



Provided by the Church of the Lutheran Confession - Board of Missions

A Systematic Study of Bible Teachings (Dogmatics) Lesson 2.7.4 – The Doctrine of God

The Holy Spirit Is Also God – His Names, Attributes, and Works

There are many who believe and teach that the Holy Spirit is a force and not a person. But the Bible clearly teaches that the Spirit is a Person who is God, just as the Father and the Son are persons who are God. For example, before His death, Jesus told his disciples that the Father would send them another Comforter or Counselor: **“I will pray the Father, and He will give you another Helper, that He may abide with you forever – the Spirit of truth...The Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My name, He will teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all things that I said to you”** (John 14:16, 26). Jesus clearly speaks of the Holy Spirit as a Person, not as an impersonal force.

In the early church at Jerusalem, the apostle Peter exposed Ananias and his wife Sapphira, as hypocrites. In his rebuke, Peter declared that the Holy Spirit is God: **“Ananias, why has Satan filled your heart to lie to the Holy Spirit...You have not lied to men, but to God”** (Acts 5:3-4).

The apostle Paul likewise understood the Holy Spirit to be God, for he wrote to the Christians in Corinth: **“The Spirit searches all things, yes, the deep things of God. For what man knows the things of a man except the spirit of the man which is in him? Even so no one knows the things of God except the Spirit of God”** (1 Corinthians 2:10-11). No one knows the deep things of God except God Himself. Later in this same letter, Paul talks about the spiritual gifts of God and says that they are gifts from all three Persons of the Trinity: The Lord (Jesus), God (the Father), and the Spirit: **“There are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit. There are differences of ministries, but the same Lord. And there are diversities of activities, but it is the same God who works all in all”** (1 Corinthians 12:4-6). Paul proclaims the same three Persons of God in apostolic blessing: **“The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all”** (2 Corinthians 13:14).

The Holy Spirit has divine attributes. In the Old Testament, King David spoke of the omnipresence of the Holy Spirit: **“Where can I go from Your Spirit? Or where can I flee from Your presence?”** (Psalm 139:7). The letter to the Hebrews declares the Spirit to be **“eternal”** (Hebrews 9:14).

The Holy Spirit does divine works. The Bible makes it clear that the Holy Spirit was involved in such divine works as creation, redemption, the calling of pastors, and guiding the Church.

At creation, **“the spirit of God was hovering over the face of the waters”** (Genesis 1:2). Elihu, Job’s young friend, correctly said: **“The Spirit of God has made me”** (Job 33:4).

The Holy Spirit also was involved in the work of redemption. The angel Gabriel told the virgin Mary: **“The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Highest will overshadow you; therefore, also, that Holy One who is to be born will be called the Son of God”** (Luke 1:35). In His ministry, Jesus was **“filled with the Holy Spirit”** and was **“led by the Spirit”** (Luke 4:1).

Finally, Jesus commanded His disciples to baptize all nations **“in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit”** (Matthew 28:19). It is clear that Jesus considered the Holy Spirit to be a being on the same level as the Father and the Son. Therefore, if the Father is God and the Son is God, it is clear that the Holy Spirit also is God and He does the works of God.

Questions

1. Why can we be sure that the Holy Spirit is a person, not a force?
2. How does the Biblical account of Ananias and Sapphira show that the Holy Spirit is God?
3. In what way is the Trinity depicted in 2 Corinthians 13:14?
4. What the divine attributes are attributed to the Holy Spirit?
5. How was the Holy Spirit active in the works of creation and redemption?
6. Why is the Holy Spirit called the Third Person of the Triune God?