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### **Holy Spirit**

#### **The Watchtower, July 15, 1974, p. 423**

“So, then, not just a majority of Bible passages, but *all* the Scriptures are in agreement that God’s spirit is, ‘not someone,’ but ‘something.’ A simple but careful reading of the Scriptures makes it clear that God’s spirit is indeed his invisible active force.”

#### **Holy Spirit - The Force Behind the New Coming Order, 1976 ed., p. 11**

“From God there goes forth an invisible active force by means of which he gets his will done. It is not a mere influence such as a man might exercise over others by his powerful personality. It is a force that is operative, and it issues forth from God who is holy, that is to say, absolutely clean and righteous. He sends it forth to accomplish what is holy. So it is correctly called “holy spirit.” It is so spoken of in God’s written Word. Jesus Christ himself recognized God as the Source of holy spirit. In evidence of this, he said to human fathers of his day: ‘If you, although being wicked, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more so will the Father in heaven give holy spirit to those asking him!’—Luke 11:13.”

#### **You Can Live Forever in Paradise, 1982 ed., p. 40**

“As for the ‘Holy Spirit,’ the so-called third Person of the Trinity, we have already seen that this is not a person but God’s active force.”

(continued)

**Reasoning From the Scriptures, 1985 ed., p. 381**

“The correct identification of the holy spirit must fit *all the scriptures* that refer to that spirit. With this viewpoint, it is logical to conclude that the holy spirit is the active force of God. It is not a person but is a powerful force that God causes to emanate from himself to accomplish his holy will.—Ps. 104:30; 2 Pet. 1:21; Acts 4:31.”

**Knowledge That Leads to Everlasting Life, 1995 ed., p. 31**

“God’s holy spirit is not a person. It is Jehovah’s active force, used by the Almighty to accomplish his purposes.”

(done)

At John 16:7, 8, 13, the *Authorized Version* quotes Jesus as stating: "If I go not away, the Comforter [*para'kle-tos*] will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send him unto you. And when he is come, he will reprove the world . . . when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth."

In connection with this passage, the *New Catholic Encyclopedia* (Vol. 13, pp. 575, 576) observes: "So clearly does St. John see in the Spirit a person who takes Christ's place in the Church, that he uses a masculine pronoun [*e-kei'nos*] in reference to the Spirit even though [*pneu'ma*, spirit] is neuter in gender (16.8, 13-16). Consequently, it is evident that St. John thought of the Holy Spirit as a Person, who is distinct from the Father and the Son, and who, with the glorified Son and the Father, is present and active in the faithful (14.16; 15.26; 16.7)."

But did John really use the masculine pronoun despite the neuter gender of the word "spirit"? Was his purpose to show that the spirit is indeed a person? Why not reread the above quotation from John chapter 16? What is the antecedent of the pronoun "he"? Is it not the word "Comforter"? Yes, and the Greek word so rendered is *para'kle-tos* and is masculine in gender. Rightly, then, John used masculine pronouns in this passage because grammatical usage required it.

However, John did not use masculine pronouns when the antecedent was actually the neuter word *pneu'ma* (spirit). This can readily be seen from the readings of literal translations, such as the one by Rotherham. At John 14:16, 17, Rotherham renders Jesus' words as follows: "I will request the Father, and Another Advocate [*para'kle-tos*] will he give unto you, that he may be with you age-abidingly,—the Spirit [*pneu'ma*] of truth,—which the world cannot receive, because it beholdeth

it not nor getteth to know it. But ye are getting to know it; because with you it abideth, and in you it is." Notice that the pronoun is masculine in gender ("he") when the antecedent is the masculine noun *para'kle-tos* but neuter ("it") when the antecedent is the neuter noun *pneu'ma*.

This fact is often concealed in Bible translations, as neuter pronouns are replaced with masculine pronouns. A footnote in *The New American Bible* on John 14:17 admits: "The Greek word for 'Spirit' is neuter, and while we use personal pronouns in English ('he,' 'his,' 'him'), most Greek MSS [manuscripts] employ 'it.'"

Thus we can see that Trinitarians point to personal pronouns when these seem to support their view but ignore them when they do not. A careful examination of passages used by Trinitarians, however, reveals that John's use of pronouns—both neuter and masculine—is a matter of grammar and therefore does not support their claim that the spirit is a person, the "third person" of the triune God.

So, then, not just a majority of Bible passages, but all the Scriptures are in agreement that God's spirit is, "not someone," but "something." A simple but careful reading of the Scriptures makes it clear that God's spirit is indeed his invisible active force.\*

\* For details, see the booklet "The Word"—Who Is He? According to John and Aid to Bible Understanding, pages 1541-1548.

### IN COMING ISSUES

- Divine Mercy Points the Way Back for Erring Ones.
- Behind Christendom's Religious Architecture.
- Alcoholism—The Cause and the Cure.

<sup>11</sup> The "abundance of dynamic energy" that God has is immeasurable. It is inexhaustible. When we think just of the energy tied up in the sun of our solar system, which is a furrace of nuclear explosions like the explosion of hydrogen bombs, we are utterly amazed. And then when we think of the unnumbered billions of stars many of which are larger than our sun, we get some idea of the outflow of dynamic energy from God that the present starry heavens represent. And yet God is not played out, not exhausted. So, in full harmony with the facts it is said: "He is giving to the tired one power; and to the one without dynamic energy he makes full might abound." (Isaiah 40:29) He will never let our expanding universe wear out or run down. Forever it will remain to carry out the purpose for which it was created. Poetically an ancient observer of the stars said: "The heavens are declaring the glory of God; and of the work of his hands the expanse is telling. One day after another day causes speech to bubble forth, and one night after another night shows forth knowledge."—Psalm 19:1, 2.

<sup>12</sup> Happily for us, God is invisible to mankind. Yet, in spite of this, he gives us so much evidence of his existence that the world of mankind is without excuse for denying or ignoring his existence and their responsibility to him. "For," as one Biblical writer wrote, "his invisible qualities

<sup>11</sup> Why is it that the Creator is not played out and will not let the universe wear out or run down?  
<sup>12</sup> Why are men inexcusable for ignoring God and responsibility they have toward Him?

are clearly seen from the world's creation onward, because they are perceived by the things made, even his eternal power and Godship, so that they are inexcusable; because, although they knew God, they did not glorify him as God." (Romans 1:20, 21) In the face of all the evidence, they cannot successfully argue that God does not exist any more than argue that "God is dead." He still lives and has all the dynamic energy and the perfect memory to carry out his stated purposes, which have been declared and published now for six thousand years. How glad we can be for this!

<sup>13</sup> We do not join the modern-day scientists in their denying that God is the Source of all energy now in operation. We know that he is also the Source of something else that scientists deny, not knowing anything about it. What is that? It is "spirit." And why should he not be the Source of spirit? "God is a Spirit," or, "God is spirit," as Jesus Christ pointed out nineteen centuries ago.—John 4:24, and marginal reading.

<sup>14</sup> From God there goes forth an invisible active force by means of which he gets his will done. It is not a mere influence such as a man might exercise over others by his powerful personality. It is a force that is operative, and it issues forth from God who is holy, that is to say, absolutely clean and righteous. He sends it forth to accomplish what is holy. So it is correctly called "holy spirit." It is so spoken of in God's written Word.

<sup>13</sup> Or what else, besides dynamic energy, is God the Source, and why?  
<sup>14</sup> What is "holy spirit," and who gives it?

death and resurrection and ascension to heaven, Jesus was still not equal to his Father.—1 Corinthians 11:3; 15:28.

<sup>16</sup> ‘But isn’t Jesus called a god in the Bible?’ someone may ask. This is true. Yet Satan is also called a god. (2 Corinthians 4:4) At John 1:1, which refers to Jesus as “the Word,” some Bible translations say: “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.” But notice, verse 2 says that the Word was “in the beginning *with* God.” And while men have seen Jesus, verse 18 says that “no man hath seen God at any time.” (*Authorized or King James Version*) So we find that some translations of verse 1 give the correct idea of the original language when they read: “The Word was with God, and the Word was divine,” or was “a god,” that is, the Word was a powerful godlike one. (*An American Translation*) Clearly, Jesus is not Almighty God. In fact, Jesus spoke of his Father as “my God” and as “the only true God.”—John 20:17; 17:3.

<sup>17</sup> As for the “Holy Spirit,” the so-called third Person of the Trinity, we have already seen that this is not a person but God’s active force. John the Baptist said that Jesus would baptize with holy spirit, even as John had been baptizing with water. Hence, in the same way that water is not a person, holy spirit is not a person. (Matthew 3:11) What John foretold was fulfilled when, following the death and resurrection of Jesus, holy spirit was poured out on his followers gathered in Jerusalem. The Bible says: “They all became filled with holy spirit.” (Acts 2:4) Were they “filled” with a person? No, but they were filled with God’s active force. Thus the facts make clear that the Trinity is not a Bible teaching. Actually, long before Jesus walked the earth



16. Even though Jesus is referred to as “God,” what shows that he is not Almighty God?

17. How does the pouring out of holy spirit on Jesus’ followers prove that it is not a person?

the people nor the leaders of religious thought ever faced the possibility of the total annihilation of what once was called into existence. Death was a passage to another kind of life."

—*The Religion of Babylonia and Assyria* (Boston, 1898), M. Jastrow, Jr., p. 556.

See also pages 100-102, under the heading "Death."

## Spirit

**Definition:** The Hebrew word *ru'ach* and the Greek *pneuma*, which are often translated "spirit," have a number of meanings. All of them refer to that which is invisible to human sight and which gives evidence of force in motion. The Hebrew and Greek words are used with reference to (1) wind, (2) the active life-force in earthly creatures, (3) the impelling force that issues from a person's figurative heart and that causes him to say and do things in a certain way, (4) inspired utterances originating with an invisible source, (5) spirit persons, and (6) God's active force, or holy spirit. Several of these usages are here discussed in relation to topics that may arise in the field ministry.

### What is the holy spirit?

A comparison of Bible texts that refer to the holy spirit shows that it is spoken of as "filling" people; they can be "baptized" with it; and they can be "anointed" with it. (Luke 1:41; Matt. 3:11; Acts 10:38) None of these expressions would be appropriate if the holy spirit were a person.

Jesus also referred to the holy spirit as a "helper" (Greek, *para-kletos*), and he said that this helper would "teach," "bear witness," "speak," and "hear" (John 14:16, 17, 26; 15:26; 16:13) It is not unusual in the Scriptures for something to be personified. For example, wisdom is said to have "children." (Luke 7:35) Sin and death are spoken of as being kings. (Rom. 5:14, 21) While some texts say that the spirit "spoke," other passages make clear that this was done through angels or humans. (Acts 4:24, 25; 28:25; Matt. 10:19, 20; compare Acts 20:23 with 21:10, 11.) At 1 John 5:6-8, not only the spirit but also "the water and the blood" are said

to 'bear witness.' So, none of the expressions found in these texts in themselves prove that the holy spirit is a person.

The correct identification of the holy spirit must fit all the scriptures that refer to that spirit. With this viewpoint, it is logical to conclude that the holy spirit is the active force of God. It is not a person but is a powerful force that God causes to emanate from himself to accomplish his holy will.—Ps. 104:30; 2 Pet. 1:21; Acts 4:31.

See also pages 406, 407, under the heading "Trinity."

### What gives evidence that a person really has the holy spirit, or "the Holy Ghost" (KJ)?

Luke 4:18, 31-35: "[Jesus read from the scroll of the prophet Isaiah:] 'Jehovah's spirit is upon me, because he anointed me to declare good news' . . . And he went down to Capernaum, a city of Galilee. And he was teaching them on the sabbath; and they were astounded at his way of teaching, because his speech was with authority. Now in the synagogue there was a man with a spirit, an unclean demon, and he shouted with a loud voice . . . But Jesus rebuked it, saying: 'Be silent, and come out of him.' So, after throwing the man down in their midst, the demon came out of him without hurting him." (What gave evidence that Jesus had God's spirit? The account does not say that he trembled or shouted or moved about in a fervor. Rather, it says he spoke with authority. It is noteworthy, however, that on that occasion a *demonic* spirit did move a man to shout and fall onto the floor.)

Acts 1:8 says that when Jesus' followers received holy spirit they would be witnesses about him. According to Acts 2:1-11, when they did receive that spirit, observers were impressed by the fact that, although the ones speaking were all Galileans, they were speaking about the magnificent things of God in languages that were familiar to the many foreigners who were present. But the record does not say that there were any emotional outbursts on the part of those who received the spirit.

It is noteworthy that when Elizabeth received the holy spirit and then gave voice to "a loud cry" she was not in a

to all mankind. (Psalm 8:3, 4; Luke 6:35) Jehovah is also gracious to individuals, answering their specific pleas for favor. (Exodus 22:26, 27; Luke 18:13, 14) Of course, God is not obligated to show favor or mercy to anyone. (Exodus 33:19) Therefore, we need to manifest deep appreciation for God's mercy and graciousness.—Psalm 145:1, 8.

### SLOW TO ANGER, IMPARTIAL, AND RIGHTEOUS

<sup>20</sup> Jehovah is slow to anger. Yet, this does not mean that he does not take action, for he did so in destroying stubborn Pharaoh and his army in the Red Sea. Jehovah is also impartial. Hence, his favored people, the Israelites, eventually lost his favor because of their persistent wrongdoing. God accepts as his worshippers people from all nations, but only those who conform to his righteous ways.—Acts 10:34, 35.

<sup>21</sup> The Bible book of Revelation highlights the importance of learning about God's "righteous decrees." It tells us that heavenly creatures sing: "Great and wonderful are your works, Jehovah God, the Almighty. Righteous and true are your ways. King of eternity. Who will not really fear you, Jehovah, and glorify your name, because you alone are loyal? For all the nations will come and worship before you, because your righteous decrees have been made manifest." (Revelation 15:2-4) We show wholesome fear of Jehovah, or reverence for him, by conforming to what he says is right. This is made easier by reminding ourselves of God's wisdom and love. All his commands are for our good.—Isaiah 48:17, 18.

### “JEHOVAH OUR GOD IS ONE”

<sup>22</sup> The ancient Egyptians worshipped many gods, but Je-

20. What shows that Jehovah is both slow to anger and impartial?  
21. (a) What does Revelation 15:2-4 teach us about God? (b) What will make it easier for us to do what God says is right?  
22. Why do those who accept the Bible not worship a Trinity?

hovah is “a God exacting exclusive devotion.” (Exodus 20:5) Moses reminded the Israelites that “Jehovah our God is *one* Jehovah.” (Deuteronomy 6:4) Jesus Christ repeated those words. (Mark 12:28, 29) Therefore, those who accept the Bible as God's Word do not worship a Trinity consisting of three persons or gods in one. In fact, the word “Trinity” does not even appear in the Bible. The true God is one Person, separate from Jesus Christ. (John 14:28; 1 Corinthians 15:28) God's holy spirit is not a person. It is Jehovah's active force, used by the Almighty to accomplish his purposes.—Genesis 1:2; Acts 2:1-4, 32, 33; 2 Peter 1:20, 21.

<sup>23</sup> When you consider how wonderful Jehovah is, do you not agree that he deserves your worship? As you study his Word, the Bible, you will get to know him better and will learn what he requires of you for your eternal welfare and happiness. (Matthew 5:3, 6) In addition, your love for God will grow. That is fitting, for Jesus said: “You must love Jehovah your God with your whole heart and with your whole soul and with your whole mind and with your whole strength.” (Mark 12:30) Obviously, Jesus had such love for God. But what does the Bible reveal about Jesus Christ? What is his role in Jehovah's purpose?

23. (a) How will your love for God grow? (b) What did Jesus say about loving God, and what do we need to learn about Christ?

### TEST YOUR KNOWLEDGE

What is God's name, and how often is it used in the Hebrew Scriptures?

Why should you use God's name?

What qualities of Jehovah God especially appeal to you?