

## Week 6: The Spirit And Jesus' Ministry

1. The vital role of the Holy Spirit in empowering Jesus throughout His earthly ministry.
2. Primary dimensions of Jesus' Spirit-led work:
  - a. Instruction and teaching
  - b. Restoration and healing
  - c. Deliverance and exorcism
3. The principles of Spirit-dependence in personal life and ministry.

Many Christians assume that Christ was able to perform miracles because he was God. It certainly is true that he is God. However, if we argue, for example, that Christ's divine nature necessarily and always acts through his human nature, thus enabling him to perform miracles, a serious problem emerges concerning the many texts that speak of the Holy Spirit's role in the life of Christ.

If the divine second person of the Godhead is the sole effective agent working on the human nature, then we need to ask ourselves a serious question: What is the point of the Holy Spirit in the life of Christ? Many Christians (and even some formidable theologians) seem unsure what to do with the Holy Spirit when speaking about the person and work of Christ.

— **Mark Jones**, author of *Knowing Christ*

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## Jesus' baptism

- (Matthew 3:11–17; Mark 1:9–11; Luke 3:21–22; cf. John 1:29–34)

### **Matthew 3:11-17**

<sup>11</sup> *"I baptize you with water for repentance, but he who is coming after me is mightier than I, whose sandals I am not worthy to carry. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire."* <sup>12</sup> *His winnowing fork is in his hand, and he will clear his threshing floor and gather his wheat into the barn, but the chaff he will burn with unquenchable fire."*

Jesus had to adhere to the whole law of God because the redemption He brought was not accomplished solely by His death on the cross. God did not send Jesus to earth on Good Friday so He could go straight to the cross. Jesus not only had to die for our sins, but also had to live for our righteousness.

— **R. C. Sproul**, *The Work of Christ*

<sup>13</sup> *Then Jesus came from Galilee to the Jordan to John, to be baptized by him.*

<sup>14</sup> *John would have prevented him, saying, "I need to be baptized by you, and do you come to me?"* <sup>15</sup> *But Jesus answered him, "Let it be so now, for thus it is fitting for us to fulfill all righteousness."* Then he consented.

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<sup>16</sup> *And when Jesus was baptized, immediately he went up from the water, and behold, the heavens were opened to him, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and coming to rest on him; <sup>17</sup> and behold, a voice from heaven said, "This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased."*

**Mark 1:9-11**

<sup>9</sup> *In those days Jesus came from Nazareth of Galilee and was baptized by John in the Jordan. <sup>10</sup> And when he came up out of the water, immediately he saw the heavens being torn open and the Spirit descending on him like a dove. <sup>11</sup> And a voice came from heaven, "You are my beloved Son; with you I am well pleased."*

**Luke 3:21-22**

<sup>21</sup> *Now when all the people were baptized, and when Jesus also had been baptized and was praying, the heavens were opened, <sup>22</sup> and the Holy Spirit descended on him in bodily form, like a dove; and a voice came from heaven, "You are my beloved Son; with you I am well pleased."*

**John 1:29-34**

<sup>29</sup> *The next day he saw Jesus coming toward him, and said, "Behold, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!" <sup>30</sup> This is he of whom I said, 'After me comes a man who ranks before me, because he was before me.' <sup>31</sup> I myself did not know him, but for this purpose I came baptizing with water, that he might be revealed to Israel."*

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<sup>32</sup> *And John bore witness: "I saw the Spirit descend from heaven like a dove, and it remained on him. <sup>33</sup> I myself did not know him, but he who sent me to baptize with water said to me, 'He on whom you see the Spirit descend and remain, this is he who baptizes with the Holy Spirit.' <sup>34</sup> And I have seen and have borne witness that this is the Son of God."*

The descent of the Holy Spirit at Jesus' baptism marks his public anointing and commissioning for his mission as the Messiah and God's Servant.

- **The Descent:** As Jesus was baptized and came up from the water, the Spirit of God was seen descending "like a dove" (Matthew 3:16) and in "bodily form" (Luke 3:22).
- **A Permanent Endowment:** John the Baptist bore witness that the Spirit descended and *remained* on Jesus, indicating this was a long-term endowment of power for ministry. This act corresponds to the prophetic experience of being anointed and commissioned for a specific task.
- **Divine Affirmation:** The descent of the Spirit occurs simultaneously with God the Father's voice, which confirms Jesus' identity as "my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased" (Matthew 3:17). This confirms his status as Messiah and God's Servant (alluding to Psalm 2:7 and Isaiah 42:1).

The events at the Jordan River immediately connect to the beginning of Jesus' empowered public work.

- **Prayer and Power:** Luke adds the detail that the heavens opened and the Spirit descended while Jesus "was praying," linking prayer to the reception of the Spirit's empowerment.

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- **Preparation for Testing:** The descent of the Spirit prepares Jesus for a new phase of his life and ministry, specifically enabling him to face the subsequent testing in the wilderness. Immediately after his baptism, Jesus, "full of the Holy Spirit," was led by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted, demonstrating his reliance on the Spirit in his humanity.

- **Foreshadowing Pentecost:** John the Baptist identifies Jesus as the one "who baptizes with the Holy Spirit" (John 1:33). The Spirit's descent upon Jesus thus foreshadows the promise and the later sending of the Spirit to his followers at Pentecost.

## Jesus' testing

- (Matthew 4:1–11; Mark 1:12–13; Luke 4:1–13)

### Matthew 4:1-11

*<sup>1</sup> Then Jesus was led up by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil. <sup>2</sup> And after fasting forty days and forty nights, he was hungry. <sup>3</sup> And the tempter came and said to him, "If you are the Son of God, command these stones to become loaves of bread." <sup>4</sup> But he answered, "It is written, ""Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that comes from the mouth of God.""*

*<sup>5</sup> Then the devil took him to the holy city and set him on the pinnacle of the temple <sup>6</sup> and said to him, "If you are the Son of God, throw yourself down, for it is written, ""He will command his angels concerning you," And ""On their hands they will bear you up, lest you strike your foot against a stone.""*

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<sup>7</sup> Jesus said to him, “Again it is written, ‘You shall not put the Lord your God to the test.’” <sup>8</sup> Again, the devil took him to a very high mountain and showed him all the kingdoms of the world and their glory. <sup>9</sup> And he said to him, “All these I will give you, if you will fall down and worship me.” <sup>10</sup> Then Jesus said to him, “Be gone, Satan! For it is written, “‘You shall worship the Lord your God and him only shall you serve.’” <sup>11</sup> Then the devil left him, and behold, angels came and were ministering to him.

### Mark 1:12-13

<sup>12</sup> The Spirit immediately drove him out into the wilderness. <sup>13</sup> And he was in the wilderness forty days, being tempted by Satan. And he was with the wild animals, and the angels were ministering to him.

When Mark writes that the Spirit “immediately drove him out into the wilderness,” he’s describing something far more forceful than a gentle leading. The verb “ekballein” is explosive—related to the English word ballistic—conveying the same violent expulsion Jesus uses when driving out demons, clearing mourners from a dead child’s room, and overturning money changers’ tables. ... The Spirit’s violent propulsion wasn’t punishment but purposeful preparation, positioning Jesus to confront evil and demonstrate his authority over Satan throughout his ministry.

— Jack Levison, *An Unconventional God: The Spirit According to Jesus*

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**Luke 4:1-13**

<sup>1</sup> And Jesus, full of the Holy Spirit, returned from the Jordan and was led by the Spirit in the wilderness <sup>2</sup> for forty days, being tempted by the devil. And he ate nothing during those days. And when they were ended, he was hungry. <sup>3</sup> The devil said to him, “If you are the Son of God, command this stone to become bread.” <sup>4</sup> And Jesus answered him, “It is written, ‘Man shall not live by bread alone.’” <sup>5</sup> And the devil took him up and showed him all the kingdoms of the world in a moment of time, <sup>6</sup> and said to him, “To you I will give all this authority and their glory, for it has been delivered to me, and I give it to whom I will.” <sup>7</sup> If you, then, will worship me, it will all be yours.” <sup>8</sup> And Jesus answered him, “It is written, “‘You shall worship the Lord your God, and him only shall you serve.’”

<sup>9</sup> And he took him to Jerusalem and set him on the pinnacle of the temple and said to him, “If you are the Son of God, throw yourself down from here, <sup>10</sup> for it is written, “‘He will command his angels concerning you, to guard you,’ <sup>11</sup> and “‘On their hands they will bear you up, lest you strike your foot against a stone.’” <sup>12</sup> And Jesus answered him, “It is said, ‘You shall not put the Lord your God to the test.’” <sup>13</sup> And when the devil had ended every temptation, he departed from him until an opportune time. <sup>14</sup> And Jesus returned in the power of the Spirit to Galilee, and a report about him went out through all the surrounding country. <sup>15</sup> And he taught in their synagogues, being glorified by all.

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Jesus has been anointed and empowered by the Spirit for ministry, and he is identified as the Son of God, the one who brings salvation for all human beings. Before his ministry commences, he is tempted in the desert for forty days, just as Israel was tempted in the wilderness for forty years. Jesus is led into the wilderness as one full of the Spirit, ready for battle with the Devil. During these forty days Jesus goes without food, and the Devil tempts him to rely on himself for physical provision, to claim authority and rule apart from God, and to test God to see if he would be faithful. Jesus passes every test, showing that he is ready for his ministry.

— *ESV Expository Commentary*

According to the accounts of Jesus being tested in the wilderness and his subsequent arrival in Galilee, the Holy Spirit's influence in his ministry is evidenced by three key actions:

- **Directing the Testing Process**

The Spirit initiates and oversees the pivotal period of Jesus' temptation, showing authority over his path.

- Matthew records that the Spirit led Jesus into the wilderness for the purpose of being tempted by the devil.
- Mark uses more forceful language, stating the Spirit "drove him out" into that environment.
- Luke similarly notes that Jesus was led by the Spirit throughout his time in the wilderness.

- **Strengthening Resistance to Temptation**

The Gospel of Luke specifically attributes Jesus' victory over the devil's trials to the Holy Spirit's presence.

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○ By observing that Jesus was "full of the Holy Spirit" upon leaving the Jordan, Luke indicates that this divine fullness empowered him to rely on God's word and resist temptation for forty days.

### ● **Fueling the Start of Public Ministry**

Following the wilderness experience, the Spirit is depicted as the catalyst for Jesus' mission in Galilee.

○ Luke highlights that Jesus returned "in the power of the Spirit," a state that immediately preceded his widespread fame.

○ This spiritual empowerment was the foundation for his synagogue teaching, which earned him honor from the people.

Now we can see the meaning of Jesus' fasting more clearly. It was not an arbitrary choice of something to do in the face of Satanic temptation. It was a voluntary act of identification with the people of God in their wilderness deprivation and trial. Jesus was saying in effect, "I have been sent to lead the people of God out of the bondage of sin into the Promised Land of salvation. To do this I must be one of them. That is why I was born. That is why I was baptized. Therefore I will take on the testing that they experienced. I will represent them in the wilderness and allow my heart to be probed with fasting to see where my allegiance is and who is my God. And, with the Spirit's help, I will triumph through this fasting. I will overcome the devil and lead all who trust me into the Promised Land of eternal glory."

— **John Piper**, *A Hunger for God: Desiring God through Fasting and Prayer*

## Jesus' understanding of his mission

- (Luke 4:14–44)

### Luke 4:14-22

*14 And Jesus returned in the power of the Spirit to Galilee, and a report about him went out through all the surrounding country. 15 And he taught in their synagogues, being glorified by all.*

*16 And he came to Nazareth, where he had been brought up. And as was his custom, he went to the synagogue on the Sabbath day, and he stood up to read. 17 And the scroll of the prophet Isaiah was given to him. He unrolled the scroll and found the place where it was written,*

*18 "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to proclaim good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim liberty to the captives and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty those who are oppressed, 19 to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor."*

*20 And he rolled up the scroll and gave it back to the attendant and sat down. And the eyes of all in the synagogue were fixed on him. 21 And he began to say to them, "Today this Scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing." 22 And all spoke well of him and marveled at the gracious words that were coming from his mouth. And they said, "Is not this Joseph's son?"*

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### Luke 4:38-44

<sup>38</sup> And he arose and left the synagogue and entered Simon's house. Now Simon's mother-in-law was ill with a high fever, and they appealed to him on her behalf. <sup>39</sup> And he stood over her and rebuked the fever, and it left her, and immediately she rose and began to serve them.

<sup>40</sup> Now when the sun was setting, all those who had any who were sick with various diseases brought them to him, and he laid his hands on every one of them and healed them. <sup>41</sup> And demons also came out of many, crying, "You are the Son of God!" But he rebuked them and would not allow them to speak, because they knew that he was the Christ.

<sup>42</sup> And when it was day, he departed and went into a desolate place. And the people sought him and came to him, and would have kept him from leaving them, <sup>43</sup> but he said to them, "I must preach the good news of the kingdom of God to the other towns as well; for I was sent for this purpose." <sup>44</sup> And he was preaching in the synagogues of Judea.

## Jesus' teaching ministry

- (John 3:5-8; 4:23-24; 7:16-19; 8:21-30; 14:25-26; 16:13-15)

### John 3:5-8

<sup>5</sup> Jesus answered, "Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God. <sup>6</sup> That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit.

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<sup>7</sup> Do not marvel that I said to you, 'You must be born again.' <sup>8</sup> The wind blows where it wishes, and you hear its sound, but you do not know where it comes from or where it goes. So it is with everyone who is born of the Spirit."

### John 4:23-24

<sup>23</sup> But the hour is coming, and is now here, when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth, for the Father is seeking such people to worship him. <sup>24</sup> God is spirit, and those who worship him must worship in spirit and truth."

### John 7:16-19

<sup>16</sup> So Jesus answered them, "My teaching is not mine, but his who sent me. <sup>17</sup> If anyone's will is to do God's will, he will know whether the teaching is from God or whether I am speaking on my own authority. <sup>18</sup> The one who speaks on his own authority seeks his own glory; but the one who seeks the glory of him who sent him is true, and in him there is no falsehood. <sup>19</sup> Has not Moses given you the law? Yet none of you keeps the law. Why do you seek to kill me?"

### John 14:25-26

<sup>25</sup> "These things I have spoken to you while I am still with you. <sup>26</sup> But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, he will teach you all things and bring to your remembrance all that I have said to you.

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### John 16:13-15

*<sup>13</sup> 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.* <sup>14</sup> He will glorify me, for he will take what is mine and declare it to you. <sup>15</sup> All that the Father has is mine; therefore I said that he will take what is mine and declare it to you.

### Jesus' healing ministry

- (Matthew 12:15–21)

#### Matthew 12:15-21

<sup>15</sup> Jesus, aware of this, withdrew from there. And many followed him, and he healed them all <sup>16</sup> and ordered them not to make him known. <sup>17</sup> This was to fulfill what was spoken by the prophet Isaiah: <sup>18</sup> “Behold, my servant whom I have chosen, my beloved with whom my soul is well pleased. I will put my Spirit upon him, and he will proclaim justice to the Gentiles. <sup>19</sup> He will not quarrel or cry aloud, nor will anyone hear his voice in the streets; <sup>20</sup> a bruised reed he will not break, and a smoldering wick he will not quench, until he brings justice to victory; <sup>21</sup> and in his name the Gentiles will hope.”

### Jesus' exorcism ministry

- (Matthew 12:22–37; Mark 3:20–30; Luke 11:14–23)

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**Matthew 12:22-37**

<sup>22</sup> Then a demon-oppressed man who was blind and mute was brought to him, and he healed him, so that the man spoke and saw. <sup>23</sup> And all the people were amazed, and said, "Can this be the Son of David?" <sup>24</sup> But when the Pharisees heard it, they said, "It is only by Beelzebul, the prince of demons, that this man casts out demons." <sup>25</sup> Knowing their thoughts, he said to them, "Every kingdom divided against itself is laid waste, and no city or house divided against itself will stand. <sup>26</sup> And if Satan casts out Satan, he is divided against himself. How then will his kingdom stand? <sup>27</sup> And if I cast out demons by Beelzebul, by whom do your sons cast them out? Therefore they will be your judges. <sup>28</sup> But if it is by the Spirit of God that I cast out demons, then the kingdom of God has come upon you. <sup>29</sup> Or how can someone enter a strong man's house and plunder his goods, unless he first binds the strong man? Then indeed he may plunder his house. <sup>30</sup> Whoever is not with me is against me, and whoever does not gather with me scatters. <sup>31</sup> Therefore I tell you, every sin and blasphemy will be forgiven people, but the blasphemy against the Spirit will not be forgiven. <sup>32</sup> And whoever speaks a word against the Son of Man will be forgiven, but whoever speaks against the Holy Spirit will not be forgiven, either in this age or in the age to come.

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### Final thoughts

The Spirit filled Jesus from birth and anointed him at baptism for public ministry, reflecting Old Testament patterns. This descent prepared him for testing and enabled him, as Lord and Christ, to later baptize others with the Spirit, foreshadowing Pentecost.

Led by the Spirit, Jesus defeated Satan, proving his worthiness and succeeding where Adam and Israel failed. His victory established him as a sympathetic High Priest, offering a model of total obedience to the Father and dependence on the Spirit during trials.

Jesus adopted Isaiah 61:1–2 as his ministry pattern, demonstrating the Spirit's power through teaching, healing, and exorcism. His authoritative teaching, compassionate healing, and works of power—though rejected by religious leaders—signaled the dawn of a new age.

### Application

- **Seek Continual Filling:** The Spirit desires to continually fill believers, which means being more fully under His influence, aware of His presence, and effective in service. Christians are commanded to continually seek this filling through living and praying.
- **Pray for Empowerment:** Seek Spirit empowerment through prayer, especially when facing new challenges.
- **Live Obediently:** Live victoriously over sin by obeying the Father and trusting the Spirit's power. Walking in the Spirit involves learning to listen and obey.
- **Dependence for All Things:** Recognize that apart from the Spirit of Christ dwelling in you, you cannot do anything, including producing holiness or praying.

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- **Sanctification and Holiness:**

The Spirit performs the progressive work of sanctification, enabling you to put sin to death and grow in Christ-likeness.

- **Understanding Scripture:**

Without the Spirit, you cannot read the Scripture effectively. He is the Helper who will teach you all things, illuminate God's Word, and guide you into all truth.

**Next:** *The Spirit and Jesus' Departure*