

Belgic Confession, Article 11, “Of the Person and Eternal Deity of the Holy Spirit”

Scripture Lesson: John 14:15-31

Lesson Aim	To understand two things: First, the personality of the Holy Spirit and second, the eternal deity and procession of the Holy Spirit.
Steps to Learning	Read Belgic Confession, Article 11 and John 14:15-31. Discuss the sermon and the particulars of the lesson below. It may work best to work through the material over several days or sessions.
Discuss	<p>Why have some concluded that the Holy Spirit is not personal? He is referred to as “Spirit,” which seems to suggest that he is not a person and the Spirit did not appear in personal form among men.</p> <p>Why do we believe that the Holy Spirit is personal? Masculine personal pronouns are used to refer to the Spirit and the characteristics of a person are applied to him: He has intelligence, affections (not human affections) and performs actions proper to a person (teaching, commanding, etc.).</p> <p>Why do we believe the Holy Spirit is God? Divine names are given to him (Ex. 17:7, cf. Heb. 3:7-9), He is called God (Acts 5:3-4), Divine perfections are ascribed to him (omnipresence, Ps. 139:7-10), (omniscience, Isa. 40:13,14, cf. Rom. 11:34), (omnipotence, 1 Cor. 12:11), (eternality, Heb. 9:14), Divine works are performed by him (creation, Gen. 1:2), (Providential renewal, Ps. 104:30), (regeneration, John 3:5,6), (divine honor is paid to him, Matt. 28:19).</p> <p>What do we mean when we discuss the procession of the Spirit? We mean that the Holy Spirit proceeds <u>eternally</u> from the Father and the Son. That is, He is neither made, created, nor begotten but proceeds from the Father and the Son eternally. Where the Son is not created but is eternally begotten from the Father, the Spirit is not created but proceeds from both the Father and the Son eternally. Procession does not mean that the Holy Spirit is subordinate to the Father and/or the Son in divinity. Rather, procession describes the relationship He has to the other two persons in the Trinity.</p> <p>What Scriptures tells us that the Spirit proceeds from the Father and the Son? The Father sends the Spirit according to John 14:16 & 26: “And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Helper, to be with you forever...But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, he will teach you all things and bring to your remembrance all that I have said to you.” But the Son also sends the Spirit according to John 15:26: “But when the Helper comes, whom I will send to you from the Father, the Spirit of truth, who proceeds from the Father, he will bear witness about me.”</p>
Bible Reading	Judges 1-7 (covering the great Bible stories)