



BELIEVERS CHAPEL

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The Sermons of S. Lewis Johnson

Systematic Theology

“The Holy Spirit in the Life of Christ”

TRANSCRIPT

... a couple of minutes after 7:30, so let's begin with a word of prayer.

[Prayer] Father, we thank Thee, again, that we are able to turn to Thy word. We thank Thee for Jesus Christ of whom it speaks and again, tonight as we consider the ministry of the third person of the Trinity, may our thoughts be lifted so that we come to understand Thee in a deeper way.

And Lord, since we are so indebted to the ministry of the Spirit and so dependent upon him, help us to understand in a more significant way all that Thou art able to do for us through him. And so we commit this hour to Thee, for they blessing upon us.

In Jesus' name. Amen.

[Message] Now, our subject for tonight is The Holy Spirit in the Life of Christ. And so will you turn with me to Luke chapter 10, verse 21 and then Luke chapter 11, verse 20, and one verse in Matthew, which is a parallel text with that last.

Luke chapter 10, verse 21:

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“In that hour Jesus rejoiced in Spirit, and said, I thank Thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that Thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes: even so, Father; for it seemed good in Thy sight.”

And I want you to notice the expression, “In that hour Jesus rejoiced in spirit.” Now, turn to chapter 11, verse 20 of Luke. This is the incident in which our Lord cast out the devils from the dumb demoniac, and we read in verse 20:

“But if I with the finger of God cast out devils, no doubt the kingdom of God is come upon you.”

I want you to notice that expression here in Luke 20 is: “But if I with the finger of God.”

Now, let’s turn back and read the parallel passage in Matthew chapter 12 in verse 28, and you will see that in this chapter Matthew interprets that expression as being a reference to the Holy Spirit. Matthew chapter 12 in verse 28, and here we read:

“But if I drive out devils by the Spirit of God, then the kingdom of God is come upon you.”

And so Matthew interprets the expression “the finger of God” to be “the Spirit of God.”

Now, our subject tonight is “The Holy Spirit in the Life of Christ.” Earlier in our studies this fall, I mentioned that man’s history from the standpoint of the revelation of the eternal Trinity may be divided into three periods. And the first period is the period from the creation to the incarnation, in which we have described for us, primarily, and preeminently the work of the Father. And then the second period was the period of time

from the incarnation to the ascension in which we have primarily revealed to us the ministry of the Son. And the third period, beginning shortly after the ascension, Pentecost to Advent, is preeminently the revelation of the Holy Spirit in his person and work.

So the three persons of the Trinity are predominantly revealed in chronological order historically. That is, Father from creation to incarnation; Son, from incarnation to ascensions; and the Spirit, from Pentecost to Advent.

Now, in our last study in which we studied the Holy Spirit in the Old Testament, we learned that the Spirit was active in the age of the Father. And so we are not to think of these as exclusive descriptions of the revelation of the Trinity. In other words, we are not to think that only the Father was revealed from creation to incarnation and the Son and Spirit, accordingly. But we are to think of these as the ages in which preeminently the one person of the Trinity involved was revealed.

But we saw last time, when we studied the use of the Spirit or the ministry of the Spirit in the Old Testament, that he was active in three distinct spheres. He was active in the world, for he was the agency of divine creation. He is also active in the preservation of the material creation. And we saw that he has been active in restraint of sin. Then we saw secondly that he was active in the sphere of the theocracy or in the sphere of Israel. That is, in the Old Testament times, he endowed the kings and the prophets and the priests and others who had official duties to perform with special power for the carrying out of their tasks. We saw, too, that he endowed the prophets of the Old Testament with the gift of prophecy. And, further, that in his Old Testament ministry he also gave us some prophecies of endowments, which he would give the coming Prince in the age to come. Now, that was not, of course, the Spirit’s ministry in Old Testament times, but in Old Testament times he did prophesy -- or the Old Testament does have prophecies of his work which he shall do in the future. So the Spirit was active in the Old Testament in the age in which the Father was preeminently revealed.

And, finally, in the third sphere, the Holy Spirit was active in individuals. He was active in sanctification. And he was especially active in endowing certain characters of the Old Testament with power for individual tasks.

And the words that we pointed out that were predominate were the words “filled,” “rushed upon,” and “clothed himself with.” And we looked at some of the men of the Old Testament and saw that the Scriptures said that they were filled with the Spirit in Old Testament times. It was said that the Holy Spirit “rushed upon” certain of them. And it was also said that the Holy Spirit “clothed himself” with certain men in Old Testament times in order to carry out specific tasks through them. Particularly, in the latter case we looked at Gideon, whom the Lord clothed himself with in order that he might, through Gideon, deliver the Israelites from the hand of the Midianites.

Now, tonight, we’re going to move a step further in our study, and we’re going to consider the age of the Son, the age from the incarnation to the ascension. And we are going to look, particularly, at the Spirit’s work in and through him personally.

Now, the Spirit did other works besides work in our Lord, Jesus Christ, during the age of his incarnation to his ascension. We shall look at that at a later time. But we want tonight to see what the Holy Spirit did through and in the ministry of the Son of God.

And so we are going to notice the primary stages in his life and ministry, his birth, his baptism, his temptation, his general Messianic ministry, his teaching, his miracles, his personal life and then the death and resurrection and post-resurrection ministry. And we are going to try to relate the ministry of the Spirit to each one of these phases of our Lord’s life, as it is revealed in our Gospels, primarily.

So first of all, roman I, the Holy Spirit in Christ’s birth. And I want you to turn with me and read a couple of familiar passages. One in Matthew and then we’ll read a lengthier one in the first chapter of Luke. Matthew chapter 1, and I’ll just read three verses beginning with the 18th verse. Matthew chapter 1, verse 18 through verse 20. Now, this is Matthew’s account of the conception and birth of our Lord. And he writes:

“Now the birth of Jesus Christ was on this wise: When as his mother Mary was espoused to Joseph, before they came together, she was found with child of the Holy Ghost. [Now, the thing that you are to notice here, of course, is that expression ‘she was found with child of the Holy Ghost’ or ‘by the Holy Spirit.’] Then Joseph her husband being a just man, and not willing to make her a public example, was minded to put her away privily.

But while he thought on these things, behold, the angel of the LORD appeared unto him in a dream, saying, Joseph, thou son of David, [Notice that expression] fear not to take unto thee Mary thy wife: for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Ghost.”

Now, notice in verse 18 and verse 20 we have the same expression, “of the Holy Ghost.” She was found with child of the Holy Ghost. That which is conceived in her is “of the Holy Ghost.” And it is obvious from this that Matthew is tracing the human nature of our Lord to the Holy Spirit, conceived within the womb of the Virgin Mary.

Now, let’s turn over to Luke chapter 1, and we’re going to see another account of the same thing with some slightly different emphasis but, nevertheless, an account that teaches the same truth. Luke chapter 1, and let’s begin reading at verse 26, the annunciation.

Now, remember, in Luke chapter 1, we have first an annunciation to Zacharias, the father of John the Baptist, that he would have a son of Elizabeth, his wife, and that he would be full of the Holy Spirit from his mother’s womb, that he would be great in the sight of the Lord, and his ministry would be to make ready a people for the Lord.

And then, after that annunciation by the Angel Gabriel to Zacharias, we read of a second annunciation. And these annunciations are, obviously, designed to be compared and contrasted with one another.

Let’s read the second one now, beginning with verse 26 and you’ll notice again it is by the Angel Gabriel.

“And in the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent from God unto a city of Galilee, named Nazareth, To a virgin espoused to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David; [Notice that] and the virgin's name was Mary. And the angel came in unto her, and said, Hail, thou that art highly favoured, the Lord is with thee: blessed art thou among women. And when she saw him, she was troubled at his saying, and cast in her mind what manner of salutation this should be. And the angel said unto her, Fear not, Mary -- [If you look back at verse 13, you will see that the angel said unto him, ‘fear not, Zacharias.’ Men are not used to having angels around, and it tends to create a great deal of fear in them. And I’m sure that if we – right here – were to have a visit from an angel in heaven, no doubt, he would create quite a bit of fear in our midst, too. Now, verse 31]

“thou hast found favour with God. And behold, thou shalt conceive in thy womb, and bring forth a son, and shalt call his name JESUS. He shall be great, [Like John the Baptist] and shall be called the Son of the Highest: and the Lord God shall give unto him the throne of his father David: And he shall reign over the house of Jacob for ever; and of his kingdom there shall be no end. Then said Mary unto the angel, How shall this be, seeing I know not a man?”

Now, Mary’s request for information is a request that arises out of faith. Zacharias in verse 18 said, ‘Whereby shall I know this?’ In other words, he wasn’t willing to accept the truth of it unless he had some encouragement. ‘Whereby shall I know this?’ Not, how shall this come to pass, but how shall I know it. ‘For I am an old man, and my wife well stricken in years.’ And so Zacharias is chastised for his disobedience, but Mary is given the answer to her question.

“And the angel answered and said unto her, [Verse 35] 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. And behold, thy cousin Elisabeth, she hath also conceived a son in her old age: and this is the sixth month with her, who was called barren. For with God nothing shall be impossible.”

It is obvious that the account presupposes that this birth would be a miraculous birth. Otherwise, we would not have that statement “For with God nothing shall be impossible.”

“And Mary said, Behold the handmaid of the Lord; be it unto me according to thy word. And the angel departed from her.”

Now, I just want for a few moments to remind us of some of the things that we have read in these accounts. The Matthian account which we read first, offers no comparison with John the Baptist’s birth, because, of course, the purpose of Matthew in writing his gospel is to present our Lord, Jesus, as the predestined king. He is not so much concerned to present him as Son of God as he is to present him as the king who is the Son of David. And that is why, in Matthew, he begins with a genealogy. Luke does not give his genealogy until the third chapter. But, Matthew begins with a genealogy because in the case of a king it is of the utmost importance to establish his right to the throne. And so the genealogy is given us in the Gospel of Matthew for that reason.

Further, in Matthew, we have the visit of the Magi. And the symbols of that visit are also things that suggest the kingship of our Lord, Jesus Christ. And you’ll remember, that Joseph was addressed in the Matthian account as, “Fear not, Joseph, thou son of

David.” And so that particular aspect of Joseph’s relationship to the promises of God is particularly mentioned by the angel as he speaks to him.

So the purpose of the Matthian account is simply to tell us that there is coming a predestined king. He is of the seed of David. He has right to the throne. And he is coming as a deliverer to save Israel from enemies who are worse than reason and pica, the two kings of Isaiah chapter 7, from which the citation that the “virgin should conceive” should be -- was taken.

Now, the Lukan account does not ignore these royal aspects. It says in verse 27, “To a virgin espoused to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David.” So Luke does not ignore the fact that this one who is called the Son of God is also the son of David. But he wants to stress a higher destiny than the destiny “son of David.” For he says in verse 35:

“That holy thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God.”

Now, he is like John. He, obviously, designed -- has designed his account in the opening chapter to contrast the birth of our Lord with the birth of John. There are so many things that are alike in the two: Gabriel appears to Zacharias, Gabriel appears to Mary, the virgin. In the case of Zacharias, the angel speaks to Zacharias, “Zacharias, fear not, thy prayer is heard.” He says to Mary, “Fear not, thou hast found favor with God.”

He said to Zacharias that Elizabeth is going to “bear thee a son.” He says with reference to Mary that she is going to conceive and bring forth a son. Did you notice the difference?

We read in verse 13: “For thy prayer is heard; and thy wife Elisabeth shall bear ‘thee’ [Zacharias] a son.” In other words, John would be the son of Zacharias. It would be his son. What he was going to do was enable Elisabeth at old age to conceive by

Zacharias, so that that son would be Zacharias’ son. But that is not said with reference to our Lord.

“Behold, though shalt conceive in they womb, and bring forth a son” -- Not to Joseph, but a son -- “And shalt call his name JESUS.”

And so in the comparison of the two births there is also all the difference in the world. In the case of John, he is called great. And his work will be to make ready a people prepared for the Lord. But in the case of our Lord, he is going to be called “Son of God.” In the case of John, “he shall be full of the Holy Spirit, even from his mother’s womb.” But in the case of Jesus, he will be conceived by the Holy Ghost through the power of the Highest. And so while John is said to be full of the Holy Ghost from his mother’s womb, our Lord is conceived by the Holy Ghost.

And in that apparently small difference, there is the difference between a human being who was a man marked out for use by God and a person who is more than a human being, the son of God, or the God-man.

Now, I don’t think that there is anything further that we can say about that. I want now to just point out a few facts that appear from these two accounts. In the first place, the father is the father of our Lord’s human nature by the Spirit. That seems evident from verse 35, where we read:

“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.”

Now, what does he mean by this? Well, now, of course, I wish I was able to describe for you all of the details of the conception of our Lord. But that is impossible. Who could ever explain how Jesus Christ was conceived. Mary asked the question, “How shall this be, seeing I know not a man?” And this is the answer that she got.

And so we cannot go beyond this. There are, of course, some obvious things that appear but then there are other questions that we could never answer. And I just, as I have often said, I believe that, probably, when we get to heaven we shall still not understand all of the ways in which God has brought our Lord into existence as the God-man.

Now, we can learn some things about these things by the words that are used. We read, “The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee.” And if you’ll take that word “come upon” and trace it through the Old Testament Greek translation of the Old Testament, you will discover that it was used of a sudden and irresistible coming, like the descent of a whirlwind. It was also used of the stirring up of a fit of jealousy. And it is used of the final outpouring of the Holy Spirit in the future. And so I gather from this, “The Holy Spirit shall come upon thee,” that it’s a reference to a sudden and irresistible action of the Spirit upon Mary.

And it also states that the “power of the Highest shall overshadow thee.” And that verb was used in the Old Testament of the glory of God overshadowing the Tabernacle. And so the statement seems to say there is to come a sudden and irresistible working of the power of God upon the womb of the Virgin Mary, and he shall hover over her womb in such a way that he shall perform a task that only God can do. And that’s about as far as the text takes us. It just says that the embryo in the womb of Mary is vitally energized by the power of the Holy Spirit, and that’s about as far as we can go.

G. Campbell Morgan, in one of his books, says, “It was the touch of God upon the simple life that made it forever sublime. It was a supernatural act of God.”

“The Power of the Highest shall overshadow thee.” “The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee.” And something shall be born and it shall be a holy thing, and it shall be called “the Son of God.”

Now, our Lord’s human nature is not only ascribed to the Holy Spirit in the Bible, we are stressing in our studies the ministry of the Spirit and so we are trying to center our

attention upon this, but it is a significant fact that in the Bible the human nature of our Lord is ascribed to all three persons of the Trinity.

For example, it is ascribed by our Lord to the Father’s eternal council. He said, remember, in Psalm 40, speaking of God, “A body hast thou prepared me.” And so the Father is responsible for the body of our Lord.

And then, here, of course, we read of the Spirit’s efficient energy. It is the Spirit who comes upon Mary. “The Holy Spirit shall come upon thee.”

And then, it is, also, the son’s voluntary assumption of human nature; for we read in Hebrews chapter 2 and verse 14: Since the children have become partakers of “flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same.” And so there is a concurrence of the actions of all three persons of the Trinity, Father, Son and Spirit, in the incarnation; the birth of our Lord, Jesus Christ. So, I think that we should say, the Father is the father of our Lord’s human nature by the Spirit. But we are not suggesting by that that the Son did not have a part in it as well.

Now, the second thing I think we can say is that Mary is the mother of the material not the moral nature of the Lord. Now, I want you to turn chapter 1, verse 47 of the Gospel of Luke. If you listen carefully to what I was saying, I was trying to say that Mary is the mother of our Lord’s human nature, but not the moral side of his human nature. Simply the material side. Let’s read verse 46 of Mary’s Magnificat: “And Mary said, My soul doth magnify the Lord, And my spirit hath rejoiced in God my Savior.” Now, notice those expressions, “God my Savior.”

Now, can we say from this that Mary was sinless? I don’t think we can. She said, “God, my Savior.” She acknowledges that she needs a savior just as others. Mary is not sinless. She was not conceived without sin. She was not born sinless.

Now, it’s not my purpose to attack any religious organization, but, after all, religious groups do make certain claims and everybody should be willing to test their claims by the word of God, if they claim to be Christian.

The Roman Catholic Church claims that Mary was conceived by an immaculate conception. Now, you, no doubt, have seen like that: the Church of the Immaculate Conception. Now, that is a reference to the doctrine propounded by Pope Pius IX, in 1854, in which it was said that Mary was conceived without sin; born without sin, and consequently, our Lord was born not only of a virgin but born of a sinless virgin.

It is also Roman Catholic doctrine that Mary was kept from particular acts of sin by the special grace of God.

Now, you can see from this statement that Mary does acknowledge that she needs a savior, that she was born as other men and women were born in sin. The secret of our Lord’s sinlessness is not that he was born of a virgin, immaculately conceived. The secret of our Lord’s sinlessness is to be traced to the action of the Holy Spirit. “The Holy Spirit shall come upon thee.” “The Power of the Highest shall overshadow thee.”

And so we should not, because Jesus is sinless, render praise to the Virgin Mary; but rather render praise to the God, the Holy Spirit, who conceived him and brought him forth as that holy thing.

Now, we also say in the Apostles’ Creed, which is generally an expression of Christian truth, that the Lord Jesus was conceived of the Holy Ghost, born of the Virgin Mary. Have you ever heard that statement? Of course you have, all of you have, probably many of you have repeated it many times. “Conceived of the Holy Ghost, born of the Virgin Mary.”

Now, that precise distinction was intended by the early Church to teach something. But, now, did not Mary conceive, also? Will you look at verse 31 of Luke chapter 1, “And behold thou shalt conceive in thy womb and bring forth a son.” So why can we not say that he was conceived of the Holy Ghost, conceived of the Virgin Mary? Well, we could say that. There is nothing wrong with that. But there is a difference between the two. And what the early church was trying to say and what the Christian church has been trying to confess down through the years is that the Holy Spirit is the

active efficient cause. And that the Virgin Mary is the passive, material cause. And so we say, conceived of the Holy Ghost because we want to give the preeminence to the active, efficient working of the Holy Spirit.

And we say, “Born of the Holy Ghost” because “born” is a more passive word, and by that, the early Church sought to express the idea that Mary was the receptacle. She was the passive, material cause of the birth of our Lord.

Now, why was our Lord born of Virgin Mary? Why did Mary conceive in her womb? Why was it necessary that our Lord should be a man? There were many in the early days of the Christian church and its history who did not think our Lord had to be a man. Why should he be completely a man? Well, he had to be completely a man for purposes of redemption. You see, if a man is to substitute for others, he must be truly a man. And remember, the Scripture said in Genesis chapter 3, and verse 15, in the Protevangelium, the first preaching of the Gospel, that it would be “the seed of the woman” that would crush the serpent’s head. And so our Lord had to be truly “seed of the woman” if he was to be a promised redeemer.

Further, if there is to be a kingdom and the Old Testament prophesied that there would be a kingdom that would -- and that kingdom would come from the seed of Abraham, then our Lord had to be of the “seed of Abraham,” as Paul says in Galatians chapter 3. “If you’ve believed in Christ, then are you Abraham’s seed and heirs according to the promise”? For he is the seed. So our Lord had to be a man if there was to be redemption; he had to be a man if there is to be a kingdom; and he had to be a man if we are to have a king in the kingdom; because the king is to be of the seed of David.

And so our Lord had to be born not only of a man, but he had to be born of a descendant of Abraham, and not only of Abraham but he had to be born of a descendant of David, as well. So he was of David, he was of Abraham, he was of Adam, in order that there should be a redemptive kingdom in which he would rule and reign. That, by the way, is why there must also be a virgin birth. Because if there is not a virgin birth, he,

too, is touched with sin and he cannot be our king. He cannot bring us our kingdom. He cannot die for us.

Now, a third factor we often talk about the virgin birth. I'm not going to argue the point because it really is not quite as important as some other things. But, you know, the Christian church, in my opinion, should not have spoken so much about the virgin birth as virgin conception. The virgin birth, by that term -- that term has obscured an important truth, I think. Our Lord was conceived of the Virgin Mary -- of the Holy Ghost. He was born of the Virgin Mary. You see, he was conceived supernaturally, but he was born naturally. There was nothing unusual about his birth. It was his conception that was different.

Now, the reason, of course, that his conception is supernatural is all of these reasons that I've been saying. But the reason that he was born naturally is that he might more perfectly enter into all the experiences of humanity. So he was born just as you and I are born. And so we really should speak about the virgin conception of our Lord rather than the virgin birth. But I'm not going to fight that battle. I could never win that. I'm just going to let the world rest in ignorance. [Laughter]

Now, seriously, who can change something like that, after hundreds of years? So let's go ahead and talk about the virgin birth, but let's do think clearly. In Believer's Chapel, we want you to think clearly and know your Bible doctrine.

Now, another -- as I started to say, a third reason, a third thing that I want to say is that by this virgin conception, a body was prepared by God that would be a fit habitation for the holy soul of our Lord. That is why he was born of the Holy Spirit, too. It was that he might have a body that was a fit dwelling place for a person who had a holy soul. And our Lord's body did not have all of the particular constitutional failures that ours has had. Now, I know a lot of our sins come from our inmost sin nature, but others seem to come from other aspects of our humanity. But our Lord had a fitting habitation for his holy soul.

Now, I think there is one last thing I want to say about this before we move on. We’ll deal with the other things more rapidly. By the Virgin Conception, his soul was made capable of a fullness of grace that would come from God. In other words, by our Lord’s birth and by the preparation of a body for him, he was made capable of the expression of the fullness of the grace of God.

Now, that actual exercise of fullness of grace was suspended until the organs of his body were fitted for it. In other words, there was growth in the experience humanly of our Lord. So we read in the New Testament, that he grew in wisdom and stature and in favor with God and with men. He learned obedience by the things that he suffered. He did not learn to obey. He always knew how to obey and to obey, but he learned in experience obedience by obeying. And so he entered into the experiences that human beings have apart from sin. He knew what it was to be tired. He knew what it was to be weary.

Further, he knew what it was to not know what the next step in his life should be. And I’ve often said this and a lot of times people are startled by it, but it is the truth. Our Lord had to find the will of God just as you and I do. Now, of course, he never made any false steps. But there were times when he did not know the next step. As a matter of fact, he confesses that he does not know, out of his human nature, the time of the Second Advent.

Now, it is not sin to not know something unless you are supposed to know it, unless you ought to know it. And so our Lord entered into the experiences that you and I have, and he undoubtedly had to wait upon God to direct his paths. God did not always lay out everything before him and so he waited. He prayed. He sought the guidance of God. When it came, he obeyed. In the Garden of Gethsemane, he said, “O My Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me ... Nevertheless, not my will but thine be done.” There is evidence in that account that he received the answer to that petition right there in the garden and then went out triumphantly to the cross.

Now then, you can see that our Lord’s conception is a conception that is wrapped up in the ministry of the third person of the Trinity.

Let’s move on now to his baptism. And let’s turn back to Matthew chapter 3 and read verses 13 through 17. Matthew chapter 3, verse 13 through verse 17 --

You know, whenever I get off on the subject of the person of Christ, I want to talk for hours and hours on that; because that is such a magnificent topic. But we can’t do that. We’re talking about someone who is just as great; the Holy Spirit. Verse 13:

“Then cometh Jesus from Galilee to Jordan unto John, to be baptized of him. [This is many years later now] But John forbad him, saying, I have need to be baptized of thee, and comest thou to me? And Jesus answering said unto him, Suffer it to be so now: for thus it becometh us to fulfill all righteousness. Then he suffered him. And Jesus, when he was baptized, went up straightway out of the water: and lo, the heavens were opened unto him, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove, and lighting upon him: And lo a voice from heaven, saying, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.”

Jesus had heard that John the Baptist had begun to preach, “Repent for the kingdom of the heavens is at hand.” And recognizing the call of God in John’s preaching, he came to John for baptism as an obedient Jew; to acknowledge that he was ready for the kingdom to come. Not to confess his sins, as the other Jews did, but to confess that he was ready for the kingdom. And here he was anointed by the Holy Spirit for the discharge of his Messianic office.

Peter will preach in the Book of Acts chapter 10 in verse 38, that the Holy Spirit “anointed Jesus with power,” or “he was anointed of the Holy Ghost with power.” And he went about doing good.

The Spirit is the author of his human nature by that supernatural conception. He is the equipper of his human nature for ministry as Messiah by baptism. And it is at that

point, that the Holy Spirit comes upon him and he begins his Messianic ministry that is foretold in the Old Testament.

In Isaiah chapter 42, in Isaiah chapter 61, both of these places the Messiah says in prophecy the Holy Spirit is upon me. He hath anointed me to preach good tidings to the meek and to do the other things that were part of the Messianic ministry. And so this is our Lord’s inauguration into his Messianic office and it is his equipment for carrying out the work of God. The Holy Spirit comes upon him in an official way that he might do his work.

By the way, people ask often, what about the silent years of our Lord’s life? After all, this is about thirty years after his birth? How can we say that Jesus was sinless? Well, we know there are statements that say he was sinless, but what about all those years? We don’t read anything about them. There are many who have tried to supply us incidents from those early years, and you can read the books which seek to do that. They are not genuine. It’s an expression of the curiosity of human nature to want to know our Lord’s life.

We have that one incident when he was twelve years of age, and that’s about all we have. But this tells us that we don’t really need to know those details because when the voice from heaven says, “This is my beloved son in whom I am well pleased,” well, that’s the voice of approval for the silent years.

And so we don’t have to ask for any details. It’s enough. The Father has said, “This is my beloved son,” at thirty years of age, “in him I am well pleased.” So we know that in the thirty years, they were years of perfection, so far as our Lord was concerned.

Now, no miracle was ever wrought by our Lord before his baptism. When he begins his work of performing miracles, he does it by the power of the Holy Spirit. And that is why the Spirit comes upon him. By the way, no one can ever do the will of God apart from the power of the Holy Spirit. You cannot please God apart from the power of the Holy Spirit in your life.

Now, that is why in the New Testament, we are told that when we believe in Jesus Christ we have the indwelling Holy Spirit; and we are expected to walk by the Spirit. It is tremendously important that, as Christians, we learn to walk by the Spirit. We shall never please God if we do not.

Roman III, the Holy Spirit in Christ's temptation. Now, will you notice verse 1 of chapter 4:

"Then was Jesus led up of the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted of the devil."

Let me just say this about the temptation. In his baptism, he received power for his Messianic ministry. In his temptation, he used the power that he had received. And this is one of those experiences through which our Lord learned obedience.

Now, roman IV, the Holy Spirit in Christ's ministry. And let's turn over to Matthew chapter 12 in verse 28. Matthew chapter 12 in verse 28. You know, the fact that the Holy Spirit came as a dove upon our Lord may be a rather important thing. Doves are sensitive birds.

I would think that probably the reason the Holy Spirit came as a dove on the Lord is because our Lord was the kind of person would never give any pain or hurt to the Holy Spirit. And so as he came upon him, there was a reflection not only of the character of the Holy Spirit but the character of our Lord. I would also imagine that this implies that when a Christian is really guided by the Holy Spirit, there should be something of the sensitiveness of a dove about him. Now, we've got a lot of sensitive birds in the Christian church, but they are not the kinds of sensitive birds that the coming of the Holy Spirit suggests.

By the way, did you know -- I'm told that this is true -- did you know that the dove does not have a gall? I heard of a former preacher who was killing a pigeon, and

he couldn’t find the gall to take it out. And then he remembered that the pigeon was one of the dove family and doesn’t have one.

Now, the Lord’s people have enough to make up for them [Laughter] Someone has said, we have to be wise as serpents and as harmless as doves. Our Lord said that. But someone else has said, the Lord’s people are wise as serpents and harmless as porcupines. [Laughter]

You ever seen Christians like that? Well, you can hardly be like that if you are guided by the Holy Spirit. There really should be something of the gentleness and sensitiveness of the Holy Spirit, of the dove, about the person who is guided by him.

Now, his ministry was a ministry in teaching, a ministry in miracles, and a ministry, of course, in his personal life. And let’s just look at chapter 12, verse 28, first of all. Here we read:

“But if I cast out devils by the Spirit of God, then the kingdom of God is come unto you.”

Now, I think -- I’m looking at the wrong text first. Now, isn’t that terrible. Now, this is, of course, the text for his miracles. Notice, since we’re here, that the miracles that Jesus did are performed by the Spirit of God. “If I cast out demons by the Spirit of God, then has the kingdom of God is come unto you.”

C. S. Lewis, in one of his books, says, “God does not shake miracles into nature at random as from a pepper caster. They come on great occasions. They are found at the great ganglions of history.” He means by that great points in history where we have a center of force, an unusual part of human history.

And of course, in the ministry of our Lord, we have one of those great, critical events of human history. And that’s why our Lord performed miracles. The finger of God was working through him, and it was done by the Holy Spirit.

Some people would think, you know, if Jesus really was the God-man, if he had a divine nature, why does he need the help of the Holy Spirit? That question has been asked. Well, the reason, of course, is that our Lord, in his human nature, must learn to be subject to this third party of the Holy Spirit in order that he might be an example for us and also might know the experiences that we are to have. And when he reaches the right hand of God, be a high priest who can sympathize with us. And so he had to have the experiences that you and I are to have. So he performed his miracles by the Holy Spirit.

Now, turn back to Luke chapter 4, and I will do what I should have done first, point to the source of his teaching. In Luke chapter 4 in verse 14, we read -- Now, this is after the temptation and Lord is going back to Galilee. And we read in Luke 4:14,

“And Jesus returned in the power of the Spirit” (into Galilee).

And then in verse 18, remember, he stood up in the Synagogue in Nazareth and he said, verse 18:

“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. And he closed the book, and he gave it again to the minister, and sat down. And the eyes of them that were in the synagogue were fastened on him. And he began to say unto them, This day is this scripture fulfilled in your ears.” [And I think he expounded the significance of that. And then we read:] And all bare him witness, and wondered at the gracious words which proceeded out of his mouth.”

Now, why were they gracious words that proceeded out of this mouth? Because the Spirit of the Lord was upon him as he says in verse 18. So his teaching is by the Spirit, his miracles are performed by the Spirit, and even his personal life is all guided by the Holy Spirit.

Turn over to the 10th chapter of the Gospel of Luke for the passage that we read in our Scripture reading. Luke chapter 10 in verse 20 -- oh, I must read verse 20. We could not get by a night without referring to the doctrine of election, could we? [Laughter] Now, so we read in verse 20:

“Notwithstanding in this rejoice not, that the spirits are subject unto you; but rather rejoice, because your names are written in heaven.”

Election doesn’t make the Christian proud and careless, does it? “Rejoice, because your names are written in heaven.” Hallelujah! Don’t get upset because you discover that you are one of the elect.

Now, verse 21:

“In that hour Jesus rejoiced in spirit, and said, [Or as the Greek text says, “in the Holy Spirit”]

And so even our Lord’s expressions of his disposition were expressions that arose out of the Holy Spirit. He rejoiced in the Holy Spirit. Let me just read that in the Greek text, Chapter 10, verse 21 -- I won’t read verse 20 again.

“In that very hour, Jesus [or he] rejoiced in the Holy Spirit, and said” --

And so even our Lord's expressions of emotion, the expressions of his will, the expressions of his intellect, of his thoughts; they are the product of the Holy Spirit. He was one who was completely guided by him. Every thought was brought into obedience to the Spirit. So his teaching, his miracles, his personal life was all inspired by the Holy Spirit. And it was experiential. He waited for help, and he received help. I wish I had time to turn to the Messianic promises of the Old Testament in which the Messiah is promised that God would help him at the critical points of his ministry.

Now, roman, V, the Holy Spirit in Christ's death. Now, I can deal with these in a hurry because there isn't anything hardly at all spoken -- given in the New Testament about the Holy Spirit in Christ's death.

Now, it is said by some that because in Hebrews chapter 9, verse 14, we read that "through eternal Spirit he offered himself without spot to God," that the Holy Spirit was the one who guided our Lord to his death. They reveal by that that they have never read the Greek text at that point, because the reference there is probably not to the Holy Spirit, but to our Lord's own holy spirit. Not the Holy Spirit, the third person of the Trinity, but to our Lord's spirit. The great emphasis of the Book of Hebrews is that Jesus offered himself voluntarily to God, and it is through his own holy spirit that he offered himself without spot to God. In fact, the few references of our Lord to the death indicate there is very little stress upon the work of the spirit in that death.

Now, I think that the reason for this should be obvious, and I'm going to give you just a minute. Now, why do you think - in the New Testament, why do you think that there is no real clear evidence that the Holy Spirit led our Lord to the cross and was working in his death? I'm not saying they were separated in this. But I'm saying, why is it in the word of God that there is little emphasis on the work of the Spirit in his death? Can you give me one reason?

I, long time ago, when we began this study said something about this. Does anyone remember? Yes. [Inaudible] That may be related to it, but that isn't exactly what I was driving at. What is the -- Yes. [Inaudible]

Well, that is the point -- the great emphasis of the New Testament is that the death is a voluntary death of the Son, so that there is no question whatsoever that he voluntarily died, voluntarily became the substitute. And so the New Testament stresses our Lord's part in his death.

Now, roman VI, the Holy Spirit in Christ's resurrection. Now, I also said a long time ago that the Spirit is only the agent in our Lord's resurrection. In no where is it said that the Holy Spirit raised our Lord from the dead. Now, someone might, immediately, point to Romans chapter 8, verse 11, so I'm going to read this text but only to refute that idea. In Romans chapter 8, verse 11, it says,

"But if the Spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead" --

Now, at first, that sounds as if the Spirit is the one who raised up our Lord from the dead but read it carefully. It says "the Spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead." Now, is it the Spirit that raised him up or is it him that raised him up? Well, of course, it's him/ And the spirit is the spirit of him who raised up Jesus from the dead. What he's really saying is and if "the Spirit of God who raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, he that raised up Christ from the dead [God] shall also quicken your mortal bodies through his Spirit that dwelleth in you."

So that text really says that God raised up our Lord and that he will raise up your body through his Spirit. Now, we might, by implication, say, well, the Father probably used the Spirit to raise our Lord from the dead. And with that I will not argue. But I want you to notice that there is no place in the New Testament, apart from this, that really says that our Lord was raised from the dead by the Spirit. Almost always in the New

Testament the resurrection is traced to whom? Answer? Is the resurrection traced to our Lord? To the Father? Or to the Spirit? I've already told you it's not the Spirit, so -- which is it? The Father? The Father?

Very rarely is our Lord ever said in the Scriptures, to have a direct part in his resurrection. He did say, remember, "Destroy this body and in three days I will raise it up." He said, "I have power to lay it down, and I have power to raise it again." No one questions his power. But, in the New Testament, the great emphasis rests on the Father raising the Son.

Now, I want to ask you another question? Why is the New Testament on the Father's raising of the Son? Can anyone tell me that? Yes, sir? [inaudible] What do you mean by that? [inaudible] Why then -- why then is the Father the one who raises him? [inaudible] Well, of course, he was the Son of God by his conception, too, remember.

But why is it the Father that does it? Why did not the Son just rise from the dead and the very fact that he rose from the dead; that would declare him to be the Son of God? [inaudible] Huh? Right. Right. This young lady up front has been right on the point. You see, the question about the resurrection is it acceptable? That is, is the work that he did on the cross acceptable to the Father? And the fact that the Father raised him from the dead is his way of saying, I accept the finished work that Jesus did.

And so the New Testament emphasis rests upon the Father raising the Son in his -- in that way, he says, I accept what he does. It is valid for the remission of sins.

Now, finally, for our time is up, roman VII, the Holy Spirit in Christ's Post-resurrection Ministry. And I just want to read one verse in Acts chapter 1, verse 2, to show that even though our Lord is glorified, he still ministers in the Spirit. Acts chapter 1 in verse 2, we read:

“The Holy Spirit in the Life of Christ” by S. Lewis Johnson
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“The former treatise have I made, O Theophilus, of all that Jesus began both to do and teach, Until the day in which he was taken up, after that he through the Holy Ghost had given commandments unto the apostles whom he had chosen:”

And so our Lord, even in his post-resurrection ministry still ministers in the power and through the person of the Holy Spirit. I’ll only ask you one question as we close.

If Jesus Christ, who was the sinless Son of God, needed the Holy Spirit in his ministry, is it possible for us to ever think that we do not need the Holy Spirit?

Let’s bow together in prayer.

[Prayer] Father, we thank Thee for the revelation of the ministry of the Spirit in the Son and, O Father, if the sinless Son, conceived of the Holy Ghost, needed the Holy Spirit in his whole ministry, even in his thoughts, O, how dependent we are upon him also. So, Lord, teach us to walk by the Spirit.

For Jesus’ sake. Amen.