

Jesus had a special relationship with the Holy Spirit, a relationship that is most important for our own personal lives. This article explores that relationship and its practical implications.

OLD TESTAMENT PROPHECY

Many O.T. prophecies about the coming Messiah (i.e., the “Anointed One,” Savior, Christ) specifically predicted that he would be guided and empowered by the Holy Spirit. When Jesus read from Isaiah 61:1-2 in the synagogue at Nazareth, he stated, “Today this scripture is fulfilled in your hearing” (Lk 4:18-21).

JESUS’ BIRTH

Both Matthew and Luke state clearly that Jesus came into this world as a result of a miraculous act of God. He was conceived by the Holy Spirit (i.e., without a sexual union between a man and woman) and born of the virgin Mary (Matthew 1:18, 23; Luke 1:27). Because of his miraculous conception, Jesus was completely “holy” (i.e., pure, perfect, spiritually complete, separated from evil and entirely devoted to God’s purposes, Luke 1:35). This meant that Jesus came into the world unstained by sin (unlike all others born into the human race) and free from spiritual corruption. This made him completely worthy to become the perfect sacrifice required for the sins (i.e., offenses against God) of humanity; he was able to take our total guilt on himself and pay in full our penalty for sin (Matthew 1:23). Without a perfect, sinless Savior, we could not experience complete forgiveness and a restored personal relationship with a holy God.

JESUS’ BAPTISM

When John the Baptist baptized him, Jesus was personally anointed (i.e., empowered, commissioned for service) by the Holy Spirit (Matthew 3:16-17; Luke 3:21-22). At that time, the Spirit came upon him in the form and appearance of a dove, equipping him with great power to fulfill his ministry, including his work of redemption (i.e., restoring our opportunity for a personal relationship with God). When Jesus went into the desert after his water baptism, he was “full of the Holy Spirit” (Luke 4:1). Later, Jesus himself would baptize (i.e., immerse, cleanse, empower) his followers with the Spirit (Luke 3:16; Acts 1:4-5; 2:33, 38-39), which he continues to do even today. All who have experienced a spiritual salvation—whose lives have been supernaturally transformed by the Holy Spirit—ought to experience the baptism in the Spirit to empower their lives and equip them for ministry.

JESUS’ TEMPTATION BY SATAN

Immediately after his baptism, the Spirit led Jesus into the desert, where he was tempted by the devil for forty days (Luke 4:1-2). It was only because he was full of the Holy Spirit that Jesus—as a human—was able to face Satan and resist his temptations. In the same way, it is God’s intention that we never face the spiritual forces of evil and sin without the power of the Spirit. We must be equipped with his full authority and follow his leading in order to be victorious against Satan and his demonic powers. In fact, in God’s sight we are not God’s children—and do not belong to Christ—unless his Spirit lives in us (Romans 8:9, 16; 2 Corinthians 1:21-22), continually empowering us to overcome sin and do what is right.

JESUS’ MINISTRY

When Jesus referred to Isaiah’s prophecy about the Spirit coming on him (see paragraph above on Old Testament Prophecy), he used the same passage to outline the primary purposes of his ministry: preaching, healing and liberating (i.e., freeing people spiritually, physically, emotionally, etc.; Isaiah 61:1-2; Luke 4:16-19). (1) The Spirit anointed (i.e., commissioned and empowered) Jesus for his mission. Though Jesus was God (Jn 1:1), he was also human (1 Timothy 2:5). As a human being, he had to rely on the Spirit’s help and power—just as we do—to fulfill his responsibilities and purpose (Matthew 12:28; Luke 4:1, 14; Romans 8:11; Hebrews 9:14). (2) It was only as a Spirit-anointed, Spirit-led man that Jesus could live, serve and proclaim the gospel

as God intended (Acts 10:38). Jesus is a perfect example for all Christians, who should receive all the Spirit has to offer and rely completely on the Spirit for guidance and power (Acts 1:8; 2:4).

JESUS' PROMISE REGARDING THE HOLY SPIRIT

John the Baptist had prophesied that Jesus would baptize his followers in the Holy Spirit (Matthew 3:11; Mark 1:8; Luke 3:16; John 1:33), a prophecy that Jesus himself repeated again and again (Acts 1:5; 11:16). In Luke 11:13, Jesus promised to give the Holy Spirit to all who asked. All of these verses refer to the full presence and power of the Spirit that Christ promises to give to God's children (i.e., people who have accepted Christ's forgiveness and have a personal relationship with God). This promise was first fulfilled during the first Pentecost after Jesus had returned to heaven (Acts 2:4). The promise remains in effect for all who have become his disciples (i.e., followers) and who ask for the baptism in the Spirit (Acts 1:5; 2:39).

JESUS' RESURRECTION

Through the power of the Holy Spirit, Jesus was raised from the dead, proving that he is the true Messiah (i.e., Christ, Savior) and Son of God. In Romans 1:3-4 we read that through the Spirit of holiness (i.e., the Holy Spirit) Jesus "was declared with power to be the Son of God," and in Romans 8:11, that "the Spirit ... raised Jesus from the dead." Now, that same power enables Christians to live for him. Just as Jesus depended on the Holy Spirit for his resurrection, so Jesus' followers must depend on the Spirit for power and guidance in their lives now and for their bodily resurrection in the future (Romans 8:10-11).

JESUS' ASCENSION INTO HEAVEN

After Jesus' resurrection, he returned to heaven and took his rightful place "at the right hand" of his Father (i.e., the position of honor and authority) as co-ruler of God's kingdom (Mark 16:19; Luke 24:51; Acts 1:9-11; Ephesians 4:8-10). In this exalted position, he "received from the Father the promised Holy Spirit and has poured out" the Spirit on his people, starting at Pentecost (Acts 2:33; John 16:5-14). Fulfilling this promise affirms Jesus' lordship (i.e., his supreme leadership and authority) as prophet, priest and king (Matthew 3:12; Acts 13:33; Hebrews 1:5; 5:5; 7:28; 2 Peter 1:13). This "outpouring" of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost (i.e., when God generously sent his Spirit to fill and empower his followers) and throughout this present church age is proof of Jesus' continual presence, power and authority.

JESUS' NEARNESS TO HIS PEOPLE

As one of his present tasks, the Holy Spirit honors Jesus by revealing Jesus' truth and purposes to his followers (John 16:14-15). The benefits of spiritual salvation and a renewed relationship with Christ are made available to us through the Spirit (Romans 8:14-16; Galatians 4:6). The most important benefit is Jesus' nearness to us (John 14:18). Through his Spirit, Jesus remains with us constantly. The Spirit makes us aware of Jesus' personal presence, his love, blessing, help, forgiveness, healing and all that is ours through faith. The Spirit also inspires us to pursue a deeper relationship with God through his Word, prayer and worship (John 4:23-24; 16:14).

JESUS' RETURN FOR HIS PEOPLE

Jesus has promised to return and take his faithful people to be with him forever (John 14:3; 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18). This is referred to as "the blessed hope" of all believers (Titus 2:13); it is the event that we should pray and long for (2 Timothy 4:8). The Bible reveals that the Holy Spirit inspires our hearts to cry out to God for our Lord's return. In fact, God's Word describes the Holy Spirit as "a deposit, guaranteeing what is to come" (2 Corinthians 1:22; 5:5; Ephesians 1:14). It is the Spirit who testifies within our hearts that our restoration and relationship to God remain incomplete until Christ returns (Romans 8:23). At the very close of the Bible, the Holy Spirit inspired the words, "Come, Lord Jesus" (Revelation 22:20).