

# North Dallas Community Bible Fellowship

## Wednesday Bible Study

Fall, 2008

### Pneumatology: The Doctrine of the Holy Spirit

#### Section 1

The term *pneumatology* comes from two Greek words, namely, *pneuma* meaning “wind,” “breath,” or “spirit” (used of the Holy Spirit) and *logos* meaning “word,” “matter,” or “thing.” As it is used in Christian systematic theology, “pneumatology” refers to the study of the biblical doctrine of the Holy Spirit. Generally this includes such topics as the personality of the Spirit, the deity of the Spirit, and the work of the Spirit throughout Scripture.

*The purpose of this study is to:*

- (1) Define and clarify just who the Holy Spirit is and what it is that He does.
- (2) Understand the unique age in which we live as it relates to the Holy Spirit.
- (3) Define and clarify the terms used of the Holy Spirit such as anointing, indwelling, and filling, etc.
- (4) Demonstrate from Scripture how to be filled with the Spirit, i.e., how to walk under the control of the Holy Spirit in order to experience the character of Christ. The Lord Jesus Christ will not express Himself in the life of the believer apart from the ministry of the Spirit. If the Spirit’s ministry is not understood, then His work in reproducing Christ in us is hindered, if not completely quenched.

Before we actually begin to deal with the Spirit-filled life, what it means, and how we can experience it, there is some ground work that must be laid or we could quickly go off into error with regard to the ministries of the Spirit.

## The Holy Spirit is a Person

### The Personality of the Holy Spirit

The least understood person of the Godhead is the Holy Spirit. Yet a proper understanding of the truth of His personality is crucial to a number of other doctrines of Scripture, including the ministry of the Spirit Himself.

To deny the personality of the Spirit is to “deny His real existence, the existence of the Trinity, and the teaching of the Scriptures on the subject. Nevertheless, His personality has been denied throughout the ages, first by the Monarchians, the Arians, ... and the Socinians in the days of the reformation.” In modern days, His personality has been denied by one Pentecostal group and by the Jehovah’s Witnesses.

The name “Holy Spirit” occurs 89 times in the New Testament, and this number does not include the times He is referred to simply as “Spirit.” This, plus the fact He is promised in the Old Testament and is a special gift from God in the New Testament, should show just how important it is to understand what the Scripture teaches about the Spirit.

## **He Has the Attributes of Personality**

### **(1) Intellect.**

These verses show the Holy Spirit has a mind, that He thinks, searches, and teaches. When we combine this with the other attributes of the Spirit set forth in the Bible, we see this is not like a programmed computer with memory, or like a sign that gives direction along the road, but the Holy Spirit has a mind and does things as a person.

[1 Corinthians 2:10-13](#) God has revealed these to us by the Spirit. For the Spirit searches all things, even the deep things of God. 11 For who among men knows the things of a man except the man’s spirit within him? So too, no one knows the things of God except the Spirit of God. 12 Now we have not received the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is from God, so that we may know the things that are freely given to us by God. 13 And we speak about these things, not with words taught us by human wisdom, but with those taught by the Spirit, explaining spiritual things to spiritual people.

[Romans 8:27](#) And he who searches our hearts knows the mind of the Spirit, because the Spirit intercedes on behalf of the saints according to God’s will.

### **(2) Emotion.**

We cannot grieve or cause pain to an influence. We are only able to grieve a person who can love and feel. Because of the Spirit’s holy character—another element of personality—He is grieved by our sin. Note in particular the statement in [James 4:5](#): Or do you think the scripture means nothing when it says, “The spirit that God caused to live within us has an envious yearning?” An “influence” or an “it” does not envy or jealously guard another.

[Ephesians 4:30](#) And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, by whom you were sealed for the day of redemption.

[Hebrews 10:29](#) How much greater punishment do you think that person deserves who has contempt for the Son of God, and profanes the blood of the covenant that made him holy, and insults the Spirit of grace?

[James 4:5](#) Or do you think the scripture means nothing when it says, “The spirit that God caused to live within us has an envious yearning”?

### **(3) Will.**

Concerning the will of the Holy Spirit, Ryrie writes:

The distribution of spiritual gifts is said to be according to the will of the Spirit ([1 Cor. 12:11](#)), and He is able to direct the activities of God’s servants. This is well illustrated by the Spirit leading Paul at Mysia and Troas. He forbade Paul to preach in Asia and Bithynia, ...

We can translate, “as he decides” of [1 Corinthians 12:11](#) as “as He purposes or determines.” This could hardly be predicated of a mere *it*.

[1 Corinthians 12:11](#) It is one and the same Spirit, distributing as he decides to each person, who produces all these things.

[Acts 16:6-11](#) They went through the region of Phrygia and Galatia, having been prevented by the Holy Spirit from speaking the message in the province of Asia. 7 When they came to Mysia, they attempted to go into Bithynia, but the Spirit of Jesus did not allow them to do this, 8 so they passed through Mysia and went down to Troas. 9 A vision appeared to Paul during the night: A Macedonian man was standing there urging him, “Come over to Macedonia and help us!” 10 After Paul saw the vision, we attempted immediately to go over to Macedonia, concluding that God had called us to proclaim the good news to them. 11 We put out to sea from Troas and sailed a straight course to Samothrace, the next day to Neapolis,

## **He Performs the Actions of Personality**

### **(1) He teaches.**

[John 14:26](#) But the Advocate, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you everything, and will cause you to remember everything I said to you.

[John 16:13-15](#) But when he, the Spirit of truth, comes, he will guide you into all truth. For he will not speak on his own authority, but will speak whatever he hears, and will tell you what is to come. 14 He will glorify me, because he will receive from me what is mine and will tell it to you. 15 Everything that the Father has is mine; that is why I said the Spirit will receive from me what is mine and will tell it to you.

### **(2) He testifies or bears witness.**

[John 15:26](#) When the Advocate comes, whom I will send you from the Father—the Spirit of truth who goes out from the Father—he will testify about me,

**(3) He guides or leads.**

[Romans 8:14](#) For all who are led by the Spirit of God are the sons of God.

**(4) He performs miracles.**

[Acts 8:39](#) Now when they came up out of the water, the Spirit of the Lord snatched Philip away, and the eunuch did not see him any more, but went on his way rejoicing.

**(5) He convinces.**

[John 16:7-8](#) But I tell you the truth, it is to your advantage that I am going away. For if I do not go away, the Advocate will not come to you, but if I go, I will send him to you. 8 And when he comes, he will prove the world wrong concerning sin and righteousness and judgment—

**(6) He restrains.**

[Genesis 6:3](#) So the Lord said, “My spirit will not remain in mankind indefinitely since they are mortal. They will remain for one hundred and twenty more years.”

[2 Thessalonians 2:6-7](#) And so you know what holds him back, so that he will be revealed in his own time. 7 For the hidden power of lawlessness is already at work. However, the one who holds him back will do so until he is taken out of the way,

**(7) He commands and directs people.**

[Acts 8:29](#) Then the Spirit said to Philip, “Go over and join this chariot.”

**(8) He intercedes in prayer.**

[Romans 8:26](#) In the same way, the Spirit helps us in our weakness, for we do not know how we should pray, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us with inexpressible groanings.

We can learn from books or from our experiences, but they do not really function as teachers who possess will and purpose. Handcuffs can restrain, but in [2 Thessalonians 2:6-7](#) (if this refers to the Spirit through His role in the church, and many believe it does) the restrainer is spoken of as “he”—a person. (See below on the concept of accidence.)

[2 Thessalonians 2:6-7](#) And so you know what holds him back, so that he will be revealed in his own time. 7 For the hidden power of lawlessness is already at work. However, the one who holds him back will do so until he is taken out of the way,

The aspect of bearing witness is presented as the work of one who is a person. All of these actions of the Spirit are presented in Scripture, especially when taken as a whole, as the work of a person who is vitally involved with us as people in a relationship. For

instance, the Holy Spirit intercedes for us and performs miracles—things which only a person can do.

### **He Receives Ascriptions of Personality**

Ryrie writes: “Certain acts are performed toward the Holy Spirit which would be incongruous if He did not possess true personality.”

#### **(1) He can be obeyed.**

[Acts 16:6-7](#) They went through the region of Phrygia and Galatia, having been prevented by the Holy Spirit from speaking the message in the province of Asia. 7 When they came to Mysia, they attempted to go into Bithynia, but the Spirit of Jesus did not allow them to do this,

#### **(2) He can be lied to.**

[Acts 5:3](#) But Peter said, “Ananias, why has Satan filled your heart to lie to the Holy Spirit and keep back for yourself part of the proceeds from the sale of the land?”

#### **(3) He can be resisted.**

[Acts 7:51](#) You stubborn people, with uncircumcised hearts and ears! You are always resisting the Holy Spirit, like your ancestors did!

#### **(4) He can be blasphemed.**

[Matthew 12:31](#) For this reason I tell you, people will be forgiven for every sin and blasphemy, but the blasphemy against the Spirit will not be forgiven.

#### **(5) He can be grieved.**

[Ephesians 4:30](#) And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, by whom you were sealed for the day of redemption.

#### **(6) He can be insulted.**

[Hebrews 10:29](#) How much greater punishment do you think that person deserves who has contempt for the Son of God, and profanes the blood of the covenant that made him holy, and insults the Spirit of grace?

### **He is a distinct and separate personality**

The Greek word for Spirit is *pneuma* which fundamentally means “breath, wind.” “Wind” in [John 3:8](#) is *pneuma*. From this word, we derive English words like “pneumonia” or “pneumatic.” *Pneuma* is a neuter gender word and would normally

require a neuter gender pronoun according to a rule of Greek grammar called concord. However, because the Holy Spirit is a person, the New Testament writers sometimes used a masculine pronoun in place of a neuter pronoun for the neuter noun *pneuma*. Masculine pronouns are used of the Spirit in [John 15:26](#); 16:7, 8, 13, and 14.

### **Ramifications of the Personality of the Spirit**

The Holy Spirit is related to people as a distinct person rather than simply an influence. The following are some illustrations:

**(1) He is related to the apostles as a distinct and separate person who thought about what was best and related that to the apostles who were in accord with the Spirit.**

[Acts 15:28](#) For it seemed best to the Holy Spirit and to us not to place any greater burden on you than these necessary rules:

**(2) He is related to the Lord Jesus as a distinct and separate person.**

[John 16:14](#) He will glorify me, because he will receive from me what is mine and will tell it to you.

**(3) He is related to the other persons of the Godhead so as to indicate personality.**

Concerning this, Ryrie writes:

In the passages where this occurs it would be completely unnatural to regard the Spirit as a thing while understanding the Father and the Son as persons. The baptismal formula is in the “name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost” ([Matt. 28:19](#)). Not only does the association of the Spirit with the Father and the Son argue for the Spirit’s personality, but the use of the word “name” in the singular also indicates that He is a person just as the others are. The apostolic benediction leads to the same conclusion: “The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Ghost, be with you all. Amen” ([2 Cor. 13:14](#)).

**(4) He is distinguished from His own power as a person.** Ryrie writes:

Further, the Holy Spirit is related to His own power and yet distinguished from it, so that one may not conclude that the Spirit is only power. “And Jesus returned in the power of the Spirit into Galilee” ([Luke 4:14](#)). A verse like this leads one to understand that the Spirit is a person who has power, and not that the Spirit is simply a powerful force or thing. Other examples of this distinction between the Spirit as a person and that person’s power are found in [Luke 1:35](#); [Acts 10:38](#); [Romans 15: 13](#); [I Corinthians 2:4](#). The phraseology of these verses would be useless and inexplicable repetition if the Holy Spirit were conceived as merely a power or influence and not a distinct personality with power of His own.