



Theological Study of the Role of the Holy Spirit as the Antithesis of Liberal Theology

Elisabeth Faomasi Gea^{1*}, Yeremia Putra Danurja², Ekky Oktapian³

Sekolah Tinggi Teologi Kharisma Bandung

Corresponding Author: Elisabeth Faomasi Gea elisabethfaomasigea044@gmail.com

ARTICLE INFO

Keywords: Theology, Holy Spirit, Liberal, Church, Bible

Received : 21, October

Revised : 23, December

Accepted : 25, February

©2026 Gea, Danurja, Oktapian: This is an open-access article distributed under the terms of the [Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/).



ABSTRACT

This study examines liberal theology, which emerged in the early 20th century and is rooted in modern philosophy and rationalism, emphasizing the capacity of human reason as the source of truth. This understanding created a crisis of biblical authority because it rejected fundamental doctrines of the Christian faith and reduced Jesus to a mere moral teacher. As an antithesis, the Holy Spirit in biblical theology is understood as a personal God who guides believers to all truth. Through His work, the Holy Spirit reveals divine truth that transcends the limitations of human reason, affirms the authority of the Bible, and empowers people to live in true faith. The research method used is a literature review with a theological-systematic approach and descriptive-comparative analysis. The results show that only through the help of the Holy Spirit can the church resist the influence of liberal theology, maintain the purity of its teachings, and bear faithful witness to Christ amidst the changing times.

INTRODUCTION

In the history of theology there is a universal idea that has emerged, namely about the fatherhood of God and the brotherhood of man, this goes hand in hand with the emergence of Liberal theology in the 1900s. It began with laymen to seminaries followed by liberal ministers who took over the pulpits of churches in some parts of America. Liberalism is basically rooted in Stoic teachings or Stoicism, and this Liberal idea was transmitted by theology students who studied German idealistic philosophy and Biblical Criticism at several universities in Germany and Scotland. It is indicated that Liberal theology goes hand in hand with the idea of fatherhood, namely the fatherhood of God and brotherhood, which is the brotherhood of man. The root of liberal theology is Stoic or also called Stoicism, which focuses on something that can be controlled by oneself which is also related to the Humanist concept, namely believing in oneself.

According to Adriano da Silva Carvalho, the group is a cultural Protestant who emphasizes the gospel in harmony in realizing the great values of civilized human beings, namely love, love, peace, tolerance, freedom and kindness. The Gospel is summed up in 3 points, namely the fatherhood of God, the brotherhood of Man, and the infinite value of the human soul. It is indicated that according to liberal thinkers, Jesus was not a divine savior, but was seen as the one who gave birth to general moral values.

Liberal theology places great emphasis on the ability of the human mind to understand reality without being based on divine teachings and revelations accepted in religious traditions. Liberalism not only teaches material, but also develops critical thinking skills independently. This understanding emphasizes freedom in rationality, so it prioritizes ratio or logic. This has a very negative impact on spirituality because it displaces the basic basis of the Christian faith. This emphasis on understanding has led to a crisis of biblical authority as a source of truth.

The Holy Spirit is the person of God who helps believers and sinful people. In John 16:8 it is stated that the Holy Spirit will reveal the truth to the world. The Holy Spirit also works as the Spirit of Truth, which is to open limited understandings in order to understand God's will and way. Thus the understanding of the *divine* truth is not only the truth of the human mind but must also involve spiritual enlightenment through the Holy Spirit. This indicates that it is the Holy Spirit who is the person of God who will help people to know the true truth, as the antithesis of Liberal theology which emphasizes personal rationality and doubts the truth of the Bible.

This is an important point to examine, because the rational emphasis of Liberal theology is very dangerous to true religious faith. Therefore, the Holy Spirit plays a role in restoring true truth to the world.

METHODS

This research is a literature study with a qualitative approach and a theological-systematic style. The primary source used is the Bible, particularly the section that talks about the work of the Holy Spirit, while the supporting literature includes the writings of conservative and liberal theologians, as well as relevant academic articles. Data was obtained through reading and recording, then analyzed by descriptive-analytical methods to describe the basic views of the two theological currents, as well as comparative to reveal the fundamental differences between the two. Through this step, research is directed to show how the role of the Holy Spirit can be understood as the antithesis to liberal theology.

When it first appeared, liberalism was often identified with individual freedom in every aspect of life. The goal is to guarantee human rights. But it should be noted that the freedom in question here is the freedom of the individual, not the group. In other words, liberalism views personal liberty as a right that binds every individual in the name of human rights.

The theology of Liberalism developed from philosophical and scientific thinking centered on reason and experience, as expressed by Enns in 2008. This movement seeks to reinterpret Christian teachings and reform them to align them with modern science, ethics, and knowledge.

In the view of liberal theology, science is seen as the supreme source of truth. As a result, they often think that the Bible is full of myths and errors. Liberals argue that the Bible is not God-inspired word and contains many imperfections. They prioritize human reason and knowledge, so anything that is not in accordance with common sense or scientific conclusions must be rejected. Therefore, liberalism rejects fundamental doctrines in Christianity that involve miraculous and supernatural things, such as the incarnation of Christ, the resurrection of Christ, and others, because they are considered absurd (Enns, 2008).

Liberalists such as John Locke, Montesquieu, and Alexis de Tocqueville argued that Christianity was the only religion capable of fostering liberal values. According to them, values such as human dignity, freedom, equality, and even tolerance for dissent flourished thanks to Christian teachings. This view, as expressed by Parekh (2008), can be considered as speculation. This may have arisen in response to the pressing social and political conditions of the time. They seem to be trying to find a historical or philosophical basis to support the liberal ideas they hold, and show in the teachings of Christianity.

The teachings of the Liberals described by Ariyanto (2010) have several different views from Christian teachings in general. First, this teaching assumes that Jesus' birth of the virgin Mary is a myth and that Jesus did not rise from the grave. These people saw Jesus as a good moral teacher, but not as a supernatural being. These people argue that the miracles recorded in the Bible are mere stories made up by their followers. Second, liberals do not believe in the existence of hell and hold that humans are not born in sin. These people have the view that man can save himself without the need for Jesus' sacrifice on the cross. These people believe that God is a loving being and that it is impossible to send people to hell. Third, they do not believe that the writers of the Bible are the people who have been believed to be the authors, like the first five books of the Bible. For liberals, the Bible is an ordinary book of human work whose content must be criticized and cannot be taken for granted. Finally, these people teach that the most important thing is to love others. However, the definition of an act of love itself is not based on the Bible, but rather on the decisions of Liberal theologians.

Liberalism theology is based on the demand for equality, criticism of the church that prioritizes dogma, faith and ignores the right to life, justice, equality of rights, so that the essence of the Bible and its teachings are considered distorted, the teachings of the church are considered unreasonable, not based on logic.

The Role of the Holy Spirit in Biblical Theology

In Theology, the Holy Spirit is understood as the person of the Triune God who lives and works very actively in the life of every believer. In the Bible the Holy Spirit is often referred to as an entertainer, guide, and guide. And the Holy Spirit has an important role as well in the life of believers as follows.

The Holy Spirit in Creation

The Holy Spirit as the "mover" in giving life, found in Genesis 1:2 states that in the Bible "the earth was not yet formed and empty; pitch darkness covered the great Ocean, and the Spirit of God hovered above the surface of the water." And by this it shows that the Holy Spirit existed and was active even before man was created.

The Holy Spirit who gives Wisdom

The Holy Spirit also plays a role in human life in the Old Testament to the New Testament; the Holy Spirit actively works as a person of God by imparting wisdom. Wise Old Testament characters like Daniel who can interpret Pharaoh's dreams and there are also other characters in the Bible. As in the New Testament in Acts 6:10, the Holy Spirit gives wisdom, courage, and strength to everyone who fears who will then help in the journey of service.

Speaking in tongues

The phenomenon of speaking in tongues is also one of the important topics in biblical theology and also as an experience of the Christian faith. As in Acts 2 which records how Jesus' disciples were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak and speak other languages that were not understood by man. Just as the Holy Spirit descended upon Jesus' disciples and gave them the power, and the power to be His witnesses to the ends of the earth. This is fulfilled and lived until now as a believer. In Romans verse 8:26 it is also stated that the Holy Spirit can help in every weakness, because he does not know how to pray properly. However, the Spirit Himself prays for us with unspoken complaints. And this is understood by many theologians as a unity between the language of the Spirit and prayer that transcends the limits of human reason. And as in 1 Corinthians 14:2 which explains that to speak in the Spirit is to reveal the secret to God.

The Holy Spirit as the Antithesis of Liberal Theology

In John 16:13 it states that the Holy Spirit is the Spirit of Truth who will lead believers to all of God's truth. The Holy Spirit is the Person of God who has a very important role in human life. In reality, the status of human beings is in a sinful state so that it is difficult for humans to know the truth. But through Jesus Christ who has redeemed man from sin, it is a gift for man to return to live in righteousness. It is the Holy Spirit who is present in the life of the believer who will demand from truth to other biblical truths.

God's truth is absolute and indisputable truth, because God has perfect freedom, eternal and eternal freedom to be authority in human life. Man's freedom is limited and temporary, so it is very different from the Freedom that God has infinitely. Therefore, freedom in thinking and theorizing must be done with caution and must also be analyzed very carefully because it will have a fatal impact. Thus, Liberal Theology, which adheres to freedom of thought, is contrary to the true truth, which is the Bible. The Holy Spirit is the person of God who is the answer to true truth. The truth is revealed through the help of the Holy Spirit who is present for every believer so that every believer understands that the Bible is the true truth, not a book of myths, myths.

Implications for the Church Today

The Holy Spirit is the one who helps every believer to understand the truth. Thus, every believer must rely on the Holy Spirit not only to be able to understand the truth, but to be able to demonstrate to all mankind the true truth, not the truth that focuses only on self-thought. Thus, the church will play a role in straightening people who are lost in their minds to the true truth through the help of the Holy Spirit.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Liberal Teology

Liberal according to the Indonesian Dictionary has the meaning, namely Free, open. Meanwhile, in Latin Liberal it is mentioned with the word *Liber*, which means free and not slave. Liberalism was originally understood as the condition that a person is not under the possession of others. Over time, this concept developed into an ideology, philosophical view, and political tradition that placed freedom and equality of rights as the highest political values.

CONCLUSION

Thus, it can be stated that Liberal Theology was born from the influence of modern philosophy, rationalism, and humanism that emphasizes the ability of human reason as the supreme source of truth. This view has a serious impact on the Christian faith because it undermines the authority of the Bible and displaces the recognition of Christ as Lord and Savior. Rather, the Bible affirms that the Holy Spirit is the person of God who leads believers to all truth. Through the work of the Holy Spirit, man not only understands the truth rationally, but also experiences spiritual enlightenment that confirms faith in Christ and His Word. Thus, the Holy Spirit acts as the antithesis of liberal theology, as it reaffirms the authority of the Bible and the true truth of the Gospel.

This paper emphasizes that the church today needs to be more vigilant against the influence of liberal theology that can shake and erode faith and obscure the truth of the gospel in Jesus Christ. The Church is called to hold fast to the authority of God's Word with the help of the Holy Spirit which is the basis of true faithfulness. Only by relying on the Holy Spirit can believers discern true truth from misleading views, while also bearing living witness of Christ in the midst of the modern world. Thus, the role of the Holy Spirit is not only to help in understanding the Word, but also to strengthen faith, maintain the purity of doctrine, and enable the church to continue to stand firm on the truth of the Gospel.

REFERENCES

- Albert Talumepa, Ventje. "Teologi Liberalisme Salah Satu Teologi Kontemporer Suatu Kajian Analisis Bagi Pendidikan Agama Kristen." *Jurnal Pendidikan Indonesia* 5, no. 11 (2024): 1384–1395.
- Arestu Yulanda, Brando Frans Willi Malau, Cindi Anisa Bahar, and Sarmauli Sarmauli. "Doktrin Roh Kudus (Pneumatologi)." *Lumen: Jurnal Pendidikan Agama Katekese dan Pastoral* 3, no. 2 (2024): 11–19.
- Carvalho, Adriano da Silva. "Mythology, Kerygma and Demythologization: A Positive Introduction to Rudolf Bultmann's Hermeneutics" 1 (2024): 1–17. <https://works.hcommons.org/records/4c9mq-s9d69>.
- E. Miller, Donald, Yamamori, Tetsunao. *Global Pentecostalism: The New Face of Christian Sosial Engagement*. USA: The Regents of the University of California, 2007.
- Samarenna, Desti. "Analisis 1 Korintus 14:2-6 Tentang Karunia Berbahasa Roh Dan Bernubuat." *DUNAMIS: Jurnal Penelitian Teologi dan Pendidikan Kristiani* 2, no. 1 (2017): 1.
- Setiawan, Iwan, Yanti Martina Ruku, Afrida Riska Bili, Kaleb Timuneno, and Jimi Rasi. "Peranan Roh Kudus Dalam Perspektif Tulisan Paulus." *Skenoo : Jurnal Teologi dan Pendidikan Agama Kristen* 4, no. 1 (2024): 37–50.

Talumepa, Ventje Albert. "Teologi Liberalisme Salah Satu Teologi Kontemporer Suatu Kajian Analisis Bagi Pendidikan Agama Kristen." *Syntax Literate ; Jurnal Ilmiah Indonesia* 9, no. 5 (2024): 2942–2951.

Tubagus, Steven. "Makna Roh Kudus Dalam Alkitab." *DA'AT : Jurnal Teologi Kristen* 3, no. 1 (2022): 29–42.