

2 Corinthians 3:17

The Lord IS the Spirit

Proof of the Trinity Error

Paul explicitly tells us the Lord Jesus is the Holy Spirit proving the Trinity to be false. In the doctrine of the Trinity, Jesus is not the Spirit and cannot be the Spirit otherwise there would be only two persons and not three since.

The Evidence

In Trinitarian doctrine, the Father is not the Spirit and Jesus is not the Spirit. In fact, the doctrine of the Trinity cannot stand true without insisting that Jesus is not the Holy Spirit. But here we have a passage which explicitly indicates Jesus is indeed the Holy Spirit.

1. The Context: The Ministry of the Holy Spirit in Contrast to the Ministry of the Law of Moses

In context, Paul is contrasting the old covenant with the new covenant. He does this by contrasting the glory of the ministry of the Law of Moses with the glory of the new ministry of the Holy Spirit. He is telling the Corinthians that the glory of the ministry of the Spirit surpasses the glory of the ministry of the Law of Moses. The ministry of the Law of Moses came with glory but it is a fading glory as evidence by the glory that faded from Moses' face. However, the ministry of the Spirit does not fade in glory but is eternal.

2. The Spirit

Since Paul says, "the Lord is **the Spirit**," let us first let us establish that when Paul says, "the Lord is the Spirit," he is referring to the Holy Spirit.

Are we beginning to commend ourselves again? Or do we need, as some, letters of commendation to you or from you? You are our letter, written in our hearts, known and read by all men; being manifested that you are a letter of Christ, cared for by us, written not with ink but with **the Spirit of the Living God**, not on tablets of stone but on tablets of human hearts. Such confidence we have through Christ toward God. Not that we are adequate in ourselves to consider anything as coming from ourselves, but our adequacy is from God, who also made us adequate as servants of a new covenant, not of the letter but of **the Spirit**; for the letter kills, but **the Spirit** gives life. But if the ministry of death, in letters engraved on stones, came with glory, so that the sons of Israel could not look intently at the face of Moses because of the glory of his face, fading as it was, how will **the ministry of the Spirit** fail to be even more with glory? For if the ministry of condemnation has glory, much more does **the ministry of righteousness** abound in glory. For indeed what had glory, in this case has no glory because of the glory that surpasses it. For if that which fades away was with glory, much more that which remains is in glory. Therefore having such a hope, we use great boldness in our speech, and are not like Moses, who used to put a veil over his face so that the sons of Israel would not look intently at the end of what was fading away. But their minds were hardened; for until this very day at the reading of the old covenant the same veil remains unlifted, because it is removed in Christ. But to this day whenever Moses is read, a veil lies over their heart; 16 but whenever a person turns to the Lord, the veil is taken away. Now the Lord is **the Spirit** and where **the Spirit of the Lord** is there is freedom.

We can see plainly that in context that Paul is referring to the Holy Spirit and the ministry of the

Holy Spirit. He is also contrasting the NEW ministry of the Holy Spirit with the OLD ministry of the Law.

2. The Lord

The context also shows us undeniable proof that "the Lord" is in fact Jesus Christ, more specifically, the risen Jesus.

The Veil is Removed in Christ = The Veil is Removed when one turns to the Lord

But their minds were hardened; for until this very day at the reading of the old covenant the same veil remains unlifted, because **the veil is removed in Christ**.

But to this day whenever Moses is read, a veil lies over their heart but **the veil is taken away whenever they turn to the Lord**.

The immediate context already makes it clear that the "Lord" whom Paul has in mind is Jesus Christ. The veil is removed in **Christ** and only when a person turns to **the Lord** is the veil taken away. These are quite plainly parallel statements.

The veil is removed in **Christ**
The veil is taken away when one turns to **the Lord**

The Glory of Christ

Paul also makes it clear that the "Lord" of 2 Corinthians 3:17 is Christ by his words which follow:

The Lord is the Spirit and where the Spirit of **the Lord** is there is freedom. But we all, with unveiled face, beholding as in a mirror **the glory of the Lord**, are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory, just as from **the Lord**, the Spirit. Therefore, since we have this ministry, as we received mercy, we do not lose heart, but we have renounced the things hidden because of shame, not walking in craftiness or adulterating the word of God, but by the manifestation of truth

commending ourselves to every man's conscience in the sight of God. And even if our gospel is veiled, it is veiled to those who are perishing, in whose case the god of this world has blinded the minds of the unbelieving so that they might not see the light of the gospel of **the glory of Christ**, who is the image of God. 2 Corinthians 3:17-4:4.

Again, it is quite clear that "the Lord" of 2 Corinthians 3:17 is Jesus Christ. The glory of the Lord is the glory of Christ.

Paul is preaching Jesus Christ as Lord

Now as though we already don't have enough evidence, Paul even makes it even more explicitly clear. He tells us **explicitly** who he has in mind as "the Lord" when he says, "the Lord is the Spirit." He immediately goes on to identify the Lord in question as Jesus Christ.

Now **the Lord** is the Spirit, and where the Spirit of **the Lord** is, there is freedom. But we all, with unveiled face, beholding as in a mirror the glory of **the Lord**, are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory, just as from **the Lord**, the Spirit. Therefore, since we have this ministry, as we received mercy, we do not lose heart, but we have renounced the things hidden because of shame, not walking in craftiness or adulterating the word of God, but by the manifestation of truth commending ourselves to every man's conscience in the sight of God. And even if our gospel is veiled, it is veiled to those who are perishing, in whose case the god of this age has blinded the minds of the unbelieving so that they might not see the light of the gospel of the glory of **Christ**, who is the image of God. For we do not preach ourselves but **Jesus Christ as Lord** and ourselves as your servants for Jesus' sake. (3:14-4:5).

Paul tells us plainly who he has in mind when he refers to "the Lord" in verse 17. The honest person will be able to see quite clearly that Paul is most certainly referring to Jesus when he says, "the

Lord is the Spirit." The honest person will also see that the Spirit in question is the Holy Spirit.

But their minds were hardened; for until this very day at the reading of the old covenant the same veil remains unlifted, because it is removed in **Christ**. But to this day whenever Moses is read, a veil lies over their heart; but whenever a person turns to **the Lord**, the veil is taken away. Now **the Lord** is the Spirit, and where the Spirit of **the Lord** is, there is freedom. But we all, with unveiled face, beholding as in a mirror the glory of **the Lord**, are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory, just as from **the Lord**, the Spirit. Therefore, since we have this ministry, as we received mercy, we do not lose heart, but we have renounced the things hidden because of shame, not walking in craftiness or adulterating the word of God, but by the manifestation of truth commending ourselves to every man's conscience in the sight of God. And even if our gospel is veiled, it is veiled to those who are perishing, in whose case the god of this age has blinded the minds of the unbelieving so that they might not see the light of the gospel of the glory of **Christ**, who is the image of God. For we do not preach ourselves but **Christ Jesus as Lord**, and ourselves as your servants for Jesus' sake. (3:14-4:5).

3. There is ONE Spirit

At Ephesians 4:4-5, we read that there is **ONE** Spirit in the body of Christ, the church. There is **ONE** Spirit, not two, not three, not four. Hence, when we read that Jesus has been raised "Life-giving Spirit" at 1 Corinthians 15:45, we know this must be the same Spirit, the Holy Spirit. It is plainly obvious then that the risen Lord is this Spirit, "Life-making Spirit," the Holy Spirit. Jesus is the Life-giving Spirit.

4. Another Trinitarian Contradiction

A common response by Trinitarians is to try and vaguely define "the Lord" as "Yahweh." This is vague since in Trinitarian doctrine "Yahweh" could variously be the Triune God or the Father or the Son. The idea here is to avoid any specific identification of "the Lord" as either the Father, or the Son, or the Triune God, since those are the only choices they have and none of them will work for their doctrine.

So Trinitarians often choose to appeal to Exodus 34:34 and declare the Lord in view at 2 Corinthians 3:17 is "Yahweh." The funny thing here is that Trinitarians also commonly insist that Yahweh who spoke to Moses was the pre-incarnate Jesus. So they insist Yahweh who spoke to Moses at Exodus 34:34 is Jesus but when 2 Corinthians 3:17 turns up, they insist "the Lord" at 2 Corinthians 3:17 is not Jesus but Yahweh who spoke to Moses at Exodus 34:34. And so they speak with forked tongue and contradict themselves. Oddly, they never seem to notice their own contradiction here.

In the doctrine of the Trinity, the Triune God is not the Spirit, the Father is not the Spirit and Jesus is not the Spirit. So they have an inescapable problem on their hands here. When pressed on the specific identity of their "Yahweh" claim, Trinitarians tend to do one of two things. They tend to simply refuse to clarify precisely who they mean, or they resort to insisting that "the Lord" at 2 Corinthians 3:17 is "the Spirit" since nothing else will work for their doctrine.

5. An Absurd Trinitarian Interpretation: "The Spirit is the Spirit"

So Trinitarians can't say the Triune God is the Spirit or that would be saying their Triune God is the third person of the Trinity. That would not agree with their doctrine. They can't say the Father is the Spirit because then they would be saying the first person of the Trinity is the third person of the Trinity. And that would also not agree with their doctrine. And they cannot say Jesus is the Spirit in the same manner.

So their only recourse is to accept the facts. But since they don't want to accept the facts, they claim that "the Lord" of verse 3:17 is the Holy Spirit. But this is obviously ridiculous since it has Paul consequentially saying, "the Spirit is the

Spirit." This won't work for two reasons. First, it is simply ludicrous even on the face of it. This would have Paul creating a redundancy of insisting that the Spirit is the Spirit. What point would Paul be making to declare that the Spirit is the Spirit especially in this context? It is a senseless proposition. Second, the words which follow, "Spirit of the Lord," would make absolutely no sense since the Trinitarian interpretation would then amount to "the Spirit of the Spirit" resulting in even more absurdities. Hence, they are caught in an inescapable predicament.

6. What Paul Means

In context, Paul is talking about the glory of the new ministry of the Spirit because we experience the glory of the Lord Jesus Christ. In this context, Paul is alluding to the glorification of Jesus' resurrection body. He was raised, as Paul says, "life-giving Spirit" (1 Cor 15:45). His mortal crucified body of flesh was clothed and consumed by the Holy Spirit. Concerning the resurrection of the body, Paul tells us that death was swallowed up in life. The Spirit is that life (2 Cor 3:6). The Spirit swallowed up Jesus' crucified body. His body was clothed in Holy Spirit in such a way that his crucified body and the Spirit became one new creation, a Spiritual body, a new kind of humanity, the new Adam. We can also see that Paul has this in mind here in 2 Corinthians 3 since he immediately leads in to describe the resurrection body at 4:18-5:10.

If we are honest with ourselves the message is quite plain. Paul is discussing the work of the Holy Spirit in Christian lives. He indicates the veil that was over the Old Covenant minds is only taken away in Christ; it is only removed when one turns to the Lord resulting in the experience of the glory of the New covenant. The ministry of the Spirit is much more glorious. And then he says, "the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God. For we do not preach ourselves but **Christ Jesus as Lord**." Paul comes right out and explicitly tells us precisely who he had in mind when he said "the Lord is the Spirit." He is referring to the glorified and resurrected Jesus who is, as Paul says, "Life-giving Spirit."

Conclusion

Trinitarian doctrine claims Jesus **is most definitely NOT** the Holy Spirit. That would mean the first person of the Trinity is the same person as the third person and the doctrine of the Trinity would be destroyed since only two persons would remain. However, the evidence is overwhelmingly undeniable. Paul the Apostle is clearly telling us that the glorified Jesus **IS** the Spirit. These are two diametrically opposed claims and the Trinity is absolutely proven false if Jesus is indeed the Spirit. Who should we believe? Paul or Trinitarians?

He who.. *Anointed us* is God, who also sealed us and gave us *the Spirit in our hearts* as a pledge. 2
Corinthians 1:21

The mystery among the nations, which is *the Anointed One in you*, the hope of glory.
Colossians 1:27.

Last Revision/Update: March 24, 2016

HOME