



While most of the Bible is literal, there are many figures of speech used in the scriptures. One of these is personification, which has been defined as *“the attribution of a personal nature or human characteristics to something nonhuman”*. The holy Spirit is sometimes described in the Bible by using personification. The personification of the holy Spirit is often misunderstood in a way that causes believers in the Trinity doctrine to believe the holy Spirit is a person, *“third person of the Trinity”*. For example:

The Spirit of the Truth

“When the Advocate comes, whom I will send to you from the Father—the Spirit of truth who goes out from the Father—he will testify about me”—John 15:26 NIV

“But when he, the Spirit of truth, comes, he will guide you into all the truth. He will not speak on his own; he will speak only what he hears, and he will tell you what is yet to come”—John 16:13 NIV

In these cases, the holy Spirit is personified as “the Spirit of the truth”. Notice how something else is also personified in the next verse:

“We are from God, and whoever knows God listens to us; but whoever is not from God does not listen to us. This is how we recognize the Spirit of truth and the Spirit of falsehood—1 John 4:6 NIV

Not only is “**the Spirit of truth**” personified, but so is “**the Spirit of falsehood**” personified. So, we do well to ask, “*If ‘the Spirit of truth’ is a person, why isn’t ‘the spirit of falsehood’ a person?*”. Let’s notice the pronoun used to describe “the Spirit of truth” in the following verse:

“The Spirit of truth, which the world cannot accept, because it neither sees nor knows it. But you know it, because it remains with you, and will be in you”—John 14:17 NAB

Three times in the above verse, the holy Spirit is described by the pronoun “it”, which means the holy Spirit is not a person, but is personified. Now, let’s notice how personification is used in the Bible for many other inanimate things:

Sin

“But if you do not do what is right, sin is crouching at your door; it desires to have you, but you must rule over it”—Genesis 4:7 NIV

“So then, just as sin ruled by means of death, so also God’s grace rules by means of righteousness, leading us to eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord”—Romans 5:21 GNB

“Therefore do not let sin reign in your mortal body so that you obey its evil desires”—Romans 6:12 NIV

“For sin shall no longer be your master, because you are not under the law, but under grace”—Romans 6:14 NIV

“Don’t you know that when you offer yourselves to someone as obedient slaves, you are slaves of the one you obey—whether you are slaves to sin, which leads to death, or to obedience, which leads to righteousness?”—Romans 6:16 NIV

“I see another law at work in me, waging war against the law of my mind and making me a prisoner of the law of sin at work within me”—Romans 7:23 NIV

Blood

“The Lord said, “What have you done? Listen! Your brother’s blood cries out to me from the ground’”—Genesis 4:10 NIV

“But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far away have been brought near through the blood of Christ”—Ephesians 2:13 BSB

“You have come to Jesus, the one who mediates the new covenant between God and people, and to the sprinkled blood, which speaks of forgiveness instead of crying out for vengeance like the blood of Abel”—Hebrews 12:24 NLT

“This is the one who came through water and blood, Jesus Christ, not by water alone, but by water and blood. The Spirit is the one that testifies, and the Spirit is truth. So there are three that testify, the Spirit, the water, and the blood, and the three are of one accord”—1 John 5:6-8 NAB

“The Spirit” is also personified in this last text, along with “water and blood”.

Water

“When the waters saw you, O God, when the waters saw you, they were afraid; the very deep trembled”—Psalm 77:16 NRSV

“Let the rivers clap their hands, let the mountains sing together for joy”—Psalm 98:8 NIV

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Creation

“For the anxious longing of the creation waits eagerly for the revealing of the sons of God”—Romans 8:19 NASB

Flesh/the Body

“That is why a man leaves his father and mother and is united to his wife, and they become one flesh”—Genesis 2:24 NIV

“We ourselves, who have the firstfruits of the Spirit, groan inwardly as we wait eagerly, for our adoption to sonship, the redemption of our bodies”—Romans 8:23 NAB

Death

“Death reigned from Adam to Moses”—Romans 5:14 NAB

“Christ, raised from the dead, dies no more; death no longer has power over him”—Romans 6:9 NAB

The Spirit of the World

“We have not received the spirit of the world, but the Spirit that is from God”—1 Corinthians 2:12 NAB

Conclusion

We have examined the personification of the holy Spirit in the Bible, as well as personification of other inanimate things in the Bible, which reveals the truth that the holy Spirit is not a person any more than sin, blood, death, water, etc., are persons. Thus, a key component of the Trinity doctrine is exposed as scripturally false.