



THE IDENTITY OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

GOLDEN TEXT

“Don’t you know that you yourselves are God’s temple and that God’s Spirit dwells in your midst”? (1 Corinthians 3:16)

USEFUL PRACTICE

We believe that the Holy Spirit is the Third Person of the Holy Trinity, Lord and Giver of life, who convinces the world of sin, justice and judgment; regenerates the sinner, and who spoke through the prophets.

SCRIPTURE READING

John 14:15-18, 26

15 - “If you love me, keep my commands.

16 - And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another advocate to help you and be with you forever

17 - the Spirit of truth. The world cannot accept him, because it neither sees him nor knows him. But you know him, for he lives with you and will be in you.

18 - I will not leave you as orphans; I will come to you.

26 - But the Advocate, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you all things and will remind you of everything I have said to you.

GENERAL OBJECTIVE

To show that the Holy Spirit is the Third Person of the Holy Trinity and that He convinces the world of sin, justice and of judgment.



SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES

- I. **To understand** who the Holy Spirit is;
- II. **To show** the deity of the Holy Spirit in the light of the Bible;
- III. **To present** the attributes of deity;
- IV. **To analyze** the personality of the Holy Spirit.

INTRODUCTION

The Holy Scriptures reveal the identity of the Holy Spirit, his absolute deity and his personality, his consubstantiality with the Father and the Son as the Third Person of the Trinity and his works in the historical-salvific context. All these data of the revelation were only defined after the Council of Nicaea. The formulation of the pneumatological doctrine took place late in the history of the Church in the second half of the fourth century. This lesson is meant to explain and show how it all happened from the Bible.

I - THE HOLY SPIRIT

1. The divine revelation. The Bible shows that the divine revelation was progressive, as one of the fathers of the Church in the fourth century said: "The Old Testament proclaimed the Father openly, and the Son more obscurely. The New manifested the Son, and suggested the Deity of the Spirit. Now the Spirit Himself dwells among us, and supplies us with a clearer demonstration of Himself" (Gregory of Nazianzus / Original text in English). The Lord Jesus revealed the Father (John 1:18), and the Holy Spirit is the one who reveals the Son (John 16:14; 1 Cor. 12:3).

2. Forgetfulness. There are plenty of details in the Bible about the identity of the Holy Spirit in regard to his personality and deity as well as his relationship with the Father and the Son. He literally appears throughout the Bible from Genesis, at the Creation (Gen. 1:2), to Revelation (22:17). But these data of the revelation needed to be defined, hence the need for theological formulations required by the new cultural reality in which the Church was living and by the other civilizations which the gospel had penetrated. This difficult task took centuries to be completed, and the various attempts also resulted in heresies.

3. The Holy Spirit and the early Christians. In the light of the New Testament and in comparison with the patristic literature of the second

and third centuries, it becomes clear that the Christians of the Apostolic Age knew more about the identity of the Holy Spirit than the fathers of the Church of that period. The true identity of the Holy Spirit, as based on the Bible, only happened from Athanasius and the Three Great Cappadocians. Before that, the conceptualization of the Holy Spirit was almost always inadequate.

II - THE DEITY OF THE HOLY SPIRIT TO THE LIGHT OF THE BIBLE

1. The declared deity. The Holy Spirit is called Lord in the Holy Scriptures: "Now the Lord is the Spirit" (2 Cor. 3:17 / NKJV). The names "God" and "Holy Spirit" appear alternately in the Bible: "Why has Satan filled your heart to lie to the Holy Spirit and keep back *part* of the price of the land for yourself? [...] You have not lied to men but to God" (Acts 5: 3, 4b). Here God and the Holy Spirit are the same deity. The apostle Paul also uses this kind of language: "Do you not know that you are the temple of God and *that* the Spirit of God dwells in you?" (1 Cor. 3:16). This comes from the Old Testament: "The Spirit of the Lord spoke by me, and His word was on my tongue. The God of Israel said, The Rock of Israel spoke to me" (2 Sam. 23:2-3). It is in this language that the Bible says that the Holy Spirit is God.

2. The deity revealed. The relationship of the Holy Spirit with the Father and the Son reveals his deity and consubstantiality with them. This is made clear in the tripartite constructions of the New Testament (Matt. 28:19, 1 Cor. 12:4-6, 2 Cor. 13:13; Eph. 4:4-6, 1 Pet. 1:2). In relation to the Father, the Spirit searches all things, even the deep things of God (1 Cor. 2:10, 11); he is also called "the Spirit of God" (Gen. 1:2) and "the Spirit who is from God" (1 Cor. 2:12). As for the Son, He is called by Jesus "another Comforter" (John 14:16). The Greek term for "Comforter" here is **paracletos**, which means "helper", "advocate", and is applied to the Lord Jesus as Advocate (1 John 2:1). He is called the "Spirit of Jesus" (Acts 16:7), "the Spirit of Christ" (Rom. 8:9), and even "the Spirit of his Son" (Gal. 4:6).

3. Divine Works. The deity of the Holy Spirit is seen not only in the direct statement of the Scriptures, nor only through His relationship with the Father and the Son, but also in the works of God. The Holy Spirit is the Creator of the Universe and human beings (Job 26:13; 33:4; Ps. 104:30). He begot Jesus (Matt. 1:20; Luke 1:35) and raised him from the dead (1 Pet. 3:18); and he will raise the faithful (Rom 8:11). He is the Lord of the Church (Acts 20:28); author of the new birth (John 3:5:6); Gives life (Ez. 37:14), regenerates the sinner (Titus 3:5) and distributes the spiritual gifts (1 Cor. 12:7-11). Thus, the Nicene-Constantinopolitan Creed states: "And



in the Holy Spirit, the Lord and Giver of Life, who proceeds from the Father and the Son, who with the Father and the Son together is worshipped and glorified, who spoke by the prophets" (Extracted from the original text in English). The biblical confirmation of this truth is abundant (2 Cor. 3:17, Rom. 8: 2; John 15:26; Phil. 3:3; 2 Pet. 1:21).

III - THE ATTRIBUTES OF THE DEITY

1. Some incommunicable attributes. The deity of the Holy Spirit is also revealed in his divine attributes. Here we present only a few, due to scarcity of space. The Spirit is omnipotent (Rom. 15:19) and the source of power and miracles (Matt. 12:28; Acts 2:4; 1 Cor. 12:9-11). He is omnipresent, he is everywhere in the universe (Ps. 139:7-10); and he is omniscient, for he knows all things, from the deep things of God (1 Cor. 2:10, 11), passing through the human heart (Ez. 11: 5), until he reaches things to come (Luke 2:26, John 16:13, 1 Tim. 4:1). Thus the Bible teaches that the Holy Spirit is eternal (Heb. 9:14).

2. Some communicable attributes. The holiness of God is the most solemn attribute in the Scriptures (Is 6:3, Rev. 15:4). The term "holy" is applied to the Spirit as a direct consequence of his nature and not as the result of an external source. He is holy in himself; so he does not need to be sanctified, for it is He who sanctifies (Rom. 15:16; 1 Cor. 6:11). Goodness is another divine attribute, this is why Jesus said, "No one *is* good but One, *that is*, God." (Mark 10:18 and parallel passages of Matt. 19:17; Luke 18:19); however, the Bible teaches that the Holy Spirit is good (Ne. 9:20; Ps. 143:10). The Spirit is truth (1 John 5:6) and wise (Isa 11:2).

3. The Holy Spirit and the Trinity. The Holy Spirit equals the Father and the Son, also having a name, for the Lord Jesus determined that his disciples should baptize "in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit" (Matt. 28:19). This means that the Holy Spirit is the object of our faith, for in his name we are baptized, indicating equal recognition to that of the Father and the Son. The expression "communion with the Holy Spirit" (2 Cor. 13:14) shows that He is not only the object of our faith, but also of our prayer and worship. There is absolute equality within the Trinity, and none of the three Persons is subject to the other, as if there were a hierarchy in the divine substance. There is, indeed, a distinction of service, and the Holy Spirit represents the interests of the Father and the Son in the life of the Church on earth (John 16:13, 14).

IV - PERSONALITY OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

1. The faculties of personality. The personality of the Holy Spirit is abundantly and unmistakably present throughout the Bible and has been



a belief of the Church from the beginning. There are in Him elements of the personality, such as intellect, for He searches all things (1 Cor. 2:10, 11) and intelligence (Rom. 8:27). He has emotion, sensitivity (Romans 15:30, Eph. 4:30) and also possesses will (Acts 16:7, 1 Cor. 12:11). The three faculties “intellect, emotion, and will” characterize personality.

2. Reactions of the Holy Spirit. Another evidence of the personality of the Holy Spirit is that He reacts to certain acts practiced by human beings. Peter obeyed the Holy Spirit (Acts 10:19, 21); Ananias lied to the Holy Spirit (Acts 5:3); Stephen said that the Jews always resisted the Holy Spirit (Acts 7:51); The apostle Paul advises us not to grieve the Holy Spirit (Eph. 4:30); the Pharisees blasphemed against the Holy Spirit (Matt. 12:29-31); Christians are baptized in the name of the Holy Spirit (Matt. 28.19).

CONCLUSION

The phrase referring to the Holy Spirit as "Third Person of the Trinity" is due to the fact that his name appears after the Father and the Son in the baptismal formula. It is not, therefore, about an intra-Trinitarian hierarchy, because the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit are one God who subsists in three distinct Persons.