness of God overwhelms even the seraphim. The thing they are praising God for is his holiness. His otherness. The brightness of his glory that can only overflow into humble worship.

So it is with the **Holy** Spirit. He is other than we are. The brightness of his glory, the beauty of his majesty, his power, his wisdom - he is the creator God utterly worthy of all praise and devotion. He is the third person of the infinite Trinity of whom the heavens and the highest heavens cannot contain - and yet he dwells in his people. And if he is holy - the chief attribute of his name - what do you imagine he empowers his people to do? Live lives of holiness.

He is the Holy **Spirit**. The KJV calls him the Holy Ghost, maybe you've heard that. Usually when we hear ghost we think of a disembodied spirit who haunts people - that's because the English language has changed over time.

BTW: There is no such thing as ghosts. When your spirit leaves your body you are what? Dead. And if you're dead your spirit either goes instantly to glory if you are a believer or instantly to torment in hell if you are not. There are no ghosts. There are demons who do what people often say ghosts do; but no ghosts.

When the KJV used the term ghost it was getting across what we now refer to as "spirit" - it's the inner life and power of a person. Adam was a lifeless human body until God breathed into him the breath of life. It was that breath - that spirit, in the Hebrew - that inner life which animated him and powered him for living.

When Jesus died it says he gave up his spirit, or the KJV says he gave up the what? The ghost. Not the Holy Spirit, but his own inner life. He gave up that immaterial part of himself that animated who he was as fully human only to receive it back 3 days later. That's how we use the word spirit.

And that inner animating power is how we are to understand the Holy Spirit. If you were to put the life of God, the power of God, the creative force of God, the part of God that gives and sustains physical life, and gives and sustains spiritual life into a person who is himself fully glorious God: that is God the Holy Spirit.

The Holy Spirit is not some creepy ghost or shadowy figure within the Trinity. No, he is the inner life, the Holy person of Power that gives life to all things. And we see that here even at the very beginning of the very first book of the Bible.

Gen. 1:1-2. Here we are at the very beginning of the Bible and before we ever know that there is a Son of God who is the agent of creation, we find out that there is a Spirit of God who is overseeing creation. **Read**

So this is day one of our universe and the Holy Spirit is present. Now what we need to understand is that the Holy Spirit has always existed. He was not created on day 1 in Genesis, he has always been. There never has been a time when there was no Spirit of God - he is the everlasting God. **Heb. 9:14** calls him the eternal Spirit.

Whereas **John 1:1** says of Jesus that in the beginning was the Word and the Word was with God and the Word was God. We could say here than in the beginning was the Spirit, and the Spirit was with God and the Spirit was God. Obviously the text doesn't say that verbatim, but that's exactly what we see.

And he is portrayed here as overseeing the creation of the universe. The Father spoke it, the Son created it, and the Spirit is intimately overseeing all of it.

And maybe this goes without saying but the Spirit is a person. He is not a force, he is not a feeling, he is not your intuition. He is every bit as much a person as Jesus and the Father. You know how our crazy world seems to think it's necessary to tell people what their pronouns are? Well, I will oblige that discussion just this once to say that the pronouns we use for the Spirit are he/him/his. The Spirit is not an "it," certainly not "she/her."

And the Spirit is superintending the creation order because that's what God does. The Spirit is superintending his creation.

Turn to Psalm 139:1-12. One of the ways we see the Spirit's deity indirectly is when attributes that only God has are given to him.

Heb. 9:14 he is called the eternal Spirit. Only God is eternal, the Spirit is called eternal so the Spirit is God.

In **Isa. 40:13** and **1 Cor. 2:10-11** he is omniscient - he knows all the depths of God (which only God can know) and no one teaches him anything.

He is omnipresent by the fact that he can dwell in all believers at once. And he is omnipresent and omniscient (all knowing) as the psalmist says here. **Read 1-12**

This really is an incredible psalm of grace and comfort. And the gist is simply that God knows us thoroughly and completely. He knows everything about us no matter where we are. God knows believers in chains on the

other side of the planet just as much as he knows believers in Argentina just as much as he knows astronauts in space or the Christian 500 feet below the sea in a submarine. He's there all at once. In fact, my family was just reading through Jonah. And in Jonah chapter 2 we have a prayer recorded. Where was Jonah when he prayed? He was in the belly of a fish. And Jonah's prayer is actually a prayer of thanks for answering his first prayer when he was about to drown in the middle of the ocean. How did God answer that prayer in the middle of the Mediterranean Sea? He is everywhere. **Read 7-10**

The Spirit is everywhere. And especially in Vs. 7 the Spirit is equated with the very presence of God. This is Hebrew poetry called synonymous parallelism. He says the same thing twice. In English our words rhyme, in Hebrew the concepts rhyme. It is the Spirit who is the omnipresent God who hears our prayers.

Another way we see the deity of the Spirit is his name is often included in Trinitarian formulas. **Look at Matt. 28:19.** A trinitarian formula is basically when someone in the NT refers to the Father, Son and Spirit in the same breath or passage. Why these are significant is because this elevates the Spirit in a way that wouldn't be right if the Spirit were not God. We never hear of the Father, Son, and Michael the archangel. Or the Father, Son, and the apostle Peter. The Spirit is included with the other two persons of the Trinity. **Read**

The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit, be with you all," ([2 Corinthians 13:14](#))

Be on guard for yourselves and for all the flock, among which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to shepherd the church of God which He purchased with His own blood," ([Acts 20:28](#))

To those who reside as aliens, scattered throughout Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia, who are chosen according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, by the sanctifying work of the Spirit, to obey Jesus Christ and be sprinkled with His blood: May grace and peace be yours in the fullest measure," ([1 Peter 1:1-2](#))

When people are put together it makes sense. Washington, Lincoln and Roosevelt. But if I were to say Washington, Lincoln, McMorris-Rogers you'd do a double take. One of these is not like the other.

Acts 4:32-5:6 - I mentioned last week that although there are many passages about the deity of Jesus but there were 3 you really should memorize - at least memorize where they are what were they? John 1:1-4, Romans 9:1-5, Hebrews 1:1-9. The same thing is true with the Holy Spirit. This is one of the top 3. We have the situation with Ananias and Sapphira. **Read 4:32-5:6**

So what's going on that God kills Ananias and later his wife? Well, first we need to acknowledge that they were actually being generous. They had sold a field and were going to give at least some - if not most - of the proceeds to the apostles for ministry. But what happened? The best we can tell is that although they sold the field, they didn't bring all the money to the apostles. They only brought some. Even only bringing some of the money wasn't a problem. Here was the problem: When they brought the money, it seems as though they said that they had brought all the money rather than simply a portion of it. They were lying. They were attempting to look more generous than they were. They wanted the apostles to see how sacrificial they were. This was a show to make them look better.

And while they can hide it from men, they can't hide it from who? God. Well, specifically here the Holy Spirit. In one breath he's called the Spirit, in the next breath he's called God. **Read 3-4**

Their chief sin here was that they lied to the Holy Spirit who is God. Peter says they didn't lie to men but God. Well, technically, they did lie to men his point is that their their primary offense was lying to the Spirit.

By the way, you cant lie to a force. You can lie to centrifugal motion, you can't lie to gravity, or inertia. You also can't lie to inanimate objects like a tree or a chair or the wind. You can only lie to people. And here they lied to the divine person of the Holy Spirit. He reiterates the sin with Sapphira. **Read 7-11**

You don't mess with the Spirit of the Lord, the Almighty, infinitely holy, all-knowing and all-powerful Spirit of God. Why? Because he is God who can take take our life just as soon as he gives it.

1 Cor. 6:12-20 - We have the dire warning that we are not to be mastered by anything. Even things that are good can become bad if we become slaves to them. Paul goes on to say that for sure we should not be involved in sexual immorality. The sexual union was created by God to be nurtured and enjoyed in the context of marriage alone. Outside of that, it is not to be named amount us. Why not?

There's a lot of reasons Paul could have given: STDs, premarital pregnancy, violating our covenant to our spouse, he could have given many reasons. The main reason he gives here is because Christians are the Temple of the Holy Spirit. **Read 12-20**

There were actually people in Corinth, it seems, who thought that in their Christian liberty they could go to prostitutes. Paul says no way. When you are intimate with someone you become one flesh with them in a way that it reserved for marriage. And sexual immorality is a sin against our body in a unique way that other sins are not.

But notice that ultimately his argument is that we are a Temple of the Holy Spirit. Think about that concept. We often say that, as believers, we are a temple of the Holy Spirit or that the Holy Spirit is inside of us. But what are we saying? Let me put it another way: In the OT who lived inside the Tabernacle and later the Temple? God did; Yahweh.

Later in the book Paul will talk about how the Corinthians shouldn't go eat meat at pagan temples. Why not? What's the big deal? Well, what's in those temples? False gods; idols. They are not real, and Paul says they're actually demons not gods. There's only one God. But the point is that what resides in temples - whether real or false - are divine beings.

And the glory of the New Covenant is that God dwells not just *among* us, but *in* us. We are his temple. If the Holy Spirit is not God then we are idolatrous temples because only the one true and living God can dwell in us. **Look over at Eph. 2:19-22**

Here Paul uses the Temple analogy again. But this time he changes it just a tad. Here his point isn't that every single Christian is a Temple - though that's true. Here, his point is that the entire body of Christ - all Christians together - are a temple of God. **Read 19-22**

So are we the Temple of God or the Temple of the Holy Spirit? What's the answer? Yes. The Holy Spirit is God who fashioned us individually into his own Temple and also fashions us collectively into a Temple.

Jesus says in **John 14:23-24** that the one who loves him and keeps his word - in other words, the person who is a true Christian - that he and the Father will come to him and make their home in him. How many people are inside of us right now? If you are a follower of Jesus three: The Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Or we could say one: we are the Temple of the Triune God. One in three, three in one.

Let's not forget the moral imperative Paul was giving us: the reason we flee from sexual immorality is because we are the Holy House of the Holy Spirit. God doesn't live in the moral slums, he lives in the moral beauty and radiance of a human house that he himself has transformed from darkness into light.

Turn to 1 Cor. 12. Here we have the Spirit empowering the people he has saved to serve one another. This is the section on Spiritual gifts - or we could say gifts empowered by the Spirit. This would be the second passage you should write down if you want to memorize a few locations for the deity of the Holy Spirit. **Read 12:4-11**

Now, my goal isn't to unpack all these gifts - what they are or mean or whether or not they operate today. What I want you to notice is actually verse 11: that these gifts are all powered by the Spirit and he gives them to his people exactly as he wants or doesn't want. It's his will that is supreme in deciding how he has equipped you for service to the church.

And by the way, if you are a Christian he has equipped you to serve, and you should be serving. You should be using the gifts God has given you to benefit the congregation both at church and outside of church. But know that it is the Holy Spirit, by his own will, who gives us these gifts.

And then Paul gives us an analogy. All these spiritual gifts are like the different parts of a body: hands, eyes, nose, feet. **Read 14-20**

In Verse 18, who arranges the parts? God does. I thought it was the Spirit who sovereignly apportioned them as he willed. Who is it? Yes. The Spirit who is the sovereign God raises people to life by his own will. And the Spirit, who is the sovereign God, empowers the followers of Jesus to serve one another according to his own will.

Turn over to Hebrews 3:7-11. Hebrews is usually known for its high Christology. The theme of the book is "Jesus is better than..." Jesus is better than the angels / Moses / his rest is greater than the OC Sabbath rest / he is a better high priest / better priesthood / giving a greater sacrifice over a greater covenant in a greater Temple.

But interestingly, Hebrews has one of the highest pneumatologies in the Bible. The exaltation of the Holy Spirit often goes unnoticed because of the amazing exaltation of the Son. But Hebrews offers us a grand view of the Spirit. And so Hebrews is the third passage I'd encourage you to jot down when thinking of the deity of the Spirit. And it's a multitude of passages, so maybe what you might do is start at one passage and jot next to that passage the address of the following passage and next to that passage the next one. Sort of like the Thompson chain reference Bible.

So here's the first verse. **Read 7-11**

How does this prove the deity of the Holy Spirit? Because this section is simply a quote from the OT, it's a quote from **Psalms 95:7,8**. Who was it speaking in the OT in Psalm 95? It was God - that's why we call the Bible the Word of God or God's Word. The author of Hebrews says this is what the Spirit said. You can look up the Psalm later - it's almost precisely the same. The author of Hebrews used a Greek translation of the OT so there will be some small variances. But he is attributing words that God clearly spoke referring to himself as referring to the Holy Spirit.

Most people believe the book of Hebrews is essentially a sermon that was written down and as a preacher I know why: chapters 3-4 are an exposition of Psalm 95. Notice he quotes the psalm, makes a few comments, then unpacks it. Hebrews 3:15 is an expounding of 3:7; 4:3 is an expounding of 3:11; 4:5 is the same; 4:7 he's back to verse 3:7. Does that make sense? So this section he says is spoken by the Holy Spirit, and we know it was spoken by God.

But **look at 4:3-10** at how he takes those quotes attributed to the Spirit and then calls him God. **Read 3-12**

It's the Spirit speaking, it's God speaking, it's God's Word. Who is the Spirit? He is the eternal, speaking God who gave us His Word in the OT.

We see it again and again. **Look at 9:6-9.** This is talking about the OT law concerning sacrifices. And how the fact that only the high priest could go into the presence of God made it clear that for a time access to God was very limited until Christ came. **Read 6-9**

So who gave the Law? God did. Here he says that the Spirit gave the Law and indicated that in the OC the way to God was closed off to most people. The Holy Spirit gave the Law.

Look at another: 10:15-18. This is significant because this is the promise of the NC from **Jer. 31:31-34**. Where Yahweh promises Israel a new covenant. And here it is said specifically that the Spirit was the one who promised the NC. **Read 15-18**

So it is the Spirit who promises the NC. The Spirit who is called the Lord - God's covenant name, Yahweh, in Jeremiah. It is the Spirit who puts laws on hearts and minds. And it is the Spirit who forgives sins. Who can forgive sins but God alone?

So the author of Hebrews not only attributes the writing of the OT to the Spirit, but quotes passages that specifically call him God and Yahweh.

Where does this leave us? Our brains big and hopefully you are convinced by Scripture that the Holy Spirit is God. That should concern us and comfort us. Why should it concern us? Because the Holy Spirit being fully God means we have God inside of us. This isn't mysticism or the divine spark or that we become God. No, we become the dwelling place for God. And just like we'd clean up our house if we had important company coming over, we should proverbially clean up our lives knowing that the Holy, righteous, all-powerful Spirit is inside of us. **Read 26-31**

Who was it that destroyed Ananias and Sapphira instantly? The Spirit. Who do you have inside of you right now? The Spirit. It is possible for us to outrage the Spirit just as much as it is possible for us to trample on the blood of Christ by sinning deliberately. Know, dear brothers and sisters, that the one inside of you - who knows you better than you do - is holy; and he has called you to be holy. Deliberate sin in us is no different than the deliberate sin of Annanias and Sapphira and the Spirit is no less able to bring about vengeance and repay our sin with the full fury of his wrath as the living God.

What about comfort? Here's the comfort: If the Spirit is in you it is because, as the sovereign God, he has chosen to you. What the Father planned and the Son accomplished, the Spirit has applied to your account. If he's in you it's because he has eternally loved you. And any and every act of service you offer for the sake of Christ is done because the Spirit is in you empowering you to good works which the Father prepared beforehand that we should walk in them.

It's you that works, but really it's the Spirit in you. If God wanted to strike us down he would have done so long ago. Notice what the Spirit is called in **Vs. 29**. He's the Spirit of what? Grace.

Grace is unmerited favor. You've never earned the Spirit's love and affection. It has always been unconditional. You've never earned the Spirit's power, he provides it solely by his grace as he so wills.

He is the Spirit of grace. The Spirit of the Lord. The Spirit of God who is God and worthy of all praise and honor worship.

Doxology:

Praise God from whom all blessings flow;

Praise him all creatures here below.

Praise him above, ye heavenly host,

Praise Father, Son, and Holy Ghost.

Amen