

Is the Holy Spirit a Person?

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Jehovah's Witnesses are taught that the holy spirit is not a person but God's active force, something like electricity that God uses. The 2013 New World Translation even renders Genesis 1:2 as "God's active force was moving about over the surface of the waters," and it writes "holy spirit" without capital letters. If you are a Witness, we write with respect and ask you to look at how the Bible actually describes the Holy Spirit. A force does not do the things Scripture says He does.

1. You can lie to the Holy Spirit, and that is lying to God

Acts 5:3 and 4 "But 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? ... You have not lied to men but to God.'"

No one can lie to a force. You can only lie to a person who hears and understands. And Peter makes the point even stronger: lying to the Holy Spirit is lying to God.

2. The Holy Spirit speaks and says "Me"

Acts 13:2 "As they ministered to the Lord and fasted, the Holy Spirit said, 'Now separate to Me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them.'"

The Holy Spirit speaks, uses the personal pronoun "Me," and calls men to His work. Electricity does not call missionaries. In Acts 15:28 the apostles wrote, "it seemed good to the Holy Spirit, and to us," placing His decision alongside their own.

3. Jesus called Him "another Helper"

John 14:16 and 17 "And I will pray the Father, and He will give you another Helper, that He may abide with you forever, the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees Him nor knows Him; but you know Him, for He dwells with you and will be in you."

Jesus had been the disciples' Helper in person. He promised "another" Helper of the same kind, not an impersonal power. And notice that believers "know Him."

John 14:26 "But 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."

4. He hears, speaks, guides, and glorifies

John 16:13 and 14 "However, when He, the Spirit of truth, has come, He will guide you into all truth; for He will not speak on His own authority, but whatever He hears He will speak; and He will tell you things to come. He will glorify Me, for He will take of what is Mine and declare it to you."

The Greek word for spirit (pneuma) is grammatically neuter, so we might expect a neuter pronoun. Yet in John 16:13 and 14 John uses the masculine pronoun ekeinos, "He." John goes out of his way to show that the Spirit is a "He," not an "it."

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.”

You cannot hurt the feelings of a force. Only a person can be grieved. Hebrews 10:29 also warns of those who have “insulted the Spirit of grace,” and Jesus warned that blasphemy against the Spirit will not be forgiven (Matthew 12:31). No one blasphemes electricity.

6. He has a will and a mind

1 Corinthians 12:11 “But one and the same Spirit works all these things, distributing to each one individually as He wills.”

The Spirit decides which gifts to give to whom. He also “searches all things, yes, the deep things of God” (1 Corinthians 2:10), and He prays for believers: “the Spirit Himself makes intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered” (Romans 8:26). Willing, searching, knowing, and praying are the acts of a person.

7. He shares one name with the Father and the Son

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.”

Jesus did not say to baptize in the name of a person, a creature, and a force. He named three persons sharing one name. This is the God of the Bible: one God, eternally existing as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

For Christians talking with Witnesses: Be patient and loving. Read Ephesians 4:30 and ask, “How can a force be grieved?” Then read Acts 5:3 and 4 and ask who Ananias lied to. Walter Martin’s *The Kingdom of the Cults* and Watchman Fellowship are helpful for further study.

Born of the Spirit

Jesus said, “unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God” (John 3:5). The Holy Spirit is not only for a small group of 144,000. He convicts the world of sin (John 16:8) and gives new life to everyone who repents and trusts in Jesus Christ, who died for our sins and rose again. If you will turn from your sin and trust Christ alone, God promises to forgive you and give you His Spirit (Acts 2:38 and 39). You can know Him, not as a force, but as the living God who dwells in you.