

IS THE HOLY SPIRIT A PERSON?

Who really is the Holy Spirit?

Is He a third God-Being?

Is it God's omnipresence?

Is it simply a force like the wind?

Or does it have intelligence?

"The Holy Spirit has a personality, else He could not bear witness to our spirits and with our spirits that we are the children of God. He must also be a divine person, else He could not search out the secrets which lie hidden in the mind of God. "For what man knoweth the things of a man save the spirit of man, which is in him; even so the things of God knoweth no man, but the Spirit of God."

--Ms 20, 1906.

Margaretha Tierney
Remnant Messages
P.O. Box 378
ARARAT 3377
AUSTRALIA

*Here is the patience of the saints: here are they that keep the
commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus.
Revelation 14:12*

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THE HOLY SPIRIT

“And grieve not the holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption.” Ephesians 4:30.

As we discuss the Holy Spirit, let us remember that the Father is seated upon His throne in heaven, and the Son is at His right hand. They are both glorious Beings; the Son having all the glory He possessed before He took humanity upon His divine Person. When Sister White asked Jesus if the Father had a ‘form’ like Himself, she was told He had, but if she saw Him, she would cease to exist. Early Writings p54.

Both the Father and the Son are vitally connected with the work of salvation, for Christ is ministering before the Father in our behalf.

What about the Holy Spirit?

Where is He during this ministry?

In fact, where was He during the creation of the universe, the creation of this earth, the redemption of humanity, the life of Christ on earth, and every other activity portrayed as involving the Father and the Son?

Firstly, it is important we see what the Bible actually says, and not read into it words that are not there. The first example is in the book of Genesis. “And the earth was without form, and void; and darkness was upon the face of the deep. And the spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters.” Genesis 1:2.

A Trinitarian mind would immediately say, ‘There is the Holy Spirit’, concluding that this is God the Holy Spirit, the third co-equal Being of the Trinity. But it does not say that.

The verse simply states that the ‘Spirit of God’ moved upon the face of the waters. It does not say God the Holy Spirit. It says *Spirit of God*. Our understanding of English grammar would tell us that the Spirit *belongs to God*. We would accept this for *Word of God*,

angels of God, truth of God, wrath of God, and so forth. Why do we have problems for the Spirit of God?

The second Bible verse that mentions the Spirit of God is where God said of the antediluvian world, “And the LORD said, My Spirit shall not always strive with man...” Genesis 6:3.

Note that the text simply says the Lord’s Spirit would not always strive with man. Again, it does not say God the Holy Spirit, but *My Spirit*, that is, the Spirit belonging to the Lord. (Compare 2 Corinthians 3:17)

The third verse is when Joseph was in Egypt, after having interpreted Pharaoh’s dreams. Pharaoh said of Joseph, “Can we find such a one as this is, a man in whom the Spirit of God is?” Genesis 41:38

If we do not have a Trinitarian mind, we will readily understand that Joseph had God’s Spirit within him, not another God-Being. The text implies that the Spirit belongs to God, as in Genesis 1:2.

Of course, it is impossible to go through every verse of the Bible in such a booklet as this, but in your own personal study it can be done. Simply write down what the verse is saying, but add nothing more. As you progress through the Scriptures, you will see a picture begin to form. And when you have arrived at your last text, you will have the truth on the subject of the Holy Spirit.

However, you will always have a few texts that will appear to say something different, even the opposite. This is so in every doctrinal subject. If you take these isolated verses and base your belief on them, you will be believing error. Prime examples are the doctrine of ever-burning hell and the Sabbath. It will be so with the subject of the doctrine of Christ as well.

Therefore it is *vital these isolated verses be explained by the majority of verses that are clear and in harmony with each other.* (It is the same with Spirit of Prophecy statements)

Now let us return to our question -- where was the Holy Spirit when the Father and the Son were working together in the creation of the universe, and at other times?

Sister White wrote, “The Psalmist represents the presence of **the Infinite One** as pervading all the universe. ‘Whither shall I go from **Thy Spirit**? Or whither shall I flee from **Thy presence**? If I ascend up into heaven, Thou art there; if I make my bed in hell, behold, **Thou art there**....’ Psalm 139:7.8. We can never find a solitude where God is not.” Signs of the Times. Jul 14. 1881.

So we can understand that God is ‘here’ and ‘there’ by His omnipresent Spirit.

“The greatness of God is to us incomprehensible. “The Lord’s throne is in heaven” (Psalm 11:4); yet **by His Spirit He is everywhere present**. He has an intimate knowledge of, and a personal interest in, all the works of His hand.” Education p132.

According to this Spirit of Prophecy statement, although the Father and the Son are now ministering in heaven, they can also be everywhere in the universe by the Spirit.

Do not allow your mind to jump to another co-equal Being called the Holy Spirit. God the Father and Christ, although they are in heaven performing a vital ministry, **they** can be elsewhere by **their** Spirit.

As there is only one Spirit, we must conclude that the Father and Son share the same Spirit. Ephesians 4:4. This can be seen in the interchange of terms in Scripture. To have the *Spirit* of God the Father, is to have the *Spirit* of Christ, for it is the same *Spirit*.

“But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the *Spirit of God* dwell in you. Now if any man have not the *Spirit of Christ*, he is none of his. And if *Christ be in you*, the body is dead because of sin, but the Spirit is life because of righteousness. But if the *Spirit of Him that raised up Jesus from the dead* dwell in you, *He that raised up Christ from the dead* shall also quicken your mortal bodies by *His Spirit* that

dwelleth in you.... for if ye live after the flesh, ye shall die, but if ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live. For as many as are led by the *Spirit of God*, they are the sons of God.” Romans 8:8-14.

Plant this firmly in your mind – God is everywhere in the universe by His Spirit.

A Bible example will make this concept a little clearer. Paul stated, “I verily, *as absent in body, but present in spirit*, have judged already, as though I were present, concerning him that hath so done this deed. In the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, when ye are gathered together, and my spirit, with the power of our Lord Jesus Christ, to deliver such an one unto Satan....”

1 Corinthians 5:3.4.

Unlike God’s Spirit, Paul’s spirit could not literally place him with the Corinthian believers, but they were to act ‘as though he was present’. Apparently, God and Christ can send their Spirit wherever they wish, and instead of only being there ‘in understanding of the situation, and in harmony with it’ as was Paul, they are *literally present in Spirit*. God and Christ are there *personally*, but unseen.

In the writings of the Bible and Spirit of Prophecy, the picture is constantly shown that where the Spirit is, there is the Father and the Son *in Spirit*.

To make this concept clear the prophet stated the following in a talk to the students at Avondale College.

“Present your bodies a living sacrifice... (Romans 12:1.2. quoted in full) ... The Lord says this because He knows it is for our good. He would build a wall around us, to keep us from transgression, so that His blessing and love may be bestowed on us in rich measure. This is the reason we have established a school here. The Lord instructed us that this was the place in which we should locate, and we have had every reason to think that we are in the right place. We have been brought together as a school, and **we need to realize**

that the Holy Spirit, who is as much a person as God is a person, is walking through these grounds, that the Lord God is our keeper, and helper. He hears every word we utter and knows every thought of the mind.” Manuscript 66. 1899. Talk at Avondale School. April 15. 1899. (Emphasis added) Compare 2 Corinthians 6:16.

The prophet is not speaking about another co-eternal, co-equal Being called the Holy Spirit. She is reminding the students that they must regard the Lord God as being personally with them in Spirit, although He could not be seen. (The part bolded in the above quotation is the only section placed in the book Evangelism p616, giving a completely different understanding)

“In giving us **His Spirit, God gives us Himself**, making Himself a fountain of divine influences, to give health and life to the world.” 7 Testimonies p273.

In His humanity, Christ was empowered by the Spirit of His Father. “He laid hold of **the divinity of God**; and this every member of the human family has the privilege of doing. Christ did nothing that human nature may not do if it **partakes of the divine nature**.” Signs of the Times. Jun 17.1897. (This is speaking of Christ’s obedient, sanctified life)

“He was fitted for the conflict by **the indwelling of the Holy Spirit**.” The Desire of Ages p123.

Note each point. The ‘divinity of God’; ‘partakers of the divine nature’; and ‘indwelling of the Holy Spirit’ are synonymous terms. As surrendered Christians, God’s people are partakers of the divine Spirit, once more united with God. So long as we live the Spirit-filled life, we partake of God’s divine nature.

Unfortunately, it is not possible to give worldly illustrations in order that the subject might be simplified, for to do so would demean the presence of God. Suffice is to say that if the Bible and Spirit of Prophecy say that the Spirit is the personal presence of God and Christ, we should believe it.

Before Jesus left this earth, He promised to pray to the Father that He would send “another Comforter” who would abide with them forever. John 14:16. While Jesus was present with His disciples, they felt safe and secure, but Jesus knew that when deprived of His presence, they would feel their need of Him.

Jesus gave the disciples His promise that He would not leave them “comfortless” as orphans. **“I will come to you”**, He said. John 14:18.

And He had promised to pray to the Father to send the Comforter who is called “the Spirit of truth”, a Spirit whom the world could not receive. He then tells the disciples that they know this Spirit of truth, for He “dwelleth with you, and shall be in you”. John 14:17.

Although He was leaving His disciples, Jesus promised to come to them. This is not speaking about His second coming, but of **His return in Spirit**. Instead of being with them in the flesh in visible form, He would be with them invisibly in Spirit.

“The Holy Spirit is Christ’s representative, but divested of the personality of humanity, and independent thereof. Cumbered with humanity, Christ could not be in every place personally. Therefore it was for their interest that He should go to the Father, and send the Spirit to be His successor on earth. No one could then have any advantage because of his location or his personal contact with Christ. **By the Spirit, the Saviour would be accessible to all. In this sense He would be nearer to them than if He had not ascended on high.**” The Desire of Ages p669.

This statement is clear enough for a mind that is open to the truth, but do not allow yourself to grab hold of words such as ‘Christ’s representative’ as another God-Being other than Christ. Or that Christ would “send the Spirit to be His successor”. Study the whole statement, and every sentence in context.

Also note that the Holy Spirit – as another God-Being of the Trinity – did not have humanity in the first place, and so it is impossible for Him to divest it. According to the dictionary, ‘divest’ means ‘to

unclothe, to strip, to uncover, denude, bare, undress, disrobe, dismantle, shed, doff, peel, skin, expose, lay open'. The only person who can do this to 'humanity' is Jesus Christ.

The above quotation from 'The Desire of Ages' is very clear, however, the original Spirit of Prophecy statement is even clearer. It states, "**Cumbered with humanity**, Christ could not be in every place personally, therefore it was altogether for their advantage that He should leave them, go to His Father and send the Holy Spirit to be His successor on earth. **The Holy Spirit is Himself divested of the personality of humanity and independent thereof. He would represent Himself as present in all places by His Holy Spirit, as the omnipresent.**" Manuscript Release 1084. 1899.

Look again at the words, "The Holy Spirit is Himself (Christ) divested (stripped, dismantled) of the personality of humanity...."

In other words, Christ would come Himself, by His omnipresent Spirit. And He would continue to comfort the disciples as He had done when present with them in the flesh.

"At all times and in all places, in all sorrows and in all afflictions, when the outlook seems dark and the future perplexing, and we feel helpless and alone, the Comforter will be sent in answer to the prayer of faith. Circumstances may separate us from every earthly friend; but no circumstance, no distance, can separate us from the heavenly Comforter. Wherever we are, wherever we may go, He is always at our right hand to support, sustain, uphold, and cheer." The Desire of Ages p669.670.

Of whom is the prophet speaking?

"There is **no comforter like Christ**, so tender and so true. He is touched with the feeling of our infirmities. His Spirit speaks to the heart.... The **influence of the Holy Spirit is the life of Christ in the soul**. This Spirit works in and through everyone who receives Christ. Those who know the indwelling of this

Spirit reveal its fruit – love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith.” Review & Herald. Oct 26. 1897.

When Christ entered within the heavenly gates, He was enthroned, and the “**Father gave His Spirit without measure to His Son...**” The Great Controversy p477. 1888. Review & Herald. Nov 5. 1908.

“How quickly **Christ** fulfilled His promise, and **sent from the heavenly courts the guarantee of His love!**

After His inauguration, the Spirit came and Christ was indeed glorified, even with the glory which He had from all eternity with the Father. During His humiliation upon this earth, the Spirit had not descended with all its efficacy; and Christ declared that if He went not away, it would not come, but that if he went away, He would send it. It was **a representation of Himself**, and after He was glorified, it was manifest.” Signs of the Times. May 17. 1899.

“Henceforth through the Spirit, **Christ was to abide continually in the hearts of the children. Their union with Him was closer than when He was personally with them.** The light, and love, and power of **the in-dwelling Christ** shone out through them, so that men, beholding, ‘marvelled; and they took knowledge of them, that they had been with Jesus’. (Acts 4:13)...

We may be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might. Receiving Christ, we are clothed with power. **An indwelling Saviour** makes His power our property... **Christ’s presence in the heart** is a vitalizing power, strengthening the entire being. Never feel that Christ is far away. He is always near. His loving presence surrounds you.” The Faith I Live By p62.

“I am crucified with Christ; nevertheless I live; yet not I, but **Christ liveth in me**; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave Himself for me.” Galatians 2:20.

“And because ye are sons, **God hath sent forth the Spirit of His Son into your hearts**, crying, Abba Father.” Galatians 4:6. 2:20.

Unfortunately, some brethren are charging those who do not believe the Trinity as stating that the Holy Spirit is not a person, or that He lacks a personality. Statements are made such as ‘Could we grieve the Holy Spirit if it were only a force? Can we sin against a force?’

But this charge is entirely false.

The Spirit is indeed a person. He is the person of Jesus Christ in the Spirit, and although invisible to mortal eyes, He has all the personality of Christ in the flesh.

In one of the earlier quotations, Sister White stated that Christ “divested (Himself) of the *personality of humanity*”, but this does not mean that He stripped Himself of personality. It simply means that He is free from the limitations of the flesh. This is quite clear when comparing other Spirit of Prophecy statements on the subject.

The Holy Spirit is the *personal presence* of God and Christ. It must be emphasised that it is not an impersonal force like the wind. Sister White made it clear that the Spirit must be a divine person with a personality or He could not do the work of the Spirit.

“The **Holy Spirit has a personality**, else He could not bear witness to our spirits, and with our spirits that we are the children of God. He must also be a **divine person**, else He could not search out the secrets which lie hidden in the mind of God. ‘For what man knoweth the things of a man save the spirit of man, which is in him, even so the things of God knoweth no man, but the Spirit of God’.” Manuscript 20. 1906.

Although the Spirit is the personal presence of Christ, He works differently to Christ. Both Jesus in the flesh, and Jesus in the Spirit, have a specific work to do. When referring to Jesus in heaven, He is called Christ or Jesus, but when referring to His work on earth, He is called the Holy Spirit, the Spirit, the Spirit of God or the Spirit of Christ.

In heaven Jesus “officiates in the presence of God, offering up His shed blood.... (He) presents the oblation offered for every offense and every shortcoming of the sinner... He holds before the Father the censer of His own merits, in which there is no taint of earthly corruption.... The incense comes up before God entirely acceptable.” 1 Selected Messages p344.

On earth the Spirit (of Christ) also intercedes in man’s behalf, but He “pleads not for us as does Christ, who presents His blood. The Spirit works upon our heart, drawing out prayers and penitence, praise and thanksgiving. The gratitude which flows from our lips is the result of the Spirit’s striking the cords of the soul in holy memories, awakening the music of the heart.” Ibid

The Spirit convicts of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment. He leads, guides, teaches and comforts His people. John 16:7.8. John 16:13. 14:24.

Thus it is that Christ is able to continue the work He began on earth, except that now He can be with each one of us, and every other Christian on the face of the earth.

What a blessing to know that Christ is with us, for He understands our temptations, and He can comfort us in all our trials and sufferings. Hebrews 2:18. 4:15.

Christ in heaven is able to work in harmony with His omnipresent Spirit on earth because He alone knows “what is the mind of the Spirit”, and understanding our needs, is able to make intercession for us before God the Father. Romans 8:27. 1 Corinthians 2:10.11. Revelation 3:18.23

If your mind keeps becoming Trinitarian in concept, do not become discouraged, it is simply a sign that the poison is still within. It was the same with the disciples, for even though He told them that “**by the Spirit.... He would manifest Himself to them**”, they did not understand, and Christ explained the meaning to them again. The Desire of Ages p670.

“Jesus had opened before His disciples a vast tract of truth. **But it was most difficult for them to keep His lessons**

distinct from the traditions and maxims of the scribes and Pharisees. They had been educated to accept the teaching of the rabbis as the voice of God, and **it still held a power over their minds**, and molded their sentiments.

Earthly ideas, temporal things, still had a large place in their thoughts. They did not understand the spiritual nature of Christ's kingdom, though He had so often explained it to them. Their minds had become confused. **They did not comprehend the value of the Scriptures Christ presented.** Many of His lessons seemed almost lost upon them. **Jesus saw that they did not lay hold of the real meaning of His words.** He compassionately promised that the Holy Spirit should recall these sayings to their minds.” Ibid p670.

Are you having the same problem as the disciples?

If so, claim the promise that the Spirit – Christ's Spirit – will explain the meaning of the Scriptures to you. “Ask and it shall be given you. Seek, and ye shall find”. Matthew 7:7.

At one time in Sister White's life, she became extremely discouraged, and spent many hours in prayer asking for divine help. The workers in the publishing house thought she was dead, but all at once the prophet raised her voice in prayer; the power of God was upon her. It remained upon her all night long, a wonderful blessing.

However, this experience could have come earlier, for Sister White said, “I had been praying and praying for help, and **all the time my Saviour was standing close by my side, waiting for me to recognize Him** as my sufficiency, my strength, my grace. I learned the lesson, and after that, when I kneeled down to pray, I believed that I would receive an answer, whether I felt as if I would or not.” The Upward Look p359.

In the same manuscript, the prophet wrote, “Oh, how I wish that we would honor Christ by realizing what He wants to do for us, and taking Him at His word...” Ibid.

Clearly, the experience of having Christ standing beside her, was not for the prophet alone, but for every one of us.

Again she wrote, “To how many might the Saviour’s words be spoken, ‘Why weepest thou? Whom seekest thou?’ **He is close beside them, but their tear-blinded eyes do not discern Him.** He speaks to them, but they do not understand.” The Desire of Ages p794.

Claim the promise by faith.

“The **Lord Jesus standing by the side of the canvasser**, walking with them, is the chief worker. If we recognize Christ as the One who is with us to prepare the way, **the Holy Spirit by our side** will make impression in just the lines needed.” Colporteur Ministry p107.

Please note the interchange of terms - Jesus and Holy Spirit.

“Could our eyes have been opened, we could have seen **Jesus in our midst** with His holy angels. Many felt His grace and His presence in rich measure.... We knew that the sin-pardoning Saviour was in our midst... **I knew that Jesus was in our midst.**” 1888 Materials p58.59.

Do you know Jesus is in your midst by His Spirit?

“Although **God** dwells not in temples made with hands, yet He **honors with His presence the assemblies of His people.** He has promised that when they come together to seek Him, to acknowledge their sins, and to pray for one another, **He will meet with them by His Spirit.**” Faith I Live By p62. (If church members come to church for other reasons – to celebrate with loud music and/or irreverent entertainment -- Jesus is not in their midst. Neither is He in the midst of self-righteous Laodicea, no matter how pious the congregation or how ‘moving the spirit’)

Today it is vital we understand the identity of the Spirit in our midst.

Is it the Spirit of God?

It is possible for professed Christians to pray to ‘the Father’, and in actual fact be praying to Satan. Sister White wrote, “I saw them

look up to the throne, and pray, 'Father, give us Thy Spirit'. Satan would then breathe upon them an unholy influence; in it there was light and much power, but no sweet love, joy, and peace. Satan's object was to keep them deceived..." Early Writings p 55.56.

This experience took place after October 1844, when men and women refused to believe that Jesus had moved from the holy place in the heavenly sanctuary to the most holy place.

Instead of having their faith directed to the holy of holies, they kept their eyes upon the first apartment, but the Father and Jesus were no longer there.

Today you and I may understand that Jesus is in the most holy place, but if we are praying to a counterfeit Godhead to receive *God the Holy Spirit* (as believed by Trinitarians), we may well receive 'another spirit', and not **Jesus Himself in Spirit**.

Some Adventists are even praying *to* the Holy Spirit. If they believe in the Trinity, they are not praying to Jesus in the Spirit, but to another being *called* God the Holy Spirit. And if they receive power from this being, it could be from Satan achieving his desire to be "like the Most High"!

Paul was very concerned that the Corinthian believers not be deceived by false shepherds.

He wrote telling them, "I am jealous over you with godly jealousy.... But I fear, lest by any means, as the serpent beguiled Eve through his subtilty, so your minds should be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ, for if he that cometh, **preacheth another Jesus**, whom we have not preached, **or if ye receive another spirit**, which ye have not received, **or another gospel**, which ye have not accepted, ye might well bear with him..." 2 Corinthians 11:3.4. Galatians 1;8.9.

Have false shepherds been preaching 'another Jesus' to you?

Have they been presenting 'another gospel'?

Are they praying for ‘another spirit’, one that would allow Satan to send the counterfeit latter rain?

This is serious, as the counterfeit falls before the genuine. If any of us receive the false latter rain, we will be unable to receive the genuine, for it will *seal us* in its falseness. We will then be prepared to receive the mark of the beast, and it will be too late then to study for truth.

If we have a true understanding of the personality of God, Christ, and the Holy Spirit, according to the Bible and Spirit of Prophecy, we must do all we possibly can for those who are deceived into believing the doctrine of the Trinity. They “**must be freed from the delusions of the enemy.**” Soon it will be impossible for these deceived ones to see the light, for without the eye salve, they will remain blind.

Today God is using brethren and sisters in the churches, but as the message of truth is spread abroad with power, those who refuse to submit to this work of Christ will become bold in their rebellion, and error will be presented at every opportunity.

If we fail in our efforts to save these erring ones, **we must come out from among them and be separate.**” Manuscript Release 454 p23. Manuscript Release 106. Nov 20.1905

Why must we do this?

“God is displeased with us when we go to listen to error, without being obliged to go, for unless He sends us to those meetings where error is forced home to the people by the power of the will, He will not keep us. **The angels cease their watchful care over us**, and we are left to the buffetings of the enemy, to be **darkened** and **weakened** by him and the power of his evil angels; and the light around us becomes contaminated with the darkness.” Early Writings p125.

“If it be possible”, said the apostle Paul, “as much as lieth in you, live peaceably with all men” But after quoting the apostle’s recommendation Sister White added, “There is a point beyond

which it is impossible to maintain union and harmony without the sacrifice of principle. **Separation then becomes an absolute duty**". Signs of the Times. Nov 8 1899.

When that time of separation is for us as individuals depends on the situation in which we find ourselves. There is to be no pre-arranged mass exodus. Circumstances and the Spirit of Christ will direct the time of departure for all who rely on His leading.

In the meantime, we must make a decision as to whether we really believe Jesus is personally with His people.

If He is, then the One in our midst is a Person – the omnipresence of the Saviour, His personal Spirit.
