

The Holy Spirit 1

The Holy Spirit and Jesus

Jesus has always existed - there never was when he was not; and from the very beginning he was God. It is true that when he returned to heaven after his victory on the cross and in his resurrection, the Father rewarded him with a name that is above all names, but the reward was not to make him a god. He already was God. He has always existed and has never been anything less than God.

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. (Jn.1:1 NKJV)

And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth. (Jn. 1:14 NKJV).

When Jesus, the Word, became flesh, that is became man, he did not cease to be God. How could he? He could not cease to be what he is eternally in his essential being. However, the flesh he took was not some special species of flesh; no, he took the same type of body that we have, you and I. He did not become superman with powers in his body denied to you and me.

It is important to understand that. At Sunday school I was taught that he did have powers denied to you and me. I was taught that the fact that he worked miracles proved that he was God. His miracles of healing, of turning water into wine, of feeding the five thousand on two fish and five loaves, of walking on the water, all proved that he was God. But they do not: other things in his ministry point to that, but not his miracles. Think; if the fact that Jesus healed people proves that he was God, what about Ian Andrews? Colin Urquhart, John Wimber. I have seen people healed under their ministry; does that prove that they are God?

Over the years, I have had the joy of seeing people healed as I have prayed for them; but that certainly does not prove that I am God, and if you are using the ability to heal as proof of deity in the case of Christ, you cannot suddenly change the rules and say that it doesn't prove the same thing in any other case. It either proves it or it doesn't.

No, and this is the point that may challenge your faith about Jesus, he had no power in himself to work any miracle at all. He did not do his mighty works because he was perfect God, but because he was perfect man. When he was on earth he was limited to the abilities of a human body just like ours. That means he had only a human brain.

Now let me show you my authority for saying that - the very words of Jesus himself:-

Then Jesus answered and said to them, "Most assuredly, I say to you, the Son can do nothing of Himself, but what He sees the Father do; for whatever He does, the Son also does in like manner." (John 5:19)

Do you see? The Son, Jesus, can do no mighty work of himself; he does not have it in him.

"I can of Myself do nothing. As I hear, I judge; and My judgement is righteous, because I do not seek My own will but the will of the Father who sent Me." (John 5:30)

What Jesus is saying there is that his judgement comes from the Father. He lines himself up with the Father's will and allows the Father's judgement to flow through him.

Then Jesus said to them, "When you lift up the Son of Man, then you will know that I am He, and that I do nothing of Myself; but as My Father taught Me, I speak these things." (John 8:28)

That is very similar to the previous quotation. It is what he receives from his Father that he speaks and does.

"For I have not spoken on My own authority; but the Father who sent Me gave Me a command, what I should say and what I should speak." (John 12:49)

Perhaps most important of all in this connection:-

"Do you not believe that I am in the Father, and the Father in Me? The words that I speak to you I do not speak on My own authority; but the Father who dwells in Me does the works." (John 14:10)

Can you grasp this truth here? What Jesus is saying is this. "Do not think that I am able to do these mighty works in my own strength. I have no power in myself to do them. Rather, I am completely open to my Father; and because I am so completely open, he can work through me. I have a human body and I put it utterly at the disposal of my Father and what you see is simply my Father doing his works. I am not doing them." In Holland, near Rotterdam, there is a swing bridge over a river on a central pivot. It carries a railway and it swings open to allow large ships to go up to the port. As it swings shut its positioning is so exact that, massive as it is, it is correct to a thousandth of an inch so that the rails are perfectly aligned and the train can run smoothly and safely from one bank of the river to the other.

Look to these words from the letter to the Hebrews:-

Therefore, when He came into the world, He said: "Sacrifice and offering You did not desire, But a body You have prepared for Me... Then I said, "Behold, I have come--In the volume of the book it is written of Me--To do Your will, O God.' " (Hebrews 10:5-7)

Are you beginning to understand? Jesus is saying, "When it was decided in heaven, Father, that I should come to earth, you provided a body for me. It was an ordinary human body, just like that of Adam and every other human being; no more, no less. I did what it was your intention that the first Adam should do, I offered myself, my body, utterly to you to do your will. I aligned myself totally with your plan and allowed that to flow through me.

Let me give you just one more text to hammer the point home that Jesus did not work his miracles by any power of his own.

"Men of Israel, hear these words: Jesus of Nazareth, a Man attested by God to you by miracles, wonders, and signs which God did through Him in your midst, as you yourselves also know-- " (Acts 2:22)

Those are the words of Peter to the crowd on the day of Pentecost when people thought the apostles were drunk. Notice what he says: Jesus was man. Everyone knows where he came from - Nazareth. But he was accredited by God himself by means of the miracles which you saw him do; but, in fact, it was God doing them through him.

Do you see now why, when just before Jesus went to Gethsemane to be handed over to the priests, betrayed by Judas, and Philip asked, "Lord, show us the Father," Jesus was so upset that he had not understood, and said to him, "Don't you know me Philip... anyone who has seen me has seen the Father.." Jesus was so

open to God and God so filled him that anyone who looked at Jesus saw what God was like in human form.

For in him all the fullness of God was pleased to dwell, (NRSV)
(Colossians 1:19)

Let me try to illustrate it in another way. (Have opening of Beethoven's 5th Symphony played on solo guitar or a flute.) Now who can tell me what that was? ... What? That was Beethoven's 5th symphony? Have you ever seen the score, with all the woodwind, brass and percussion as well as the strings? That was Beethoven's 5th symphony? Yet it was. That was the fullness of it but expressed through the limitations of a guitar (flute). Why, if even Beethoven himself was here to do it, it would not sound any better - maybe a great deal worse because he probably couldn't play a guitar (or flute). Now Jesus was the fullness of God expressed through the limitations of a human body. Jesus had only a human brain. He had to learn like anyone else. Of course, there is one great difference between us and the human Jesus - he was without sin, so there was no barrier between the Father and him.

Now, will you grasp one very important fact:- Jesus did not perform any miracle until he was baptised in the Spirit. Jesus was born of the Spirit, conceived of the Spirit - Joseph was not his physical father, it was the Holy Spirit who came upon Mary and the baby Jesus was conceived. But Jesus still had to be filled with the Spirit, baptised in the Spirit, before he was able to enter on his ministry. Why? Because in his humanity he had laid aside his power. Not his deity, we saw that at the start, Jesus never ceased to be God, but he worked his mighty works not because he was perfect God (although he was) but because he was perfect man - totally open to God to allow his Father to work his works through him.

Now if that is true, if the works were in fact the Father doing them through Jesus, if only we were equally open to God, why shouldn't God be able to do the same things through us? The answer is, he can!

"Most assuredly, I say to you, he who believes in Me, the works that I do he will do also; and greater works than these he will do, because I go to My Father." (John 14:12)

Notice what Jesus says. It is every believer who will do these works not just the Apostles or Missionaries or Clergy or Readers or Elders but "He (and of course that includes women) who believes in me." Notice also, how or why this will be possible - "because I go to my Father." What did Jesus say he would do if he went to the Father but what would not happen if he didn't go? He would send the Holy Spirit.

"Nevertheless I tell you the truth. It is to your advantage that I go away; for if I do not go away, the Helper will not come to you; but if I depart, I will send Him to you." (John 16:7)

It is God's intention that the works Christ did were not to cease when he returned to heaven but to go on; and they did go on in the early Church. We have lost it because we don't believe it and it isn't taught anymore. Or at least it wasn't and even now most theological colleges don't teach it. There is a theory (called dispensationalism) that the Holy Spirit was given to the early Church in a special way just to get it going but now the gifts have been withdrawn. But there is not a shred of biblical evidence that this is so. 1 Corinthians 13 tells us when the gifts will cease - when that which is perfect is come. I don't notice that perfection has come to this world yet. I don't see the Kingdom of God established on earth in all its fullness. So the gifts of the Spirit are for today.

So let me sum up what we have learnt this morning.

Jesus was born of the Spirit but he had to be baptised in the Spirit before he was able to work any miracle. It was not because he was God that he worked his works (although he was, indeed, God) but because he was man as man was intended to be - perfectly open to God. God the Father was working his works through Jesus by the power of the Holy Spirit. That same Holy Spirit is now available to you, if only you are open to God and then he will be able to do the same works through you. (In fact, the gifts which operated through Jesus have been shared throughout the whole of the Church; each believer has a different gift, but together, making up the body of Christ, all the gifts are there. But that is the subject of a later talk.)

You may want to say that you are too great a sinner for the same works to be done through you that Jesus did. But wait a moment, haven't you been cleansed from all sin by your faith in Jesus? Or don't you believe that? Don't you see? - Jesus was born of the Spirit and then, when he was 30, he was filled or baptised in the Spirit. If you are a Christian you have been born again of the Spirit; you need to be filled with the Spirit.

So that you do not think this is some strange and heretical teaching let me leave you with scripture.

Do you not believe that I am in the Father and the Father is in me? The words that I say to you I do not speak on my own; but the Father who dwells in me does his works. Believe me that I am in the Father and the Father is in me; but if you do not, then believe me because of the works themselves. Very truly, I tell you, the one who believes in me will also do the works that I do and, in fact, will do greater works than these, because I am going to the Father..... And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Advocate, to be with you forever..... You know him, because he abides with you, and he will be in you. I will not

leave you orphaned; I am coming to you..... On that day you will know that I am in my Father, and you in me, and I in you."
(John 14:10-20)

Do you see it? do you believe it?