

THE MINISTRY OF THE HOLY SPIRIT IN THE LIFE OF CHRIST

INTRODUCTION

- We can learn much about the personhood and work of the Holy Spirit by studying His involvement in the person and work of Jesus Christ
- That Christ would be empowered in His ministry by the Spirit was something prophesied in the OT:

Isaiah 11:2 ~ *The Spirit of the LORD will rest on Him, The spirit of wisdom and understanding, The spirit of counsel and strength, The spirit of knowledge and the fear of the LORD.*

Isaiah 42:1 ~ *Behold, My Servant, whom I uphold; My chosen one in whom My soul delights. I have put My Spirit upon Him; He will bring forth justice to the nations.*

Isaiah 61:1 ~ *The Spirit of the Lord GOD is upon me, Because the LORD has anointed me To bring good news to the afflicted; He has sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, To proclaim liberty to captives And freedom to prisoners*

- Thus, the Spirit is really the chief witness for Christ because of His direct involvement in His life and ministry
- “That is why his witness is so important, potent and reliable. From womb to tomb to throne, the Spirit was the constant companion of the Son. As a result, when he comes to Christians to indwell them, he comes as the Spirit of Christ in such a way that to possess him is to possess Christ himself, just as to lack him is to lack Christ” ~ *The Holy Spirit*, Sinclair Ferguson, 37
- This relationship is implied in Romans 8:9-10

Romans 8:9-10 ~ *However, you are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if indeed the Spirit of God dwells in you. But if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he does not belong to Him. If Christ is in you, though the body is dead because of sin, yet the spirit is alive because of righteousness.*

- This shows that there is an economic unity and identity between Christ and the Spirit

IN HIS CONCEPTION

- The Spirit was the generating power by which Christ was formed in Mary’s womb

Matthew 1:20~ *But when he had considered this, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream, saying, “Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary as your wife; for the Child who has been conceived in her is of the Holy Spirit.*

Luke 1:35 ~ *The angel answered and said to her, “The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; and for that reason the holy Child shall be called the Son of God.*

- The origin of Jesus’ birth was not through Joseph but through the agency of the Holy Spirit...Jesus had no human father
- Notice the 2 terms Luke uses to confirm this: “will come upon you...will overshadow you”

- Both of these terms indicate that God’s powerful presence would come upon Mary so that she would bear a child who is the Son of God
- “will come upon you”
 - This is a common OT phrase (1 Sam 10:6, 10; 16:13), indicating how the Spirit clothes himself with that person’s life, conforming it to his own purposes
 - In this case, not merely a barren woman is pregnant (like Elizabeth – Luke 1:15), but a virgin woman, one who has never known a man, is pregnant
- “will overshadow you”
 - The equivalent Hebrew word in the OT was used of the hovering of the Spirit over the waters at the original creation and of the cloud of God’s glory presence as He led His people out of Egypt...the One who was engaged in that first creation and the One who led the people through the wilderness as a pillar of cloud and fire is the Holy Spirit
 - Perhaps these references to the Spirit in both creation and the Exodus suggest that the work of the Spirit in the incarnation should be understood similarly
 - First, it is a divine work of new creation – the humanness of Jesus was formed by the activity of the Spirit...the beginning of a new creation...just as the Spirit was involved in the first creation, in the darkness, using existent materials, so too was the Spirit involved in this creation, in the darkness of Mary’s womb, using existent materials, the humanity of Christ was formed without the normal process of reproduction
 - Second, it is the beginning of the work of redemption, the new exodus
- The result of this Holy Spirit conception is that the human nature of Christ came into existence
- It was not a person who came into existence, for Christ as a Person existed from all eternity; but Christ’s human nature had a beginning at the moment of Holy Spirit conception
- This work of the Spirit in the incarnation is essential in maintaining the holiness and sinlessness of Christ’s humanity
- If Jesus’ humanity had been formed from Joseph or Mary WITHOUT the work of the Spirit, he would have been a sinner
- It took a special work of the Spirit to conceive in her womb of the stuff of her own body, the humanity of Christ, preserved from any taint of Adam’s sin
- Only by the work of the Spirit could Christ receive a genuine human nature and yet remain entirely sinless
- So right from the beginning, there is a bond between the humanity of Christ and the Spirit – it is the work of the Spirit that preserves both the reality of his genuine human nature (thereby identifying with us) and his freedom from the guilt of Adam’s sin

IN HIS EARLY LIFE

- Scripture is mostly silent about the early years of Christ...other than the time he amazed the teachers of the law in the temple (Luke 2:41-52)
- Jesus’ wisdom and understanding of the Scriptures at an early age must be attributed to the work of the Spirit in His life

Isaiah 11:2 ~ *The Spirit of the LORD will rest on Him, The spirit of wisdom and understanding, The spirit of counsel and strength, The spirit of knowledge and the fear of the LORD.*

- This wisdom didn’t just start when he was 30....this came as a result of the Spirit working in Him from a young age

- The Spirit was His teacher and the ministry of the Spirit to Jesus during the “hidden years” was closely related to His understanding of God’s Word
- So in the early growth of Christ, there is an inextricable bond between the Spirit and Himself

IN HIS BAPTISM

- The coming of Holy Spirit on Christ as His baptism introduced Jesus to His public ministry of teaching and performing miracles
- This anointing by the Spirit set Jesus apart to His ministry as the Messiah, an anointing that occurred at 30 years of age, when priests began their normal functions

Matthew 3:13-17 ~ *Then Jesus arrived from Galilee at the Jordan coming to John, to be baptized by him. But John tried to prevent Him, saying, “I have need to be baptized by You, and do You come to me?” But Jesus answering said to him, “Permit it at this time; for in this way it is fitting for us to fulfill all righteousness.” Then he permitted Him. After being baptized, Jesus came up immediately from the water; and behold, the heavens were opened, and he saw the Spirit of God descending as a dove and lighting on Him, and behold, a voice out of the heavens said, “This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well-pleased.”*

Acts 10:38 ~ *You know of Jesus of Nazareth, how God anointed Him with the Holy Spirit and with power,*

- The Spirit had conceived Him...the Spirit had been teaching Him...and now the Spirit comes in an external way at the beginning of Christ’s ministry to announce that the kingdom is present and the day of salvation is here
- Just as the high priest prepared for his atonement-day ministry by washing and anointing, so Jesus received the washing of this baptism and the anointing of the Spirit with a view to his own priestly ministry
- His water baptism was also pre-figurement of his coming death-baptism...in it, He identifies with sinners
- So, Jesus enters this new stage of ministry in the public arena...in the frailty of human flesh he stands in need of a greater endowment of the Spirit, in order that, through his death, resurrection, and ascension, he may possess the Spirit in order that He will be able to baptize with the Spirit
- The voice from heaven and the coming of the Spirit in the form of a dove “cooperate to produce an impregnable assurance of his own identify and ministry as Son of God and Suffering Servant-Messiah. The physical manifestation of the Spirit and the audible voice are a ‘seal’ to him...The voice exegetes the significance of the Spirit’s manifestation. It means, ‘You are my Son, whom I love; with you I am well pleased’...in this sense, the descent of the Spirit, and Jesus’ new experience of him, serve to assure Jesus of the Father’s love (essential if he is to be sustained through the forthcoming conflict), and of the reality of the Sonship which he is to express in his willingness to suffer as the Servant of the Lord (an essential principle for him to grasp if he is to withstand the attacks of Satan)” ~ *The Holy Spirit*, Sinclair Ferguson, 46-47.
- Thus, the Spirit is a confirmation to Christ of His coming work by the Father and a seal of the Father’s love for the Him

Luke 4:18 ~ *THE SPIRIT OF THE LORD IS UPON ME, BECAUSE HE ANOINTED ME TO PREACH THE GOSPEL TO THE POOR. HE HAS SENT ME TO PROCLAIM RELEASE TO THE CAPTIVES, AND RECOVERY OF SIGHT TO THE BLIND, TO SET FREE THOSE WHO ARE OPPRESSED*

- This “anointing” by the Spirit designated Jesus as Israel’s Messiah and king...it introduced Him to His public ministry...it empowered Jesus for His public ministry...it served as a divine authentication by the Father
- How is Christ’s baptism different than believer’s baptism?

IN HIS TEMPTATION

- Having been anointed with the Holy Spirit, Christ was now continuously filled with and under the guidance of Spirit
- This is evident from the fact that the Spirit led Christ into the wilderness immediately after His baptism

Matthew 4:1-11

Mark 1:12-13 ~ *Immediately the Spirit impelled Him to go out into the wilderness. And He was in the wilderness forty days being tempted by Satan; and He was with the wild beasts, and the angels were ministering to Him.*

Luke 4:1-2 ~ *Jesus, full of the Holy Spirit, returned from the Jordan and was led around by the Spirit in the wilderness for forty days, being tempted by the devil*

- The word Mark uses is a very strong word: “impelled” = to drive out
- It is the same word used in Mark 1:34 to refer to driving out, casting out demons
- Jesus is compelled by the Spirit to go into the wilderness....here Jesus confronted Satan and took the first step toward overthrowing Satan and his evil purposes
- How do we reconcile the fact that the Holy Spirit led Jesus into the wilderness to be tempted with the fact that God tempts no one (James 1:13)?
- Here we see the Spirit of God directing the Son of God to advance the kingdom of God into enemy-occupied territory
- And this gets to the heart of Jesus’ purposes in coming to earth...ultimately to destroy the work of Satan and to redeem those who are lost in sin
- Unfortunately, this emphasis is often missed as many interpret Jesus’ temptations as a model for how we as believers should resist temptations
- Now it is true...Christ does give us an example of how to resist temptations with the Word of God
- 1st temptation – Satan tempted Jesus to turn stones into bread rather than trusting God’s provision
 - Jesus’ response: Matt 4:4 ~ It is written, ‘MAN SHALL NOT LIVE ON BREAD ALONE, BUT ON EVERY WORD THAT PROCEEDS OUT OF THE MOUTH OF GOD.’ (quote from Deut 8:3)
 - It was as though Jesus was saying “Satan, it does not really matter much whether I have physical bread to eat. God will preserve my life. What really matters is whether I believe God or not. If I doubt his Word, all is lost”
- 2nd temptation – Satan tempted Jesus to receive worship Satan’s way rather than God’s way (jump off the top of the temple...God will send his angels to save you...and people will follow you immediately)
 - Jesus’ response: Matt 4:7 ~ it is written, ‘YOU SHALL NOT PUT THE LORD YOUR GOD TO THE TEST.’ (quote from Deut 6:16)
 - It was as though Jesus was saying, “Satan you want me to put God to the test...but my responsibility is not to test Him but to trust Him)
- 3rd temptation - Satan tempted Jesus to inherit kingdoms of the world his way rather than God’s
 - Jesus’ response: Matt 4:10 ~ it is written, ‘YOU SHALL WORSHIP THE LORD YOUR GOD, ANDSERVE HIM ONLY.’ (quote from Deut 6:13)
- Christ used the Word of God in his battle with Satan...but not just in general...he used the power of specific sayings of the Word of God to turn aside Satan and protect Himself
- So, Christ does show believers how to resist temptation with His Word

- But there is more at stake here...“the significance of the event does not lie in the ways in which our temptations are like his, but in the particularity and uniqueness of his experiences. He was driven into the wilderness as an assault force. His testing was set in the context of a holy war in which he entered the enemy’s domain, absorbed his attacks and set him into retreat (Mt. 4:11, and especially Lk. 4:13). In the power of the Spirit, Jesus advanced as the divine warrior, the God of battles who fights on behalf of his people and for their salvation...His triumph demonstrated that ‘the kingdom of God is near’ and that the messianic conflict had begun” ~ *The Holy Spirit*, Sinclair Ferguson, 48-49.
- The fact that Luke inserts the genealogy of Jesus between his baptism and temptation suggests that Christ’s victory over Satan in the wilderness are to be seen in the light of Adam’s failure
- Christ undid what Adam had done through the power of the Spirit – every place that the first Adam failed, the last Adam was successful
- This was a rerun of Eden – compare the way Satan tempted Eve with the way Satan tempted Jesus:

Genesis 3:6 ~ *When the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was a delight to the eyes, and that the tree was desirable to make one wise, she took from its fruit and ate; and she gave also to her husband with her, and he ate.*

1 John 2:16 ~ *For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh and the lust of the eyes and the boastful pride of life, is not from the Father, but is from the world.*

Lust of the flesh = Gen 3:6 = Matt 4:3-4

Lust of the eyes = Gen 3:6 = Matt 4:5-7

Pride of life = Gen 3:6 = Matt 5:8-10

- The last Adam has regained enemy territory and He is going to have power over Satan in everything He does!
- See how the person of Christ and the power of the Spirit are inextricably bound together!

IN HIS MINISTRY AND TEACHING

- The Spirit was really the source and power for Jesus’ earthly ministry and repeatedly the presence and power of the Spirit in the life and ministry of Jesus was presented as proof of His identity as Israel’s Messiah
- Immediately after His temptation, Luke states that Jesus began his ministry with the authority of the Spirit:

Luke 4:14 ~ *And Jesus returned to Galilee in the power of the Spirit, and news about Him spread through all the surrounding district.*

- Jesus maintained that the evidence of the Spirit’s power in His life was proof that He had come down from heaven as Messiah:

John 3:31-34 ~ *The one who comes from above is above all; the one who is from the earth belongs to the earth, and speaks as one from the earth. The one who comes from heaven is above all. He testifies to what he has seen and heard, but no one accepts his testimony. The man who has accepted it has certified that God is truthful. For the one whom God has sent speaks the words of God, for God gives the Spirit without limit*

- Jesus often identified the Holy Spirit as the power behind His ministry and evidence that He should be - believed in as God’s Son:

Matthew 12:28 ~ *But if I drive out demons by the Spirit of God, then the kingdom of God has come upon you*

Matthew 12:31-32 ~ *And so I tell you, every sin and blasphemy will be forgiven men, but the blasphemy against the Spirit will not be forgiven. Anyone who speaks a word against the Son of Man will be forgiven, but anyone who speaks against the Holy Spirit will not be forgiven, either in this age or in the age to come*

- Thus, to reject Jesus as the Messiah required some explanation as to where His power came from...As no one could deny that His miracles were genuine and that there was the evidence of supernatural power, men who persisted in rejecting Christ as God's Messiah had to attribute His power to Satan...In so doing, they became guilty of the sin of blasphemy against the Holy Spirit.
- In His teaching, Jesus indicated that men are saved by means of the ministry of the Holy Spirit, who communicates and illuminates the truth of God, and who brings men to life:

John 3:5-6, 8 ~ *Jesus answered, "I tell you the truth, no one can enter the kingdom of God unless he is born of water and the Spirit. Flesh gives birth to flesh, but the Spirit gives birth to spirit... The wind blows wherever it pleases. You hear its sound, but you cannot tell where it comes from or where it is going. So it is with everyone born of the Spirit"*

John 6:63 ~ *The Spirit gives life; the flesh counts for nothing. The words I have spoken to you are spirit and they are life*

John 16:8-11 ~ *When he comes, he will convict the world of guilt in regard to sin and righteousness and judgment: in regard to sin, because men do not believe in me; in regard to righteousness, because I am going to the Father, where you can see me no longer; and in regard to judgment, because the prince of this world now stands condemned*

- Jesus not only taught men generally about the Holy Spirit; He also taught His disciples a great deal about the Holy Spirit and the ministry which He would play in their lives and ministry to come.
- Earlier in His ministry He promised the Holy Spirit to those who would ask for Him:

Luke 11:13 ~ *If you then, though you are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father in heaven give the Holy Spirit to those who ask him!*

- As the time for His departure approached, Jesus spoke more of the Spirit's coming, and especially of the ministry which the Spirit would have in manifesting His presence and power to His disciples:

John 14:15-18 ~ *If you love me, you will obey what I command. And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Counselor to be with you forever—the Spirit of truth. The world cannot accept him, because it neither sees him nor knows him. But you know him, for he lives with you and will be in you. I will not leave you as orphans; I will come to you*

John 14:26 ~ *But the Counselor, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you all things and will remind you of everything I have said to you*

John 15:26 ~ *When the Counselor comes, whom I will send to you from the Father, the Spirit of truth who goes out from the Father, he will testify about me*

John 16:13 ~ *But when he, the Spirit of truth, comes, he will guide you into all truth. He will not speak on his own; he will speak only what he hears, and he will tell you what is yet to come*

John 16:15 ~ *All that belongs to the Father is mine. That is why I said the Spirit will take from what is mine and make it known to you*

- When the disciples were arrested for proclaiming the gospel, the Holy Spirit would give them the words to speak in their defense, thereby eliminating the need to worry or think about this before hand:

Matthew 10:20 ~ *For it will not be you speaking, but the Spirit of your Father speaking through you*

Luke 12:12 ~ *For the Holy Spirit will teach you at that time what you should say*

- The Great Commission which Jesus gave the disciples just before His ascension, was predicated on the power which He gave them through His Spirit.
- Thus, they were also commanded to wait for the Spirit to come upon them, enduing them with power:

Matthew 28:19 ~ *Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit*

John 20:22 ~ *And with that he breathed on them and said, "Receive the Holy Spirit" (*

IN HIS DEATH

- As is clear thus far, the whole of Christ's ministry was conducted in the Spirit's power
- It should be no surprise then that the Spirit was involved in his death and resurrection as well;
- We do know that Jesus gave up his life willingly:

John 10:18 ~ *No one has taken it away from Me, but I lay it down on My own initiative. I have authority to lay it down, and I have authority to take it up again. This commandment I received from My Father.*

- So on the one hand, Christ's death was entirely voluntary on His part...He willfully took the punishment of the cross, willfully took the sin of the world upon Himself, willfully submitted to absorbing the full weight of God's wrath
- He was willing to undergo hell for us on His own initiative and obedience
- Yet, His death was also through the Holy Spirit
- Interestingly, however, there is really only 1 reference to the Spirit's work in Christ offering Himself on the cross:

Hebrews 9:14 ~ *how much more will the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered Himself without blemish to God, cleanse your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?*

- Notice all 3 members of the Godhead were involved in sacrifice of Christ
- It is possible that the concept of the suffering Servant of Isaiah is in view when the author of Hebrews writes this verse
- If so, then the Spirit who is said to come up the Servant in Isaiah 11 and 42 is also the Spirit who leads Him to suffer the for our sin in Isaiah 52:13-53:12
- Christ offered Himself through the Spirit

IN HIS RESURRECTION

- Just as the entire Godhead was involved in the death of Christ, so was the entire Godhead involved in the resurrection of Christ
- God the Father raised Christ from the dead:

Acts 2:32 ~ *This Jesus God raised up again, to which we are all witnesses*

Romans 6:4 ~ *Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father*

Galatians 1:1 ~ *Paul, an apostle (not sent from men nor through the agency of man, but through Jesus Christ and God the Father, who raised Him from the dead)*

Ephesians 1:19-20 ~ *and what is the surpassing greatness of His power toward us who believe. These are in accordance with the working of the strength of His might which He brought about in Christ, when He raised Him from the dead and seated Him at His right hand in the heavenly places*

- Christ also had the power to raise Himself from the dead:

John 2:19-21 ~ *Jesus answered them, "Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up." The Jews then said, "It took forty-six years to build this temple, and will You raise it up in three days?" But He was speaking of the temple of His body*

John 10:18 ~ *No one has taken it away from Me, but I lay it down on My own initiative. I have authority to lay it down, and I have authority to take it up again. This commandment I received from My Father.*

- The Holy Spirit was also involved in the resurrection of Christ from the dead:

Romans 1:4 ~ *who was declared the Son of God with power by the resurrection from the dead, according to the Spirit of holiness, Jesus Christ our Lord*

Romans 8:11 ~ *But if the Spirit of Him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, He who raised Christ Jesus from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through His Spirit who dwells in you.*

- Christ's resurrection was the work of the Triune God... The entire Trinity had part in this glorious event

THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE SPIRIT IN THE LIFE OF CHRIST

- If Christ depended on the Spirit in these ways, how much more should we?