

What is the Holy Spirit?

The first mention of the Hebrew *ruwach* in Scripture, “And **the Spirit [ruwach 7307] of God** moved upon the face of the waters” (Gen 1:2), it’s “of God” as His possession. It wasn’t a separate person flying over the water like superman! It’s the breath of God as He was blowing from His mouth across the surface of the waters. The second occurrence of *ruwach*, “And they heard the voice of the LORD God walking in the garden in **the cool [ruwach 7307] of the day**” (Gen 3:8), it’s the wind blowing. Other Bible versions render it, “When the cool evening breezes were blowing” (NLT), “at the time of the evening breeze” (CSB), “at the breezy time of the day” (NET), “at the breeze of the day” (YLT). It’s simply air, breath, or wind. And in its third appearance, “And the LORD said, **My spirit [ruwach 7307]** shall not always strive with man” (Gen 6:3). The first time it was “the Breath of God” and now “My Breath.” It’s not another person at all—it’s God’s Breath.

The Greek equivalent of *ruwach* is *pneuma*. It’s where our English “pneumonia,” “pneumology,” and “pneumatics” are derived—all involving air or breath. Furthermore, its verb form *pneo* means “to blow” as Jesus Himself used it, “The wind [*pneuma* 4151] bloweth [*pneo* 4154]” (Jhn 3:8). Finally, Jesus even illustrated that the Holy Spirit is breath by literally breathing on His disciples, “**he breathed on them**, and saith unto them, Receive ye **the Holy Ghost [pneuma 4151]**” (Jhn 20:22).

Man is a physical being brought to life by God breathing into his nostrils, “And the LORD God formed man *of* the dust of the ground, and **breathed into his nostrils the breath of life**; and man became a living soul” (Gen 2:7). The Son of God became fully human and entrusted His breath back to God when He died, “Father, into thy hands I commend **my spirit [pneuma 4151]**: and having said thus, **he gave up the ghost [exhaled]**” (Luk 23:46). Life and death are the imparting and departing of God’s breath in man’s lungs and nostrils.

Resurrection from the dead is simply God breathing life into the body as when God breathed into Adam: “It is the spirit [*pneuma* 4151] that quickeneth” (Jhn 6:63); “the Spirit [*pneuma* 4151] of life in Christ Jesus” (Rom 8:2); “the Spirit [*pneuma* 4151] of him that raised up Jesus from the dead” (Rom 8:11); “a quickening spirit [*pneuma* 4151]” (1Co 15:45); “quickened by the Spirit [*pneuma* 4151]” (1Pe 3:18); “the Spirit [*pneuma* 4151] of life from God entered into them” (Rev 11:11). In fact,

Paul even cited Adam’s creation when teaching about the resurrection, “breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul” (Gen 2:7), “The first man Adam was made a living soul; the last Adam *was made* a quickening spirit [*pneuma* 4151]” (1Co 15:45). Being resurrected from death to life is consistent with being made alive initially—God breathing life into us.

The Greek *hagios pneuma* appears about 90 times in the New Testament and should be rendered “holy breath” instead of “holy spirit.” But why is God’s breath described as *hagios* or holy? It’s because God’s people will be raised to eternal life by His breath and they are holy or set apart from all others. In the Exodus, God separated His people from all other people to favor them and give them eternal life: “For thou *art* **an holy people** unto the LORD thy God: the LORD thy God hath chosen thee to be **a special people unto himself, above all people** that *are* upon the face of the earth” (Deu 7:6).

Many times *hagios* is used for God’s people as holy or saints: “the saints [*hagios* 40] which dwelt at Lydda” (Act 9:32); “To all that be in Rome, beloved of God, called *to be* saints” [*hagios* 40]” (Rom 1:7); “But now I go unto Jerusalem to minister unto the saints [*hagios* 40]” (Rom 15:25); “All the saints [*hagios* 40] salute you” (2Co 13:13). And only God’s people have His breath in their hearts: “the Spirit [*pneuma* 4151] of God dwell in you” (Rom 8:9); “his Spirit [*pneuma* 4151] that dwelleth in you” (Rom 8:11); “ye have received the Spirit [*pneuma* 4151] of adoption” (Rom 8:15); “the Holy Ghost [*pneuma* 4151] *which is* in you” (1Co 6:19); “given the earnest of the Spirit [*pneuma* 4151] in our hearts” (2Co 1:22); “given unto us the earnest of the Spirit [*pneuma* 4151]” (2Co 5:5); “God hath sent forth the Spirit [*pneuma* 4151] of his Son into your hearts” (Gal 4:6); “ye were sealed with that holy Spirit [*pneuma* 4151] of promise” (Eph 1:13); “an habitation of God through the Spirit [*pneuma* 4151]” (Eph 2:22); “the Holy Ghost [*pneuma* 4151] which dwelleth in us” (2Ti 1:14); “the Spirit [*pneuma* 4151] which he hath given us” (1Jo 3:24).

If *ruwach* and *pneuma*—found a combined total of over 750 times in Scripture—had been consistently translated as “air,” “breath,” or “wind,” there would be no chance of mistaking it for a person. Why then are these two words consistently translated into English as “spirit,” giving the impression of a personal being? It’s because the Trinity is a false view of God that Trinitarian ministers, scholars, and theologians want people to embrace.