

Th123 A Study of the Holy Spirit

Th123-8 The Spirit Empowered Jesus

In previous lessons, you have learned how the Holy Spirit anointed Old Testament prophets, kings, and craftsmen. The Spirit enabled them to accomplish the work which God had called them to do. In this lesson, you will learn how the Spirit anointed and empowered Jesus, the Messiah, to fulfill His ministry.

Someone may ask, “Why would Jesus need the power of the Holy Spirit? Wasn’t He the eternal Son of God manifested in the flesh?” The answer is that, indeed, Jesus was—and is—the eternal Son of God. Had He chosen, He could have done all of His mighty works in His own divine power. Jesus, however, chose not to minister in this way. He rather chose to minister as a man empowered by the Holy Spirit. To fully understand this truth, one must understand four other biblical truths.

First, we must understand how *Jesus humbled himself*. The Bible teaches that when Jesus came to earth, He chose to “empty” himself of His divine power and rights so that He might truly live, minister, and die on the cross as a man. In his letter to the Philippians, Paul wrote about how Christ was in “very nature God.” However, He “did not consider equality with God something to be used to his own advantage; rather, he made himself nothing by taking the very nature of a servant.” In other words, He became a common man. Paul continues, “And being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself [or “emptied Himself,” NASB] by becoming obedient to death—even death on a cross!” (Phil 2:5-8). In other words, Jesus humbled himself by denying himself of His privileges and powers as the Son of God. He willingly chose to live and minister as a man. He did this so that He could be our example—showing us how we too can live and minister in the Spirit’s power.

The second truth we must understand is that *Jesus Christ, the Messiah, was anointed and empowered by the Holy Spirit*. In fact, the Hebrew word translated *Messiah*, and the Greek word translated *Christ*, have the same meaning. They both mean the “Anointed One.”

Jesus was anointed by the Holy Spirit at His baptism in the Jordan River. There He actually received two baptisms. He was first baptized in water. Then, He was baptized in the Holy Spirit. The Bible says, “Jesus was baptized” in water. Then, “as he was praying, heaven was opened and the Holy Spirit descended on him in bodily form like a dove” (Luke 3:21-22). As a result, Jesus was empowered by the Holy Spirit to fulfill His ministry.

Third, we must understand how *Jesus fulfilled His ministry in the Spirit’s power*. Soon after He was baptized, Jesus described what happened to Him when the Spirit came upon Him. He explained, “The Spirit of the Lord is on me, because he has anointed me to preach good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners and recovery of sight for the blind, to release the oppressed, to proclaim the year of the Lord’s favor” (Luke 4:18-19).

Luke tells us that as soon as Jesus was anointed by the Spirit, “he began his ministry” (Luke 3:23). He then “returned to Galilee in the power of the Spirit” (Luke 4:14). Being full of the Spirit, He proclaimed the good news, healed the sick, and cast out demons. Everyone was

“amazed at the gracious words that came from his lips” (Luke 4:22). And, as Jesus taught, “the power of the Lord was present for him to heal the sick” (Luke 5:17). Peter summed up Jesus’ ministry like this: “God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and power, and...he went around doing good and healing all who were under the power of the devil, because God was with him” (Acts 10:38).

The Bible tells us that Jesus even went to the cross and rose again through the power of the Holy Spirit. It says that Jesus, “through the eternal Spirit offered himself unblemished to God” (Heb 9:14). Finally, the same Holy Spirit who sustained Him on the cross, raised Him from the dead (Rom 8:11). Truly, Jesus performed His entire ministry in the power of the Spirit.

Finally, we must understand that *God expects us to carry out our ministries in the same way Jesus carried out His ministry—in the power of the Holy Spirit*. Jesus chose to minister as a man full of the Holy Spirit so He could be our model. The night before His crucifixion, Jesus promised His disciples, “Anyone who has faith in me will do what I have been doing. He will do even greater things than these, because I am going to the Father.” Then, He told them what He would do when He arrived at His Father’s side. “And I will ask the Father,” He said, “and he will give you another Counselor to be with you forever—the Spirit of truth” (John 14:12, 16-17).

Jesus first fulfilled this promise on the day of Pentecost. Since that time, we, like Jesus, can be empowered by the Spirit. Then, like Him, we too can preach and teach with power. We can be used by God to heal the sick and defeat demonic spirits. And like Jesus, we can endure hardship and persecution and finish the work the Lord has given us to do.

This lesson is **important** because we have learned that Jesus was anointed by the Holy Spirit and that He carried out His ministry through the Spirit’s power.

The **main truth** we learn from this lesson is that if we, like Jesus, are empowered by the Holy Spirit, we too will be able to minister in the Spirit’s power.

Let’s **review** some important truths we have learned from this lesson.

1. How did Jesus humble (or empty) himself when He came to earth to minister?
 - A. [PAUSE] If you answered that Jesus emptied Himself by denying himself of His privileges and powers as the Son of God and choosing to live and minister as a man full of the Holy Spirit, you are right.
2. What happened to Jesus at the Jordan River that enabled Him to fulfill His messianic ministry?
 - A. [PAUSE] If you answered, “The Spirit of the Lord descended upon Him as a dove and anointed and empowered Him to fulfill His ministry,” you answered correctly.
3. Why did Jesus minister in the power of the Holy Spirit rather than in His own divine power as the eternal Son of God?
 - A. [PAUSE] If you answered, “Jesus ministered in the power of the Holy Spirit so He could be the example of how we should minister,” you answered correctly.

This lesson may contain some new ideas that you have never before considered. Therefore, your **assignment** is to re-listen to it several times until you clearly grasp its truths. Memorize Jesus' promise to His followers, "I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Counselor to be with you forever—the Spirit of truth" (John 14:16-17). Then ask God to empower you and your fellow believers with His Holy Spirit, just as He empowered Jesus.