

THE HOLY TRINITY IN US

Amidst the profusion and complexity of the hypotheses concerning the position of the Holy Spirit in the Trinity, there is usually common ground on two areas.

1. The Holy Spirit is an individual personality in the Godhead, having as much claim to deity as God the Father and Jesus Christ the Lord. However, there are some distinctions worth noting:

- (a) The Holy Spirit hasn't an individual name as has the other members of the Godhead. His various names are associated with His work, or His relationship to the Father or Son. E.g. in His association with the Father, He is called "**the Spirit of God.**" "**For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, these are sons of God.**" Rom 8:14.

In His association with Jesus, He is called "**the Spirit of Christ.**" "**For I know that this will turn out for my deliverance through your prayer and the supply of the Spirit of Jesus Christ...**" Phil 1:19.

Associated with His work, He is called "**the Spirit of grace,**" "**the Spirit of truth,**" and so on.

In general, references to the Holy Spirit are qualified by association with the functions of the Father and Son, and what we know about Him is derived from His relationship with the Father and the Son.

- (b) In the Scriptures, He is never individually addressed, prayed to, or worshipped.

2. The Holy Spirit is the particular person through which the whole Godhead operates. The thought of the world is that power begets authority. But in the case of the Godhead, the opposite is the case. The Holy Spirit, who executes the power of the Godhead, submits to the authority of the Father and the Son.

'Holy' Spirit indicates His total consecration to the purposes of the Godhead.

VIEWING POINT of SUBSTANCE *rather than* PURPOSE

The Substance of the Godhead

The accent on the power of the Holy Spirit, and Him being the vehicle through which God and Jesus work in the church, has caused us to view His position in us as largely independent from the Father and Son. We tend to see God and Jesus enthroned in heaven, and the Holy Spirit as their representative on earth, carrying out their orders.

To gain the right perspective, it is necessary to change our viewing point from one of individuality and works, to one of the substance and unity of the Godhead.

The obvious starting point is that each member of the Godhead is SPIRIT. They are one substance—one SPIRIT. The question that follows is, do they remain separated, or do they co-inhabit each other, whilst retaining their individuality?

In looking at the possibility of the second alternative, we will first look at our own regeneration, in which our spirit was inhabited by the Holy Spirit. Jesus promised His disciples, **"the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees Him nor knows Him; but you know Him, for He (now) dwells with you and will be in you"** John 14:17.

The Holy Spirit is now in us, inhabiting our spirit. We acknowledge His existence in us, and yet we don't feel that the individuality of our spirit has been compromised. The Holy Spirit and our spirit are one substance, interacting with one another, each involved in its own individual purposes.

Furthermore, if we have been baptised in the Spirit, we have been filled and immersed in the Spirit. In this case the Spirit is in us, and we in the Spirit—that is, in the immediate sphere of His working.

Jesus was Filled with the Holy Spirit

Luke records that **"Jesus, being filled with the Holy Spirit, returned from the Jordan and was led by the Spirit into the wilderness."** Luke 4:1.

Jesus the man, was as we are—a tripartite being, having body, soul, and His own Spirit. The difference was that his Spirit was not subject to the Fall and was therefore undefiled.

If, as the Scriptures say, Jesus was filled with the Spirit, the Holy Spirit indwelt and interacted with Jesus' Spirit without compromising His individuality.

The Scriptures also disclose that in His ministry, the Holy Spirit was upon Him, empowering and directing His ministry.

"The Spirit of the LORD shall rest upon Him, the Spirit of wisdom and understanding, the Spirit of counsel and might, the Spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the LORD." Isa 11:2.

"The Spirit of the Lord GOD is upon Me, because the LORD has anointed Me to preach good tidings to the poor; he has sent Me to heal the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to those who are bound." Isa 61:1.

Being **"in the Spirit"** is not a constant state, but according to God's sovereign will. We read that on one occasion that **"as he was teaching...the power of the Lord (the Holy Spirit) was present to heal them."** Luke 5:17. This statement implies that the power or presence of the Holy Spirit to heal was not always present.

God as a Spirit Being was in Jesus Christ

When we talk about the Spirit of God, we are usually referring to the Holy Spirit in His association with God. However when we talk about God being in Christ, we are referring to His omnipresent Spirit Being abiding in Christ. E.g.

"Now all things are of God, who has reconciled us to Himself through Jesus Christ, and has given us the ministry of reconciliation, that is, that God (the Father) was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself..." 2 Cor 5:18-19.

"Do you not believe that I am in the Father, and the Father in Me? The words that I speak to you I do not speak on My own authority; but the Father who dwells in Me does the works." John 14:10.

The FATHER and SON in THE HOLY SPIRIT are in US

The apostle John said that we can be assured that we have the presence of God (and Jesus Christ) in us because we have been given the Holy Spirit. **"By this we know that we abide in Him, and He in us, because He has given us of His Spirit."** I Jn 4:13.

From this we deduce that the omnipresent Father is in the Holy Spirit, and consequently in us. Moreover, Jesus made it clear that both He and the Father would dwell in us.

He said, **"If anyone loves Me, he will keep My word; and My Father will love him, and We will come to him and make Our home with him."** John 14:23.

"At that day you will know that I am in My Father, and you in Me, and I in you." John 14:20.

He prayed to the Father that we **"...all may be one, as You, Father, are in Me, and I in You; that they also may be one in Us, that the world may believe that You sent Me."** John 17:21.

Not the Representative—the Actual Presence

The apostle Paul writes, **"But you are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if indeed the Spirit of God dwells in you. Now if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he is not His. And if Christ is in you, the body is dead because of sin, but the Spirit is life because of righteousness."** Rom 8:9-10.

In this reading, the Spirit of Christ relates to the presence of Christ Himself. Paul indicates that if we have the Spirit of Christ, **then Christ Himself is dwelling in us.** This indicates that the actual presence of Christ, as an omnipresent Spirit Being, is in the Holy Spirit, (or Spirit of Christ), in us.

Paul called the presence of Christ in us a mystery. **"...this mystery...which is Christ in you, the hope of glory."** Col 1:27. He also prayed to the Father, asking Him to strengthen us in our spirits so that we would understand the mystery, **"...that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith..."** Eph 3:16-17.

It is important that we open our hearts to accept the knowledge of the actual presence of the Father and Son in us, because it paves the way for entering into a personal relationship with them. It is the basis for our abiding in Christ, and He in us—according to His instruction: **"Abide in Me, and I in you."** John 15:4-5.

Our worship is directed to the universal Godhead in heaven, but our individual fellowship is with the Godhead within us.

UNITY in OPERATION of the GODHEAD in US

Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews, questioned Jesus about the spiritual nature and power of His ministry. He **"said to Him, "Rabbi, we know that You are a teacher come from God; for no one can do these signs that You do unless God is with him."** John 3:2.

In replying, Jesus explained the difference between His ministry to that of worldly teachers. **"Most assuredly, I say to you, We (the Trinity) speak what We know and testify what We have seen, and you do not receive Our witness. If I have told you earthly things and you do not believe, how will you believe if I tell you heavenly things? No one has**

ascended to heaven but He who came down from heaven, that is, the Son of Man who is in heaven." John 3:11-13.

Jesus could say that He was in heaven because He was one Spirit with the Godhead, who was simultaneously in heaven and yet in Him.

Even before appearing on earth, Isaiah prophesied that Jesus would be sent forth by the other members of the Godhead. "I, (God the Father) **even I, have spoken; yes, I have called him, I have brought him, and his way will prosper. Come near to Me, hear this: I have not spoken in secret from the beginning; from the time that it was, I was there.**" (Now the Messiah speaks) "**And now the Lord GOD and His Spirit have sent Me.**" Isa 48:15-16.

Whilst historically this prophecy refers to Cyrus, he, as a figure of restoration, is a type of Messiah. Its perfect application and fulfilment is in Jesus Christ the Messiah, who personally directs the last part of the prophecy. It is another example of God and the Spirit working together in Christ's ministry—in this case sending Him forth.

Summing up so far

- The Holy Spirit indwells and interacts with our spirits.
- In being baptised in the Spirit, we are filled with the Spirit. This extends beyond our spirits to our souls, and even our bodies. (e.g. renewing our minds, or giving strength to our bodies).
- We are immersed in the Spirit, or in the sphere of His activity involving us.
- On earth, Jesus was filled with the Spirit and immersed in the Spirit.
- The Father and Son, as Spirit Beings, are in the Holy Spirit.
- Because the Holy Spirit is in us, the Father and Son are in us.
- When we are immersed in the Spirit, we may know the presence of the Father or Son or whole Godhead in our circumstances.
- Receiving by faith the presence of the Father and Son in us, as distinct from their position on the throne in heaven, opens the way for us to have a personal relationship with them.
- Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are One, having the same spiritual substance, one in essence, and yet are different personalities.

Because of the inadequacy of our carnal minds, we tend to separate the members of the Godhead to the degree that we worship three disunited Gods. The mystery of the Godhead is that there is one God, of one spiritual substance, manifested in three personalities, who are separate yet ONE.

If we view the inter-relationships of the personages in the Godhead from the point of view of their one substance—as omnipresent Spirit Beings inhabiting each other, always one in purpose, we may now accept that we have the presence of the Trinity in us—not just the Holy Spirit, and Him manifesting the presence of the Father and Son.

We have the Holy Trinity in us—Father, Son, and Spirit. As Spirit Beings, they have the one substance, with the same essence, yet are individual in person.

The Holy Spirit is the working aspect of Trinity in us.

The Father and Son are the authorities or directors of the Spirit.

God the Father is head of all authority over the world and its destiny, and times and final judgment.

The glorified Jesus, as "**head of all things to the Church,**" is the director of the Holy Spirit in all things associated with the Church. He baptises us in the Spirit, and empowers and directs our ministries. Through the Spirit He shows us the reality of the Trinity in us. By the Spirit

He prepares the ground, imparts the truth, and gives us the faith to receive His presence in our hearts. It is He who establishes His kingdom in us. And it is He who leads us through the veil of His sacrificial flesh and shed blood to the abiding presence of God as Father.

WHY DID JESUS HAVE TO BE GLORIFIED BEFORE HE COULD SEND FORTH THE HOLY SPIRIT?

“But this He spoke concerning the Spirit, whom those believing in Him would receive; for the Holy Spirit was not yet given, because Jesus was not yet glorified (rendered glorious by the Father after His resurrection and ascension).” John 7:39.

In his gospel, John plainly stated that the coming of the Holy Spirit depended on

- Jesus being crucified for the sake of mankind,
- being resurrected and going to the Father,
- and being glorified by the Father.

Before coming to earth, Jesus was **“in the form of God...”** and **“equal with God.”** (Phil 2:6). In order to do the will of the Father in reconciling the world back to Himself, He emptied Himself of his divinity and fullness of His Spirit, making Himself totally dependent on the other members of the Godhead. He **“made Himself of no reputation, taking the form of a bondservant, and coming in the likeness of men. And being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself and became obedient to the point of death, even the death of the cross.”** Phil 2:5-8.

God’s response to Christ’s **“obedien(ce) to the point of death,”** in delivering mankind from sin, is shown in the following part of the reading.

“Therefore God also has highly exalted Him and given Him the name which is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of those in heaven, and of those on earth, and of those under the earth, and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.” Phil 2:9-11.

This reading shows the first part of Christ’s glorification. All authority was subjected to Him, in heaven, on earth, and those in Satan’s domain. He was made head of the church. **“And He God) put all things under His (Christ’s) feet, and gave Him to be head over all things to the church, which is His body, the fullness of Him who fills all in all.”** Eph 1:22-23.

The second part of His glorification relates to the restoration of His divinity and the glory He had shared with the Father. It was to this end He prayed before His departure from earth, **“And now, O Father, glorify Me together with Yourself, with the glory which I had with You before the world was.”** John 17:5.

This prayer originated from the Father’s heart, **“for it pleased the Father that in Him should all fullness dwell.”** Col 1:19. “All fullness” relates specifically to the Godhead. **“For in Him dwells all the fullness of the Godhead bodily; and you are complete in Him, who is the head of all principality and power.”** Col 2:9-10.

Now, all the fullness of the Father and the Spirit indwell the glorified Lord Jesus Christ, who is now proclaimed, **“the head of all principality and power.”** This was God’s indication to

the world that He who they had crucified was His **“Beloved in whom (His) soul is well pleased,”** (Matt 12:18), and that it was through the smiting of the rock, **“and that Rock was Christ,”** (1 Cor 10:4), that the waters of the Spirit now gush out.

THE AGE OF THE RISEN AND GLORIFIED LORD

There is a common misconception that the church age is the age of the Spirit. It has resulted in an unwarranted worshipping of the Spirit, and an idolatrous longing for tokens of the Spirit’s power.

We should never lose sight of the fact that it was God’s good pleasure to glorify Jesus, so that He might have the pre-eminence. **“And He is the head of the body, the church, who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, that in all things He may have the pre-eminence. For it pleased the Father that in Him all the fullness should dwell.”** Col 1:18-19.

As **“Head of all things to the church,”** it is Jesus who oversees all things and directs all things, the Holy Spirit being His instrument. **“And they went out and preached everywhere, the Lord working with them and confirming the word through the accompanying signs.”** Mark 16:20.

It is Jesus who pours out the Spirit on the church. **“Therefore being exalted to the right hand of God, and having received from the Father the promise of the Holy Spirit, He poured out this which you now see and hear.”** Acts 2:33.

It is Jesus who baptises us in the Spirit, and continually refills us—empowering every ministry. It is Jesus who establishes His kingdom in us, and who leads us to know the abiding presence of God. It is He who instructs the Spirit, who does not **“speak on His own authority, but whatever He hears (from Jesus) He will speak.”** John 16:13.

It is He who will fill all things with His fullness—the **“fullness of the Godhead bodily.”**

The GLORIFIED LORD will FILL ALL with HIS FULLNESS

It is now the glorified Lord Jesus Christ who fills us individually, and as the church, with His fullness—that is the **“fullness of the Godhead bodily”**

“He who descended is also the One who ascended far above all the heavens, that He might fill all things.” Eph 4:10.

The Holy Spirit responds to our testimonies to what Jesus procured for us by His sacrificial death on the cross. But we should never pray to the Holy Spirit to manifest His power to us without reference to Jesus Christ.