

# 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?

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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?

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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?**

**Key Text:** *John 14:12*

### Teachers Aims:

1. To show the essential role of the Holy Spirit in Christ's life and ministry.
2. To explore the potential of our lives when fully submitted to the Holy Spirit's work.

### Lesson Outline:

#### I. The Power of the Holy Spirit in Christ's Life

- A. Conception (*Luke 1:35*).
- B. Baptism (*Luke 3:21, 22*).
- C. Sinless life (*1 Tim. 3:16*).
- D. Guidance (*Luke 4:1*).
- E. Miraculous works (*Matt. 12:28*).
- F. Resurrection (*1 Pet. 3:18*).

#### II. The Availability of the Holy Spirit's Power in Our Lives

- A. Faith to believe.
- B. Guidance to a pure life.
- C. Being able to know and to do the will of God.

**Summary:** Jesus set aside His divine powers completely to take on humanity. Not one miracle that He performed or one temptation that He overcame was done with His own power. All that Jesus did, said, and taught came directly from the Holy Spirit. Jesus' divinity never ceased, but He chose to be exactly like us—in our need to rely completely on the Holy Spirit—to fulfill His mission. He became the perfect human tool in the hands of the Holy Spirit. We, too, can be used by the Holy Spirit as efficiently as Jesus if we learn to fully submit to His leading and to His voice.

## COMMENTARY

### Introduction

Christ's mission was sustained and guided by the Holy Spirit throughout every phase of His earthly life. The Spirit's infinite intelligence, capabilities, and full sympathy with the Divine purpose qualified Him to labor as an equal Partner with the Father and the Son for our redemption.

## 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?

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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?

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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?**

## I. Miracle Birth

Christ's incarnate nature presents unfathomable mysteries to our minds, but Scripture reveals as much about this subject as we can grasp in this dispensation. Christ, being God come in human flesh (*John 1:14, 1 Tim. 3:16*), must of necessity be conceived in human flesh by divine power. A mere mortal being could not possibly inseminate another mortal with "Immanuel" (God with us). Hence, Jesus was conceived in Mary's womb by the Holy Spirit. This is marvelous, but not baffling; from the beginning the Spirit was actively involved in the work of creation. It is no less complicated for God to create a human by supernatural impregnation than by means of the laws of biological reproduction that He has established. The greatest marvel in this process is that the Creator (Jesus) condescended to become a created being (human) for the sake of our redemption. (*See Phil. 2:5-9 and Col. 1:12-19.*)

## II. Anointed By the Spirit

Christ's visible anointing by the Holy Spirit (*see Luke 3:21, 22*) unveils several core truths:

1. The validation of Jesus' calling as the Messiah. *See Isa. 61:1-3; Luke 4:16-20.*
2. Christ's renunciation of His inherent divine powers and His entire dependence on the other Two Persons of the Godhead for the conduct of His mission. Thus, He retained no advantage that we cannot possess through the same dependence on God that He exercised. (*See John 5:19, 30; 8:28; 15:4, 5; Phil. 4:13.*) This also reveals that it was not exclusively Christ's desire to save us; the Father and the Spirit are equally committed to our redemption and are unitedly laboring to consummate it. (*See John 6:37-39, 63.*)
3. The omnipotent efficacy of the gospel to save people from their sins and restore them to the image of their Creator—a twofold work that only the unmodified power of God can perform. (*See Gen. 1:27; Rom. 8:1-30; Eph. 4:23, 24.*)

## III. Guided By the Spirit

Christ's submissiveness to the guidance of the Holy Spirit clearly displays the variety of the Spirit's work in His life. Consider some aspects of this work—daily direction with regard to duty and its proper performance; discernment; endurance; energy; power; and clarity of mind to comprehend, teach, and apply Scripture. This work is also to be carried out in and through the life of Christ's disciples but only as we completely submit to God. (*See Isa. 11:1, 2; 50:4-10; 59:19-21; 61:1, 2; John 9:4.*) In concert with the Father, and in subjection to His will, the Spirit glorifies Christ. (*See John 16:13, 14.*)

## IV. Spirit-Directed Activity

## 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?

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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?

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“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?**

Christ's paramount mission was "to seek and save the lost" (*Luke 19:10*). This involved a full restoration of Bible truth and personal demonstration of its beauty and power. (*See John 18:37*.) The Holy Spirit anointed Christ to perform His work with flawless mastery, skill, and plenitude, as the great Medical Missionary who came to save us from sin and from every conceivable form of life-robbing affliction (*see Acts 10:38*). Because of Christ's single-minded submission to the will of God, and full obedience to His Word, the Spirit was granted to Christ without measure (*see John 3:31-35*).

## Inductive Bible Study

**Texts for Discovery:** *Matthew 4:1, 3:17, 17:20, Luke 1:35, 3:22*

- 1 Describe the Holy Spirit's role in Jesus' life and ministry. How is this similar to the Holy Spirit's role in the life of a Christian? How is it different? Why was it necessary for Jesus, Himself a manifestation of God, to rely on the Holy Spirit?
- 2 Jesus' entry into the world through the virgin birth was accomplished by the Holy Spirit. Why was this necessary? What spiritual lessons can we learn from the Holy Spirit's role in Jesus' birth, and from the virgin birth itself?
- 3 We are told that Jesus was guided and led by the Holy Spirit. Yet, we usually think of the Holy Spirit as being a gift to the church, from the apostolic age on. How do we reconcile appearances of the Holy Spirit in Jesus' life—and indeed, in the Old Testament era—with statements by Jesus, and others in the Bible, that the Holy Spirit would make Himself known *after* Christ's departure? Can we assume that the apostles, and others at the time, were familiar with the concept of the Holy Spirit? Explain your answer.
- 4 A close look at the Gospels indicates that God and the Holy Spirit were active in Jesus' life and ministry at different times and places. What does this say about the nature and character of the Holy Spirit manifested in the Godhead?
- 5 Jesus performed His miracles strictly through the power of the Holy Spirit. Presumably, we have access to the same power, but we rarely, if ever, perform such miracles, or see them performed by others. Was Jesus different in this sense? If so, how? Did He have an advantage in being God, or was He closer to God's ideal for humanity—an ideal that is at least theoretically attainable for us?

## 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?

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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*.

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

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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?

“Christ came to this world to show that by receiving power from on high, man can live an unsullied life. With unwearied patience and sympathetic helpfulness, He met men in their necessities. By the gentle touch of grace, He banished from the soul unrest and doubt, changing enmity to love, and unbelief to confidence. . . .

“At the sound of His voice the spirit of greed and ambition fled from the heart, and men arose, emancipated, to follow the Saviour.”—Ellen G. White, *Reflecting Christ*, p. 43. “Where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty” (2 Cor. 3:17).

### **V. Resurrection Power by the Spirit**

To the many Scripture references that the Father raised Christ from the dead (see Acts 2:24, 32; 3:15, 26; 4:10; 5:30; 13:30-37), Peter adds that Christ was “quickenened” (*zoopoieo*, which means “made alive”) “by the Spirit” (1 Pet. 3:18; compare Rom. 1:4, 8:11).

## **Witnessing**

Jesus Christ was born into the family of a tradesman—a blue-collar worker by today’s standards. He followed His earthly father, Joseph, into the building trade and became a carpenter. Jesus worked with wood. While we don’t have a mental snapshot of the pieces he handcrafted, we can imagine Him lovingly stroking a beautiful piece of olive wood, turning it this way and that in order to see how best to work with the grain to bring out its inner beauty. We can visualize Him hand-rubbing and polishing the piece until the finish is smoother than warm honey.

Jesus cherished and respected manual labor. He never missed an opportunity to reach down and uplift the oppressed of His day and those who performed the most humbling tasks. Fishermen, tent makers, tax collectors—all were precious to Him. He was not ashamed to be seen with them; rather, He worked on some of the roughest hearts to bring out the beauty of holiness in them.

Christ’s example demonstrates to us today that there is *no* work, occupation, or endeavor too lowly for the Christian to undertake. By example, He showed that wherever we are in the earthly chain of wealth, education, social status, and so forth, we are chosen children of His.

Every day, those around us observe our responses to jobs, personal relationships, financial situations, and more. If we are constantly complaining about our bad luck, our lousy paycheck, our difficult boss, bad politicians, our kids’ inflexible teachers, or whatever else sets us off, others will have a difficult, if not impossible, time seeing Christ reflected in our lives. We will be witnessing all right, but not in a positive, affirming way. If we’re not careful, our behavior may actually further discourage someone who is already struggling hard with life.

We must always remember that our behavior needs to mirror Christ’s—positive in thoughts and in actions. Not only will we encourage others, we might just give ourselves a much-needed boost!

## 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.*

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**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?**

This again atests to the intimacy with which the Father and Spirit worked together in all aspects of Christ's life and ministry, from His birth to His resurrection. God desires this same intimacy with us from our new birth onward to final glory. (*See Romans 6–8; Eph. 1:17-19.*)

“Christ became one flesh with us, in order that we might become one spirit with Him. It is by virtue of this union that we are to come forth from the grave,—not merely as a manifestation of the power of Christ, but because, through faith, His life has become ours. Those who see Christ in His true character, and receive Him into the heart, have everlasting life. It is through the Spirit that Christ dwells in us; and the Spirit of God, received into the heart by faith, is the beginning of the life eternal.”—Ellen G. White, *The Desire of Ages*, p. 388.

## Life-Application Approach

**Icebreaker:** Discuss the meaning and practical implications of *power*. Consult a dictionary if necessary. Describe someone you consider to be a powerful person. Share a time when you felt powerful. What were some of the common themes or concepts from your dialogue? How does our understanding of *power* contrast with our understanding of the Holy Spirit's power?

### Thought Questions:

❶ Imagine Mary's encounter with the angel. Make your mental image as vivid and detailed as your creativity allows. Now read the account in Luke 1:26-38. The angel told Mary that she would conceive the Messiah when “the Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you” (*vs. 35, NIV*). Try to describe how this could happen. Why is this miracle so beyond our ability to explain? What does this tell us about the Holy Spirit and one of God's greatest miracles—the salvation of a sinful human being?

❷ Take a moment to remember your baptism or to recall a baptism that you have witnessed. Share those experiences in class. What kinds of feelings and thoughts did the class members share about baptism? If you had been at Jesus' baptism, what would you have seen and heard? Jesus received the anointing of the Holy Spirit (*see Matt. 3:16, Luke 3:22*). Why must we each experience the Holy Spirit's presence in our lives?

### Application Question:

When Jesus was talking with Nicodemus, He said, “God gives the Spirit without limit” (*John 3:34, NIV*). Why was this important for Nicodemus and for us to know? Consider John 3:3-8. What barriers prevent us from receiving the Holy Spirit and acting in accordance with His direction and power? In a season of prayer, either corporately or individually, ask the Holy Spirit to anoint you and your class or church family for His service. Be prepared to act under His guidance in ways that take you out of your usual routine.

**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?