

## Pronoun Use in Reference to the Holy Spirit

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### 1 Peter 1:11

KJV...*the Spirit of Christ which was in them* (prophets) *did signify, when it testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ, and the glory that should follow.*

NIV...*the Spirit of Christ in them was pointing when he predicted...*

*Holy Ghost, Holy Spirit, Spirit of God/the Lord or Spirit*, the name of deity, is neuter grammatical gender in the Greek. His natural gender is veiled and represented as neuter in a context where He assumes the persona role of part of Jesus' person, as our spirit is *it*, part of us, not the whole, and this is the case in 1 Peter 1:11. Thus Romans says *Spirit of Christ* in 8:9 and *Spirit itself* in 8:16,26 (8:9 equates *Spirit of Christ* & *Spirit of God*, and in Jn.3:34 Jesus has the Spirit without measure, the Spirit as an integral part of His person). *It* applies in the Jn.1:32 context where the Spirit has an identity role, that of salvation peace (a dove, *it*). *Spirit* is inherently *he*, and natural gender at times controls the grammatical (e.g. Jn.15:26,16:8, Acts 8:29,10:19,13:2). But the names can relate to Holy Ghost persona/identity roles that mask natural gender (e.g. In Acts 2:17,18 the Spirit is poured out), and in a few such cases the roles invoke pronoun use, requiring *it*.<sup>1</sup>

The KJV rightly renders *it* in four appropriate verses. Modern versions usually miss or by-pass them all (NRSV has *it* in two cases and avoids the issue in two, and RSV has *it* in Jn.1, incorrect *himself* in Romans 8, and avoids the issue in 1 Pet.1). The NIV *he* in 1 Peter 1:11 is incorrect, favoring human preference over context. Further, the Spirit points us to Christ, so in 1 Peter 1:11 presenting Christ on the cross, Spirit de-emphasis on His own person by use of *it* stresses a primacy of Christ's person to us (Jn.16:13-14).

The impersonal reference applies only in specific contexts, as in the KJV. But one scholar says *Spirit* isn't *he*, saying Jn.14:16-17,26 *him/he* refers to the *Comforter* person, not *Spirit of truth*,<sup>2</sup> but they refer inclusively to an equivalenced *Comforter* and *Spirit of truth*, and refer directly to *Spirit of truth* in 16:13. Another scholar says 1 Jn.5:7,8 treatment of neuter *Spirit, water and blood* as masculine is just a personalizing of *Spirit* that personalizes *water and blood*,<sup>3</sup> which isn't so, for *Spirit* in 5:6, also subject to any personalizing, is neuter.<sup>4</sup> Masculine-gender treatment of *Spirit* in 5:8 is due to His masculine natural gender made visible by association with masculine *Father* and *Word* in 5:7, despite the neuter natural gender He assumes in the persona role of part of Jesus' person in 5:8.<sup>1,5</sup> The Old Testament too treats *Spirit* as personal or impersonal, but the personal is less obvious since personal pronouns *him/he/me/I* don't appear (only *my/his Spirit*).

### End Notes

1. The personal/impersonal distinction of the Spirit is verified by the 1 Jn.5:7,8 Johannine Comma (so erroneously called unauthentic<sup>5</sup>), as the Holy Ghost (*He*) of the Trinity of heaven in the Comma is distinguished from, yet related to, Jesus' Spirit (*it*) on earth. Jesus' *Spirit* is neuter grammatical gender, but a participial modifier treats *Spirit* (and *water and blood*) as masculine grammatical gender, and Comma masculine nouns *Father* and *Word* account for this (one of

several proofs of Comma authenticity). The weight of this evidence of Comma authenticity is clear from futile efforts of modern-version advocates to discount it, such as the two noted in the text above that would have the effect of discrediting a genuine Comma masculine-gender treatment of *Spirit* (and *water* and *blood*).<sup>2,3</sup> The reason for *Spirit* masculine gender treatment is masculine natural gender of Jesus' Spirit revealed by *Father* and *Word* to offset usual veiling by neuter natural gender in the persona role of part of Jesus' person (the reason regarding *water* and *blood* is a bit different<sup>5</sup>). Thus a personal/impersonal distinction of the Spirit is seen, and the KJV and Received Text treat the Spirit as a person here, despite neuter-gender effects.

That *it* is proper at times is further seen in that the Spirit (He) indwells a true Christian, and would have to be a part of that person (*it*). Likely, the mark (*it*) of God's name (Rev.22:4) signifies the Spirit persona (*it*) as part of the person of one sanctified in taking on the image of the holy beloved Son of God [exact opposite of the mark/name of the beast (Rev.13:17), signifying satan's imitation, his persona in his servants]. God's mark ensures the triumph.

2. Wallace, D.B. Dallas Theological Seminary. *Greek Grammar and the Personality of the Holy Spirit*. Bulletin for Biblical Research. 13.1 (2003). 97-125. Note: That *Spirit of truth* and *Comforter* are in apposition doesn't refute the fact that the two are in a state of equivalence and are joined in an inclusive reference to *him/he*. Wallace fails to note that in John 16:13 *him/he*, representing a masculine Greek pronoun, refers directly to *Spirit of truth*.

3. Marshall, I.H. 1978. *The Epistles of John*. Eerdmans. p237. Note: If *Spirit* in 1 John 5:8 were personalized and did impose personalization on *water* and *blood*, how could this be so selective as to apply to verse 8 but ignore the one other use of *Spirit* in the chapter in the nearby verse 6? Dr. Hills pointed this out long ago.<sup>4</sup>

4. Hills, E.F. 1988. *The King James Version Defended*. Des Moines. The Christian Research Press. p209-13.

5. Bednar, L. 2010. *The KJB and Its Textual Basis: Consistent Accuracy Indicative of Providential Text Inerrancy*. IFBC booklet . [www.LawrenceBednar@zoomtown.com](http://www.LawrenceBednar@zoomtown.com)