

The Holy Spirit is a Coeternal Member of the Trinity-Christians, Three Gods and the Trinity (Pt. 8)

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You may have noticed by now that this study on the Trinity has been more about resolving specific concepts presented in Scripture than merely offering a collection of “proof texts.” These concepts are encompassing and require more than a single God in the Godhead. Consider this axiom: “Truth is proven true by the harmony that comes from the sum of its parts.” This means that what may be considered truth within six “proof texts” may not be true when four more “proof texts” are added. Therefore, to resolve many apparent conflicts, this study on the Trinity includes several topics that many people do not ordinarily associate with a study of the Godhead. To complete this series on the Trinity, we need to examine the Holy Spirit. Is He an equal, separate, distinct, coeternal member of the Godhead or is He an *influence* that exists between the Father and Jesus? Please consider the following:

#1 The Holy Spirit Has a Will, He Can Speak, Hear, Think and Bring Glory to Jesus

Shortly before His death, Jesus told His disciples, **“But when He, the Spirit of Truth, comes, He will guide you into all truth. He will not speak on His own; He will speak only what He hears, and He will tell you what is yet to come. He will bring glory to me by taking from what is mine and making it known to you.”** (John 16:13,14) Clearly, Jesus described an intelligent being, a third party who can think, hear, speak on His own and independently carry out a mission of bringing glory to Jesus. Consider the breakdown:

1. **“He will not speak on His own . . .”** This statement indicates the Holy Spirit has a will. **“He will not . . .”** He can speak on His own and for Himself, but Jesus said the Holy Spirit will not do so. This is because when the members of the Godhead formed, each God surrendered Himself to the other two. They agreed at that time the role of the Holy Spirit would be to serve as a faithful conduit between the Godhead and the universe. In other words, the God we now call the Holy Spirit gave up 2/3 of His rights and prerogatives to glorify the other two Gods!
2. **“He will speak only what He hears . . .”** This phrase means the Holy Spirit is the Revealer of God’s will and truth, but the Holy Spirit only reveals as the Father and Jesus allow. He neither lags behind nor accelerates ahead. He stays in-sync with the Father and Jesus at all times.
3. Like the Father and Jesus, the Holy Spirit has intelligence and reasoning powers. Jesus said, **“He will bring glory to me . . .”** The Holy Spirit loves and exalts Jesus the same way the Father loves and exalts Jesus. (John 13:31,32; 17:1,5) Each selfless member of the Godhead exalts the other two above Himself. The Holy Spirit delights in bringing glory to Jesus in the same way the Father was delighted to give Jesus His throne in

1798.

4. **“He will guide you into all truth.”** This authority, which belongs to the Holy Spirit, shows the Holy Spirit has a work which the Father and Jesus cannot do. The Holy Spirit guides the children of God into all truth as the Father or Jesus advances truth. The Holy Spirit is our critical link with the Godhead and through Him, we advance in our understanding of truth. In our first study, we learned that Jesus spoke the Father’s testimony through Jesus’ lips. The Father wanted the Jews to know that Jesus was His equal. During the past 2,000 years, the Holy Spirit has given a greater understanding of truth and soon, He will convey the testimony of Jesus through the lips of the 144,000. The Holy Spirit does this so that God’s children might know **“what is yet to come.”**

Given the specifications in John 16:13,14, Jesus indicated the Holy Spirit is a hearing, thinking, speaking, member of deity who has His own will. The Holy Spirit is not “an influence” or a “sweet fragrance” (as some people suggest) that exists between the Father and Jesus.

#2 The Holy Spirit Has a Distinct Role and Purpose

The second verse in the Bible specifically mentions the Holy Spirit: **“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.”** (Genesis 1:2) The Spirit of God was hovering over the waters prior to Creation because He was ready to *connect* the forthcoming children of God to the Father and to Jesus.

The Holy Spirit serves the whole universe as a two-way conduit. Through the Holy Spirit, the Father and Jesus send their happiness, righteousness, joy, peace, grace, and power to us (this transfer is also called the fruits of the Spirit – Galatians 5:22,23). We send our prayers, thoughts, fears, feelings, concerns, praise and whatever else may concern us through the Holy Spirit back to the Father and Jesus! This transfer is 100% efficient, nothing is lost. Paul wrote, **“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. 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.”** (Romans 8:26,27) Because the Holy Spirit also is a God, the Father and Jesus understand the mind of the Spirit perfectly. When we need comfort, they know it and send comfort to us through the indwelling Spirit! When we need faith, the Holy Spirit immediately informs the Father and Jesus and we are blessed with it. (Compare John 12:49 with Mark 13:11.) The Holy Spirit intimately knows us, our hearts, and our motives. He never tires of interceding on behalf of the saints. This is not the work of an *influence* that exists between two Gods. It is the work of an infinitely intelligent and divinely capable member of deity.

#3 The Holy Spirit Did Everything Possible to Bring the Antediluvian to Repentance

Jesus spoke to Noah before the flood and said, **“My Spirit will not contend with man forever, for he is mortal; his days will be a hundred and twenty years.”** (Genesis 6:3) After the 120

years expired, the flood came and washed them all away. The flood was necessary because the antediluvians had blasphemed the Holy Spirit. They shut out His inner voice by choosing the ways of wickedness instead of righteousness. They became engrossed and numbed by sin. They opposed righteousness and when Jesus saw that He could do nothing further with such hateful and violent people, He destroyed them. There is a simple explanation for the increase of wickedness: **“The man without the Spirit does not accept the things that come from the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him, and he cannot understand them, because they are spiritually discerned.”** (1 Corinthians 2:14) If the Holy Spirit is grieved away by defiance, a God of love is forced to accept it because He will not violate a person’s free will.

#4 Ananias and Sapphira Lied to the Holy Spirit

Because the Holy Spirit is an “all seeing” member of deity, He recognizes a lie when He hears it. In fact, the Holy Spirit killed Ananias and his wife for lying to Him! **“Then Peter said, ‘Ananias, how is it that Satan has so filled your heart that you have lied to the Holy Spirit and have kept for yourself some of the money you received for the land? Didn’t it belong to you before it was sold? And after it was sold, wasn’t the money at your disposal? What made you think of doing such a thing? You have not lied to men but to God.’ ”** (Acts 5:3,4) Because the Holy Spirit is a member of deity, He can give life and He can take life. In fact, the Holy Spirit resurrected Jesus and gave Him life! **“And if the Spirit of Him who raised Jesus from the dead is living in you, He who raised Christ from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through his Spirit, who lives in you.”** (Romans 8:11)

The Holy Spirit is often mentioned in the Bible in the possessive case, that is, the Holy Spirit appears to belong to someone. Remember, Jesus said in Genesis 6:3, **“My Spirit** will not always strive with man...” and Paul wrote in Romans 8:11, **“The Spirit of Him** of who raised Jesus from the dead...” The simple reason for this is the Holy Spirit serves the Father and Jesus. They tell the Spirit what to do and He (who hears and intelligently responds) implements their wishes. The Holy Spirit is submissive to their commands and this explains why possessive language is used.

#5 Blaspheming (Insulting) the Holy Spirit Is the Unpardonable Sin

Jesus said: **“And so I tell you, every sin and blasphemy will be forgiven men, but the blasphemy against the Spirit will not be forgiven. Anyone who speaks a word against the Son of Man will be forgiven, but anyone who speaks against the Holy Spirit will not be forgiven, either in this age or in the age to come [throughout eternity].”** (Matthew 12:31,32)

The Holy Spirit is the only member of the Godhead that is omnipresent. This is why Jesus told His disciples, **“But I tell you the truth: It is for your good that I am going away. Unless I go away, the Counselor will not come to you; but if I go, I will send Him to you.”** (John 16:7) Even though the Spirit is unseen, He is everywhere, seeing everything at the same instant. David wrote, **“Where can I go [to hide] from your Spirit? Where can I flee from your presence? If I go up to the Heavens, you are there; if I make my bed in the depths, you are there.”** (Psalm 139:7,8, insertion mine)

The Holy Spirit is the only member of deity that can live *within* each child of God at the same instant. The Father and Jesus are physically limited but the Spirit is everywhere! Through the Holy Spirit, the Father and Jesus know everything occurring because the Spirit updates the Father and Jesus constantly. The Holy Spirit is our only connection with the Father and Jesus. If we defy the Spirit and shut Him out of our lives, we cannot connect with God and God cannot connect with us. If we continue to violate the efforts of the Holy Spirit by doing evil, He will leave us alone because He is not permitted to override a defiant will. People who commit the unpardonable sin are not drawn to God and have no interest in serving God, repenting of their sins, or glorifying God with their lives. This is why rejecting the Holy Spirit is eternally fatal, both in this age and in the age to come!

#6 The Holy Spirit Is A Member of the Trinity

The Holy Spirit is invisible (like the Father), but this does not reduce His importance or position within the Trinity. Remember, it takes three Gods to function as One unit. Each God performs functions the other two cannot do. This explains why Jesus commanded, **“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.”** (Matthew 18:19) These three Gods are equal, separate, distinct, coeternal Gods who are eternally united in love. Man’s highest privilege is to enter into their relationship and become a member of their family.

#7 The Holy Spirit Will Soon Separate the Sheep From the Goats

The Bible points forward to a time when the whole world will experience a great display of Holy Spirit power. The prophet Joel gives us an Old Testament parallel of this phenomenon: **“And afterward, I will pour out my Spirit on *all people*. Your sons and daughters will prophesy, your old men will dream dreams, your young men will see visions. Even on my servants, both men and women, I will pour out my Spirit in those days.”** (Joel 2:28,29, italics mine) This coming manifestation of the Holy Spirit is necessary because before Jesus returns, the sheep and the goats must be separated. Jesus described the difference between the sheep and goats by saying, **“My sheep listen to my voice; I know them, and they follow me.”** (John 10:27) Paul wrote, **“those who are led by the Spirit of God are sons of God.”** (Romans 8:14) Currently, there are more than seven billion people living on Earth and those who are led by the Holy Spirit are sons of God. They listen to Jesus’ voice even though many of His sheep currently do not know that they are following Jesus. During the Great Tribulation, the 144,000 will proclaim Jesus’ voice (testimony) and the sheep will discover that they have been following Jesus all along! These people will worship the Creator and observe His Sabbath rest because they know the voice of the Holy Spirit! The interesting outcome of this process is that the Holy Spirit will decisively separate the goats from the sheep.

I could write more about the nature of the Holy Spirit, but I think the best way for anyone to determine the identity of the Holy Spirit is to open your Bible and study the topic of the Trinity. Allow the Spirit to show you from Scripture the nature of the Godhead. If you consider the topics presented in this series and are willing to let the Spirit guide you into all truth, you have nothing to fear.

Summary:

1. In the first segment, we learned:

- Jewish Monotheism teaches there is one God (Jehovah) and all other gods are false or imaginary.
- The Father sent Jesus to Earth so the Father could speak through Jesus' lips. The Father wanted to confront the Jews with the fact that they did not actually know Him.
- Jesus was crucified for blasphemy, speaking the exact words which the Father gave Him to speak.
- The Father confirmed that Jesus was His Son (His equal) on four occasions. 1) At Jesus' baptism. 2) On the mount of transfiguration. 3) In the temple, shortly before Jesus was crucified. 4) By tearing the temple veil from top to bottom. In addition to these manifestations, the Father worked many miracles through Jesus.

2. In the second segment we learned:

- The Father releases knowledge over time. Therefore, truth is always unfolding. "New light" can either supplement or abolish doctrines that were once thought to be *absolute* truth.
- The Father attempted to terminate the Jewish doctrine of monotheism through Jesus, but the Jews would not accept it. The Father wanted Israel to know the truth about Him, but the Jews would not accept it.
- The Father validated the deity of Jesus with many miracles, even His virgin birth. However, the miracles only hardened the hearts of the Jews. When the mind is unwilling to let go of idolatry and tradition, miracles do not matter.
- When the Father speaks, He either speaks through Jesus, to Jesus, or He exalts Jesus. He does not otherwise speak.
- The Father is invisible. No one has ever seen Him except Jesus (and the Holy Spirit). The Father lives in unapproachable light.

3. In the third segment we learned:

- Jesus is called "The Word" because the Father's testimony comes through Jesus' lips.
- The Father follows a predictable process. On or about the time of a prophetic fulfillment, the Father reveals His plans to people searching for truth.
- After Paul opened his mind to the deity of Jesus, he understood that God reveals mysteries over time and what he once thought was absolute truth had to be unlearned because of new

light.

- Jesus is the Creator of everything that exists. Everything He makes belongs to the Father with one exception—everyone that Jesus redeems belongs to Him.

- Jesus spoke to Israel in Old Testament times within the context of monotheism because He was the only God they knew. Therefore, Jesus used a singular personal pronoun in many statements such as, “Thou shalt have no other gods before me.”

4. In the fourth segment we learned:

- Because Jesus is a member of deity and He died on the cross, we know that the price to save sinners required the death of a deity.

- If a perfect man could have saved sinners, Jesus the Creator, would have created someone to satisfy the Plan of Salvation.

- The Father required a *donor* who had these powers within Himself to legitimately transfer the powers of righteousness and eternal life to sinners.

- The Plan of Salvation is built on the premise that guilt and righteousness are transferable. Jesus had to successfully overcome every possible temptation before the Father would accept His sacrifice. Because Jesus overcame the world, the guilt of sinners can be legitimately transferred to Jesus and His righteousness can be transferred to sinners.

- Advocates for a “created Jesus” or “a perfect man” infinitely diminish the price paid for our salvation.

5. In the fifth segment we learned:

- The Father did not create Jesus.

- Jesus became a subject of the Father (the Son of God) when He voluntarily accepted the Father’s plan to save sinners.

- Jesus did not come to Earth on His own. The Father sent Jesus.

- Jesus is called the Father’s “only begotten son” to indicate the Father could not pay a higher price for sinners.

- There could be no greater anguish on the Father’s part than requiring Jesus to suffer all that was necessary for the salvation of sinners.

- Before Jesus could die for sinners, He had to be tempted as sinners are tempted. In addition, He had to reject the severe temptation of using divine power for safety or personal advantage.

- While Jesus was on the cross, the Father surprised Jesus. He caused Jesus to be crushed when the curse of sin was applied. Jesus cried out, **“My God, my God, why have you forsaken me.”** The Father removed from Jesus any hope of resurrection to see (a) if Jesus loved sinners enough to donate His eternal life to them and cease to exist forever and (b) to see if Jesus would doubt the Father’s promise to resurrect Jesus and use His own divine power to prevent His death.

6. In the sixth segment we learned:

- The Jewish and Christian doctrine of monotheism (one God or one God manifesting Himself in three different persons) puts the Bible in a state of internal conflict. This is evident in Revelation 5.

- It makes no sense for the Father to write a book, seal it with seven seals, conduct a search throughout the universe for someone worthy to receive the book, only to find Himself worthy to receive the book He wrote.

- Jesus was found worthy to receive the book sealed with seven seals because He:

- Came to Earth and overcame every temptation.

- Lived a life that was in perfect compliance with the Father’s will.

- Was willing to die for sinners even when there was no hope of resurrection.

- Could have used divine authority at any time to end the cruel treatment that He suffered. - He could have come down off the cross if He wanted, but He chose to die without any hope of living again so that sinners could be given His power of righteousness and His eternal life.

- When the search was conducted, in the entire universe only Jesus was found worthy to sit on the throne and receive sovereign power. Jesus was found worthy because He has shown the universe the depth of the Father’s love for sinners.

- In 1798, the Father put everything in Heaven and on Earth under Jesus so that He could complete the sin problem in a way that no deficiencies could be found throughout eternity.

7. In the seventh segment we examined the following:

- If the Father’s death for sinners would have achieved the best possible outcome, the Father would have certainly come to Earth and died for sinners. He has the same love for sinners that Jesus has.

- If the Father had come to Earth and died for sinners, what response would He have a billion years from now if someone sinned? How could the Father implement His “sudden death” law and avoid the accusation of being unfair? How could the Father avoid the criticism, “He gave His life to save sinners long ago, why not now?”

- The Father, according to infinite wisdom and sovereign authority created a plan of salvation that would only need to be implemented once. This plan includes many new revelations about

the nature of God's love and government. It also includes hundreds of object lessons that will endure for all eternity.

- To function as one God, three Gods gave up 2/3 of themselves. Their selfless behavior each day will be an eternal example of what love is and how it functions.

- The commandment "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, mind and soul" can only be fulfilled through selflessness, living with the Trinity as they live in the Trinity.

- Even though Jesus and the Holy Spirit direct us to worship the Father, the Father does not consider it blasphemy when/if we worship all three together because they are equals and they function as one God.

- The Father, Son, and Holy Spirit have made a covenant of love with each other for all eternity. Their covenant guarantees that eternal life will be happy and safe, free from the power of sin.

8. In the final segment on the Holy Spirit, we examined the following:

- The Holy Spirit is a member of deity, He is an equal, distinct, separate, coeternal member of the Godhead.

- The work of the Holy Spirit is that of a two-way conduit from the Father and Jesus **to** all creation and **from** all creation.

- If it were not for the ministry of the Holy Spirit, no one could know God, walk with God, or enjoy the love of God.

- If we continually insult (blaspheme) the Holy Spirit and continue to defy the Holy Spirit, He will give up because He will not violate our free will.

- Jesus commanded that His disciples be baptized in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit because these three make up the Godhead and it is the privilege of every believer to enter into their happiness, joy, and eternal goodness!

- The Trinity consists of three eternal, wonderful, selfless Gods perfectly united in purpose, plan, and action. They function as one God to benefit their children and it is their selfless surrender to each other that defines what love is and is not!

I know this study has been a "long winded" one, but the topic is huge. I believe this topic has been controversial for centuries because it was not time for the truth about the Trinity to be revealed. A few proof texts will not resolve the many issues that are involved. A proper understanding of the Trinity requires a comprehensive understanding of many topics. We have only examined a few of them.

I hope you will now read the Bible with "a new set of eyes" and that you will also find a much greater appreciation for the phrase, "God is love." In the name of the Father, the Son, and the

Holy Spirit, three equal, distinct, separate, coeternal Gods, this study is concluded.