

Pneumatology
The Doctrine of the Person and Work of the Holy Spirit

THE WORK OF THE HOLY SPIRIT IN RELATION TO CHRIST

I. Christ's Birth

- A. The Cause: Scripture clearly states that Christ was born of a Virgin and the efficient cause and agent of generating the humanity of Christ was the Holy Spirit (Luke 1:35; Matt. 1:20). Although the incarnation was an act of all three persons of the Godhead, yet it was especially the work of the Holy Spirit (cf. Heb. 10:5 and 2:14). NOTE: The inscrutable mystery can be stated, then, that Christ was begotten of the Holy Spirit; the life which was joined to humanity was that of the Second Person, and the First Person became the Father of the humanity of Christ.
- B. The Results: (Heb. 4:15; 2 Cor. 5:21; 1 Pet. 2:22; Heb. 7:26)
 - 1. A human nature was conceived, not a person, for the Second Person existed always.
 - 2. The God-Man came into existence.
 - 3. Christ had a sinless humanity, not just a sanctified humanity.

II. Christ's Life

- A. Introduction: Because Jesus is full deity, some have denied or minimized the necessity of the work of the Holy Spirit in the life of Christ. They reason that because He is God He has power within Himself to accomplish anything and everything. POINT: As far as the divine nature of Jesus is concerned—His deity—the Holy Spirit has little influence. For the second Person of the Trinity is co-equal with the Third. But as far as the human nature of Christ is concerned—his manhood—He does need the constant presence of the Holy Spirit.
- B. His Conception: Christ was filled with the Spirit from the moment of conception. The Old Testament predicted that Christ would have the fullness of the Spirit (Isa. 11:2-3; 42:1-4; 61:1-2) and the new Testament confirms this (John 3:34). John the Baptist was filled with the Spirit from his mother's womb (Luke 1:15) and would this be any less true of Christ? NOTE: There is no good reason to deny that Christ was filled with the Spirit from the moment of conception.
- C. His Childhood Days: The human nature of Christ was subject to development (Heb. 5:8). Luke 2:40 indicates that Christ grew physically, matured morally, spiritually and intellectually. From Luke 1:80 where it states that John the Baptist "grew and waxed strong in spirit," the words "in spirit" may refer to the Holy Spirit. If so, this would then confirm that Christ's childhood days until maturity were superintended by the Spirit of God. NOTE: It is interesting that in Luke chapter one Christ is first called a babe (vs. 12), then a child (vs. 40), then a boy (vs. 43), and finally Jesus (vs. 52). NOTE: It is evident that the ministry of the Holy Spirit to the humanity of Christ supplied knowledge of every fact necessary to duty, to avoid sin, or to do the

will of God. The human nature of Christ was undoubtedly the seat of the most brilliant human mind ever found in the world.

- D. His Baptism: At Christ's baptism, it says that "the Holy Spirit descended on Him in bodily form like a dove." (Luke 3:22). From this point on, we read of Christ's ministry of preaching and miracles. We may conclude that the giving of the Holy Spirit to Christ at baptism was for the purpose of officially equipping Him for His public ministry. The anointing of the Spirit on Christ probably came at the time of His water baptism, for we find soon after this that His anointing was related to His preaching ministry (Luke 4:18-19). Christ's anointing distinguished Him as:

1. The Messiah (Acts 4:27)
2. As one empowered to preach (Luke 4:18)
3. As one to do good (Acts 10:38).

NOTE: Even after Jesus had been filled with the Spirit of wisdom and understanding, and had advanced in the favor of God in His own personal life, He still needed the Holy Spirit in a new way for His public ministry.

- E. His Temptation: After his baptism, Jesus is said to be "full of the Holy Spirit" (Luke 4:1) and then "he was led by the Spirit into the wilderness" (Luke 4:1). Here it may be seen that the Holy Spirit was leading and filling Christ during the time of His testings and temptations. Later we read that after the temptations Jesus "returned in the power of the Spirit" (Luke 4:14). NOTE: The whole period of temptation from beginning to end was under the control of the Holy Spirit, and it was by means of the Spirit that Jesus' human nature was given the strength to overcome the severe temptations placed before Him.
- F. His Miracles: Jesus cast out demons by the power of the Spirit (Matt. 12:28) and His miraculous works in general were related to the empowering of the Spirit (Luke 4:14, 15, 18 cf. Acts 10:38). From these verses, it may be concluded that Jesus did many of His miracles in the power of the Holy Spirit. It may be that He did ALL of His miracles through the Spirit, but the Bible does not specifically indicate this. POINT: Christ apparently did do miracles in His own power (e.g. Mark 5:30; Luke 5:17ff; 6:19). NOTE: In conclusion, Christ did not have to perform miracles in the power of the Spirit, but He did so on certain occasions; in some instances He clearly used His own power.
- G. Miscellaneous: Christ is said to be sealed with the Spirit (John 6:27) which speaks of His heavenly origin and divine sonship. Also we see that Christ rejoiced in the Holy Spirit (A.S.V.) in Luke 10:21.
- H. Conclusion: We see in the life of Christ how as a man He had a dependence upon the Holy Spirit in His life. He is our example. If Christ, who was perfect, needed dependence upon the Spirit, how much more Christians who are sinful by nature. As one reads through the life of Christ, one is impressed by (1) the compelling power of His words; (2) the tenderness of His actions; (3) the courage and the manliness of His deeds; (4) His keen insight into human nature; (5) the marvelous calm and poise that was His in every circumstance, and (6) the unforgettable impact that He made upon everyone. What was His secret? The answer is that as a man He obeyed the will of the Father (John 5:30; 6:38; 5:19), and was dependent upon the Holy Spirit in His human experience.

III. **Christ's Death**

- A. There is only one verse that would indicate the Spirit's ministry to Christ in His death (Heb. 9:14): "How much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit, offered Himself without spot to God, purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God."
- B. Commentators disagree as to whether the "eternal Spirit" refers to the eternal spirit of Jesus or the Holy Spirit, but most hold to the latter. NOTE: Christ voluntarily offered Himself as a perfect sacrifice. He went to death, knowing its consequences, but willingly, with faith in God, and with love, trust and obedience. His attitude was perfect for accomplishing our redemption.
- C. **Conclusion:** *"The work of the Holy Spirit in relation to the sufferings of Christ on the cross consisted, then in sustaining the human nature in it's love of God, in submission to the will of God and obedience to His commands, and in encouraging and strengthening Christ in the path of duty which led to the cross. In it all, the ministry was to the human nature, and through it to the person of Christ. The inquiring mind must ever confess that this truth is infinite and beyond our complete comprehension."* (Walvoord, *The Holy Spirit*, p. 101)

IV. **Christ's Resurrection**

- A. **Doubtful Passages:** Two passages which are often used to prove that Christ was resurrected by the Spirit, are Romans 1:4 and 8:11. Both of these passages are questionable. In Romans 8:11 the "he" that raised Jesus from the dead is God, not the Holy Spirit. In Romans 1:4 the words "according to the spirit of holiness" seem to be parallel to "according to the flesh" (vs. 3); thus this is probably a reference to Christ's own divine spirit, not the Holy Spirit.
- B. **1 Pet. 3:18:** "For Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh, but quickened by the Spirit." This could be translated "made alive in the spirit" in which case it would refer to Christ's own spirit. However most commentators take this as instrumental and refer it to the Holy Spirit. NOTE: The resurrection is attributed to the Father (Acts 2:24) and to the Son (John 10:17-18), thus it is logical to conclude that the Holy Spirit did His part as well.

V. **Conclusion**

- A. If Christ, the perfect man and free from original sin, was dependent upon the Holy Spirit, then how much more do we need him!
- B. If Christ needed the Spirit as a boy to give him personal holiness and wisdom so that He might increase in favor with God and man, the how much more to our little children, who are sinful by nature, need the Holy Spirit in order that they may grow up in spiritual beauty and increase in the favor of God.
- C. If Christ, who was God and sinless, needed the anointing and power of the Holy Spirit for preaching, how much more do sinful preachers of the gospel today need the Spirit in their lives so that their preaching may be in "the demonstration and power of the Spirit." "If Christ, in His temptations, needed the Spirit to overcome

them and be victorious, how can we expect to be victorious over sin when we go about without an attitude of dependence upon the Spirit.

- D. If Christ needed the Holy Spirit in order that He might offer himself up to God and obey him willingly and not grudgingly, then how much more will we need the Holy Spirit to enable us to be willing to do whatever God would have us do.