

## Why Isn't the Holy Spirit Mentioned in Patriarchs and Prophets, Chapter 1?

The first chapter of the book "Patriarchs and Prophets" by Ellen White, which describes the rebellion of Lucifer in heaven, makes mention of only the Father and the Son in the heavenly councils. There is no mention of the Holy Spirit being present in the heavenly councils.

"The Sovereign of the universe was not alone in His work of beneficence. He had an associate—a co-worker who could appreciate His purposes, and could share His joy in giving happiness to created beings. 'In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God.' John 1:1, 2. Christ, the Word, the only begotten of God, was one with the eternal Father—one in nature, in character, in purpose—the only being that could enter into all the counsels and purposes of God." - *Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 34

"Before the assembled inhabitants of heaven the King declared that none but Christ, the Only Begotten of God, could fully enter into His purposes, and to Him it was committed to execute the mighty counsels of His will." - *Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 36

SDA anti-Trinitarians see this as evidence that there are only two divine "beings", and if the Holy Spirit was a "being" in the same sense as Christ, then the Holy Spirit should also be able to enter into the counsels and purposes of God.

In considering this objection, we have one of three options:

- 1) The Holy Spirit doesn't exist as a separate, third Person.
- 2) The Holy Spirit isn't capable of fully entering into God's purposes.
- 3) The Holy Spirit was outside the scope of the comparison being made and wasn't mentioned because He wasn't relevant to the issue at hand.

We know the Spirit existed, because He is frequently mentioned in the inspired record - before the incarnation of Jesus.

Ellen White commented:

"The Comforter that Christ promised to send after He ascended to heaven, is the **Spirit in all the fullness of the Godhead**, making manifest the power of divine grace to all who receive and believe in Christ as a personal Saviour. There are **three living persons of the heavenly trio**. In the name of these three powers,—the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, those who receive Christ by living faith are baptized, and these powers will cooperate with the obedient subjects of heaven in their efforts to live the new life in Christ." - BTS, March 1, 1906 par. 2

The second option conflicts with this scripture:

"But God hath revealed them unto us by his Spirit: for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God. For what man knoweth the things of a man, save the spirit of man which is in him? even so the things of God knoweth no man, but the Spirit of God." -- 1 Corinthians 2:10-11

Apparently, the Holy Spirit knows all that God knows.

And this statement tells us that the Holy Spirit is infinite and omniscient, just as the Father and Son:

"The Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, powers infinite and omniscient, receive those who truly enter into covenant relation with God." - Letter 43, 1901

Option three would appear to be the right option. The context of the above quotes from *Patriarchs and Prophets* is the time when God needed to clarify the difference between the Son and the created beings - including Lucifer. Evidently this distinction was not appreciated as it should be. Lucifer, and all the angels, were not on the level Jesus is on. He, out of all those in question, was the only One who could enter fully into God's purposes. The Holy Spirit was not mentioned because He was not involved in the confusion.

When Ellen White stated that Jesus was "the only being that could enter into all the counsels and purposes of God," her purpose was to show that Lucifer was excluded. There was no overt intention to exclude the Holy Spirit. The intent of Ellen White's statement can be seen as we read a little further:

"He [Lucifer] was beloved and revered by the heavenly host, angels delighted to execute his commands, and he was clothed with wisdom and glory above them all. Yet the Son of God was exalted above him, as one in power and authority with the Father. **He shared the Father's counsels, while Lucifer did not thus enter into the purposes of God.** *Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 36

And we have this important statement, which tells us that the Holy Spirit was involved in the heavenly councils:

"It is the glory of the gospel that it is founded upon the principle of restoring in the fallen race the divine image by a constant manifestation of benevolence. This work began in the **heavenly courts**. ... The Godhead was stirred with pity for the race, and **the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit** gave Themselves to the working out of the plan of redemption. In order to fully carry out this plan, it was decided that Christ, the only- begotten of God, should give Himself an offering for sin." - 16LtMs, Lt 12, pars. 9,10

It's also quite possible that the Holy Spirit simply had not been revealed to created beings at this point. If the divinity of the Son was not clearly understood, and required further revelation in order for the created hosts of heaven to understand, then it should not be a surprise that there might be some other things about the Godhead that had also not yet been revealed - such as the existence of the Third Person of the Godhead.

The Holy Spirit does not "speak of Himself" (John 16:13), and so it should not be too surprising to find that He has at times made no mention of His presence in the heavenly councils. However, we can be sure that the Holy Spirit was speaking to Lucifer's heart as well as to the rest of the angels as the controversy was unfolding in heaven, as conviction and the revelation of truth are the offices of the Holy Spirit.

It is evident that since Ellen White did include the Holy Spirit in the heavenly councils in a statement she made in 1899 and later repeated in 1901, and a satisfactory explanation is found for why the Holy Spirit was not mentioned in the first chapter of *Patriarchs and Prophets*, there is no justifiable reason for concluding that He does not exist as an individual being or that He is not capable of entering into God's purposes.