

We come this morning to our third study in a short topical series entitled: The Person and Work of the Holy Spirit. In our first sermon we learned that the Holy Spirit is a distinct divine Person. This is to say, the Spirit is no mere force or power but a divine person, equal and yet distinct from the Father and Son.

Last week we began to consider His work, limiting our consideration to His work in creation and common grace. This brings us this week to begin to consider His work in the new creation or redemption. This is basically twofold: (1) His work upon the Head (Christ), and (2) His work upon the body (Church).

We can cluster His work upon Christ in three headings—His Birth and Growth, His Baptism and Ministry, and His Death and Resurrection.

- I. His Birth and Growth
- II. His Baptism and Ministry
- III. His Death and Resurrection

I. His Birth and Growth

1. The first place to begin in considering the work of the Spirit upon Christ, is to remind you of an important clarification.
2. We must remember that Christ is one Person with two natures—He is truly Man and truly God—two natures one Person.
3. Thus, when we speak of the work of the Spirit upon Christ, technically speaking, we are referring to His human nature.
4. With regards to His divine nature, Christ cannot receive the Spirit any more, as the Father, Son, and Spirit, are One.
5. And yet, while we must make this necessary distinction, it's also important to speak of Christ as a single Person.
6. And so, in speaking of the Holy Spirit's work upon His human nature, it's best (and necessary), to speak of this work upon the Person of Christ.
7. Thus, under this first heading, I want to consider three specific works of the Spirit with regards to Christ's birth and growth.
8. (1) The Spirit formed Christ's human nature—that is, He formed His human body and soul within the virgin's womb.
9. Human nature has two parts—body and soul—and thus Christ's human nature consisted of two parts—a body and soul.
10. Last week we learned it's the peculiar work of the Holy Spirit to breathe life into man—physical and spiritual life.
11. Every time a baby is conceived within the womb of a woman, the Spirit forms a little body and breathes life into it (Job .33:4—"The Spirit of God has made me, and the breath of the Almighty gives me life').
12. And yet, obviously, with regards to Christ, the Holy Spirit played a unique role in creating His human body and soul.
13. Lk.1:35—"And the angel answered and said to her, 'The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Highest will overshadow you; therefore also, that Holy One who is to be born will be called the Son of God.'"
14. I mentioned last week, that this word rendered "overshadow" is similar to the Hebrew word rendered "hovering" in Genesis 1:2.
15. I further mentioned the word suggests the imagery of a mother bird, hovering or brooding over her nest of eggs.
16. Matt.1:20—"Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take to your Mary your wife, for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Spirit."
17. Thus, the Holy Spirit took from Mary (with nothing from Joseph), formed within her a human body and a human soul.

18. And then, the second Person of the Godhead, uniquely joined Himself to that sinless humanity as a single Person.
19. (2) The Spirit endowed Christ's human nature—that is, the Holy Spirit adorned His human soul with various graces.
20. The human soul of our Savior was not merely free from all sin, but it was also in possession of every kind of grace.
21. Just as the Spirit beautified the heavens with various stars and planets, so He beautified our Savior's soul with grace.
22. Theologians distinguish between "habitual" and "actual" holiness—habitual being the habit or source of all actual holiness.
23. Thus, because the infant was too young to "actually" live holy, He was filled with all "habitual" holiness that would eventually break out into actual holiness.
24. McGraw—"Christ's sanctification by the Holy Spirit furnished His human nature with a 'habit' of holiness, by which He was equipped to perform every 'actual' act of obedience."
25. Isa. 11:1-2—"There shall come forth a Rod from the stem of Jesse, and a Branch shall grow out of his roots. The Spirit of the LORD shall rest upon Him, the Spirit of wisdom and understanding, the Spirit of counsel and might, the Spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the LORD."
26. Let me simply confess at the outset, that I do agree this prophecy includes the Spirit's preparation of Christ for ministry.
27. But if you notice, the Spirit's work upon the Messiah (v2), is closely related to His incarnation and birth (v1).
28. John Owen—"His nature, as miraculously created, was absolutely innocent, spotless, and free from sin, as was Adam in the day wherein he was created. But this was not all; it was by the Holy Spirit positively endowed with all grace."
29. (3) The Spirit matured Christ's human nature—by this I mean, the Spirit matured the human nature of Christ in grace.
30. Lk. 2:40—"And the Child grew and became strong in spirit, filled with wisdom; and the grace of God was upon Him."
31. Our Savior grew physically and spiritually just as any young person would, and both were the results of the Spirit.
32. While our Savior was sinless at every stage of development, the Spirit continued to fill His soul with more grace.
33. Thus, the Holy Spirit formed the human nature of Christ within the womb, kept it from all sin and corruption, beautified it with grace, and matured it throughout the entirety of His life.

II. His Baptism and Ministry

1. The next section of time wherein we read about the Spirit's work upon Christ, is in His baptism and public ministry.
2. Jn. 1:32—"And John bore witness, saying, I saw the Spirit descending from heaven like a dove, and He remained upon Him."
3. Perhaps I can put it like this—the Holy Spirit especially came upon Christ, to empower and equip Him for ministry.
4. Notice, the Spirit descended from heaven like a dove, that is, the Spirit took some visible form that resembled a dove.
5. I suggest that the most likely reason the Spirit descended in the form of a dove is because of what we learned last week.
6. If you remember, in Genesis 1:2, we learned that the Spirit hovered over the mass of creation, similar to a mother bird.
7. This Greek word used of the Spirit is a word that basically means the same thing—the Spirit is hovering over Christ (the Head of the new creation).
8. But perhaps what's more important is the phrase "and remained upon Him"—that is, the Spirit never left Him.

9. The Spirit was given to Him without measure, for the purpose of qualifying or empowering Him for ministry (which I can summarize with three words – temptation, preaching, and miracles).
10. (1) Temptation—immediately following His baptism, the first thing the Spirit does is lead Him into the wilderness.
11. Lk.4:1-2—"Then Jesus, being filled with the Holy Spirit, returned from the Jordan and was led by the Spirit into the wilderness, being tempted for forty days by the devil."
12. It was by the power of the Holy Spirit, that Christ repelled the fiery darts of the Holy Spirit, while in the wilderness.
13. Now, the reason why our Savior is led by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by Satan for 40 days is very important.
14. In the first place, Christ is here portrayed as the second Adam, who unlike the first Adam, did not succumb to Satan's lies.
15. Furthermore, the fact that our Savior was in the wilderness for 40 days harkens back to Israel's rebellion for 40 years in the wilderness.
16. Thus, Christ is here portrayed as both the obedient Adam and Israel, in contrast to the disobedient Adam and Israel.
17. And how was He the obedient Last Adam and True Israel, but as the Godman, led and empowered by the Spirit.
18. (2) Preaching—the Holy Spirit filled Christ, enabling Him to preach the gospel and speak words that are in season.
19. Isa.61:1-3—"The Spirit of the Lord God is upon Me, because the LORD has anointed Me to preach good tidings to the poor; He has sent Me to heal the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to those who are bound; to proclaim the acceptable year of the LORD."
20. You know, that our Savior quoted these words in the synagogue in Nazareth, and then said—"Today this Scripture is fulfilled in your hearing."
21. It was by the Holy Spirit that our Savior was an effective and wise preacher—He preached the word in the power of the Spirit.
22. (3) Miracles—the Holy Spirit indwelt Christ and enabled Him to perform miracles that verified His divine identity.
23. Acts 10:38—"God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and with power, who went about doing good and healing all who were oppressed by the devil, for God was with Him."
24. God anointed Jesus with the Holy Spirit and power—that is, power that come from the Person of the Holy Spirit.
25. This took place at His baptism, which qualified or prepared Him for His ministry of preaching and performing miracles.
26. Oftentimes, when people are asked how Christ performed His miracles they say—Well, because He was God.
27. And because He was God, they say, His divine nature empowered His human nature, enabled Him to perform miracles.
28. Historically, this isn't the right answer—it's true of course that Christ is fully God, but remember, He is God and Man.
29. It's important to keep the two natures distinct—the divine nature never deified His human nature and His human nature never humanized His divine.
30. And thus, the proper answer is—Christ human nature was enabled to perform miracles because of the Holy Spirit.
31. In other words, the human nature did not lean upon the divine nature but was empowered by the Person of the Spirit.
32. For example, Moses parted the Red Sea not because he was God but by the powerful ministry of God's Spirit.
33. Elisha threw an ax in the water and it floated not because he was God but by the powerful ministry of God's Spirit.
34. Thus, our Savior performed miracles, not merely because He was God, but by the powerful ministry of the Spirit.

35. Perhaps I can put it like this—all that Christ did as Man, He did by the Personal ministry and power of the Spirit.
36. Thus, at one point in His ministry the Pharisees claimed He casted out devils, by the power of Satan (Matt.12:22-30).
37. His response was clear, v28—"I cast out demons by the Spirit of God"—that is, by the power of the Holy Spirit.
38. Abraham Kuyper—"As our human natures derive all gifts and power not from itself, but from the Holy Spirit, so did the Son not violate this principle, but although He was the Son, He did not take the preparation, enriching and operation of His human nature into His own hand, but was willing to receive them from the hand of the Holy Spirit."

III. His Death and Resurrection

1. The Holy Spirit not only helped Christ to fulfill His earthly ministry, but also His death, resurrection, and ascension.
2. (1) Death—that is, it was by the power of the Spirit that Christ offered Himself on the cross as an acceptable sacrifice.
3. Heb.9:13-14—"Christ, by the eternal Spirit offered Himself without spot to God"—it was by the assistance of the Spirit, that Christ endured in His humanity the wrath of God.
4. Isa.42:1—"Behold! My Servant whom I uphold, My Elect One in whom My soul delights! I have put My Spirit upon Him."
5. As Christ entered the Garden of Gethsemane, and He became troubled in His human soul—the Spirit upheld Him.
6. And then as Christ endured the wrath of God for our sins upon His human nature, the Spirit strengthened Him.
7. While Christ was suffering on the cross, the Spirit of God was enabling His human nature to bear up under the wrath of God.
8. John Owen—"By the Spirit He was directed, strengthened, and comforted, in His whole course – in all His temptations, troubles, and sufferings, from first to last."
9. O what an amazing thought! Though in one sense the Father turned His back upon His Son as He was made sin for us.
10. There is another sense in which the Father, by the Person of the Holy Spirit, sustained and upheld His humanity.
11. (2) Resurrection, Rom.8:11—"If the Spirit of Him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, He who raised Christ from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies by His Spirit who dwells in you."
12. 1Pet.3:18—"For Christ also suffered once for sins, the just for the unjust, that He might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh but made alive by the Spirit (Rom.1:1-4; 1Tim.3:16)."
13. Now again, this in no way denies the unity of the Godhead in all His acts—everything God does He does as Father, Son, and Spirit.
14. But it's simply to affirm a peculiar role of each person in every act—the Father acts through the Son and by the Spirit.
15. Thus, we find that the Holy Spirit was again hovering over our Savior's dead body in the darkness of His tomb.
16. (3) Ascension—it's here we behold the climatic work of the Spirit with regards to Christ—He is given to Christ as the exalted King to pour out upon His people.
17. Now, the Scriptures actually speak about Christ being anointed with the Holy Spirit three times—at His incarnation, baptism, and ascension.
18. Ps.45:7—"Therefore God, Your God, has anointed You with the oil of gladness more than Your companions."
19. When Christ ascended back to heaven, the Father poured out the Spirit upon Christ so that He would give Him to us.

20. Acts 2:32-33—"This Jesus god has raised up, of which we are all witnesses. Therefore being exalted to the right hand of God, and having received from the Father the promise of the Holy Spirit, He poured out this which you now see and hear."
21. And thus, the Spirit is poured out upon the body (church), because the Spirit was first poured out upon the Head.
22. Exhortation 1—Let us adore Christ—that is, let us behold in Christ moral perfection that renders Him adorable.
23. Ps.45:2—"You are fairer than the sons of men; grace is poured upon Your lips"—notice there is a fact and reason.
24. (a) A fact—"You are fairer than the sons of men"—that is, He is more beautiful, than any other son of man—any other person.
25. Now, obviously brethren the church here is thinking about Christ's moral beauty, and not His physical beauty.
26. There is no reason to assume that our Savior was physically or bodily any more handsome than any other man.
27. But, there is every reason to believe He was fairer than ALL the sons of men with regards to His moral beauty.
28. Surely brethren, we understand that true beauty is moral and spiritual, Prov.31:30—"Charm is deceitful and beauty is passing, but a woman who fears the LORD, she shall be praised."
29. In other words—true and lasting beauty is moral and inward—a woman who fears God possesses true beauty.
30. And dear brethren, if this is true (and it is), remember Christ had the Spirit, as the Spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the Lord without measure.
31. And so, the beauty here ascribed to Christ by the Church, is a beauty that had direct reference to His humanity.
32. Never as their a Man as morally beautiful than our Savior—a Man perfectly adored with all the graces and gifts of the Spirit.
33. If we emptied all the wisdom of Solomon, the meekness of Moses, and the patience of Job, and put all this grace into one man, he would never shine as brightly as Christ.
34. (b) A reason—"grace is poured upon Your lips"—perhaps more literally—"grace is poured within Your lips."
35. This of courses presupposes the work of the Holy Spirit—it was by the Spirit that grace was poured within His lips.
36. The imagery is very beautiful—Christ was full of grace because He was full of the Holy Spirit who gives grace (and because He was full of grace, He spoke graciously).
37. Exhortation 2—Let us be satisfied with Christ—that is, let us be content with Christ who is perfect moral beauty.
38. It is not enough to merely adore Christ, we must cherish, love, trust, and be satisfied, in and with Jesus Christ.
39. In the gospel of God, Christ becomes our Heavenly Groom, who not only gives salvation, but Himself to His people.
40. Now, let me suggest when it comes to a Groom, several things are important—beauty, riches, sympathy, and fidelity.
41. (a) Beauty—as I have already said, Christ was the fairest of the sons of men—morally and spiritually beautiful.
42. (b) Riches—He not only possess the riches of grace to ensure that His beloved bride arrives in the Promised Land but He owns the Promised Land.
43. (c) Sympathy—by this I mean, the Lord Jesus Christ is understanding, considerate, compassionate, and full of kindness.
44. (d) Fidelity—by this of course is meant faithfulness—He Himself has promised—I will never leave nor forsake you.
45. O my friends, if we were thinking rightly we would confess, Christ is all we need for this life and for that to come.

46. Exhortation 3—Let us be conformed to the image of Christ—we must remember we have the same Spirit He had.
47. While it's true, Christ had the Holy Spirit without measure and we in measure, we both have the same Holy Spirit.
48. In fact, there is a real sense in which, we see in the Spirit's ministry upon the Head His ministry upon the body.
49. The perfect humanity of Christ is the perfect pattern to which every Christian is slowly being conformed by the Spirit.
50. 2Cor.3:18—"But we all, with unveiled face, beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory, by the Spirit of the Lord."
51. By "mirror" is likely meant the Holy Scriptures, wherein we are enabled to behold the "glory" of Jesus Christ.
52. We "behold" Him by faith, and as we look upon Christ, as found in the Holy Scriptures, we are transformed into His image.
53. We are transformed in the same image (that is, the same image as Christ), from glory to glory (one degree of glory to the next).
54. Notice how—"By the Spirit of the Lord"—in other words, it's the work of the Spirit to conform us into Christ's image.
55. Perhaps another way of putting this would be—as the body is joined to the Head, we share in the same Anointing.
56. Ps.133:2—"It is like the precious oil upon the head, running down on the beard, the beard of Aaron, sunning down on the edge of his garments."
57. The imagery of course is that of Aaron's anointing—when the oil was poured over his head and run down his body.
58. This was typical of Christ and His people—for when we become His body—we share in His anointing (Spirit).
59. 1Jn.2:20—"But you have an anointing from the Holy One"—that is, we have received the Holy Spirit from Christ.
60. And what does the Spirit (anointing) do upon the body (church), but the very same thing He did upon the Head (Christ).
61. O dear brethren, we have in the Person and ministry of the Holy Spirit grace to keep us from the darts of the enemy.
62. We find in Him power to live a holy live within the wilderness of this world—power to fulfill our ministries—power to offer ourselves as living sacrifices.
63. In short, all that Christ was enabled to do by the Holy Spirit, we are enabled to do (though in lessening degrees).
64. Why—because we have the Spirit of Christ—that is, the very same Spirit that dwelt in Christ without measure.