

The Holy Spirit in the Synoptic Gospels

by Arno Clemens Gaebelein

Arno Clemens Gaebelein preaches on the significance of the Holy Spirit in the Synoptic Gospels, emphasizing the role of the Spirit in the birth, ministry, and baptism of Jesus Christ. The passages highlight the Holy Spirit's involvement in the incarnation of Jesus, the anointing of Jesus for His ministry, and the power of the Spirit in casting out demons. Gaebelein also addresses the blasphemy against the Holy Spirit and the promise of the Father, the gift of the Holy Spirit, to believers.

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Transcript

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Gospels?" a: "The Synoptic Gospels are the first three Gospel records of Matthew, Mark, and Luke, which present a similar view of Jesus' life and ministry." - q: "How is the Holy Spirit involved in Jesus' birth?" a: "The Holy Spirit played a crucial role in the conception of Jesus, as mentioned in both Matthew and Luke, indicating that Jesus was conceived by the Holy Spirit." - q: "What is the difference between baptism with the Holy Spirit and baptism with fire?" a: "Baptism with the Holy Spirit refers to the empowerment of believers, while baptism with fire relates to judgment and is associated with the second coming of Christ." - q: "What does it mean to blaspheme the Holy Spirit?" a: "Blasphemy against the Holy Spirit involves attributing the works of the Holy Spirit to evil, which is considered an unforgivable sin." - q: "Do Christians need to ask for the Holy Spirit today?" a: "No, Christians do not need to continually ask for the Holy Spirit, as every believer has already received the Holy Spirit upon faith in Christ." quotes: - "The Holy Spirit produced the human body for the Son of God by a creative act." - "He shall baptize you with the Holy Spirit and with fire." - "If ye then being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask Him." applicationPoints: - "Recognize the Holy Spirit's active role in your spiritual life and ministry." - "Understand the importance of discernment when discussing the gifts of the Holy Spirit." - "Embrace the assurance that as believers, we already have the Holy Spirit dwelling within us." keywords: - "Holy Spirit" - "Synoptic Gospels" - "Jesus' ministry" - "baptism" - "blasphemy" - "empowerment" - "judgment" - "promise" ---

THE first three Gospel records of Matthew, Mark and Luke are called the Synoptic Gospels. Matthew gives us the record of our Lord as the promised King, who came as such and offered the kingdom, only to be rejected by His own; Mark gives the record of Christ as servant and Luke the record of His perfect manhood. The first chapter in Matthew mentions the Holy Spirit for the first time.

Matthew 1:18

"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 Spirit." When Joseph thought of putting her away an angel informed him that "that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Spirit" (verse 20). When Gabriel brought the heavenly announcement to Mary, the Virgin mother of our Lord, he mentioned the Holy Spirit likewise. Luke 1:35, "The Holy Spirit 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." The Holy Spirit produced the human body for the Son of God by a creative act. Of that body the Son of God spoke as a prepared body (Heb. 10:5). It was impossible for One who is absolutely holy to cloth Himself with a body coming into existence by the natural generation. If that had been the case He would have had a body to which the taint of sin was attached. While it is true that Mary had a body which was sinful, yet the power of holiness in the Son of God, repulsed every particle of that, and the Holy Spirit in preparing the body could not permit anything unholy to enter the physical body of our Lord.

This is typically indicated in the meal offering (Lev. 2). The meal-offering speaks of the holy humanity of our Lord. It consisted of fine flour, unleavened, mixed with oil and frankincense put upon it. No meal offering was permitted to have leaven in it, nor any honey. Salt was to be offered with it.

The fine white flour stands for His spotless humanity. The oil is the emblem of the Holy Spirit. He was conceived by the Holy Spirit. Leaven is the type of evil and sin. There was no evil nor sin in Him. Frankincense denotes worship. Honey, which was also forbidden, is symbolical of the amiableness of the natural man. All what was in Him was the result of His own holy character. Salt typifies the separating power of holiness. The Holy Spirit is thus eminently identified with the physical body of our Lord.

Luke 1:15, 41 and 67

Luke 1:15, 41 and 67. These passages also mention the Holy Spirit. John, the forerunner was filled with the Holy Spirit from his mother's womb. Elisabeth, the mother of John, was filled with the Holy Spirit, and so was Zechariah when he prophesied. The trinity is therefore seen in holy action in the very beginning of the New Testament. The Father sent the Son; the Son of God came to be incarnate. The Holy Spirit came upon the Virgin; she conceived by the Holy Spirit. John was filled with the Holy Spirit and also Zechariah and Elisabeth. The same is said of Simeon, who had received a special revelation by the Spirit and was led by Him to the temple (Luke 2:25).

Matthew 3:11-12

Matthew 3:11-12. "I indeed baptize you with water unto repentance, but He that cometh after me is mightier than I, whose shoes I am not worthy to bear; He shall baptize you with the Holy Spirit and with fire; whose fan is in His hand, and He will purge His floor, and gather His wheat into the garner but He will burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire" (Mark 1:18 and Luke 3:16 and 17 and the reference to the same promise in John 1:33). These are fundamental passages and need our closer attention.

We must remember that John, the Baptist, as we call him, was the herald of the King. He still belonged to the Old Testament prophets and did not announce under the name "the kingdom of heaven," the church, nor this present dispensation of grace, but the kingdom, which is promised to Israel. The baptism which he practiced is not Christian baptism. It was a baptism unto repentance by which the Israelite signified that he was worthy of death on account of his sins. Then he announced that He, who came after him, the Messiah- King, would baptize them with the Holy Spirit and with fire. Every Jew who knew the Scriptures and the promise of God as to the gift of the Spirit must have understood by this statement, that these promises were to be accomplished for the nation through the Messiah, the Son of David, on the condition of repentance. The baptism with fire is something entirely different and has nothing whatever to do with the baptism with the Spirit. Strange confusion exists here. There are certain sects which actually differentiate between the baptism with the Spirit and the baptism with fire. They teach, that a believer may be baptized with the Spirit and not be baptized with fire. Then they exhort others to "seek the fire baptism," which they claim, is evidenced by some startling outward phenomena, falling to the floor and talking in a strange tongue, etc. The men who teach that a believer must "seek" a baptism with the Holy Spirit after he has been born again are responsible for a good deal of the confusion which exists among Christians. This fact is taken up elsewhere in this volume.

The baptism with fire did not take place on the day of Pentecost, nor is there a baptism with fire now. The baptism with fire means the judgments which will be executed with the second coming of our Lord. The words of our Lord demonstrate this. He speaks of gathering His wheat (the children of the kingdom) into his garner and of burning the chaff with unquenchable fire (see Matt. 13:37-43). It is the fire baptism of judgment which He will bring to this earth when He returns. The word baptism is used differently. There is water baptism, baptism with the Holy Spirit and the baptism with fire-judgment. Our Lord also used the word baptism when He said "But I have a baptism to be baptized with, and how am I straitened till it be accomplished" (Luke 12:50). It was His suffering and His death to which He referred as a baptism. The conclusive evidence that the fire baptism has nothing to do with the baptism with the Spirit is found in Acts 1:5 "For John truly baptized with water, but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days hence." The Lord omitted "and with fire" because there is no such thing as a fire baptism during the present age.

Matthew 3:16

Matthew 3:16. "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" (see also Mark 1:10-11; Luke 3:21-22, and John 1:32-34).

With His baptism in Jordan our Lord entered upon His official ministry as "a minister of the circumcision for the truth of God, to confirm the promises made unto the fathers (Rom. 15:8)." As John said, "He needed not to be baptized." In His baptism He showed forth the purpose of His coming into the world; He came to take the sinner's place in death. In His baptism there is also indicated His resurrection, His ascension, the gift of the Spirit and the declaration of Sonship.

The Spirit of God came upon Him anointing Him for the great work He came to do. This also is seen in a typical way in the meal offering, for oil was not only to be mixed with fine flour (His incarnation) but before the meal offering was exposed to the fire (typical of His sufferings), oil was poured upon it. So our Lord before He began His work as the Prophet, in His public ministry, ending with His death on the cross, was anointed with the Spirit. Many in Old Testament times were also anointed with the Spirit to do the work into which the Lord had called them. But there is a difference between them and our Lord. The Spirit of God came upon prophets, priests and kings in a certain measure, but John 3:34 tells us that the Spirit was not upon Him by measure, that is, He did not receive a portion of the Spirit, but the Spirit, the Person Himself came upon Him. This is a blessed indication how those who are dead with Christ and risen with Him should also receive the Spirit, not by measure, but He Himself, the third person of the Trinity, comes to dwell in their hearts.

He came upon Him in the form of a dove. The Holy Spirit took the emblem of a dove. The characteristics of the dove are too well known, its lowliness and harmlessness, to need further mention. Even so He manifested meekness and lowliness, the dove character; He did not cry, nor lift up, nor cause His voice to be heard in the street. If one visits nowadays certain meetings of the Pentecostals and other sects and sees the disorder, the howling noises and emotional fits, all claimed to be the operation of the Spirit of God, one feels at once that all is contrary to the Holy Spirit, the Spirit of order, quietness and peace.

Matthew 4:1, Mark 1:12 and Luke 4:1

Matthew 4:1. "Then was Jesus led up of the Spirit into the wilderness to be tested of the devil." Also Mark 1:12 and Luke 4:1. The passage in Luke tells us that Jesus was full of the Holy Spirit and was led by the Spirit to be tested of the devil. The Son of God full of the Spirit is now guided by the Spirit to fulfill all which is written concerning Himself. The life He lived before He began His public ministry was also a life of perfect trust and obedience (see Psa. 22:9-10). The Spirit, as Mark states, drove Him into the wilderness. Some have said, that our Lord was anxious to meet the enemy face to face. That it was His own spirit which led Him into the wilderness. This is incorrect. If our Lord had gone forth impatiently to meet the old serpent, He would have been the tempter of the devil. It was the Holy Spirit who led Him forward, who impelled Him to meet the foe, so that a test might be applied by Him, to find out that He is the Son of God, the holy One. There are two reasons why the Son of God could not sin. The first is, because He is God, absolutely holy, and God cannot sin. The second is because the Holy Spirit of God was upon Him and He is the Spirit of holiness.

Matthew 12:18, Luke 4:14, 18

Matthew 12:18, Luke 4:14, 18. These three passages describe His ministry in the power of the Spirit. Matthew quotes Isaiah's prophecy, who spoke of Him as the Spirit filled servant of the Lord. Luke tells us that after His victory over the devil He returned "in the power of the Spirit into Galilee." As God manifested in the flesh our Lord had power over all things. He had omnipotence and omniscience. But the Spirit of God also acted in Him and through Him. His words were the words of the Spirit, of life and of power. His works were also done in the power of the Spirit. Luke quotes Isaiah 11:1-2.

Matthew 12:28

Matthew 12:28. "But if I cast out demons by the Spirit of God, then the kingdom is come unto you." These words were occasioned by the blasphemous charge that our Lord used Beelzebub, the prince of demons, in His work of delivering the victims of demon possession. His divine logic shows the fallacy of such a charge.

Matthew 12:31-33, Mark 3:29-30, Luke 12:10.

Matthew 12:31-33; Mark 3:29-30, Luke 12:10. Here our Lord speaks of the blasphemy against the Holy Spirit, the sin for which there is no forgiveness neither in this world nor in the world to come; he who commits this sin is in danger of eternal damnation. What is the blasphemy, or sin, against the Holy Spirit? Apart from these three passages this sin is nowhere else mentioned in the New Testament. Satan has often used the statement of our Lord, leading souls into despair, as under his accusation they charge them- selves with having committed the unpardonable sin. The context explains what that sin is. The scribes which charged the Lord that He had the spirit of Beelzebub, used his power, and not the power of the Spirit of God, were guilty of that blasphemy. They did so against their better knowledge. In this sense the blasphemy against the Spirit can no longer be committed.

Matthew 10:20; Mark 13:11; Luke 11:13.

Matthew 10:20; Mark 13:11; Luke 11:13. These passages contain the promise of what should take place after the disciples had received the promise of the Father, the gift of the Holy Spirit. The book of Acts shows the fulfillment, especially Chapter 4:8-13.

Luke 11:13.

Luke 11:13. "If ye then being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask- Him." This promise is often quoted by Christians who think that it is to be used today. They think that we must ask continually for the gift of the Holy Spirit, so that we might receive Him. As our examination of the testimony of the epistles shows, a believer in Christ has received the Holy Spirit; the Holy Spirit dwells in every child of God. Therefore there is no longer any need to ask for the fulfillment of a promise which has been fulfilled. These words were spoken by our Lord before the gift of the Spirit had been given on the day of Pentecost. It was perfectly in order for them to ask the Father for that gift, but we have no right to fall back on this promise. Two more references are found in the Synoptic Gospels to the Spirit of God. In Matthew 22:43 and Mark 12:36, our Lord states the fact that David wrote by the Holy Spirit the one hundred and tenth psalm. In Matthew 28:19 the Holy Spirit is mentioned with the Father and the Son in the commission to teach all nations and to baptize them.

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