

# The Personality and Divinity of the Holy Spirit

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## Abstract

There are many issues surrounding the doctrine of the Trinity throughout the history of Christianity. Obviously, many church fathers espoused the doctrine of the Trinity. After long struggles with the Arians and other heresies, the Council of Nicea (A.D. 325) officially declared the doctrine of the Trinity. The locus of the controversy in the early years of Christianity was mainly on the divinity of Jesus. When this was finally settled, the controversy shifted on the Holy Spirit. But later on, this was also settled at the Council of Constantinople (A.D. 381). However, in the succeeding centuries, the issue of the Holy Spirit continued, which resulted in the schism between the Western and Eastern Christian Churches. The issue was mainly on the “procession” of the Holy Spirit. But the issue that is prevailing today, which already occurred in ancient times, is about the personality of the Holy Spirit. Some Christian scholars and churches deny the personality and divinity of the Holy, which is adhered to by the majority of Christian churches. It is now obvious that until today, the issue of the person and divinity of the Holy Spirit is still far from settled. Many books and articles have already been published on this issue. The task of this research is to re-investigate the evidence in the Scriptures, especially in the Gospels and Acts. This investigation will employ the historical-grammatical method of exegesis. This research is not an exhaustive exegetical exercise since it will deal with a large scope of materials. The procedure will follow the order found in the New Testament Bible, setting the issue on Synoptic Problem. This study adds more understanding about the exegetical analysis of the passages in the Gospels and Acts that deal with the Holy Spirit, which the author thinks are lacking.

**Keywords:** Trinity, Holy Spirit, Divinity of the Holy Spirit, Personality of the Holy Spirit

## INTRODUCTION

The doctrine of the Trinity has been a controversial issue since the early part of the Christian era until today. The early Christian church fathers obviously supported the idea of a Triune God.<sup>1</sup> Fernando Canale notes that “Irenaeus’ [c.115-c.202] conception of the Trinity was economic, for example, engulfing both inner reality of God in Himself and His acts of salvation in human history.”<sup>2</sup> Additionally, Origen [c. 185-c. 254] like other early church fathers, views the Trinity in

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<sup>1</sup> In this article, the history of the doctrine of Trinity will not be presented in detail since this is not the focus of this study. It is only mentioned here to give a background on the issue of the person and divinity of the Holy Spirit.

<sup>2</sup> Fernando Canale, “Doctrine of God” in *Handbook of Seventh-day Adventist Theology*, Commentary Reference Series, vol. 12, George Reid, editor (Hagerstown, MD: Review and Herald Publishing Association, 2000), 141.

Neoplatonic philosophical categories. Consequently, he concludes that the “Father alone is the simple and unoriginated cause of everything.”<sup>3</sup> Gilles Emery highlights that Justin Martyr, in his dialogue with Trypo, asserts that “the Son who is begotten by the Father should not be confused with the Father, but rather He is ‘distinct in real number.’”<sup>4</sup> Furthermore, Tertullian, in his battle against heresies, insists that the Father, Son, and the Holy Spirit are three distinct persons in one substance—God.<sup>5</sup> Another church father, Augustine, asserts “that the Trinity is the one, only, and true God and that one rightly says, believes, and understands that the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit are of one and the same substance or essence.”<sup>6</sup> Conclusively, after a long struggle with Arianism, in the Council of Nicea (325 AD), the Christian church declares their Trinitarian view.<sup>7</sup>

It is interesting to note that some of these theological formulations in the early Christian church were due to their responses to Trinitarian “heresies.” Some of these “heresies” are (1) Adoptionism, (2) Unitarian Monarchianism, which is also called “Modalism” or Sabellianism, and (3) Arianism.<sup>8</sup>

On the history of the issue on Trinity, the issue on the person<sup>9</sup> and divinity of the Holy Spirit was later taken up. Obviously, in the Council of Nicea, the Christian church’s main task was to tackle the issue of the divinity of Jesus Christ; thus, the Council just says, “And [we believe] in the Holy Ghost.”<sup>10</sup> Although the Holy Spirit was mentioned in the creeds and doxologies of the early

<sup>3</sup> Ibid., 142. In order to explain the idea of divine “hypostases,” he coined the idea of eternal “generation” which presents the Son as timelessly generated by the Father. The Holy Spirit to a lower ontological status than the Son. So, in Origen’s proposal, the Father has the highest ontological rank. A two-fold subordinationism was implicit in his assertion. Ibid.

<sup>4</sup> Gilles Emery, *The Trinity: An Introduction to the Catholic Doctrine on the Triune God*, Thomistic Resource Series, vol 1, trans., Matthew Levering, Matthew and Thomas Joseph White, eds. (Washington, DC: The Catholic University of America Press, 2011), 60.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid., 61.

<sup>6</sup> Saint Augustine, *The Trinity*, in the Fathers of the Church, vol. 45, translated by Stephen McKenna, Hermigild Dressler, editor (Washington, DC: Catholic University of America Press), 7.

<sup>7</sup> “We believe in one God, the Father almighty, maker of all things, visible and invisible. And in one Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God, the only-begotten generated from the Father that is, from the being (ousia) of the Father, God from God, Light from Light, true God from true God, begotten, not made, one in being (homousios) with the Father, through whom all things were made, those in heaven and those on earth. For us men and for our salvation He came down, and became flesh, was made man, suffered, and rose again on the third day. He ascended to the heavens and shall come again to judge the living and the dead. And in the Holy Spirit.” Declan Marmion and Rik Van Nieuwenhove, *An Introduction to the Trinity* (Cambridge, England: Cambridge University Press, 2011), 65.

<sup>8</sup> For a detailed information about these so called “Trinitarian Heresies,” see Canale, pp. 142-142; Emery, pp. 59-67.

<sup>9</sup> The Greek word for person is “hupostasis”. Its other meaning is substance, essence, and confidence. See Joseph Henry Thayer, *Thayer’s Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament* (New York City, NY: Harper and Brothers, 1889), s.v., “hupostasis.” It was once used to mean “person” in the NT which is found in Heb 1:3 which says that Jesus is “. . . the express image of His [the Father] person . . .” So, the Bible is clear that God is a person. In Merriam-Webster dictionary, the “word” person has a semantics (range of meaning): 1. Human, individual, 2. a character or part in or as if in a play, 3. One of the three modes of being in Trinitarian Godhead as understood by Christians, 3. Bodily appearance, 4. The personality of human being: Self. In Longman’s dictionary, a person is “a human being, especially considered as someone with their own particular character.” Free Dictionary has an additional insight: “the composite of characteristics that make up an individual personality; the self.”

<sup>10</sup> Sebastian Madathummuriyil, “The Holy Spirit as Person and Mediation: A Pneumatological Approach to the Church and the sacraments,” *Questions liturgiques*, 88 no 3 (2007): 180.

centuries of the Christian church, the doctrine of the Holy Spirit in His relation to the Father and the Son and His personhood was, to a great extent, untouched and undeveloped.<sup>11</sup> Furthermore, the Cappadocian Fathers clarified,

“the unity and ‘threeness’ of the Godhead employing the terms, hypostasis and ‘ousia.’ They applied the term ‘ousia’ to denote the essence that is shared by all persons of the Godhead, whereas the term hypostasis was used to designate that in which the Godhead is three. Accordingly, in the Trinity, there is the presence of three hypostases in one ‘ousia’ that exist in the mutual indwelling and reciprocal relationship to the other two, which they clarified by the notion of perichoresis.”<sup>12</sup>

After the issue on the divinity of Christ had been settled, the divinity of the Holy Spirit was also affirmed at the Council of Constantinople (381). The Council also highlighted that the Holy Spirit proceeds from the Father and that She is also to be worshiped.<sup>13</sup> However, in succeeding centuries, there was a heated controversy between the East Christian church and the West Christian church.

It should be noted that in ancient times, there were already Christians who denied the personality of the Holy Spirit. According to Walvoord, “the personality of the Holy Spirit has been attacked by Socinius and his followers ancient and modern who have held to the general position that the Holy Spirit is an impersonal energy proceeding from God.”<sup>14</sup> Walvoord also points out that Arius denied the personality of the Holy Spirit, but contrary to Socinius, Arius considers the Holy Spirit as a creature due to the idea that it is not eternal like the Father.<sup>15</sup>

Gregory of Nazianzus “explains, the name of the Father is actually the name of the Father in relation to the Son; the Father is distinguished from the Son through ‘unbegottenness’, the Son through ‘begottenness’ and the Spirit through ‘procession.’”<sup>16</sup> In the east, the idea on “procession”

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<sup>11</sup> Ibid., 180-181.

<sup>12</sup> Ibid., 182. “Accordingly, the foundation of God’s Trinitarian existence as Father, Son and Holy Spirit is this eternal perichoretic koinonia. The use of the term hypostasis indicates not simply something about the being of God, i.e., the being of God is of the same substance, but rather ontologically, the being of God as ‘being in relation’.” Ibid. Fritz Buri also notes that “although in all these three works in the direction of the world (opera ad extra Trinitatis) the three persons operate together (indivise) it is supposed (per appropriationem) that creation and conservation are mainly the work of the Father, redemption the special work of the Son and that the glorification belongs especially to the Holy Spirit.” Fritz Buri, “Trinity and Personality,” *Iliff Review*, 40 no 1 (Wint 1983): 16.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid., 181. “However, the mode of relation to the Trinity and to the Son is not explained. In other words, the Council did not consider the way in which the Holy Spirit is a person in the life of God. The question as to how the “three” and “one” could be understood was left to the theological speculation of the successive centuries. So, from 4th century, the question about the relation of the Spirit to the Trinity’ and to the Son became an important issue both in the East and the West. So, after the Council of Constantinople, the focus of attention was shifted to the processional relationship of the Holy Spirit to the other divine persons. It is important to study, how these debates shaped different views of the East and the West in the understanding of the person and mission of the Holy Spirit.” Ibid.

<sup>14</sup> John Walvoord, “The Person of the Holy Spirit,” *Bibliotheca sacra*, 97 no 386 (Apr - Jun 1940): 167. He adds, “Socinians deny the distinct personality of the Holy Spirit; they concede eternity, because they regard the Spirit as the influence or effluence of the eternal God.” Ibid.

<sup>15</sup> Ibid., 167.

<sup>16</sup> Ibid., 182.

was clearly defined. They held the idea of a two-fold procession, that is, “from the Father and through the Son.”<sup>17</sup>

In the Western Church, the view that the Holy Spirit proceeds from the Father and the Son (*Filioque*) was vigorously asserted. Augustine, in his reaction against Arianism, concluded that “the Son has the same substance with the Father.”<sup>18</sup> Sebastian Madathummuriyil notes, “It is important to note that the distinctive ways in which the East and the West understand the manner of the procession of the Spirit has radical consequences in their understanding of the person and the role of the Spirit.”<sup>19</sup> The Eastern church’s understanding of the “procession” of the Holy Spirit stresses the person and roles of the Holy Spirit which is better than that of the Western *Filioque*. Edward J. Kilmartin highlights that “traditionally the East ascribes to the Spirit a personal and proper mission whereas in the West the Spirit is attributed a mission by “appropriation.”<sup>20</sup> Stanley Burgess also points out that “in the West, the role of the Holy Spirit has often been limited to an instrumental role of extending the salvation accomplished by Christ to humankind.”<sup>21</sup> Madathummuriyil asserts that,

“This does not do justice to the person and active role of the Holy Spirit in the economy of salvation, as is witnessed in the New Testament. Doing justice to the biblical witness of the Spirit is far from merely acknowledging the work of the Holy Spirit, but rather in acknowledging the person of the Holy Spirit; it does not simply recognize the gifts of the Spirit, but rather the giver herself/himself; it is not just considering the Spirit as an indeterminate power or transforming presence, but as the person who mediates presence.”<sup>22</sup>

It is historically evident that the issue on the doctrine of the Holy Spirit had created a schism between the Eastern and Western Christian churches. Ryan Kulesa notes that “history has repeatedly replayed a terrible film in which some believers are led astray by false doctrine, misunderstanding, and ignorance, and this has been true especially in regard to the person of the Holy Spirit.”<sup>23</sup> In fact, even in recent times, the doctrine of the Holy Spirit is still a miss-

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<sup>17</sup> Ibid., 183. The East concluded that “both the Son and the Spirit originate from the Father, and both derive divinity from the divinity of the Father. Thus, the Christian East affirms that the Holy Spirit is of one essence with the Father, The Spirit is distinct from the Son. because the relationship of the Holy Spirit to the Father is distinct from that of the Son to the Father. In the life of God, the Son is begotten whereas the Spirit is breathed forth by the Father. So, according to Eastern understanding, as in the creedal statement of the Council of Constantinople, the Son is begotten by the Father alone whereas the Spirit proceeds ‘from the Father alone.’” Ibid.

<sup>18</sup> Ibid., 185. Augustine concluded, according to Madathummuriyil, “that it was reasonable to argue that originating the Spirit as a divine prerogative is not only of the Father alone, but also of the Son. Thus, Augustine claimed that the Spirit proceeds from the Father and the Son.” Ibid.

<sup>19</sup> Ibid., 187.

<sup>20</sup> Edward J. Kilmartin, “The Active Role of Christ and the Holy Spirit in the Sanctification of the Eucharistic Elements,” *Theological Studies* 45 (1984): 245.

<sup>21</sup> Stanley M. Burgess. *The Holy Spirit: Pastern Christian Traditions* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 1989) 5.

<sup>22</sup> Madathummuriyil, 187.

<sup>23</sup> Ryan Kulesa, “The Nature of the Holy Spirit and the Crucifixion, an Essay,” *Journal of Biblical Theology*, 1 no. 1 (Jan - Mar 2018): 6. He goes on to say that “The person of the Holy Spirit has been severely misunderstood by both believers and non-believers alike.” Ibid.

understood doctrine in Christianity. John Webster points out that the work of Geoffrey Lampe “is the most weighty post-war English contribution to the doctrine of the Holy Spirit. Lampe’s fundamental contention is that ‘Spirit’ properly describes, not one of the three divine persons, but the whole activity of God in his relation to man: ‘the Spirit of God,’ he writes, ‘is to be understood, not as referring to a divine hypostasis distinct from God the Father and God the Son or Word, but as indicating God himself as active towards and in his human creation.’”<sup>24</sup>

Maurice Wiles also “has suggested that ‘Spirit’ denotes the personal and relational nature of God as present to his creation: ‘God as Spirit is God as present.’”<sup>25</sup> He adds, “to know God as Holy Spirit is to know him as . . . the absolutely other entering into the most intimate conceivable relationship with a man.”<sup>26</sup> Webster also exposes Karl Barth’s doctrine of the Trinity. He opines that

“by tying the Spirit so closely to Christ, Barth often seems to suggest that the triunity of God is less primordial than his unity, and that ‘personality’ is properly attributed to the one God rather than to each of the three trinitarian persons. Father, Son, and Spirit are seen as ‘moments’ or ‘modes’ of the unfolding of a single divine subject, so that threeness threatens to be resolved into Oneness.”<sup>27</sup>

It is now obvious that until today, the issue of the person and divinity of the Holy Spirit is still far from settled. Many books and articles have already been published on this issue. The task of this research is to re-investigate the evidence in the Scriptures, especially in the Gospels and Acts. This investigation will employ the historical-grammatical method of exegesis. This research is not an exhaustive exegetical exercise since it will deal with a large scope of materials. The procedure will follow the order found in the New Testament Bible, setting the issue on Synoptic Problem.

## **The Personality and Divinity of the Holy Spirit in Matthew and Mark**

The first occurrence of the Holy Spirit is in the narrative of the conception and birth of Jesus. It is interesting to note that Matthew presents Jesus as the “Christos” or the Messiah in Matt 1:18; cf. v. 20). The most notable statement here is, “eurethē en gastri echousa ek pneumatos hagiou” (She was found with a child from the Holy Spirit).<sup>28</sup> The word “pneumatōs” (Spirit) is in the genitive case; as such, the adjective “hagiou” (Holy) is also genitive. The possible syntax of the genitive could be genitive of source or genitive of agency. Genitive of agency is more appropriate because the action is involved here, that is, the action of conceiving.<sup>29</sup> Matthew asserts that the Holy Spirit is the agent in the process of the conception of Jesus, the Messiah. Donald Hagner

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<sup>24</sup> John Webster, “The Identity of the Holy Spirit: A Problem in Trinitarian Theology,” *Themelios* 9.1 (September 1983): 5.

<sup>25</sup> Maurice F. Wiles, *Faith and the Mystery of God* (London, 1982), p. 123; cf. pp. 117-29.

<sup>26</sup> Maurice F. Wiles, ‘The Holy Spirit in Christian Theology’ in *Explorations in Theology* 4 (London, 1979), p. 68.

<sup>27</sup> Webster, 6.

<sup>28</sup> This is my translation.

<sup>29</sup> Daniel B. Wallace, *The Basics of New Testament Syntax: An Intermediate Greek Grammar* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2000), 61.

insists that “by the Holy Spirit” has great theological importance.<sup>30</sup> He adds that “Mary’s pregnancy is attributed to the agency of God’s Spirit. . . . The creative power of God at work within Mary in order to accomplish his purposes.”<sup>31</sup> It seems that Matthew here highlights the divine origin of the Messiah. Furthermore, the creative power being displayed by the Holy Spirit here may suggest His divinity and personality.<sup>32</sup> This passage also highlights the distinctiveness of the Holy Spirit from Jesus.<sup>33</sup>

Some of the occurrences of the Holy Spirit are in the context of baptism. One occurrence is found in Matt 3:11 (c.f. Mark 1:8; Luke 3:16). John the Baptist speaks of Jesus as the One who “will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire” (baptisei en pneumati hagiō kai puri). In Mark, there is no “and fire.” In this context, John contrasts his baptism (water, v. 11a) and Jesus’ (Holy Spirit or Fire, v. 11d). The syntax of the dative case, *pneumati*, is dative of the agency. It means that Jesus baptizes those who believed in the gospel of the kingdom through the Holy Spirit. The expression “with the Holy Spirit and fire” may shed a theological insight into the divinity of the Holy Spirit. Since the phrase has only one preposition, “en,” it suggests that “fire” is epexegetical. In other words, “fire” is the same or the explanation of the “Holy Spirit.” In this context, John was speaking about God’s judgment against the rebellious Jews (3:10, 12). Hence some scholars suggest that the Holy Spirit as Fire refers to God’s (Jesus) judgment against the wicked Jews in particular (in the immediate context) and the wicked humanity (in a wider context).<sup>34</sup> However, it could not be denied that there is also a positive side in this context. In other words, John was not only speaking of the judgment of the wicked by the Holy Spirit as a fire but also speaking of the blessing of the Holy Spirit (as a metaphor of fire) as an agent of refinement and purging (see also, Num 31:23).<sup>35</sup> In this passage, we draw out an idea that the Holy Spirit is (1) as fire, an agent in divine salvation and judgment; (2) distinct from Jesus, the Messiah. The metaphor of the Holy Spirit as “fire” who is an agent of judgment and salvation may suggest His divinity.

In the Old Testament (O.T.), “fire” was also associated with Yahweh (see Exod 3:2), who appeared to Moses. He was also in a pillar of fire by night to give light to the children of Israel (Exod 13:21-22; 40:38; Num 9:15,16; Deut 1:33). Interestingly, He descended in Mount Sinai in fire (Exod 19:18), and His glory was like a devouring fire (Exod 24:17), and He spoke in the midst of the fire (Deut 4:11,12,33,36; 5:4,5,22,24; 10:4). The fire of the Lord also consumed (judgment) the rebellious Israelites in the wilderness (Num 11:1; 16:35). Furthermore, Moses declared that the

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<sup>30</sup> Donald Hagner, *Word Biblical Commentary*, vol. 33A, Matthew 1-13, Bruce M. Metzger, editor (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson, 2000): 17. R. T. France also insists that “Holy Spirit was the agent of agent of Jesus’ conception.” R. T. France, *Matthew*, Tyndale New Testament Commentaries, vol. 1 (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1985), 77. See also Gregg Allison, et. Al., *The Holy Spirit* (Nashville, TN: B & H Academic, 2020), 57.

<sup>31</sup> Ibid.

<sup>32</sup> It reminds us of the Holy Spirit’s role in the creation of earth (see Gen 1:2).

<sup>33</sup> This scenario clearly exposed the untruthfulness of Modalism.

<sup>34</sup> See Michael I Vlach, “The Trinity and Eschatology,” *Master’s Seminary Journal*, 24/2 (Fall, 2013): 206. R. T. also argues that “the fire that purifies will also destroy at that is worthless.” France, 93.

<sup>35</sup> Hagner, 51, 52. D. A. Carson also opines that “there is a good reason, however, for taking “fire” as a purifying agent along with the Holy Spirit.” D.A. Carson, “Matthew” in *The Expositor’s Bible Commentary, Matthew, Mark, and Luke*, vol. 9, Frank E. Gaebelin, ed. (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1984), 105. See also France, 93.

Lord is a consuming fire (Deut 4:24; see also 5:25; 9:3). The prophets also highlight that God judgement against rebellious nations was through fire (Isa 29:6; 30:27,30,33; 33:11,14; 66:15; Jer 4:4; Ezek 15:7; 19:12; 20:47; 21:31; 22:31, etc.). It is now clear that “fire” was used by Moses as a metaphor for God in His action of judgment against the wicked Israelites and other nations. It was also used to refer to Yahweh as a cloud to shelter Israel from the heat of the Sun and as light at night. This metaphor was used by Matthew to refer to the Holy Spirit as an agent of judgment against the wicked and as an agent of purging of the righteous. Since this metaphor was only used for God in the O.T., and since it was also used as a metaphor for the Holy Spirit in the N.T., this may suggest the divinity and personality of the Holy Spirit since God is personal and divine in the Scriptures.

Other occurrences of the Holy Spirit in relation to baptism are found in Matt 3:16-17 (c.f. Mark 1:9-11) and Matt 28:19-20. In Matt 3:16, Matthew narrates the baptism of Jesus just prior to the beginning of His earthly ministry. Jesus had been baptized (3:16a; Mark 1:9), and then, the “Spirit of God” descended like a dove (another imagery used for the Holy Spirit) upon Jesus (3:16b; Mark 1:10); while the Father declares that Jesus is His beloved Son in whom He is pleased (3:17; Mark 1:11). The association of the Holy Spirit with the Father as the “Spirit of God” (“Pneuma Theou”; see also Matt 12:28) leads us to surmise the closeness or intimacy between the Holy Spirit and the Father. The “Theou” (of God) in the genitive case may suggest two options: (1) genitive of possession (2) genitive of relationship.<sup>36</sup> If the Holy Spirit is just the power or energy of God, then genitive of possession may be appropriate. If the Holy Spirit is a person, then the genitive of the relationship is appropriate. In view of strong evidence in the N.T. on the personality of the Holy Spirit, genitive of relationship is more plausible. This is further supported by another phrase, “Son of God” (e.g., Matt 4:3,6; 5:9; 8:29; 14:33; 26:63; 27:40,54; Mark 1:1; 3:11; 5:7; 15:39; Luke 1:35; 4:3,9; 4:41) in the NT which also shows relationship between the Father and the Son. In other words, there is a very deep or very intimate relationship between the Holy Spirit and God, as deep as the relationship between the Father and the Son. This might be hinting again at the divinity of the Holy Spirit since He is in a close relationship with the Father and the Son. It suggests His distinct personality since He also occurred simultaneously as a separate entity (like a dove).

In Matt 28:19, 20, Matthew describes the end of Christ’s earthly ministry, highlighting the great commission to make disciples and to baptize those who are being discipled. The most intriguing phrase here is “baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.” Once again, the Holy Spirit was associated with the Father and the Son, who was considered divine beings by N.T. writers.<sup>37</sup> If He is just the power or energy of God, definitely, He will not be included in the baptismal formula because of two reasons: (1) Both the Father and the Sons are personal beings; (2) if He is just the power or energy of God, it does not have a distinct authority (the Greek word is ‘onoma’) apart from the Father. Analyzing the Greek word “onoma” may further shed light on the issue at hand. The Greek word “onoma” may mean (1) literally the proper name of a person; (2) by a usage chiefly Hebraistic, the name is used for everything which the name covers, everything the thought or feeling of which is roused in mind by mentoring, hearing,

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<sup>36</sup> Wallace, 47.

<sup>37</sup> Carson asserts that “contributing evidence makes it difficult to deny the presence of Trinitarian thought in the NT documents.” Carson, 598.

remembering, the name, i.e., for one's rank, authority, interests, pleasure, command, excellences, deeds, etc.<sup>38</sup> In the context of Matt 28:19, the baptism that is commanded by Jesus is by the "authority" of the Father, Son, and the Holy Spirit. Another point to take note of is that the word "to onoma" is singular. This is actually interesting because what follows "onoma" which singular are three distinct entities. Grammatically, "onoma" should be plural. But the use of singular "onoma" implies the intimate Oneness of the three distinct personalities because they have only one "onoma" (authority).

Interestingly, in both passages, the Holy Spirit had been juxtaposed with God (the Father) and with the Son (Jesus). In both passages, all three occurred simultaneously, indicating their unity in the plan of salvation in Jesus' earthly ministry. It also suggests their "Oneness" because they have only one "onoma" (authority) and also their distinctiveness (Threeness), as enumerated in the baptismal formula (28:19). Hagner points out that "baptism . . . 'into,' 'name (the singular 'onoma' 'name,' points to the unity of the three) of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit . . ."<sup>39</sup> William Hendriksen also insists that "the baptizing must be into the name—note the singular: one name; hence *one* God—of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit."<sup>40</sup> The evidence clearly indicates the personality and divinity of the Holy Spirit. He is a person because both the Father and the Son are persons. If He is just the power of God, He could be included separately in the baptismal formula apart from the Father. He is divine because He is included in the "one authority" with the Father and the Son in the baptismal formula.<sup>41</sup>

There are other occurrences in Matthew that would support the belief in the personality and divinity of the Holy Spirit. In Matt 4:1 (cf. Mark 1:12), the Holy Spirit led Jesus into the wilderness, being tempted by Satan. This characteristic of the Holy Spirit suggests that He is a person. In Matt 10:20 (c.f. Mark 13:11), another characteristic of a person is manifested by the Holy Spirit when it speaks through a believer (c.f. Matt 22:43). A similar idea is found in Matt 12:38. Matthew cited an O.T. prophecy concerning Jesus upon whom the Holy Spirit was put by God in order to declare justice to the Gentiles.

The divinity of the Holy Spirit was clearly manifested in Matthew 12:31-32. (c.f. Mark 3:28-30). Jesus strongly declares that "if anyone speaks a word against the Son of Man, it will be forgiven him; but whoever speaks against the Holy Spirit, it will not be forgiven him, either in this age or the age to come."<sup>42</sup> This passage puts the Holy Spirit on the same level as the Father and the

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<sup>38</sup> Joseph Henry Thayer, *Thayer's Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament* (New York City, NY: Harper and Brothers, 1889), s.v., "onoma."

<sup>39</sup> Donald Hagner, *Word Biblical Commentary*, vol. 33B, Matthew 14-28, Bruce M. Metzger, editor (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson, 2000), s.v., "Matt 28:19."

<sup>40</sup> William Hendriksen, *New Testament Commentary: Exposition of the Gospel of Matthew* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 1973), s.v., "Matt 28:19."

<sup>41</sup> Craig S. Keener asserts that the "disciples baptize not only in the name of the Father and the Holy Spirit, whom biblical tradition regarded as divine, but also in the name of the Son." Craig S Keener, *The IVP New Testament Commentary Series*, Grant R. Osborne, editor (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1997), s.v. Matt 28:19.

<sup>42</sup> This paper will not tackle the meaning of the "blasphemy against the Holy Spirit."



Son because blasphemy against the Holy Spirit is tantamount to blasphemy against God.<sup>43</sup> Jewish Rabbis acknowledged that deliberate blasphemy against God was normally unforgivable.<sup>44</sup>

## **The Personality and Divinity of the Holy Spirit in Luke-Acts**

The books, Luke and Acts, are two-volume series written by Luke, one of Paul's companions. So, in this section, these will be dealt with together. The first occurrence of the Holy Spirit speaks about John the Baptist being "filled with the Holy Spirit even from his mother's womb" (Luke 1:15). The expression "filled with the Holy Spirit" was a dominant motif in Luke-Acts. It seems that in Luke-Acts, the Holy Spirit's role was very significant in the life, ministry, and mission of God's people. In the case of John the Baptist, he was filled with the Holy Spirit to empower him to fulfill his mission to be the forerunner of the Messiah (see Luke 3:1-22). Elizabeth was also filled with the Holy Spirit, which led her to discern the Messiah in Mary's womb prompted her to utter blessings for Mary (Luke 1:41-45). Zechariah also was filled with the Holy Spirit, and he prophesied (1:67). In Acts, the disciples in the upper room in Jerusalem, at Pentecost, were filled with the Holy Spirit, and they spoke in tongues (Acts 2:4). Peter was also filled with the Holy Spirit; consequently, he was fearless to face the Jewish rulers (Acts 4:8). Similarly, the rest of the believers were filled with the Holy Spirit and spoke the word of God boldly (Acts 4:31). Stephen was also said to be full of the Holy Spirit that prompted him to be a fearless proclaimer of the gospel (Acts 6:5,10; 7:55). Furthermore, Paul also was filled with the Holy Spirit, which made him powerful in his mission to the Gentiles (Acts 9:17; 13:9). However, it is obvious that not only the believers were filled and empowered by the Holy Spirit, but even Jesus Himself. At His baptism, like in Matthew, the Holy Spirit descended upon Jesus like a dove (3:22). Consequently, being full of the Holy Spirit, He was led by the Holy Spirit in the wilderness (4:1). He was empowered by the Holy Spirit as he returned to Galilee to begin His ministry (4:14). In Luke 4:18, the Holy Spirit of the Lord was upon Him as a token of God's anointing as a proclaimer of freedom and deliverance. Luke highlighted that the Holy Spirit was given by the Father (Luke 11:3). It means that the Holy Spirit originates from God. In all these passages, the role or work of the Holy Spirit was highlighted. It was the work of the Holy Spirit to empower the believers to fulfill the mission that God has entrusted to them. It also helped them with discernment, prophesying, and speaking in tongues. It was also associated with the Father and the Son at baptism, and rest on the Son and empowered Him. Luke also associated the Holy Spirit with baptism. Like in Matthew, the baptism in the "Holy Spirit and fire" by Jesus was also noted. Luke presents in detail the baptism of the Holy Spirit in the book of Acts. He mentioned that the believers would be baptized in the Holy Spirit (Acts 1:5; 11:16). The Holy Spirit was to empower them as they witnessed for Jesus (Acts 1:8). The baptism of the Holy Spirit was also experienced by the new believers in Christ (Acts 8:16,17; 10:44).

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<sup>43</sup> Allison also asserts that "the fact the Spirit can be the object of blasphemy clearly implies His divinity." Allison, 58.

<sup>44</sup> Keener points out that "Jewish teachers acknowledge that deliberate sin against God's law . . . such as deliberate blasphemy against God, was normally unforgivable (Jub 15:34; 1QS 7.15-17, 22-23)." Keener, s.v. Matt 12:31.

The Holy Spirit as a person seemed to be assumed in Luke-Acts. The Holy Spirit as a person, led Jesus into the wilderness (Luke 4:1). Gregg Allison asserts that when the “Spirit leads Jesus into the wilderness, it “entails a remarkable distinction between the Spirit’s own independent personality, which allows him to take the initiative and lead Jesus into the wilderness, and Jesus, whom the Spirit continually fills with his presence.”<sup>45</sup> He reveals to Simeon that he will not die until he sees the Messiah (Luke 2:26). Then the Holy Spirit moved him to go to the temple to see Jesus (Luke 2:27). He is someone who could be blasphemed (Luke 12:10). He will teach the believers what to say (Luke 12:12). He also instructs the believers (Acts 1:2). The Holy Spirit spoke prophecies in the O.T. (Acts 1:16; 4:25; 28:25). He can be lied to (Acts 5:3). He can witness something (Acts 5:32). He can be resisted (Acts 7:51). He spoke and guided the believers on who to choose to do a mission, and where to go or not to go in doing a mission, and warned them of coming dangers (Acts 8:29; 13:2,4; 16:6,7; Acts 21:11). He also encouraged the believers (Acts 9:31). He told Peter about God’s plan for the Gentiles (Acts 11:12). The Holy Spirit compelled apostle Paul on what to do (Acts 20:22). It seems that all these Holy Spirit’s actions, such as: giving discernment, wisdom, power, guidance, speaking in tongues, encouragement, courage, prophesying, speaking, teaching, and instruction, evidently show that He is a person and a divine being rather than just a mere power or energy.

Furthermore, in Luke-Acts, the divinity of the Holy Spirit was also assumed. The Holy Spirit shows the nature and characteristics of God. The activity of the Holy Spirit in Luke 1:35 shows His creative and life-giving characteristics, which was actually attributed to Yahweh in the O.T. (Isa 32:15; Exod 40:35).<sup>46</sup> He can reveal, through the prophets, events that will transpire in the future (Luke 2:26; Acts 1:16; 2:18). But, in some passages, it was God who revealed the future to the prophets (Amos 3:7; cf. Heb 1:1). Luke also uses the “fire” metaphor, like Matthew, which was used for Yahweh in the O.T. (Luke 3:16). He gives power to Jesus to perform miracles and also to the apostles and disciples (Luke 4:14; Acts 1:8). In the O.T., it was God who gave power to Moses (Exod 4:21; c.f. Deut 34:12). But then, it was also the power of the Spirit (Num 11:17,25). Power just belonged to God in the O.T. (Job 12:13). So, if the Holy Spirit also has power that only belongs to God, it implies then that the Holy Spirit is divine. The Holy Spirit seemed to be acknowledged as God by Peter in Acts 5:3,4. Although Luke was not Hebrew, he was recording the event and the words spoken by Peter, which show a Hebrew way of thinking, speaking, and writing. Here is the passage:

- v. 3 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?  
v. 4 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 just to human beings but to God.”**

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<sup>45</sup> Allison, 64.

<sup>46</sup> John Nolland, *Word Biblical Commentary*, vol. 35 A, Bruce Metzger, editor (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson, 2000), 54.

In this sentence construction, the clause, **“you have lied to the Holy Spirit”** (v. 3) is parallel to the clause, **“You have not lied just to human beings but to God.”** (v. 4). Both the first clause and the second clause have the same subject (You); both have the same verb (lied), but the verb of the second clause has a negative particle to highlight the idea that Ananias did not lie to man but to God. The direct objects of both clauses are parallel too. The direct object of the first clause is “Holy Spirit,” parallel to the direct object of the second clause, “God.” This shows that the Holy Spirit is actually God in this context.

The wider context also, as already pointed out in Luke, agrees with the divinity of the Holy Spirit. It is also supported by the wider context in Acts. For example, in Acts 28:25,26, Paul said that it was the Holy Spirit who spoke through Isaiah these words:

**“25** They disagreed among themselves and began to leave after Paul had made this final statement: “The Holy Spirit spoke the truth to your ancestors when he said through Isaiah the prophet:**26** “Go to this people and say, “You will be ever hearing but never understanding; you will be ever seeing but never perceiving.”**27** For this people’s heart has become calloused; they hardly hear with their ears, and they have closed their eyes.”

However, when we look at the literary context of this quotation in Isaiah 6:9-10, it is clear that the one who uttered these words to Isaiah was Yahweh (6:8,11). It is apparent then that the Holy Spirit was also identified as God by Paul. The Oneness and the “plurals of God” were displayed in the original context in Isaiah 6:8-10. In Isaiah 6:8, Yahweh said, “whom shall I send,” which shows that the subject “I” is singular, but the next clause “and who will go for us? Shows that “us” is plural (see also Gen 1:26-27). This may hint at the Oneness and pluralness of God, which may be the reason why the apostle Paul used the “Holy Spirit” in Acts 28:25 instead of Yahweh in the original O.T. context.

## **The Personality and Divinity of the Holy Spirit in the Gospel of John**

In the Fourth Gospel, John highlights that the pre-incarnate Jesus already existed with the Father and that He was God (John 1:1,18). It could not be denied that in John, the Godhead was not a single person. Overwhelmingly, John provided a plethora of evidence of the divinity of Jesus. Although the divinity of the Holy Spirit was not the focus of John’s gospel, John also provided some evidence on His personality and divinity.

John also records the descending of the Holy Spirit like a dove upon Jesus at His baptism. Unlike Matthew, Mark, and Luke, John stresses that the Holy Spirit remained upon Him (1:32). Like Matthew, Mark, and Luke, John also mentioned Jesus baptizing with the Holy Spirit but omitted “and fire.” But John added a dimension of the work or role of the Holy Spirit, which was not given emphasis by the Synoptic Gospels. This dimension speaks about the spiritual rebirth of anyone who believes in Jesus as the Son of God (John 3:5,16).<sup>47</sup> The expression “born of the Spirit” may present here an idea of “spiritual creation or re-creation.” In other words, the Holy Spirit was here involved in the “spiritual re-creation” of humanity, as He had been involved in the material

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<sup>47</sup> See George R. Beasley, *Word Biblical Commentary*, vol. 32, 2<sup>nd</sup> edition, Bruce Metzger, editor (Dallas, TX: Word, 1999), 48-49.

creation at the beginning (Gen 1:2).<sup>48</sup>This act of re-creating is one of the attributes of a divine being (God).<sup>49</sup>

Unlike the Synoptic Gospels, John also included in his gospel account the incident in a feast of tabernacle about the statement of Jesus concerning the Holy Spirit as a “living water” (John 7:37-39). It is interesting to note that Jesus, in His conversation with the Samaritan woman, also mentioned this “living water” of salvation (John 4:10,14). Jesus emphasized in both passages that he is the source of this “living water” (4:14; 7:38). In these passages, several insights are drawn. First, Jesus is the source of eternal life (John 11:25; 14:6). Secondly, the Holy Spirit is the agent of spiritual life (eternal life). Thirdly, the Holy Spirit proceeds from Jesus. It should be noted that in the O.T., “metaphorical water” always comes from Yahweh (see Isa 58:11; Ezek 47:1-12; Zech 14:8). Since only God is the source and giver of both physical and spiritual life (living water), it is then obvious that both Jesus and the Holy Spirit possess this attribute of God.

Jesus’ discourse in chapters 14 and 16 sheds more light on the personality and divinity of the Holy Spirit in particular. Jesus identified one of the attributes of the Holy Spirit, which is also the Father’s and Jesus’ attribute, when He identified the Holy Spirit as the “Spirit of Truth” (John 14:17; 15:26; 16:13; cf. John 3:33; 14:6; 1 John 5:20).

Interestingly, some see John 14:26 to support the personhood of the Holy Spirit. It deserves a grammatical-lexical analysis to check:

Greek:

“ὁ δὲ παράκλητος, τὸ πνεῦμα τὸ ἅγιον ὃ πέμψει ὁ πατὴρ ἐν τῷ ὀνόματί μου, ἐκεῖνος ὑμᾶς διδάξει πάντα καὶ ὑπομνήσει ὑμᾶς πάντα ἃ εἶπον ὑμῖν.

English:

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

We should take note that the noun “πνεῦμα” is nominative, neuter gender. This is exegetical nominative to the noun “παράκλητος” (Comforter, Advocate, legal assistant, counsel for defense, helper, etc.) which is also in the nominative case. But, “παράκλητος” is masculine in gender, which does not agree with “πνεῦμα.” The word “παράκλητος” always occurred in the masculine gender in the N.T. (see also John 14:16; 15:26; 16:7; 1 John 2:1). In all these occurrences, it refers to the Holy Spirit except 1 John 2:1, which refers to Christ. We may say that “παράκλητος” is naturally masculine because there is no neuter in Greek vocabulary, so also with “πνεῦμα” which is naturally neuter in Greek. In other words, we cannot use this (the gender of παράκλητος) as an argument that the Holy Spirit is a person. In the same way, the gender of the Holy Spirit cannot also be used to prove that it is not a person because it is neuter. The same is true with the personal pronoun

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<sup>48</sup> See Kseniya Borkova, “The Problem of the Place of the Person of the Holy Spirit in Orthodox Ecclesiology of the 20th Century (on the example of Eucharistic ecclesiology of Nicholas Afanasiev),” *Review of Ecumenical Studies*, Sibiu, 7 no. 2 (Aug 2015), 208.

<sup>49</sup> See also *Ibid.*, 49.

“ἐκεῖνος” (He), which is masculine whose antecedent is παράκλητος.<sup>50</sup> However, the meaning of the word “παράκλητος” may show that the Holy Spirit is a person. Beasley-Murray pointed out that “in secular Greek, it was used especially of one called to help another in court . . . Behm summarized the linguistic evidence as follows: ‘The history of the term in the whole sphere of known Greek and Hellenistic usage outside the N.T. yields a picture of a legal adviser or helper in the relevant court.’<sup>51</sup> In fact, John 16:8-11 is in the law-court context. In view of this lexical analysis, it is more plausible to believe the Holy Spirit is a person due to the meaning of the word in its context. Furthermore, the immediate context evidently shows the evidence. The work of the Holy Spirit in John 14:26, such as “to teach” and “to remind,” indicates that He is obviously a person. It is interesting to note that the Holy Spirit is sent by the Father on account of the Son. Three persons are indicated here.

Another passage that is very significant for the personality and divinity of the Holy Spirit is John 14:16. It says: “ἐγὼ ἐρωτήσω τὸν πατέρα καὶ ἄλλον παράκλητον δώσει ὑμῖν εἰς τὸν αἰῶνα ἦ,” (And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another advocate to help you and be with you forever). What is significant here is the use of “ἄλλος” (another, of the same kind) instead of “ἕτερος” (another of a different kind). In other words, the Holy Spirit is of the same kind as Jesus. Jesus was our “παράκλητος” (1 John 2:1). When He goes back to the Father, He will send the Holy Spirit like Him, as a person, and definitely, a divine being.

Another passage that needs grammatical consideration is John 16:13-14:  
Greek:

“ὅταν δὲ ἔλθῃ ἐκεῖνος, τὸ Πνεῦμα τῆς ἀληθείας, ὀδηγήσει ὑμᾶς εἰς τὴν ἀλήθειαν πᾶσαν· οὐ γὰρ λαλήσει ἄφ’ ἑαυτοῦ, ἀλλ’ ὅσα ἀκούει λαλήσει, καὶ τὰ ἐρχόμενα ἀναγγελεῖ ὑμῖν ἐκεῖνος ἐμὲ δοξάσει, ὅτι ἐκ τοῦ ἐμοῦ λήμψεται καὶ ἀναγγελεῖ ὑμῖν.”

English translation:

V. 13 “However, when He (ἐκεῖνος), the Spirit of truth, has come, He will guide you into all truth; for He will not speak on His own *authority*, but whatever He hears He will speak; and He will tell you things to come. V. 14 “He (ἐκεῖνος) will glorify Me, for He will take of Mine and will disclose it to you.”

Here, I just want to point out that the subject of the first clause in v. 13 is “ἐκεῖνος” as well as in v. 14, which is masculine. It translated as “He.” But, the apposition “τὸ Πνεῦμα” is neuter in v. 13. To be grammatically consistent, the neuter “ἐκεῖνον” (pronoun) must have been used to agree with the exegetical noun, the Holy Spirit. But the use of masculine “ἐκεῖνος” would show that the author, John, might have believed that the Holy Spirit is a person.<sup>52</sup> Contextually, in John

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<sup>50</sup> This same is true to John 15:26: Όταν ἔλθῃ ὁ παράκλητος ὃν ἐγὼ πέμψω ὑμῖν παρὰ τοῦ πατρὸς, τὸ πνεῦμα τῆς ἀληθείας ὃ παρὰ τοῦ πατρὸς ἐκπορεύεται, ἐκεῖνος μαρτυρήσει περὶ ἐμοῦ: “When the Advocate 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.”

<sup>51</sup> Beasley-Murray, 261.

<sup>52</sup> Walvoord also notes that “the Greek of the New Testament is quite explicit in confirming the personality of the Holy Spirit by use of the pronouns. As πνεῦμα is neuter, it would naturally take neuter pronouns to have grammatical

chapters 14-16, the Holy Spirit, as the “παράκλητος” is harmoniously working with the Father and the Son in the work of salvation for humanity. He is called the “Spirit of Truth” who will dwell in the believers when the Son goes back to the Father (14:16-17). He is Jesus’ representative. His indwelling with the believers is tantamount to Jesus’ indwelling in them (14:18). He will teach the believers and help them remember the teachings of Jesus (14:26). He will also testify of Jesus (15:16). He will convict the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment (16:8-9). He will guide the believers into all truth. He will not speak on His own authority, but whatever He hears, He will speak; and He will tell them things to come (16:13). The Holy Spirit will glorify Jesus and declare Him unto the believers (16:14-15). Once again, the Holy Spirit’s close fellowship with the Father and the Son and the actions and works of the Holy Spirit purport that He is a divine person because these actions and works were actually actions and works that pertain only to the actions of God, and actions of a conscious person.<sup>53</sup>

## CONCLUSION

In summary, the issue of the divinity and personality of the Holy Spirit has existed in the Christian church since the early centuries of the Christian era, even until today. This paper attempts to deal with this issue by surveying Biblical evidence, especially in the Gospels and Acts.

Matthew highlights the creative power of the Holy Spirit in the conception of Jesus, which indicates His divinity and personality. The metaphor “fire” was only used for God in the O.T., and since it was also used as a metaphor for the Holy Spirit in the N.T., this may suggest the divinity and personality of the Holy Spirit since God is personal and divine in the Scriptures.

In the baptism of Jesus, there was a very intimate relationship between the Holy Spirit and God in the expression “Spirit of God” as deep as the relationship between the Father and the Son. This might be hinting again at the divinity of the Holy Spirit since He is in a close relationship with the Father and the Son. It suggests His distinct personality since He also occurred simultaneously as a separate entity (like a dove).

In Matt 28:19, the juxtaposition of the Holy Spirit with the Father and the Son in the baptism formula and the singular “onoma” shows the distinct personality and divinity of the Holy Spirit. It also shows their Oneness. In Matt 12:31-32, the Holy Spirit was again put on equal level with Jesus in relation to forgiving or not forgiving of sins which was only the prerogative of God.

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agreement. In several instances, however, the masculine pronouns are found (John 15:26; 16:13, 14). The use of the masculine form, *εκείνος*, makes the personality of the Holy Spirit clearly the intent of the passage.” Walvoord, 169.

<sup>53</sup> Edwin Hirst also asserts that “from the New Testament statements about the Holy Spirit, whether from our Lord’s lips or those of His Apostles, we come to a threefold conclusion. First, that the Holy Spirit is God because His ministry is that of God in touch with the individual and the Church. Secondly, that He is our Lord’s “other self” by whose activity Christ dwells in the hearts of His followers. Thirdly, that within the unity of the Godhead there are three centres of Divine activity which we know as Father, Son, and Spirit. These facts are clear from one quotation selected out of many on this subject: “I will pray the Father, and He shall give you another Comforter, that He may be with you, forever, even the Spirit of truth : whom the world cannot receive ; for it beholdeth Him not, neither knoweth Him; ye know Him; for He abideth with you, and shall be in you.” Edwin Hirst, “The Person of the Holy Spirit” Churchman, 69, no. 1 (1955): 22-23.

In Luke-Acts, in many passages, the role or work of the Holy Spirit was highlighted. It was the work of the Holy Spirit to empower the believers to fulfill the mission that God has entrusted to them. It also helped them with discernment, prophesying, and speaking in tongues. It was also associated with the Father and the Son at baptism, and rest on the Son and empowered Him. In Luke-Acts, the Holy Spirit as a person was also evident. He led Jesus, and he moved Simon, He is someone who could be blasphemed (Luke 12:10). He will teach the believers what to say (Luke 12:12). He also instructs the believers (Acts 1:2). The Holy Spirit spoke prophecies in the O.T. (Acts 1:16; 4:25; 28:25). He can be lied to (Acts 5:3). He can witness something (Acts 5:32). He can be resisted (Acts 7:51). He spoke and guided the believers on who to choose to do the mission and where to go or not to go in doing the mission, and warned them of coming dangers (Acts 8:29; 13:2,4; 16:6,7; Acts 21:11). These are indications of His personality.

In Luke-Acts, the Holy Spirit was also shown as a divine being in Acts 5:3,4. Ananias lying to the Holy Spirit was tantamount to lying to God. Paul also quoted Isa 6:9-10 in Acts 28:25-26, which in its original context Isaiah was speaking about Yahweh, But Paul replaced Yahweh with the Holy Spirit. In the original context, there was also a hint of Oneness and Pluralness of God.

In John's Gospel, the Holy Spirit was an agent of spiritual re-creation attributed to God's word. He was also the "living water" or an agent of spiritual life which also belonged to God. He was also the "Paracletos" who was a distinct person from the Father and the Son, whose work purports that he is a person—He will guide, teach, rebuke, witness, etc. The lexical and grammatical analyses also show that He is a person. His closeness with the Father and the Son also shows His divinity. In view of this evidence in the Gospel and Acts, this researcher concludes without reasonable doubt that the writers of the Gospels and Acts believed that the Holy Spirit is a person and a member of the Godhead.

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