

Jesus *and the* Holy Spirit



SABBATH AFTERNOON

Read for This Week's Study: *Gen. 1:2; Job 33:4; Matt. 1:18-20; 3:16, 17; Luke 1:35; John 3:3-8, 34; Rom. 8:11; Heb. 9:14.*

Memory Text: “The angel answered and said unto her, The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee: therefore also that holy thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God” (*Luke 1:35*).

The Holy Spirit was involved in the incarnation of Jesus and His coming to this earth. Jesus was conceived by Mary through the overshadowing of the Spirit. Before He entered upon His public ministry, Jesus was endowed with the Spirit as He descended on Him in the form of a dove at His baptism. Immediately after the baptism, the Spirit led Him into the wilderness.

Throughout His entire ministry Jesus was led by the Spirit. He unreservedly committed Himself to the accomplishment of His Father's will, as unveiled to Him in the Sacred Writings and the promptings of the Spirit. He surrendered His own inclinations. He had no more desire to die at the age of 33 than you and I would. In fact, He pleaded with His Father to take that cup away, if possible. But He would rather die at 33 than go contrary to His Father's will. He did not insist on having His own way, although He could easily have escaped death.

His work, His ministry, and His miracles were accomplished, just as ours must be, through the direction of the Holy Spirit.

**Study this week's lesson to prepare for Sabbath, April 15.*

Miracle Birth

Read Matthew 1:18-20 and Luke 1:35. What role do these texts give to the Holy Spirit regarding the birth of Jesus into humanity?

If there are any texts in Scripture that show the limits of science and human logic and experience to explain the great truths of God, these two must be among the top. It's amazing enough, a woman being impregnated by the Holy Spirit; that she was a virgin (*Matt. 1:23*) makes the miracle even more amazing. People all through the history of the church have come up with all sorts of explanations for the birth of Jesus other than what the texts say. Those who limit what they believe only to what their senses can tell them or what past experience has shown them or what modern science can explain to them will have a very hard time with these texts and the great truths they contain. Those, however, who trust in the power of God (*Luke 1:37, Heb. 11:6*) and the truth of God's Word (*2 Tim. 3:16*) can accept the texts for what they say, regardless of how little we can understand the processes behind the truth revealed in them. The just, after all, shall live by faith (*Heb. 10:38*), and what is faith other than belief in what we can't fully understand, and who can fully understand a sinful human woman bearing in her womb the Son of God?

How do these few texts (*Gen. 1:2, Job 33:4, John 3:3-8, Rom. 8:11*) help us better understand the role of the Holy Spirit in the pregnancy of Mary and in the birth of Jesus?

However unfathomable the incarnation of Jesus, it's not hard to understand why the Holy Spirit Himself, One of the Godhead, would be the acting Agent. Who else other than God could perform such a miracle? It's hard to imagine an angel, or any inferior or created being, as the causative agent in this incredible act.

What are some things in the natural world that you believe are true but don't fully understand? How do these examples help you realize there are things about your faith you can believe in but not understand either?

Anointed by the Spirit

What do Matthew 3:16, 17; Mark 1:10; Luke 3:21, 22; and John 1:32-34 tell us about the role of the Holy Spirit in Christ's ministry?

Though He was the spotless Son of God, the One who was with God from the days of eternity (*John 1:1-3*), Jesus, in His human manifestation, was totally dependent upon the work of the Spirit in His life. That is, in His humanity, He allowed Himself to be guided and strengthened by the Holy Spirit.

Notice, too, at this scene that all three Persons of the Trinity were manifested in a special way not always revealed in Scripture: The Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost were all there. This fact alone should tell us how significant the anointing and baptism of Jesus were. Indeed, here, in a special way, began His work, not only for the redemption of humanity but for ending the great controversy with Satan.

What do Matthew 4:1, Mark 1:12, and Luke 4:1 tell us about the continued work and role of the Holy Spirit in the ministry of Christ?

Here, too, we are shown the influence of the Holy Spirit on the life and mission of Christ. It was here, in the wilderness temptation, that Christ went over the same ground that Adam did, only in a situation much worse than Adam (after all, Adam had a full belly in paradise while Jesus, with a growling empty stomach, was in a barren wilderness). The three writers who wrote about the temptation all emphasized it was the Spirit, which had just fallen on Christ in a marked way at His baptism, that had led Him into the wilderness. They also expressly state, too, that it was Satan who had tempted Him.

In what ways have you faced your own “wilderness temptation”? How did you fare? What can you learn from Christ’s experience that can help you with future temptations?

Guided by the Spirit

“For he whom God hath sent speaketh the words of God: for God giveth not the Spirit by measure unto him” (*John 3:34*).

Today’s English Version lucidly renders this verse as follows: “The one whom God has sent speaks God’s words, because God gives him the fullness of his Spirit.”

What is Jesus saying with those words? What do they tell us about the influence of the Holy Spirit in His life? What should they tell us about what the Holy Spirit should be doing in our lives?

Acts 1:1, 2 makes it plain that it was through the power of the Holy Spirit that Jesus “had given commandments unto the apostles.” Here, too, we have another clear reference to the dependence of Jesus upon the power of the Holy Spirit in His life.

What was Jesus’ main objective during His life on earth? *John 4:34, 6:38, 8:29*. How does this objective fit in with the work of the Holy Spirit in His life?

“Jesus stood, with reference to His human nature, during all the days of His humiliation, under the constant and penetrating operation of the Holy Spirit. The Son, who lacked nothing, but as God in union with the Father and the Holy Spirit possessed all things, compassionately adopted our human nature. . . . Although He was the Son, He did not take its preparation, enriching, and operation into His own hand, but was willing to receive them from the hand of the Holy Spirit.” —Abraham Kuyper, *The Work of the Holy Spirit* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1975), p. 96.

What changes do you need to make in your life so every word you speak could be done through the influence of the Holy Spirit? How different would your words be than they are now?

Spirit-Directed Activity: Part 1

“The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor; he hath sent me to heal the brokenhearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised, to preach the acceptable year of the Lord” (*Luke 4:18, 19*).

As you read the above text, focus on where Christ’s emphasis is. In other words, though He’s talking about the Spirit of the Lord being upon Him, how was that reality manifested in His life?

Jesus preached the gospel to the poor demoniacs (*Mark 5:1-16*); He forgave fallen Mary Magdalene (*see Luke 7:36-48, John 8:1-11*) and delivered her from captivity in sin; He restored sight to the physically blind (*see Mark 10:46-52*), as well as to the spiritually blind; He set at liberty those who were bruised and proclaimed the acceptable year of the Lord.

The Pharisees asserted that Jesus cast out devils through the power of Beelzebub. But He made it clear that He performed His miracles through the power of the Spirit (*see Matt. 12:28*). Jesus was dependent on the power of the Spirit to perform His miracles during His earthly ministry.

What part did the Spirit play in Christ’s offering Himself as a ransom for our sins? *Heb. 9:14*.

How did Peter sum up the Spirit-inspired ministry of Jesus? *Acts 10:38*.

None of us, of course, is Jesus. But in what ways can we, if filled with the Spirit, do some of the same things Jesus did (*John 14:12*) for the benefit of others? How have you been able to, under the power of the Spirit, do some of these same things?

Spirit-Directed Activity: Part 2

“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” (*1 Pet. 3:18; see also Rom. 1:4, 8:11*).

God is one, but triune. The three Persons of the Trinity work together. They are intimately united in Their work. Thus, although this text says Jesus was raised from the dead by that Spirit, the other two Persons of the Deity united in resurrecting Jesus.

Who does the apostle Paul say raised Jesus from the dead? *Gal. 1:1, Eph. 1:17-20*.

What did Jesus Himself say about His resurrection? How does this text help us understand all that was involved in His resurrection? *John 10:17, 18*.

“Over the rent sepulcher of Joseph, Christ had proclaimed in triumph, ‘I am the resurrection, and the life.’ These words could be spoken only by the Deity. All created beings live by the will and power of God. They are dependent recipients of the life of God. From the highest seraph to the humblest animate being, all are replenished from the Source of life. Only He who is one with God could say, I have power to lay down My life, and I have power to take it again. In His divinity, Christ possessed the power to break the bonds of death.”—Ellen G. White, *The Desire of Ages*, p. 785.

Although Paul spends little time on the events of Christ’s life, His death and resurrection are constant themes in Paul’s letters. When Paul speaks about what is of “first importance” (*1 Cor. 15:3, NIV*) for believers, it is that “Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day according to the scriptures, and that he appeared” (*vss. 3-5, NIV*). No wonder, then, the Bible links all three Persons of the Godhead with the resurrection of Christ as it did with His baptism. It’s of crucial importance to all that we believe as Christians. Without that belief, as Paul says, we have no hope (*vs. 17, NIV*).

Why is the resurrection of Jesus so important to us as Seventh-day Adventists, especially with our understanding of the state of the dead?

Further Study: Ellen G. White, *The Desire of Ages*, pp. 72–74, 111–113, 122, 123; *The Ministry of Healing*, p. 479; Isaiah 58.

“Jesus is our example. . . . He lived to please, honor, and glorify His Father in the common things of life. His work began in consecrating the lowly trade of the craftsmen who toil for their daily bread. He was doing God’s service just as much when laboring at the carpenter’s bench as when working miracles for the multitude. And every youth who follows Christ’s example of faithfulness and obedience in His lowly home may claim those words spoken of Him by the Father through the Holy Spirit, ‘Behold My Servant, whom I uphold; Mine Elect, in whom My soul delighteth.’ Isa. 42:1.”—Ellen G. White, *The Desire of Ages*, p. 74.

Everything pertaining to Christ’s life on earth was accomplished by the power of the Spirit: (1) His conception (*Luke 1:35*); (2) His baptism (*Luke 3:21, 22*); (3) His justification; that is, the manifestation of His righteous life (*1 Tim. 3:16*); (4) His guidance in His life of service (*Luke 4:1*; see also *Luke 2:49*); (5) His miracles (*Matt. 12:28*); (6) His resurrection (*1 Pet. 3:18*). This reality powerfully points out the importance of the role of the Holy Spirit in the plan of salvation and our lives.

Discussion Questions:

- ❶ As a class, talk about the incarnation of Jesus, about what it means that God Himself would “come down” into our world and then die for our sins. What hope does this great truth give us?
- ❷ According to Ellen White, stories were circulating about the “illegitimate” birth of Jesus. What lessons are there for us today? Do you know someone who is pregnant out of wedlock or has made some similar mistakes? As a class, what can you do to help that person, in contrast to just gossiping about the situation?
- ❸ In what practical ways can you, as a class, do for others the kind of things Jesus did, such as visiting the sick or inviting people to a meal? How are these types of acts visible expressions of the Holy Spirit working in our lives?

Darkness Meets Light

Anwhus Anwa

Ama was married to a dedicated Adventist man in central Ghana. But a spirit of darkness entered Ama's life and made life difficult for the couple. From that day her husband never knew peace at home. Ama fought with him and created much heartache. Because darkness and light cannot live together, Ama did not want to see her husband anymore. Her husband was convinced that Ama had a spiritual problem, and he could do nothing but pray for her and endure her behavior. Divorce was not a solution for him.

Ama decided to visit one of her daughters in the capital city of Accra. Ama's daughter encouraged her mother to go with her to a meeting at church, and Ama went. Ama continued attending church services and started studying the Bible. The church members fasted and prayed for Ama, and she gave her life to Christ. She confessed how demons had used her to bring her family pain and to disgrace God's church.

On the day of her baptism, the pastor entered the river and motioned for Ama to enter. He could see her struggling on the riverbank and realized that the demons were forbidding her to enter the water. The deacons tried to help her into the water, but she clung to them, as if fearful of even touching the water. The pastor waded toward Ama and began praying aloud to Jesus. At the name of Jesus, the demons left Ama. She let go of the deacons and waded into the water to be baptized. As others witnessed the power of God in her life they, too, decided to follow Jesus.

Ama was eager to return to her husband as a born-again Seventh-day Adventist Christian. She reconciled with her husband and testified of the power of God to save her and deliver her from the demons that had tormented her for so many years.

Ama's home is peaceful now, filled with the songs of grace and truth instead of harsh words of censure and angry shouts of accusation. And her patient husband rejoices that his years of prayer and fasting, and his faithfulness to his marriage vows has been rewarded.

Your mission offerings support the work in Ghana and throughout the world, providing materials and literature to bring the light of God's love to searching men and women.

Anwhus Anwa is a pastor in Accra, Ghana, who baptized Ama.