

Belgic Confession 11 – Who is the Holy Spirit and what does he do?

Brothers and Sisters in Jesus Christ: There is much confusion in Christian circles today about who the Holy Spirit is and what he does. Some, like Jehovah's Witnesses, think of the Holy Spirit as **a strong force from God**. Others, like some Charismatics, treat the Holy Spirit as **the most important person of the Trinity**. And there are others who think the Holy Spirit's main work is to **enable people to speak in a language that no one understands**. So today let's open up God's Word and let it speak clearly about **who the Spirit is and what he does**.

Our headings are:

The Nature of the Holy Spirit

The Work of the Holy Spirit

Our goals are: That you **properly understand the nature and work of Holy Spirit**, that you **worship him for who he is and what he has done for you**, and that you **ask him to continue to work in you and in those to whom you take the Gospel**.

We believe and confess also that the **Holy Spirit from eternity proceeds from the Father and the Son**; and therefore **neither is made, created, nor begotten**, but only proceeds from both; who in order is the **third person of the Holy Trinity**; of one and the **same essence, majesty, and glory** with the Father and the Son; and therefore is the true and eternal God, as the Holy Scriptures teach us.

The Nature of the Holy Spirit

1. The Holy Spirit is called "God"; Peter said so.

In the account of Ananias and Sapphira, he interchanges the words "Holy Spirit" with "God" while referring to the same person. Acts 5:3-4...Peter said, "Ananias, why has Satan filled your heart to lie to the Holy Spirit and keep back part of the price of the land for yourself? "While it remained, was it not your own? And after it was sold, was it not in your own control? Why have you conceived this thing in your heart? You have not lied to men but to God."

Paul does this too. He makes it clear that the Holy Spirit is God, living in your temple...your body.

1Corinthians 3:16 - Do you not know **that you are the temple of God** and that **the Spirit of God dwells in you?**

Isaiah does this too. To fight against the Holy Spirit was to fight against God. So this is not just a NT doctrine.

Isaiah 63:10 But they rebelled and **grieved His Holy Spirit**; So He turned Himself against them as an enemy, **And He fought against them.**

You have God in you!

2. The Holy Spirit was sent from the Father and the Son, showing their unity.

John 15:26 - "But when the Helper comes, whom I shall send to you from the Father, the Spirit of truth who **proceeds from the Father**, He will testify of Me.

Galatians 4:6 - And because you are sons, **God has sent forth the Spirit of His Son** into your hearts, crying out, "**Abba, Father!**"

It was only after the Holy Spirit came on Christ that he properly began his earthly ministry. Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are intertwined. One is never seen as greater than the other.

3. The Holy Spirit has Divine Attributes属性.

a. For example, the Psalmist David points out the Holy Spirit is omnipresent.

Psalm 139:7-10 - **Where can I go from Your Spirit? Or where can I flee from Your presence?** If I ascend into heaven, You are there; If I make my bed in hell, behold, You are there. If I take the wings of the morning, And dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea, Even there Your hand shall lead me...

Since only God is omnipresent无所不在, you can conclude that the Holy Spirit is God.

Do you see the wonderful implication of this? You are never alone.

b. Further, the Holy Spirit is perfect...

John 16:13 ...when He, the Spirit of truth, has come, He will guide you into all truth;

4. The Holy Spirit is rightly honored by man.

Jesus himself puts honor on the Holy Spirit when he commanded every baptism to be done in the Holy Spirit's name. **No one was ever baptized into a man's name** – always in God's name. Baptism shows unity with God!

Matthew 28:19 "Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son **and of the Holy Spirit**,

Many erroneously believe that since Christians, Jews, and Muslims are monotheists一神论, that we all worship the same God.

This is a lie. Don't ever concede承认 that. God exists in 3 persons. For the Jews and Muslims' good, don't make them think you are worshipping the same God as they. For God's honor don't make them think that.

The Work of the Holy Spirit

1. The Holy Spirit is Creator.

Genesis 1:1-2 In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. The earth was without form, and void; and darkness was on the face of the deep. **And the Spirit of God was hovering运行 over the face of the waters.**

How does this verse teach about the work of the Holy Spirit? These words were not written to teach you where God's Spirit was there (that would be useless information), but rather, these words were intended to teach you that **the Holy Spirit was active in creation.** Consider the Psalmist description of the creative work of the Holy Spirit.

Psalm 33:6 - **By the word of the LORD the heavens were made,** And all the host of them by the **breath of His mouth.**

When the Scriptures say that God made the earth by "the breath" of his mouth, the phrase is best translated "by his Spirit." "Breath" or "wind" is the same word for "Spirit." Job directly described the Holy Spirit as his Creator.

Job 33:4 **The Spirit of God has made me,** And the breath of the Almighty gives me life.

2. The Holy Spirit is sustainer维持者 of the earth and everything in it.

Consider a verse from Psalm 104 (though you must read the whole Psalm for the context).

Psalm 104:30 **You send forth Your Spirit, they are created;** And **You renew the face of the earth.**

The Holy Spirit is involved in the work of re-creation再创造, causing plants to bud each year, grow, and produce food.

The Holy Spirit did divine work in the desert as Israel traveled from Egypt to Canaan.

Psalm 95:9 When your **fathers tested Me; They tried Me,** though they saw My work.

When you read that you probably thought: "I don't see proof that that was referring to the Holy Spirit's work. But tie that verse with Hebrews 3:7-9, to see that that was a reference to Psalm 95.

Hebrews 3:7-9 - Therefore, as the Holy Spirit says: "Today, if you will hear His voice, Do not harden your hearts as in the rebellion, In the day of trial in the wilderness, **Where your fathers tested Me, tried Me,** And saw My works forty years.

3. The Holy Spirit saves men from their sins.

Only God can save man as man is unable to save himself. So this is further proof of the Deity of the Holy Spirit by his work.

John 3:5-8- Jesus answered, "Most assuredly, I say to you, **unless one is born of water and the Spirit,** he cannot enter the kingdom of God神的国. "That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. "Do not marvel that I said to you, 'You must be born again.' "The wind blows where it wishes, and you hear the sound of it, but cannot tell where it comes from and where it goes. **So is everyone who is born of the Spirit.**"

Romans 8:9 - ... Now if anyone does not have **the Spirit of Christ,** he is not His.

Without the Holy Spirit you would remain dead in your sins, for only the Holy Spirit regenerates重生 you and creates faith in your heart. Without the Holy Spirit there would be no salvation, not faith, no church, no Christianity. (Packer) The Holy Spirit is inextricably linked to salvation that comes from Jesus.

The Holy Spirit guides men into total truth完整的真理 ...because he is perfect. No man in the world's history has been able to truthfully say that of himself. But Jesus confidently asserted this of his Holy Spirit.

4. The Holy Spirit sanctifies men – separate and seals them – and sustains them spiritually.

How? The Bible teaches that the Holy Spirit produces fruit in the heart of the Christian to enrich him.

Galatians 5:22-23 **But the fruit of the Spirit is love,** joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control. Against such there is no law.

This good fruit separates men from adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lewdness淫乱, idolatry, sorcery, hatred, outbursts of wrath, selfish ambitions, heresies, envy, murders, and drunkenness

Ephesians 1:13b-14 - in whom also, having believed, you were sealed with the Holy Spirit

of promise, who is the guarantee of our inheritance until the redemption...

Notice how silly those who advocate the main work of the Holy Spirit is the make you speak a gobbledy-gook language - gibberish. How does that sanctify? How does that equip? When people spoke in tongues it was a different language to help with the quick spread of the Gospel.

5. To put it simply, men are blessed through the Holy Spirit.

2 Corinthians 13:14 The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the **communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all.** Amen.

No blessing is ever done in the authority 权柄 of any man, but in God alone. But there is much more. The Holy Spirit gives man what he needs for the right occasions. For example, He gave men special abilities to speak in different languages when they needed a miracle. He gave men courage to face prisons, kings, and lions. He put words Christians' mouths, words that ministered comfort to those distressed.

6. The Holy Spirit restricts sin.

He gives common grace 普遍恩典 even to those who are not believers and in so doing restricts their evil. This common grace does not lead man to salvation, as Arminians argue, but this common grace helps to maintain a degree of peace. Man, left to himself, would show total depravity.

Genesis 6:3 And the LORD said, "**My Spirit shall not strive with man forever**, for he is indeed flesh; yet his days shall be one hundred and twenty years."

Genesis 20:6 And God said to him in a dream, "Yes, I know that you did this in the **integrity of your heart. For I also withheld you from sinning against Me;** therefore I did not let you touch her.

Job 1:12 And the LORD said to Satan, "Behold, **all that he has is in your power; only do not lay a hand on his person.**" So Satan went out from the presence of the LORD.

What richness! How deep and wonderful are his works! How childish when people focus on the Holy Spirit as one who makes them speak in a language that is not a language at all!

7. Therefore, do not stop the Holy Spirit from doing his work of speaking or saving.

Remember 1Thessalonians 5:19-20 – Do not quench the Spirit. 20 Do not despise 蔑视 prophecies. **Acts 7:51** - You stiff 僵硬的necked and uncircumcised in heart and ears! **You always resist the Holy Spirit;** as your fathers did, so do you.

Conclusion:

The Holy Spirit is the 3rd person of the Godhead. He is a real person with all the attributes of God. The Father is not more important than the Spirit, nor is the Spirit superior to the Father. So **the Holy Spirit is God by his nature.** More, **the Holy Spirit is God by his activity.** He did what only God did – he created, he sustains the world, he lives in man, he saves man, he sanctifies man – separating him from sin, and he seals man till he goes to heaven. No wonder men rightly worship the Holy Spirit.

Brothers and sisters in Jesus Christ:

1. When you have a proper view of the Holy Spirit – that he is the Eternal God, you are careful how you live. You know that he lives within you. He knows what you think, what you say, what you eat, where you go, and what your attitude is to God. **Does this scare you? Well, fear is not a bad thing if it leads to right living.** So go ahead, be afraid of everything the Holy Spirit knows about you, but work to change your life with his help.

2. Then honor him. Worship him. Don't fight him. **Ephesians 4:30** - And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, by whom you were sealed for the day of redemption. **Announce the Holy Spirit to the world.** Let the world know that God is 1 yet 3 persons. Let them know that he wants to live in their hearts and seal them as Christ's children. Don't be ashamed. This is the only way they can be saved from their sins.

The Bible says that no one can truly call God his Father unless the Holy Spirit is working in his heart. If you are not a Christian, may you call upon the Holy Spirit to enter your heart and make you God's child today.