

# **Statements on the Holy Spirit as the Third Member of the Godhead**

## **By Pastor Tony Jasper**

The claim being considered here is the belief that the Godhead consists of the Father and the Son only (i.e. there is no Holy Spirit). Those who deny the Trinity — the Three in Unity — view the references in the Bible to the Holy Spirit as meaning the influence of the Father, the Son, or both, but not a separate being. We will now compare this position with the testimony of Scripture and the writings of Ellen White. Let's begin with the Bible. In the following Bible passages there seems to be a very clear distinction of beings between the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. And it seems apparent they are on equal footing.

### **The Holy Spirit the Third Member of the Godhead**

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 commands His followers to baptize people who come to faith in Him in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. This was the teaching of Jesus. This is the practice of the Seventh-Day Adventist Church. In the broader context of this passage Jesus receives all authority from the Father, commands all His disciples to go into all the world, baptizing new disciples in all that God is (Father, Son, Holy Spirit), and commanding them to obey all the Lord has commanded, and if they do He will be with them always (Matthew 28:18-20). I start with this passage because Ellen White has a lot to say about it (see Ellen White comments on Matthew 28:19 beginning on page 5 of this document).

Worthy of note in this passage. The Godhead is here described as three persons in unity. They are three—Father, Son, and Holy Spirit—yet they are one, having just one “name”. This statement of Jesus would not make sense if there were only two—Father and Son—and the Holy Spirit was just their influence or presence or power. If Jesus had said “their” Holy Spirit it would better communicate the sense of the Godhead consisting of two, and the Holy Spirit was the Father's and the Son's influence. But the expression “and the Holy Spirit” communicates a third being separate and distinct from the Father and the Son. This is reminiscent of the plural-singular nature of God depicted in Genesis 1:26.

Then God (*elohim* is plural) said, “Let Us (plural) make man in Our (plural) image (singular), according to Our (plural) likeness (singular).”

The plural nature of God is here described. Yet the members of the Godhead, in whose image mankind was created, have one image, one likeness. In fact God often spoke of Himself in this singular and plural manner (Genesis 3:22; Isaiah 6:8). That the Spirit was involved in creation is attested elsewhere in Scripture (Genesis 1:2; Job 26:13; 33:4), most notably in the creation of the unique Son of God, Son of man Jesus (Matthew 2:18). Like Jesus at the end of Matthew's

