

**§ 6. Doctrine of God: Holy Spirit**  
**Lecture 2**  
**Relation Between the Holy Spirit and Jesus Christ /**  
**The Ministries of the Holy Spirit**

We've been talking about the ministry and the person of the Holy Spirit. Today we want to talk about the relation between the Holy Spirit and Christ, the second person of the Trinity. What you find is that the ministry of Jesus was empowered and permeated by the presence of the Holy Spirit.

For example, the Holy Spirit is responsible for the virginal conception of Jesus. Look at Luke 1:35. Here Gabriel the Angel says to Mary, "The Holy Spirit will come upon you and the power of the most high will overshadow you. Therefore the child to be born will be called holy, the Son of God." So the Holy Spirit is responsible for the virginal conception of Christ right at the very beginning.

Also in the beginning of Jesus' earthly ministry we find the Holy Spirit present and active. Turn over to Luke 3:21-22. This is the public baptism of Jesus at which he begins his public ministry. We read, "Now when all the people were baptized and when Jesus also had been baptized and was praying, the heaven was opened and the Holy Spirit descended upon him in bodily form as a dove, and a voice came from heaven, 'Thou art my beloved Son, with thee I am well pleased.'" Here all three of the persons are present at the baptism of Jesus: the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit who descends upon the Son at his baptism to empower him for the public ministry to which God had called him.

The miracles and the exorcisms that Jesus performed during his earthly ministry were done through the power of the Holy Spirit. Look at Acts 10:38. This is Peter's sermon to Cornelius and his household. Peter speaks of "how God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and with power. How he went about doing good and healing all that were oppressed by the devil for God was with him." Here it is through the power and anointing of the Holy Spirit that Jesus is able to carry out his miraculous healing ministry.

As for the exorcisms, turn over to Matthew 12:28. There Jesus says, "If it is by the Spirit of God that I cast out demons then the kingdom of God has come upon you." So his power as an exorcist came through the anointing of the Holy Spirit that was upon him.

Not only his miraculous activity was empowered and anointed by the Holy Spirit but also Jesus' preaching. Let's go back to the Gospel of Luke 4:14-21:

[blockquote]And Jesus returned in the power of the Spirit into Galilee, and a report concerning him went out through all the surrounding country. And he taught in their synagogues, being glorified by all.

And he came to Nazareth, where he had been brought up; and he went to the synagogue, as his custom was, on the sabbath day. And he stood up to read; and there was given to him the book of the prophet Isaiah.<sup>1</sup> He opened the book and found the place where it was written,

[blockquote]“The Spirit of the Lord is upon me,  
because he has anointed me to preach good news to the poor.  
He has sent me to proclaim release to the captives  
and recovering of sight to the blind,  
to set at liberty those who are oppressed,  
to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord.”[/blockquote]

And he closed the book, and gave it back to the attendant, and sat down; and the eyes of all in the synagogue were fixed on him. And he began to say to them,  
“Today this scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing.”[/blockquote]

Wow! Here Jesus says that the prophecy of Isaiah – the Spirit of the Lord resting upon him to preach the good news – is manifested in his ministry. So his preaching and teaching about the kingdom of God was also empowered and driven by the Holy Spirit.

Finally, the continuance of Jesus’ ministry after his resurrection and ascension to heaven is carried on by the Holy Spirit. John 16:7, 13-15:

[blockquote]Nevertheless I tell you the truth: it is to your advantage that I go away, for if I do not go away, the Counselor will not come to you; but if I go, I will send him to you.

. . .

When the Spirit of truth comes, he will guide you into all the truth; for he will not speak on his own authority, but whatever he hears he will speak, and he will declare to you the things that are to come. He will glorify me, for he will take what is mine and declare it to you. All that the Father has is mine; therefore I said that he will take what is mine and declare it to you.[/blockquote]

So after Jesus is risen and ascended into heaven during his absence in this space-time universe it is the Holy Spirit during the church age who carries on and extends the ministry of Jesus until he comes again.

So I think you can see in the person and the work of Jesus the Holy Spirit is very actively involved. Certainly if Jesus himself needed the anointing and the power of the Holy Spirit to carry out the ministry which God had called him to do, how much more do we fallen

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<sup>1</sup> 5:05

and sinful people need the anointing power of the Holy Spirit to carry out the work that God has given us to do?

### **START DISCUSSION**

*Student:* I don't know if this has to do with the relationship between the Holy Spirit and Jesus but could you speak a little more to this scene where Jesus is baptized and the Holy Spirit descended on him "in bodily form?" I don't remember hearing about a bodily form of the Holy Spirit.

*Dr. Craig:* It's not in all of the Gospels. In some of the other Gospels, Jesus looks up and he sees a sort of vision. It's not clear whether or not this is something that onlookers would have seen, or was this a kind of private revelation to Jesus? Was this a vision (in which he sees the heavens opened and the Holy Spirit descending like a dove and resting on him) that only Jesus saw? Or is this something that the people around him would have seen like a literal bird coming down out of heaven and landing on his shoulder? I don't know the answer to that question. In the other Gospels it would seem that it was more visionary. It all depends on the force of this word "bodily" by Luke. Does he mean literally like a pigeon or a dove – flesh and blood – or does he just mean it was in the form of such a thing? I don't know the answer to that.<sup>2</sup>

*Student:* Why does Jesus say that if he doesn't leave the Holy Spirit won't come? That has always kind of puzzled me a bit. What do you think about that?

*Dr. Craig:* I think Pentecost provides the key here, and I'll say something more about that in our future lessons. It seems that there's a great difference between the church age and the old Covenant (up to the time and through the time of Jesus). In the old covenant it seems that the Holy Spirit was only temporarily present with judges or others called by God to do great and mighty works. He would come upon them temporarily to do something, but then he would leave again. Whereas in the post-Pentecostal church age it seems that the Holy Spirit now is the permanent possession of every believer; that we are indwelt by the Holy Spirit in a very special way that wasn't true up until then. So in God's economy he has chosen to empower the church in a way that people were not empowered and anointed up unto that point. It is in that sense it is to our advantage that Jesus go away and the Holy Spirit now continue his ministry.

One might also think, too, that simply in virtue of Jesus' geographical limitations it is to the church's advantage that the Holy Spirit would carry on his ministry because now it becomes worldwide simultaneously and not geographically confined to where Jesus' physical body was. So one can think of a number of ways in which it's to our advantage

that Jesus be physically absent but his Holy Spirit carry on his work throughout the world.

*Student:* In regards to the comment on the dove descending – isn't this a parallel to Noah and the dove coming? Wouldn't this have had significance to the people?

*Dr. Craig:* That might well be. You are thinking of where Noah finds a dove after the flood which indicates that there's land. But it is the identification of this with the person of the Holy Spirit that's peculiar in the baptism of Jesus. It seems to function differently here than it does in the case of Noah finding this dove flying about.

*Student:* You mentioned the Holy Spirit dwelling in us permanently and it being the sign that we are saved as believers. My question is: given that the Holy Spirit is indwelling all believers permanently, is it possible for someone to be a believer, at some point have the Holy Spirit indwelling them, and then go off track and then not be saved?

*Dr. Craig:* This is the huge question. Can a genuinely regenerate Christian who's been born again and indwelt by the Holy Spirit lose his salvation? We'll talk about that later when we get to the doctrine of justification. I don't want to opine on that at this point because I would need to justify my opinion and that would lead us into a long discussion. If you can't wait until we get to that, go online to Defender Series 2 and there you will find the lessons on doctrine of justification and the section on perseverance of the saints. You can get that material online in the Defenders 2 class.<sup>3</sup>

*Student:* I am just wondering, dealing with Jesus' relationship with the Holy Spirit, has there ever been a theological claim that perhaps the way that Jesus was fully God and fully man was that he had the fullness of the Holy Spirit in him as a fully human being? Has anybody ever put that forward?

*Dr. Craig:* I imagine there must have been because that sounds very much like adoptionism, which was an early heresy where God adopted the man Jesus to be his special Son. One could imagine that this would be through indwelling him and empowering him with the Holy Spirit. But I couldn't give you a name for sure of someone who believed that. In early trinitarian debates and debates on the incarnation, people like Apollinaris emphasized very strongly the difference between an incarnation and an indwelling.<sup>4</sup> An indwelling is simply the presence of God's Spirit in an ordinary human being, but an incarnation involves a deeper unity than a mere indwelling. People can be indwelt by God's Spirit or by demons but they are not thereby that demon or that God incarnate. The distinction between an incarnation and an indwelling becomes very important in these early debates about the incarnation. But I can't give you the name of

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<sup>3</sup> See Defenders Series 2, Section 11, "Doctrine of Salvation," Lectures 13, 14, and 15 at <http://www.reasonablefaith.org/defenders-2-podcast/s11> (accessed October 12, 2016).

<sup>4</sup> 15:05

an early heretic who felt that in virtue of being indwelt by God's Spirit Jesus was somehow divine.

*Student:* In light of Hebrews 8 and 9, talking about the first covenant and the second covenant (the old covenant vs. the new covenant), that kind of explains why Jesus has to go away in order for the Holy Spirit to come. It's almost like for us to enter into the new covenant where Hebrews 8:11 says, *And they shall not teach every man his neighbour, and every man his brother, saying, Know the Lord: for all shall know me, from the least to the greatest. For I will be merciful to their unrighteousness, and their sins and their iniquities will I remember no more.* It was saying about the new law in us. I picked out the wrong verse. In my simplistic understanding, it is like Jesus relates to God the Father with the full measure of the Holy Spirit. He is trying to give us that way – that channel – into receiving the full measure of the Holy Spirit through his redemption/sacrifice. And so I think Hebrews 8 and 9 explains this. That's why the old covenant has to be abolished and the new covenant established upon his body and the release of the Holy Spirit.

*Dr. Craig:* OK! This is far from simplistic! This is very good insight. What she points out is that according to the book of Hebrews (chapters 8 and 9) Jesus has now entered into heaven to carry out his high priestly ministry of intercession on our behalf. Look at Hebrews 9:11 and following,

[blockquote]But when Christ appeared as a high priest of the good things that have come, then through the greater and more perfect tent (not made with hands, that is, not of this creation) he entered once for all into the Holy Place, taking not the blood of goats and calves but his own blood, thus securing an eternal redemption. For if the sprinkling of defiled persons with the blood of goats and bulls and with the ashes of a heifer sanctifies for the purification of the flesh, how much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without blemish to God, purify your conscience from dead works to serve the living God.[blockquote]

What he's talking about there is the heavenly intercessory ministry of Christ on our behalf as the high priest. That is a very good point in terms of why did Jesus leave this world. He did so in order to enter into heaven and there carry out his high priestly intercessory ministry on our behalf. That's very good.

## **END DISCUSSION**

Let's turn now to an examination of some of the prominent ministries of the Holy Spirit. I think what we will find is a rather startling long list of ministries that the Holy Spirit has.

1. *The creation of the universe.* Genesis 1:2-3, "The Earth was without form and void, and darkness was on the face of the deep; and the Spirit of God was moving over the face

of the waters. And God said, ‘Let there be light’; and there was light.” So right at the beginning of creation the Spirit of God is involved.<sup>5</sup> He’s involved in the work of creation.

2. The Holy Spirit is involved in *divine revelation*. 1 Corinthians 2:9-10, 12-13. Paul says,

[blockquote]But, as it is written,

[blockquote]“What no eye has seen, nor ear heard,  
nor the heart of man conceived,  
what God has prepared for those who love him,”[/blockquote]

God has revealed to us through the Spirit. For the Spirit searches everything, even the depths of God.[/blockquote]

Verse 12:

[blockquote]Now we have received not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit which is from God, that we might understand the gifts bestowed on us by God. And we impart this in words not taught by human wisdom but taught by the Spirit, interpreting spiritual truths to those who possess the Spirit.[/blockquote]

Here God, through the Holy Spirit, is revealing to us divine truths and enabling us to understand them.

3. The Holy Spirit is responsible for *the inspiration of the Scriptures*. 2 Peter 1:20-21, “First of all you must understand this, that no prophecy of scripture is a matter of one’s own interpretation, because no prophecy ever came by the impulse of man, but men moved by the Holy Spirit spoke from God.” Here it describes the sustaining and moving power of the Holy Spirit in the inspiration of Scripture. If you’re interested in looking at that in more depth, I refer you back to the earlier lessons in Defenders when we talked about the doctrine of inspiration in our section on the doctrine of revelation.

4. The Holy Spirit is involved in *the conception of Christ*. Again we’ll look at Luke 1:30-31, 34-35.

[blockquote]And the angel said to her, “Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God. And behold, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus. . . . And Mary said to the angel, “How shall this be, since I have no husband?” And the angel said to her, “The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; therefore the child to be born will be called holy, the Son of God.”[/blockquote]

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<sup>5</sup> 20:13

So the Holy Spirit is involved in the virginal conception of Christ.

5. The Holy Spirit is *responsible for the regeneration of believers*, that is to say, for the new spiritual rebirth of believers that we experience. John 3:5-7,

[blockquote]Jesus answered, “Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God. That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. Do not marvel that I said to you, ‘You must be born anew.’”[/blockquote]

Here Jesus describes the rebirth or the new birth – and the theological term for this is regeneration. The Holy Spirit is that which makes a person spiritually alive where before there was simply spiritual death.<sup>6</sup> So it’s through the Holy Spirit that we are regenerated and thereby made fit for the kingdom of God. Apart from that regenerating work of the Holy Spirit Jesus says no one can enter God’s Kingdom.

6. *Indwelling and baptizing of the believer*. Romans 8:9. Here Paul describes the indwelling of the Holy Spirit that every believer enjoys. He says, “But you are not in the flesh, you are in the Spirit, if in fact the Spirit of God dwells in you. Any one who does not have the Spirit of Christ does not belong to him.” What Paul says is that it is the Holy Spirit within you that makes the decisive difference whether one is truly a Christian or not. Anyone who does not have the indwelling Holy Spirit is not a Christian. He is unregenerate. But anyone who has the Holy Spirit dwelling within him is a regenerate believer and therefore belongs to Christ.

1 Corinthians 12:13 makes the same point. It says, “For by one Spirit we were all baptized into one body—Jews or Greeks, slaves or free—and all were made to drink of one Spirit.” Paul here says that it is through being baptized in the Holy Spirit that we are placed into the body of Christ. The reason that we are members of the body of Christ is because of this baptism of the Holy Spirit which has identified us with Christ as one of his members. Through the baptism and indwelling of the Holy Spirit we believers belong to Christ and are part of his body.

7. The Holy Spirit *gives us assurance of salvation*. Romans 8:14-16. Paul says,

[blockquote]For all who are led by the Spirit of God are sons of God. For you did not receive the spirit of slavery to fall back into fear, but you have received the spirit of sonship. When we cry, “Abba! Father!” it is the Spirit himself bearing witness with our spirit that we are children of God . . .[/blockquote]

So how do you have assurance of your salvation? How do you know that you’re a child of God, born again? It is because of the witness of the Holy Spirit with your spirit. This is the source of your assurance that you are a regenerate and redeemed Christian.

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<sup>6</sup> 25:05

8. The Holy Spirit *gives enablement for spiritual living*. Galatians 5:16-18, 25. Here Paul says,

[blockquote]But I say, walk by the Spirit, and do not gratify the desires of the flesh. For the desires of the flesh are against the Spirit, and the desires of the Spirit are against the flesh; for these are opposed to each other, to prevent you from doing what you would. But if you are led by the Spirit you are not under the law. . . . If we live by the Spirit, let us also walk by the Spirit.[/blockquote]

So it is through daily walking in the Spirit – walking in the power of the Holy Spirit – that we can combat and live above the desires of the flesh which would pull us down and mire us in sin and stain our lives with unholy living. It is through the power of the Holy Spirit that we are enabled to live the Christian life.<sup>7</sup> The Christian life cannot be successfully lived in the power of the flesh. That’s why Christians who are not walking in the power of the Holy Spirit are so miserable and so defeated in their Christian walk because in the power of the flesh you cannot successfully live the Christian life. You need the power of the Holy Spirit.

Those are just some of the ministries of the Holy Spirit. Next time we will continue to look at further ways in which the Holy Spirit is ministering to us in our lives. Then we will take any questions that we might have about that.<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> 30:04

<sup>8</sup> Total Running Time: 31:23 (Copyright © 2016 William Lane Craig)