

Ananias and Sapphira: Lying to the Holy Spirit

Some use part of the verse below as an argument that the Bible calls the Holy Spirit God. Yet, just after, in the same passage, we see the "Spirit of the Lord".

- "But Peter said, Ananias, why hath Satan filled thine heart to lie to the **Holy Ghost**, and to keep back part of the price of the land?... Thou hast not lied unto men, but unto **God**... Then Peter said unto her, How is it that ye have agreed together to tempt the **Spirit of the Lord**?" Acts of the Apostles 5:1-9 (excerpt)

What have we been able to read to this point about who the Holy Spirit is? It is the Spirit of Father and of the Son, and that by their Spirit, they are omnipresent.

- "**By the Spirit the Father and the Son will come and make their abode with you.**" Ellen White: Bible Echo, January 15, 1893 par. 8
- "We want the **Holy Spirit, which is Jesus Christ.**" Ellen White: Letter 66 April 10, 1894 par. 18
- "**God is a spirit, yet He is a personal being**, for our first parents were made in His image. **As a personal being, God has revealed Himself in His Son.**" Ellen White: Education, p. 132, 1903

Does the Holy Spirit, as a 'being', have a Son Jesus? No, Jesus is the Son of **God (the Father)**, and the Holy Spirit is not a being but a manifestation of God Himself. According to the Bible, the Holy Spirit does not have a Son. God and Jesus work **personally** through their Holy Spirit which proceeds from them.

- "But ye are not in the flesh, but in the **Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you**. Now if any man have not the **Spirit of Christ**, he is none of his. **And if Christ be in you**, the body is dead because of sin; but the **Spirit** is life because of righteousness. **But if the Spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you**, he that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by **his Spirit** that dwelleth in you." Romans 8:9-11
- "Forasmuch as ye are manifestly declared to be the epistle of Christ ministered by us, written not with ink, but with the **Spirit of the living God**; not in tables of stone, but in fleshy tables of the heart. And such trust have we through Christ to God-ward:..our sufficiency is of God... the spirit giveth life. **Now the Lord is that Spirit**; and where the **Spirit of the Lord** is, there is liberty. But we all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, **even as by the Spirit of the Lord.**" 2 Corinthians 3:3-18

All the preceding verses clearly show, as do the first verses from Acts 5 on Ananias and Sapphira, when the whole text is read, that Spirit they lied to was God's Spirit. When a messenger (Spirit) is treated with disrespect, who would be hurt or lied to? The one from whom that messenger or spirit proceeded from.

That is why God was personally lied to and offended, since His Spirit proceeds from Him, through which He is everywhere present, was lied to. Here the same idea is repeated in both sentences (Acts 5:3-4) so that we can understand that when we lie to the Holy Spirit, we are in fact lying to God Himself, and also so that we do not think that the Holy Spirit is Itself a god.

- "But Peter said, Ananias, why hath Satan filled thine heart **to lie to the Holy Ghost**, and to keep back part of the price of the land? Whiles it remained, was it not thine own? and after it was sold, was it not in thine own power? why hast thou conceived this thing in thine heart? **thou hast not lied unto men, but unto God (Himself, personally).**" Acts 5:3-4

Why doesn't the verse say that Ananias lied to God the Holy Spirit? It first states that he lied to the Holy Spirit, and then in the next sentence states that He lied unto God! We cannot take just one part of the text out of context and interpret it in isolation. We have to study God's Word with an honest heart and prayerfully, and fitting each text in with the whole of the Bible and Spirit of Prophecy.

- “Through the operation of the **Spirit of God** humanity may be connected with divinity. **Jesus** has promised to send the **Comforter** to lead us into all truth. “**My Spirit,**” saith **Christ**, “is competent to influence the world. Those who will accept the provisions of my grace may be partakers of my nature.” [...] When men realize that Christ must have entire control of the heart, the affections, then Jesus will be with every worker, carrying the heavy end of the yoke. It will then be made manifest **that His Spirit moves upon human hearts**, for transgressors will be converted to Him.” Ellen White: Manuscript 40a, 3. November 1890
- “The **divine Spirit** that the world's Redeemer promised to send, **is the presence and power of God**.” Ellen White: ST, November 23, 1891 par. 1
- To conclude, let us look at a text from the second chapter of the Great Congroversy, “Persecution in the First Centuries”:
- “The apostles encountered those in the church who professed godliness while they were secretly cherishing iniquity. Ananias and Sapphira acted the part of deceivers, pretending to make an entire sacrifice for God, when they were covetously withholding a portion for themselves. The **Spirit of truth** revealed to the apostles the real character of these pretenders, and the judgments of God rid the church of this foul blot upon its purity. This signal evidence of the discerning **Spirit of Christ** in the church was a terror to hypocrites and evildoers. They could not long remain in connection with those who were, in habit and disposition, constant representatives of Christ; and as trials and persecution came upon His followers, those only who were willing to forsake all for the truth's sake desired to become His disciples. Thus, as long as persecution continued, the church remained comparatively pure. But as it ceased, converts were added who were less sincere and devoted, and the way was open for Satan to obtain a foothold.” Ellen White: GC, 44.1