

1 – The Third Person of the Godhead

Comments on this study are found throughout in **BLUE** colour (by Nader Mansour)

John 14:16, 17, 26:

And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Counselor to be with you forever — 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.

But the Counselor, 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.

As we study the New Testament we will see that each member of the Godhead has a specific part to play in our salvation.

The New Testament makes no mention of any members in the Godhead. The word “Godhead” in the New Testament simply means “divinity” or “divine nature.” The word “Godhead” does not have any numerical connotation. This is easily seen when looking up the Strong’s definition for the word “Godhead” and how it is used in the Bible (see Acts 17:29; Romans 1:20; Colossians 2:9).

According to the great commission that Jesus gave in Matthew 28:19, He told His disciples that when believers are baptized, it should be done in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit:

Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit,

The reason that is done is because all three Persons of the Godhead are involved in our salvation and the whole of heaven is concerned about our salvation.

The verse in Matthew does not mention the words “persons” or “Godhead”. There is indeed a Father, a Son and a Spirit, but it goes beyond this text to insist that they are “three Persons of the Godhead”. The context of this passage is not an explanation about how many persons are in the Godhead, it is rather about baptism. Jesus is not here teaching the disciples about the Godhead. The consistent Bible teaching is that God is one (that is, one person) and that this one God is the Father (see 1 Corinthians 8:6; John 17:3; Ephesians 4:6).

Here is a nice verse to help explain Matt 28:19.

*Acts 4:7 And when they had set them in the midst, they asked, **By what power, or by what name, have ye done this?***

So power and name are the same. They both mean the same thing. With this thought in mind it is much easier to understand what Jesus was telling His disciples in Matthew.

*Matthew 28:18-20 And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, **All power** is given unto me in heaven and in earth. (19) Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them **in the name [power]** of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: (20) Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world. Amen.*

In our study of the Bible, we discover God the Father's part in the plan of salvation. For example, we read in John 3:17 that God sent His Son not to condemn us but to save us: *For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through him.*

Then, in John 6:38, Jesus said:

For I have come down from heaven not to do my will but to do the will of him who sent me.

In Galatians 4:4-5 Paul says:

But when the time had fully come, God sent his Son, born of a woman, born under law, to redeem those under law, that we might receive the full rights of sons.

So the Father is the Director of the plan of salvation.

The Son, Jesus Christ, is the Saviour of all men. In Luke 2:11, the angel, speaking to the shepherds, announced to them:

Today in the town of David a Saviour has been born to you; he is Christ the Lord.

In John 4:42, Jesus is referred to as the Saviour of the world:

They said to the woman, "We no longer believe just because of what you said; now we have heard for ourselves, and we know that this man really is the Saviour of the world."

Paul writes in 1 Timothy 4:10 describing Jesus as the Saviour of all men:

...(And for this we labor and strive), that we have put our hope in the living God, who is the Saviour of all men, and especially of those who believe.

Christ, and in His doing, dying, and resurrection has reconciled us to God; He has redeemed us; He has rewritten our history, so that in Christ every one of us can come to God boldly without fear, with full assurance, because there in Christ we stand accepted in the Beloved.

Let us direct our thoughts and our attention to the Holy Spirit, the Third Person of the Godhead, and look at the part He has to play in our salvation. The Holy Spirit is "The Communicator." Throughout Scripture, His function is as the active Agent of God in our salvation and He is also the active Agent in other things. While the Father sent Jesus into this world in order that there might be a gospel to be preached, God sends the Holy Spirit to make this gospel real in our experience. That is the work of the Holy Spirit.

We will look at two aspects of the Holy Spirit. The first one to consider is the personhood of the Holy Spirit; then we will do an overview of His activity, especially in the area of our

salvation. The reason we want to examine the personhood of the Holy Spirit is because there are some who do not believe that the Holy Spirit is a Person. The error of treating the Holy Spirit in an impersonal way may be traced back to about the Third Century A.D. Unfortunately, this has not been brought to an end. Back in the Third Century, the theory was advanced that the Holy Spirit is an influence; He is the revelation of the Divine power, but He is not a Person. Unfortunately, this is still being taught and believed by some today. Therefore, we must go to Scripture.

The Holy Spirit is indeed a person. It is the very person of God. It is the very *personal* presence of God Himself (see Psalm 137:7, 8; Psalm 51:11; Jeremiah 23:23, 24). This is the case because the Spirit *proceeds* from the one God (the Father):

*John 15:26 But when the Comforter is come, whom I will send unto you from the Father, even the Spirit of truth, **which proceedeth from the Father**, he shall testify of me:*

The Spirit also proceeds from the Son of God:

*John 20:22 And when he had said this, **he breathed on them, and saith unto them, Receive ye the Holy Ghost:***

This demonstrates clearly that the Holy Spirit is the very *personal* presence of both the Father and Son. It is their very own *person* (not *another* person). To this the inspired messenger agrees:

*"It is the spirit that quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing; the words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life." **Christ is not here referring to his doctrine, but to his person, the divinity of his character.**" {Ellen White, RH, April 5, 1906 par. 12}*

Both the Old and the New Testament speak of the Holy Spirit not as a mere "Something," but as a Divine "Someone." I believe that most of us — I hope all of us — believe in the Holy Spirit as a Person, but we need some evidence. In Romans 8:27, the Apostle Paul speaks about the mind of the Holy Spirit:

And he who searches our hearts knows the mind of the Spirit, because the Spirit intercedes for the saints in accordance with God's will.

The meaning of this passage will be made clearer when we understand the identity of "he that searcheth the hearts". This person is the same one who also "maketh intercession for the saints." The rest of the chapter (Romans 8) makes it clear that only one person makes intercession for us. It is Christ Jesus Himself:

*Romans 8:34 Who is he that condemneth? **It is Christ** that died, yea rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, **who also maketh intercession for us.***
(See also 2 Timothy 2:5. We only have one intercessor and mediator, not two)

The same person who makes intercession for us is the one who searches the hearts. This is none other than Christ Jesus (see Revelation 2:23). When we read the text again, with the proper understanding, it will make much more sense.

Romans 8:27 And he [Christ] that searcheth the hearts knoweth what is the mind of the Spirit, because he [Christ] maketh intercession for the saints according to the will of God.

The word “mind” in this text actually refers to the thoughts. Notice the meaning:

5427. φρονημα phronema; from 5426; *the thought* (that which is in the mind).
(New American Standard Greek Lexicon)

The mind of the spirit in that text simply means ‘the thoughts of the spirit’. Other Bible translations help bring this point out clearly:

*Romans 8:27 He who knows the heart’s secrets understands **the Spirit’s intention** as he prays according to God’s will for those who love. (Phillips New Testament)*

*Romans 8:27 And, he that searcheth the hearts, knoweth **what is preferred by the Spirit**—that, according to God, he maketh intercession in behalf of saints; (1902 Rotherham Bible)*

*Romans 8:27 and the Searcher of hearts knows **what the Spirit’s meaning is**, because His intercessions for God’s people are in harmony with God’s will. (Weymouth New Testament)*

This text, then, does not teach that the Holy Spirit has a mind of its own. This text is referring to the thoughts and the intentions of the Spirit of Christ that dwells in us. The Bible admonishes us to “Let this **mind** be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus” (Philippians 2:5) and this mind is really none other than **the spirit of Christ** (Galatians 4:6). Christ, who is interceding for us in heaven, knows the *thoughts* and *intentions* of His mind which is in us. This is how He makes intercession for us according to the will of God.

In Romans 15:30, Paul talks about the love of the Holy Spirit:

I urge you, brothers, by our Lord Jesus Christ and by the love of the Spirit, to join me in my struggle by praying to God for me.

The Holy Spirit has a mind and He’s capable of loving.

Is this verse teaching that the Holy Spirit loves us? Or is it actually talking about the love of God that is given to us by the Spirit? Other passages make clear what the right meaning is:

*Romans 5:5 And hope maketh not ashamed; because **the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us.** (see also Romans 8:39)*

With this Spirit we can love with a heavenly love. The Bible refers to this in other places:

*Colossians 1:8 Who also declared unto us your **love in the Spirit.***

*Galatians 5:22 But **the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith,***

Thus the above text does not teach that the Spirit loves us. It is rather the love of God that is brought to us by the Spirit. Here is how the text will read in that light:

Romans 15:30 Now I beseech you, brethren, for the Lord Jesus Christ's sake, and for the love of the Spirit [That is, by the love which is the genuine fruit of the Spirit], that ye strive together with me in your prayers to God for me;

In the book of Acts, the Holy Spirit played a very important part in the early Christian church. We read in Acts 8:29 that the Holy Spirit spoke to Philip and an “influence” doesn’t speak:

The Spirit told Philip, “Go to that chariot and stay near it.”

In Acts 16:6-7, we are told that the Holy Spirit restrained and constrained the Apostle Paul:

Paul and his companions traveled throughout the region of Phrygia and Galatia, having been kept by the Holy Spirit from preaching the word in the province of Asia. When they came to the border of Mysia, they tried to enter Bithynia, but the Spirit of Jesus would not allow them to.

None of these things are possible without a personality. A “force,” an “influence” cannot do that.

Who was working with the disciples in the book of Acts? Some will say it is the “Holy Spirit”; a different person to the Lord Jesus Christ. But here is what the Bible says:

*Mark 16:19, 20 So then after the Lord had spoken unto them, he was received up into heaven, and sat on the right hand of God. And they went forth, and preached every where, **the Lord working with them**, and confirming the word with signs following. Amen.*

Here we learn that all through the book of Acts it was the Lord (Jesus Christ) who was working with the disciples. It is Christ who is the head of the Church (Ephesians 5:23) and therefore He appointed leaders (Acts 13:2), He directs the church (Acts 8:29; 10:19; 16:7), He was tempted and even grieved (Acts 5:9; Ephesians 4:30) and He is the one who worked miracles through His disciples. It was Christ working through *His own spirit (His very own person)*, not someone else. This is precisely what He had promised (Matthew 28:20). Thus the conclusion is simple: The Holy Spirit *is* a person; it is the person of Jesus Christ. Other Bible writers recognized the fact that Christ is the spirit (Romans 8:9; 2 Corinthians 3:17).

When we further examine the Scriptures, especially the New Testament, we discover that the Holy Spirit can search. 1 Corinthians 2:10:

...But God has revealed it to us by his Spirit. The Spirit searches all things, even the deep things of God.

He can cry. Galatians 4:6:

Because you are sons, God has sent forth the Spirit of His Son into our hearts, crying, "Abba! Father!"

Is the Spirit of the Son a different person to the Son? Or is the Spirit of the Son the very person of the Son?

*Mark 2:8 And immediately when Jesus perceived **in his spirit** that they so reasoned within themselves, he said unto them, Why reason ye these things in your hearts?*

*Luke 23:46 And when Jesus had cried with a loud voice, he said, Father, into thy hands I commend **my spirit**: and having said thus, he gave up the ghost.*

Was Jesus referring to another person in these passages? Certainly not! Then it is just as certain that the "spirit of His Son" cannot be anyone other than Christ Himself. The Spirit of the Son in our hearts is "Christ in you the hope of glory."

He can pray. Romans 8:26:

In the same way, the Spirit helps us in our weakness. We do not know what we ought to pray for, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us with groans that words cannot express.

The text here does not say that the Spirit can pray. Some have misunderstood this text to mean that there is another intercessor besides Christ. This is not the case at all. The comments of Paul, in the body of Romans 8, are very clear as to the *identity* of this Spirit who intercedes for us.

*Romans 8:27 "And he that searcheth the hearts knoweth what is the mind of the Spirit, **because he maketh intercession for the saints according to the will of God.**"*

*Romans 8:34 "Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, **who also maketh intercession for us.**"*

Paul plainly states that Christ is our intercessor. It is Christ who searches our hearts (Revelation 2:23) and it is Christ who alone is qualified to be our intercessor for He alone is our High Priest (Hebrews 2:17; 3:1). Only Christ can help our infirmities (Hebrews 4:15; 5:2). Paul tells us further that Christ Jesus is the *only* mediator between us and God; there can be no other mediator or intercessor (1 Timothy 2:5).

The verse in Romans 8 is simply telling us that Christ, by His Spirit, intercedes for us and helps us to know what to pray for. These prayers, inspired by His Spirit, are presented to the Father by our only intercessor. Thus Christ is doing a twofold work of intercession. He is physically in heaven and by His Spirit He is in our hearts. Only thus can Christ be a true mediator and

intercessor (Ephesians 2:18). Finally, Paul defines exactly what that Spirit is that he is referring to. In the same chapter we read:

Romans 8:9-11 “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.**”

“We have **only one channel** of approach to God. Our prayers can come to him through **one name only**,--that of the Lord Jesus our advocate. **His Spirit** must **inspire** our petitions. No strange fire was to be used in the censers that were waved before God in the sanctuary. **So the Lord himself** must kindle **in our hearts** the burning desire, if our prayers are acceptable to him. **The Holy Spirit within** must make intercessions for us, with groanings that cannot be uttered.” {Ellen White, RH, February 9, 1897 par. 10}.

He can testify. John 15:26-27:

When the Counselor comes, whom I will send to you from the Father, the Spirit of truth who goes out from the Father, he will testify about me. And you also must testify, for you have been with me from the beginning.

He can teach. John 14:26:

But the Counselor, 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.

He can lead people into truth. Romans 8:14:

...Because those who are led by the Spirit of God are sons of God.

None of these make sense if we describe the Holy Spirit and limit Him only as an influence or a power.

Christ's discourse in John 14-16 is many times misunderstood, particularly what He said about the Holy Spirit. There is no question that the work of teaching and leading is done by the Spirit (the Spirit of Christ). This *personal* work explains the use of the personal pronoun 'He' when speaking of the spirit of Jesus in this passage. The pronouns used in connection with the Spirit must lead us to conclude that he is a person; *the very person of Christ* (not someone else). It is true that the Holy Spirit is a person. No one denies that. The point is this: is the spirit a *different* person to God or is it *His own* person? Many passages clearly show that he is *not a different* person.

John 16:16 A little while, and ye shall not see **me**: and again, a little while, **and ye shall see me**, because I go to the Father.

Why did Christ say those words if He was going to send someone *else*. It would not make sense except that the spirit is none other than *Himself*. This is confirmed from a few other passages:

John 14:18 I will not leave you comfortless: I will come to you.

28 Ye have heard how I said unto you, I go away, and come again unto you. If ye loved me, ye would rejoice, because I said, I go unto the Father: for my Father is greater than I.

These words make it plain that Christ was going to come back. Many people wonder why then did not Christ speak more plainly, why did He speak in such a way about the spirit? The answer is simple. He was simplifying the matter for the disciples.

John 16:25 These things have I spoken unto you in proverbs: but the time cometh, when I shall no more speak unto you in proverbs, but I shall shew you plainly of the Father.

{Margin: proverbs: or, parables}

Here Christ explains His mode of speaking in these passages. He was speaking in proverbs (or parables, as the margin says). He was not speaking too *plainly* about things because the disciples were not ready to hear them (v.12). Therefore Christ spoke of Himself in the third person and used the pronoun 'he' for the spirit (speaking in *parables*). Other Bible writers recognized the fact that Christ is the spirit (Romans 8:9; 2 Corinthians 3:17). It is both the spirit of the Father and the Son (John 14:23).

So the Bible is clear that the Holy Spirit is a Person and, because He is a Person, the Bible says that He can be grieved. Ephesians 4:30:

And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, with whom you were sealed for the day of redemption.

When the Holy Spirit of God is grieved, who exactly is grieved? Is it God and Christ or is it someone else? Let us look at some Bible answers:

Genesis 6:3, 6. "And the LORD said, My spirit shall not always strive with man, for that he also is flesh: yet his days shall be an hundred and twenty years. And it repented the LORD that he had made man on the earth, and it grieved him at his heart."

This shows plainly that when God's spirit is resisted (or grieved) it is actually the Lord Himself who is grieved at His heart! This is certainly not speaking of someone else besides the Lord. The Spirit of the Lord is the Lord Himself. This was very well demonstrated in the story of Ananias and Sapphira, that when we grieve the Spirit of the Lord we are really grieving the Lord himself, for the spirit is the person of the Lord Himself. Notice:

Acts 5:3, 4, 9. *“But Peter said, Ananias, why hath Satan filled thine heart to **lie to the Holy Ghost**, and to keep back part of the price of the land? Whiles it remained, was it not thine own? and after it was sold, was it not in thine own power? why hast thou conceived this thing in thine heart? thou hast not lied unto men, **but unto God**. Then Peter said unto her, How is it that ye have agreed together to **tempt the Spirit of the Lord**? behold, the feet of them which have buried thy husband are at the door, and shall carry thee out.”*

Combine this verse (using the line upon line rule, searching here a little and there a little) with this text which clearly tells us who that Spirit is:

2 Corinthians 3:17 *“**Now the Lord is that Spirit**: and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty.”*

Therefore, what Peter said to Ananias was really this: ‘by lying to God’s spirit you have not lied to men, but to God Himself!’ Peter was not informing Ananias that he had lied to a “God the Holy Spirit”. Rather, Ananias had lied to God (the Lord) Himself, not someone else! If you read Ephesians 4:30 in this light and it will make much more sense. Notice how the Spirit of Prophecy confirms this same understanding.

*“How can you, oh, how can you grieve your Redeemer? How can you dishonor Him before His angels and before men? **How can you grieve the Holy Spirit of God?** How can you crucify the Lord of glory afresh, and put Him to open shame? How can you give occasion for Satan and his angels to exult and triumph over those who claim to be loyal subjects of Jesus Christ?” {TM 431}*

Thus it is plainly seen that grieving the Holy Spirit is really grieving the redeemer, not someone else. It is the redeemer Himself.

He can be blasphemed. He can be insulted. Mark 3:29:

But whoever blasphemes against the Holy Spirit will never be forgiven; he is guilty of an eternal sin.

And that is, of course, the unpardonable sin.

The same principle as above applies. The correct understanding of the Spirit of God is key to understanding these passages.

When we are dealing with the Holy Spirit, we are dealing with a Person, a Person that God has sent to make real, in our experience, the truth as it is in Christ.

Indeed, the Holy Spirit is a person. It is the very person of God. It is the very person of Christ. It is not a different person to them.

"It is the spirit that quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing; the words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life." Christ is not here referring to his doctrine, but to his person, the divinity of his character." {Ellen White, RH, April 5, 1906 par. 12}

The Activities of the Holy Spirit

Let us go through some texts to show the activity of the Holy Spirit. Twelve is the number of the Christian church, and we will study 12 main activities of the Holy Spirit. As we look at these texts, we will see clearly the very important part that the Holy Spirit plays in our salvation.

1. At the very beginning of the Bible, in Genesis 1:1-2, we discover that the Holy Spirit was active in the work of creation:

In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. Now the earth was formless and empty, darkness was over the surface of the deep, and the Spirit of God was hovering over the waters.

Here right in the very first chapter of the Bible in Genesis, the second verse, we are told that the Holy Spirit was active in the creation of this world.

The work of creation was performed by two persons (not three), and here are some plain texts to show that fact:

*Proverbs 8:30. "Then I was by **him**, as one brought up with him [or; as a master craftsman, or a workman] and I was daily his delight, rejoicing always before him"*

Please read the full context from v.22 where it is very plain to all that this passage is speaking about creation and it is speaking about only two beings. "When he prepared the heavens, I was there: when he set a compass upon the face of the depth" v. 27. Please notice how it plainly says "I was there" not 'we were there'. It also says "he prepared the heavens", not 'they'. It is plain that "he" and "I" makes only two individuals, not three.

*Proverbs 30:4. "Who hath ascended up into heaven, or descended? who hath gathered the wind in his fists? who hath bound the waters in a garment? who hath established all the ends of the earth? **what is his name, and what is his son's name, if thou canst tell?"***

These divine creative acts are attributed to two individuals only: a Father and His Son. No mention of a third.

*John 1:1. "In the beginning was **the Word**, and the Word was **with God**, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God. **All things were made by him**; and without him was not any thing made that was made."*

Here John is plainly talking about two individuals only (The Word and God), and then he talks about creation! Therefore teaching that before creation took place there were two

individuals. Thus, creation is credited to only those two individuals: The Word (Christ) and God (The Father). When the Bible says that “all things were made by him” it means just that. Nothing was created through *anyone else besides Christ*. This makes only two persons, not three.

*Revelation 4:11. “Thou art worthy, **O Lord**, to receive glory and honour and power: for **thou hast created all things**, and for thy pleasure they are and were created.”*

The context reveals that this is speaking about God the Father. He is the only source of the creation of all things. He created *all things* through one person only (not two):

*Ephesians 3:9. “And to make all men see what is the fellowship of the mystery, which from the beginning of the world hath been hid in **God, who created all things by Jesus Christ:**”*

*Colossians 1:16 “For **by him** [that is Christ] were **all things created**, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created **by him**, and for him:”*

*1 Corinthians 8:6. “But to us there is but one God, the Father, **of whom are all things**, and we in him; and one Lord Jesus Christ, **by whom are all things**, and we by him.”*

Once again, “all things” are credited to only two beings: God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ His Son. There is no mention of anyone else who was responsible for “all things”.

Here are some plain statements from the pen of inspiration:

*“**The Father and the Son** engaged in the mighty, wondrous work **they** had contemplated, of creating the world.” {Ellen White, 1SP 24}.*

*“The Sovereign of the universe was not alone in His work of beneficence. **He had an associate--a co-worker** who could appreciate His purposes, and could share His joy in giving happiness to created beings. ... **The Father wrought by His Son** in the creation of **all heavenly beings.**” {Ellen White, PP 34}.*

Please note how it says “a co-worker” (singular) not ‘co-workers’. Therefore, “The Sovereign of the universe” + “a co-worker” makes only two. There is no mention of anyone else involved in creation.

*“The **Father consulted Jesus** in regard to at once carrying out their purpose to make man to inhabit the earth.” {Ellen White, ST Jan. 9, 1879}.*

*“**Especially was his Son to work in union with himself in the anticipated creation of the earth and every living thing that should exist upon the earth.** His Son would carry out his will and his purposes, but would do nothing of himself alone. The Father's will would be fulfilled in him.” {Ellen White, 1SP 18}*

*“After the earth was created, and the beasts upon it, **the Father and Son** carried out their purpose, which was designed before the fall of Satan, to make man in their own image. **They had wrought together in the creation of the earth and every living thing upon it.**” {Ellen White, LHU 47 (1SP, 24)}*

*“Man became a living soul. **Through Christ the Word, a personal God created man and endowed him with intelligence and power.**” {Ellen White, MH 415}*

*“In the beginning **the Father and the Son** had rested upon the Sabbath after Their work of **creation.**” {Ellen White, DA 769}.*

Isn't that just a wonderful statement!

2. Now let us see what part He had in the plan of salvation. In our list of activities, we see that He was active in the incarnation of our Lord Jesus Christ. In Luke 1:31, Mary has been approached by the angel and told that she is going to have a baby:

You will be with child and give birth to a son, and you are to give him the name Jesus.

It is puzzling to her because she is a virgin, so she asks, “How can this happen?” And this is what the angel says in Luke 1:35:

The angel answered, “The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you. So the holy one to be born will be called the Son of God.”

Who was the Father of Christ in the incarnation? Christ made it clear that His Father was God the Father (not someone else):

*Luke 2:49 And he said unto them, How is it that ye sought me? wist ye not that I must be about **my Father's business?***

God the Father is the Father of Christ in the incarnation. The angel told Mary it was “the Most High” who will do this miracle. The Most High (the Father) will do this miracle by His power (His Holy Spirit). The Holy Spirit belongs to the Father and is none other than the very spirit of God Himself (not someone else).

To explain how it all happened, we read in Philippians 2:6 that Jesus was equal with God:

Who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be grasped....

Amen. There is no question that Christ was equal with God.

But He did something: He emptied Himself; He gave up His very life to the Father, the Chairman, the Director of the plan of salvation.

The Father took the life of Christ, now totally emptied of self, which means He gave up all His Divine rights, all His Divine prerogatives, voluntarily. He handed Himself over to the Father. The Father took the life of Christ and handed it over to the Holy Spirit who was the active Agent of God. The Holy Spirit brought Christ down — this is a mystery — and planted that Divine life into the womb of Mary. There in that womb humanity and Divinity were united, and Christ now became qualified to be the Saviour of all human beings.

There is no inspired evidence to support the idea that the Father gave the life of Christ to the Holy Spirit (a different person to Himself). Inspiration credits the Father with performing this miracle through *His own personal Spirit* (not another).

3. The Holy Spirit was active in the incarnation, but that's not all. He played an active part in the mission of Christ on this earth. Having taken our humanity, Christ could do nothing of Himself. He had to be totally controlled by the Spirit. There are texts that clearly bring this out. In Luke 4, Jesus returns back to his home town of Nazareth. Outwardly, He was no different from any other human being. He looked just like one of them. He was the son of a carpenter. He comes home and the people have heard about Him. The news has spread to Nazareth, so He comes to church, to the synagogue, and they place in His hands a scroll of the book of Isaiah. He opens it and He reads. Luke 4:18-19:

“The Spirit of the Lord is on me, because he [the Spirit] has anointed me [has set me aside] to preach good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners and recovery of sight for the blind, to release the oppressed, to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor.”

All this Christ accomplished, but it was the Holy Spirit that worked in Him. This is important because that same Spirit that fulfilled God's mission in Christ is made available to us, the very same Spirit. Verse 14 is an example of this. The same chapter, Luke 4, deals with the three temptations of Jesus Christ, which, in a nutshell, sum up all the temptations that come to man. Three basic statements sum up the temptations that come to each one of us. They are the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life and these three temptations of Jesus fit into those categories. Luke 4:14 tells us what happened after Jesus had gained the victory over those temptations:

Jesus returned to Galilee in the power of the Spirit, and news about him spread through the whole countryside.

Jesus did not conquer the Devil in His own strength; it was through the power of the Spirit.

It was the Father who worked through and empowered Christ while He was on earth. It was the Father doing this through His personal presence and power (His spirit). It was not

someone else. Otherwise, the words of Jesus would seem strange if the Holy Spirit was a different person to the Father:

*John 14:10 Believeest thou not that I am in the Father, and the Father in me? the words that I speak unto you I speak not of myself: **but the Father that dwelleth in me, he doeth the works.***

*2 Corinthians 5:19 To wit, **that God was in Christ**, reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them; and hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation.*

*Acts 10:38 How **God** anointed Jesus of Nazareth **with the Holy Ghost and with power**: who went about doing good, and healing all that were oppressed of the devil; **for God was with him.***

*John 10:32 Jesus answered them, Many good works have I shewed you **from my Father**; for which of those works do ye stone me?*

According to Jesus, the Holy Ghost and power is none other than *the Father Himself* (Not a different person)! It was the very person of the Father!

4. The Holy Spirit is the One who inspired the writers of this book. In 2 Peter 1:21, we read:

For prophecy never had its origin in the will of man, but men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit.

That same Spirit that moved the writers of this book, the Holy Bible, must also illuminate us when we study Scripture. It is important that ministers get training, that they understand the original languages, that they get background material, the Old and New Testament, but, when we come to the Word of God, whether we are trained or not trained, whether we are a ministers or laypeople, there is one Person who can guide us into truth. A knowledge of Greek and Hebrew is not enough. It is a useful tool, but it is the Spirit that must guide us into truth. It is a tragedy that the Christian church, the scholars, are moving to a method where they depend on the human rationale to discover truth. Human reason is important but it must be subject to the Word of God. We may be living in the Scientific Age, and the Computer Age, but God knew about science and computers long before we were born, before we were created. He knows much more than we know. Wait until we get to heaven; we'll be like dwarfs before the angels and other people. Remember, the Holy Spirit inspired the Bible writers and He must illuminate us.

The author of the Bible was actually Christ *himself*. There is only one author of the Bible. Notice *how* Christ authored this book:

1 Peter 1:11 Searching what, or what manner of time **the Spirit of Christ which was in them did signify**, when it testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ, and the glory that should follow.

Hebrews 12:2 Looking unto **Jesus the author and finisher of our faith**; who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God.

“Christ is the author of all truth.” {Ellen White, TMK 207.2}

“Who but Jesus Christ, by His Spirit and divine power, guided the pens of the sacred historians that to the world might be presented the precious record of the sayings and works of Jesus Christ?” {E. G. White, Manuscript Releases Volume 2, p. 14} 1892

The question, then, is this. Do the Scriptures have one author or two?

5. In John 16:8, we are told that the Holy Spirit convicts people of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment:

When he comes, he will convict the world of guilt in regard to sin and righteousness and judgment....

We cannot emphasize enough that it is not the work of man to convict people; it is the work of the Holy Spirit. Our job is witnessing. It is the Holy Spirit that convicts them of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment.

The Bible reveals that only Christ can do this work. It is Christ that brings a conviction to the heart to turn away from sin:

*Acts 3:26 Unto you first God, having raised up his Son Jesus, sent him to bless you, **in turning away every one of you from his iniquities.***

Christ is the one who is called in Scripture “the Lord our righteousness” (Jeremiah 23:6) and His experience on earth and his glorification and exaltation is a direct result of Him working out our righteousness (John 17:4, 5; Hebrews 1:9). To Christ has been committed all judgement:

*John 5:22 For the Father judgeth no man, but hath committed **all** judgment unto the Son*

No one else received that commission from the Father. Therefore only Christ can do a work relating to judgment. Thus it is Christ who brings conviction of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment. He does that *by His own spirit*. This *personal* work explains the use of the personal pronoun ‘He’ when speaking of the spirit of Jesus. The pronouns used in connection with the Spirit must lead us to conclude that he is a person; *the very person of*

Christ (not someone else). It is true that the Holy Spirit is a person. No one denies that. The point is this: is the spirit a *different* person to God or is it *His own* person? Many passages clearly show that he is *not* a *different* person.

John 16:16 A little while, and ye shall not see me: and again, a little while, and ye shall see me, because I go to the Father.

Why did Christ say those words if He was going to send someone *else*. It would not make sense except that the spirit is none other than *Himself*. This is confirmed from a few other passages:

John 14:18 I will not leave you comfortless: I will come to you.

28 Ye have heard how I said unto you, I go away, and come again unto you. If ye loved me, ye would rejoice, because I said, I go unto the Father: for my Father is greater than I.

Thus all the glory and honour and praise and credit goes to Christ for saving us and for bringing conviction of sin and righteousness and judgement to our hearts. It would be a great dishonour to the Master to give His credit to someone else!

6. He attracts people to the gospel. He not only convicts people but He draws people to the work of Jesus Christ. In the very first book of the Bible, we read that He was active in creation; now, in the very last book, in Revelation 22:17, we read:

The Spirit and the bride [the bride is the people of God being used by the Holy Spirit] say, "Come!" And let him who hears say, "Come!" Whoever is thirsty, let him come; and whoever wishes, let him take the free gift of the water of life.

God has given us the responsibility of witnessing the gospel. We witness and we tell people, "Come and accept the gift," but it is the Holy Spirit that goes right deep into their conscience and says, "Don't be a fool; don't reject this invitation." He is the One who draws people to Jesus Christ. That is His work and that is why witnessing is not left to the believer. It is left to the Holy Spirit to do His work in and through us.

Please see comments above, as the same principle applies. It is Christ who gives the invitation "Come unto me ... I will give you rest." Matthew 11:28. Christ is still giving this invitation through His followers today. It is Christ who lives in His followers *through His spirit* (His very own life).

Colossians 1:27 To whom God would make known what is the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles; which is Christ in you, the hope of glory:

Only Christ can invite us to come and partake of the water of life freely. He is the only one who can give us this water!

7. To those who accept the gospel, those who accept Jesus Christ as their personal Saviour, the Holy Spirit internalizes that salvation. In other words, He brings about

the new birth. The life that we received at our birth, our natural life, is the life of the flesh. It stands condemned; flesh and blood cannot inherit heaven. It does not qualify for heaven. That is why Jesus said to Nicodemus in John 3:3-8:

In reply Jesus declared, "I tell you the truth, no one can see the kingdom of God unless he is born again."

"How can a man be born when he is old?" Nicodemus asked. "Surely he cannot enter a second time into his mother's womb to be born!"

Jesus answered, "I tell you the truth, no one can enter the kingdom of God unless he is born of water and the Spirit. Flesh gives birth to flesh, but the Spirit gives birth to spirit. You should not be surprised at my saying, 'You must be born again.' The wind blows wherever it pleases. You hear its sound, but you cannot tell where it comes from or where it is going. So it is with everyone born of the Spirit."

"You must be born again. You must be born of the Spirit." The new birth is produced by the Holy Spirit.

Amen! With the correct understanding of the identity of the Spirit we can appreciate that it is Christ who actually does this work *by His Spirit*. It is Christ who becomes our "eternal Father" when we are born again (Isaiah 9:6). It is Christ who is the second Adam (1 Cor.15:45) who is the spiritual father of all the converted.

8. He leads us into all truth. He is the One that guides into truth. We must not rely on our unaided human minds, wonderful as they may be. We have to depend on Scripture. In John 15:26-27, Jesus repeats what He said in John 14:26:

When the Counselor comes, whom I will send to you from the Father [the Father is still the Chairman], the Spirit of truth [notice He is called the Spirit of Truth] who goes out from the Father, he will testify about me.

The Holy Spirit does not reveal things about Himself. The work of the Holy Spirit is to testify of Jesus Christ. He is to make the gospel real to our experience. Verse 27:

And you also must testify, for you have been with me from the beginning.

Please see above comments.

9. This is a very important statement because there are some who say that we don't believe in sanctification. We are very strong believers in sanctification but we must be clear that sanctification is not a means of salvation. That is a heresy. Sanctification is the inevitable fruits of justification. It's not an option. The means of sanctification is not screwing up our will power and trying to be good. The means of sanctification is the Holy Spirit. We cannot produce something that is impossible. We could not save ourselves because we are sinners and we cannot produce righteousness by trying. All we can produce is self-righteousness, which in God's eyes is filthy rags.

One of three texts which clearly point out that the Holy Spirit is the means of our sanctification is 2 Thessalonians 2:13. Two of them are from the Apostle Paul who

believes in sanctification. What He condemns is when we make sanctification meritorious. Sanctification is the fruits of justification. Never does it make any contribution towards justification. We are saved by grace alone through faith. That is why we need to study the book of Galatians, because Galatians is God's righteous indignation on the Judaizers who were adding works to justification by faith. This text shows the means of sanctification, the Holy Spirit. 2 Thessalonians 2:13:

But we ought always to thank God for you, brothers loved by the Lord [talking to believers who have accepted Christ], because from the beginning God chose you to be saved through the sanctifying work of the Spirit and through belief in the truth.

Notice, the Holy Spirit is the active Agent of God in our sanctification. In 1 Peter 1:2, Peter says the same thing. Here he is addressing the Christians of the Middle East, and in verse 2 he says:

...Who have been chosen according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, through the sanctifying work of the Spirit, for obedience to Jesus Christ and sprinkling by his blood: Grace and peace be yours in abundance.

Here it is pointed out that one of the works of the Holy Spirit is to sanctify the believers who have been washed by the blood of Jesus Christ. How does He do it, and what part do we have to play? The third text which answers that question is 2 Corinthians 3:17:

Now the Lord is the Spirit...

In other words, Christ today is represented by the Holy Spirit. Christ Himself is in heaven, but the Spirit is here.

Even though Christ is in heaven, He is still present here by His own personal spirit. That is what Paul means when he says "the Lord is that spirit." The Lord Jesus Christ *is that spirit* and only the Lord can bring freedom (John 8:36).

"While Jesus ministers in the sanctuary above, He is still by His Spirit the minister of the church on earth." {Ellen White, DA 166}.

Who is the minister of the church on earth?

We are living in the dispensation of the Holy Spirit.

Now the Lord is the Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom.

And then he explains what kind of freedom is meant here. He's not talking about political or economic freedom. Look at verse 18 [2 Corinthians 3:18]:

And we, who with unveiled faces all [believers, all of us] reflect the Lord's glory, are being transformed into his likeness with ever-increasing glory, which comes from the Lord, who is the Spirit.

When Moses came down from the mountain and spoke to the Jews, they asked him to put a veil between them and him because the glory of God was too much for them to bear. But Paul tells us in Corinthians that, when we come to Christ, this veil is removed because there is no barrier between a holy God and sinful man in Jesus Christ. So, with open, unveiled faces we come boldly to God, “reflecting the Lord’s glory.” When we look in a mirror we see ourselves. We use the law as a mirror, and we see filth. But when we look at the mirror of Christ — when we look at ourselves in Christ — we don’t see filth. We see righteousness, blamelessness, because that is what we are in Christ.

At Jesus’ baptism, when the Holy Spirit descended upon Jesus and God spoke to Jesus from heaven, He said, “This is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased.” Luke 3:21-22:

When all the people were being baptized, Jesus was baptized too. And as he was praying, heaven was opened and the Holy Spirit descended on him in bodily form like a dove. And a voice came from heaven: “You are my Son, whom I love; with you I am well pleased.”

Desire of Ages, by Ellen G. White, page 113, says, “This includes all humanity.” That’s good news, because, in Christ, God is well pleased with us. In Him, we stand complete and perfect. As we look at ourselves, not through the law as the mirror, but through the mirror of Jesus Christ, as we behold Jesus Christ and what He has accomplished for the human race, something takes place within us. As we behold the glory of the Lord, we “reflect the Lord’s glory,” and “are being transformed into his likeness with ever-increasing glory, which comes from the Lord, who is the Spirit.” There is a transformation of our characters to reflect the love and character of our Lord Jesus Christ but notice the last part. It is the Spirit that reproduces the character of Christ in us. We can’t do it; all we can do is hypocrisy. We are shams without the Holy Spirit.

Does inspiration shed any light on what happened at the baptism of Christ? Was there another divine person present besides Christ and the Father?

*“Never before have the angels listened to such a prayer. They are eager to bear to their loved Commander a message of assurance and comfort. But no; **the Father Himself** will answer the petition of His Son. **Direct from the throne issue the beams of His glory.** The heavens are opened, and upon the Saviour’s head descends a dovelike form of **purest light**,—fit emblem of Him, the meek and lowly One. Of the vast throng at the Jordan, few except John discerned the heavenly vision. Yet the solemnity of **the divine Presence** rested upon the assembly. The people stood silently gazing upon Christ. His form was **bathed in the light that ever surrounds the throne of God.** His upturned face was **glorified** as they had never before seen the face of man. From the open heavens a voice was heard saying, “This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.”” {Ellen White, DA 112}*

Are the beams of God's glory a different person to Him? Is light a person? Is the light that surrounds God's throne another person? Is God's glory a different person to himself? The answers to these questions will help us see the matter in its true light (no pun intended!).

10. He bestows spiritual gifts upon the church. One very clear text is Ephesians 4:7:

But to each one of us grace has been given as Christ apportioned it.

When Christ went up to heaven, He bestowed gifts upon the church — making some Apostles, some prophets, some teachers and pastors — for the building up of the church. 1 Corinthians 12:7 tells us that the gifts of the Spirit are for the profit of the whole body:

Now to each one the manifestation of the Spirit is given for the common good.

The church is the body of Christ and each member of the body needs each other to grow and be established. That is the work of the Holy Spirit.

Christ is the giver of these gifts. He gives them through the avenue of His own spirit, His very own soul and life.

*"The impartation of the Spirit is the impartation of **the life of Christ.**" {Ellen White, DA 805.3}*

The life of Christ is not another individual being different to Christ!

*"**This Comforter is the Holy Spirit,—the soul of his life, the efficacy of his church, the light and life of the world. With his Spirit Christ sends a reconciling influence and a power that takes away sin.**" {Ellen White, RH, May 19, 1904 par. 1}*

This means that the Holy Spirit is the life and glory of Christ, not another individual being:

*"Jesus is seeking to impress upon them the thought that in giving **His Holy Spirit He is giving to them the glory which the Father hath given Him, that He and His people may be one in God.**" {Ellen White, 2MR 36, 37}*

11. It is also a very important truth that it is the Holy Spirit who works in believers to witness Jesus Christ. Many say, "I don't have the ability to witness like others." But many are by nature introverts who have fought against a call to the ministry for that very same reason. The thought of standing behind a pulpit and looking at those staring eyes is horrifying to many. The only reason anyone can do it is because they believe the calling is from God. God gives us the courage to face others. In Luke 24:48-49, Jesus had given a commission to the disciples who had the same problem that we have. He knew that they were not capable of fulfilling that commission, of taking that gospel to a hostile world. So in verses 48 and 49 He says:

You are witnesses of these things. I am going to send you what my Father has promised; but stay in the city until you have been clothed with power from on high.

By “power from on high” Jesus did not mean some “influence,” because in Acts 1:8 we read,

But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.

*1 Corinthians 1:24 But unto them which are called, both Jews and Greeks, **Christ the power of God, and the wisdom of God.***

12. The Holy Spirit is always with us to the end of the world to comfort and to help us in this wicked world of ours, in our witnessing, in our Christian living, and in the things that we have to face as believers. John 14:16:

And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Counselor to be with you forever — the Spirit of truth.

The word that Jesus used for “Counselor” (or “Comforter” in some translations) is *parakletos*, which means more than a Comforter. It means somebody who is by your side or in you to be your Helper, to be your Guide, to be your Comforter, to be everything to you. So it’s more than a Comforter. And Jesus said, “I will send you the Holy Spirit to be by your side, to be your *parakletos*, to be in you, to guide you, to help you, to strengthen you, to direct you and to comfort you.”

John 14:18 I will not leave you comfortless: I will come to you.

28 Ye have heard how I said unto you, I go away, and come again unto you. If ye loved me, ye would rejoice, because I said, I go unto the Father: for my Father is greater than I.

These words make it plain that Christ Himself was going to come back, not someone else. He was going to come by His spirit.

It is true that the word comforter comes from the Greek word [3875 *parakletos*] which is used 5 times in the New Testament (John 14:16, 26; 15:26; 16:7; 1 John 2:1) one of which is translated as Advocate.

*1 John 2:1 “My little children, these things write I unto you, that ye sin not. And if any man sin, we have an **advocate** < *parakletos* > with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous”*

The same verse tells us that our *parakletos* (advocate/comforter) is Jesus Christ the righteous. So the question we must ask ourselves is this: Do we have one or two Advocates? Do we have one or two Comforters?

*“Men have **only one Advocate, one Intercessor, who is able to pardon transgression.**” {Ellen White, LHU 319.4}*

This Advocate and intercessor is only Christ. Our Comforter is Jesus Christ. There is no one who can comfort like Him.

“There is no comforter like Christ, so tender and so true.” {Ellen White, RH, October 26, 1897 par. 15}

We human beings depend on each other for comfort, for being upheld. There will come a time when we will have no other human being to help us. We need to learn to depend on the Holy Spirit for that comfort. Our Pastor may forsake us, our church may forsake us, our Conference President may forsake us, but the Holy Spirit will never forsake us. That is why we need to know that He will be by our side.

John 14:17-18:

...The Spirit of truth. The world cannot accept him, because it neither sees him [He's not something visible; He's a Person, but He's a Spirit and He dwells in you] nor knows him. But you know him, for he lives with you and will be in you. I will not leave you as orphans; I will come to you.

A better translation is, “I will not leave you helpless. I will be with you until I come and take you home, which is still future.”

So from the beginning of the plan of salvation to the end, all three Members of the Godhead are involved.

The Bible makes it plain that the plan of salvation was between only two individuals, not three.

*Zechariah 6:13 “Even he shall build the temple of the LORD; and he shall bear the glory, and shall sit and rule upon his throne; and he shall be a priest upon his throne: **and the counsel of peace shall be between them both.**”*

The redeemed will recognize this fact, for they only give glory and credit to the same two beings, not three:

*Revelation 7:10 And cried with a loud voice, saying, **Salvation to our God which sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb.***

God doesn't say, “I have saved you in Christ, now I leave the rest to you.” It's from beginning to end the work of God. We are simply tools, instruments in His hands. In Christ, God saved us. Through the Holy Spirit that salvation is internalized. The crying need of the church is to experience the power of the Holy Spirit in the life of the believer.

The church today stands challenged. The great pagan philosopher Neitzche, who was the son of a Lutheran Pastor, gave up Christianity and became an atheist. He was one of the greatest philosophers, and addressing the Christian church He said, “If you expect me to believe in your Redeemer, you Christians will have to look a lot more redeemed.” It is only as we allow the Holy Spirit to dwell in us and to control us as we walk in the Spirit that that will power be

manifested. Without that all they will see is the “fair showing of the flesh,” which is worthless.

It is my prayer in Jesus’ name that we will walk in the Spirit and will allow the third Person of the Godhead to accomplish and finish the work He has been assigned to do in our lives.

(Original source of article: <http://www.jacksequeira.org/holyspirit1.htm>)

One final comment should be made on the title of this study. What did Mrs. White mean by the usage of the term “third person of the Godhead”? The best person to tell us would be Mrs. White herself. Notice how she does this very clearly in the book *The Desire of Ages*:

“Sin could be resisted and overcome only through the mighty agency of the third person of the Godhead, who would come with no modified energy, but in the fullness of divine power. It is the Spirit that makes effectual what has been wrought out by the world's Redeemer. It is by the Spirit that the heart is made pure. Through the Spirit the believer becomes a partaker of the divine nature. Christ has given His Spirit as a divine power to overcome all hereditary and cultivated tendencies to evil, and to impress His own character upon His church.” {Ellen White, The Desire of Ages, p. 671}

This much misunderstood statement tells us that the third person of the Godhead is Christ’s own spirit. This, we are told, is the only way to resist and overcome sin. Other statements show us plainly who alone can do this:

“The only defense against evil is the indwelling of Christ in the heart through faith in His righteousness.” {E. G. White, The Desire of Ages, p. 324}

“Not until the life of Christ becomes a vitalizing power in our lives can we resist the temptations that assail us from within and from without.” {E. G. White, The Ministry of Healing, p. 130}

Thought question: How many persons enable us to resist and overcome evil and sin?

Thus, according to Mrs. White, the “third person of the Godhead” is “the indwelling of Christ”; it is the very “life of Christ”! It is not someone else; it is not a different person to Christ! Let us indeed praise God that we have such a wonderful saviour who is able to save us to the uttermost. Let us give Him all the glory and praise and the credit for the glorious work He is doing *for* us and *in* us.

*Comments by Nader Mansour
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