

What is the Holy Spirit?

1. Is the Holy Spirit like the spirit of a human being or like a spirit like an angel? Consult John 14:16 and provide supporting evidence for your answer.

The Bible indicated that man was formed materially from dust and created with a spirit when God breathed into his nostrils (Gen 2:7). Man is described as being comprised as two parts: a body and a soul / spirit (Matt 10:28; 1 Cor 2:11; 1 Cor 5:3-5).

Angels were created as spirit beings on the first day of Creation (Ex 20:11; Job 38:4-7; Gen 1:1-5).

In contrast to the spirit of human beings and angels, John 14:16 clearly indicates that the Holy Spirit is distinguishable from God and Jesus, referred to with a personal pronoun and is a distinct personality with supernatural power.

2. Does the Holy Spirit have any physical attributes? Is It a person, a thing or power of God? What biblical evidence supports your observation?

In light of biblical verses such as John 4:23-34 and 1 Timothy 1:17, the Holy Spirit does not have a physical shape or form.

In several instances, the Holy Spirit is given the same status as God and Jesus and treated as a personal being (Matt 28:19; 1 Cor 12:4-6; 2 Cor 13:14; Eph 4:4-6; 1 Pet 1:2).

According to the rules of grammar, the gender of the pronoun should match the gender of the noun. However Jesus uses both masculine and neuter pronouns when referencing the gender neutral noun "Holy Spirit" (*to pneuma*).

But the Helper (**paraklētōs**, masculine), the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My name, He (**ekeinos**, masculine) will teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all that I said to you. (John 14:26)

When the Helper (**paraklētōs**, masculine) comes, whom I will send to you from the Father, that is the Spirit of truth who proceeds from the Father, He (**ekeinos**, masculine) will testify about Me, (John 15:26)

But I tell you the truth, it is to your advantage that I go away; for if I do not go away, the Helper (**paraklētōs**, masculine) will not come to you; but if I go, I will send Him (**auton**, masculine) to you. And He (**ekeinos**, masculine), when He comes, will convict the world concerning sin and righteousness and judgment; concerning sin, because they do not believe in Me; and concerning righteousness, because I go to the Father and you no longer see Me; and concerning judgment, because the ruler of this world has been judged. I have many more things to say to you, but you cannot bear them now. But when He (**ekeinos**, masculine), the Spirit (**to pneuma**, neuter) of truth, comes, He will guide you into all the truth; for He will not speak on His own initiative, but whatever He hears, He will speak; and He will disclose to you what is to come. He (**ekeinos**, masculine) will glorify Me, for He will take of Mine and will disclose it to you. (John 16:7-14)

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3. Why is the Holy Spirit considered a person? What biblical evidence can you provide?

The Holy Spirit is called a "Helper," "Counselor" or "Comforter" which are terms that describe a person who helps and comforts another (John 14:16, 26; 15:26; 16:7).

The Holy Spirit has an essential quality of a person; He has a mind and intelligence:

He can teach (John 14:26).

He can bear witness (John 15:26; Rom 8:16).

He can search the depths of God and know God's thoughts (1 Cor 2:10-11).

He approves of some activities (Acts 15:28) and forbids or disallows others (Acts 16:6-7).

The Holy Spirit acts as a person:

He can intercede and pray for human beings (Rom 8:26-27).

He distributes gifts (1 Cor 12:11).

He feels and has emotion (Eph 4:30).

He convicts (John 16:8).

He speaks (Acts 8:29; 10:19-20; 13:2).

The Holy Spirit can be mistreated as a person:

He can be blasphemed (Matt 12:31).

He can be lied to (Acts 5:3).

He can be resisted (Acts 7:51).

References:

1. Swindoll CR, Zuck RB eds., *Understanding Christian Theology*, Nashville: Thomas Nelson Publishers, (2003).
2. Grudem W, *Systematic Theology*, Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, (2000).

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