

EMPOWERED FOR GOD

...The Christian Initiation

Jesus' example is recorded for us to follow.

Acts 2:38-39 (isv) *Peter answered them, "Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins. Then you will receive the Holy Spirit as a gift. For this promise belongs to you and your children, as well as to all those who are far away, whom the Lord our God may call to himself."*

a) Jesus was born of the Holy Spirit

Luke 1:35 (gnb) *The angel answered, "The Holy Spirit will come on you, and God's power will rest upon you. For this reason the holy child will be called the Son of God."*

b) Jesus was baptised in water

Matthew 3:13-16a (gw) *Then Jesus appeared. He came from Galilee to the Jordan River to be baptized by John. But John tried to stop Him and said, "I need to be baptized by You. Why are you coming to me?" Jesus answered him, "This is the way it has to be now. This is the proper way to do everything that God requires of us." Then John gave in to Him. When Jesus had been baptized, He immediately came up out of the water...*

c) Jesus was baptised in the Holy Spirit

Matthew 3:16b-17 (isp) *...suddenly the heavens opened up for Him, and He saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and coming to rest on Him. Then a voice from heaven said, "This is my Son, whom I love. I am pleased with Him!"*

Before His incarnation (or becoming man) Jesus was equal with God the Father and He embraced all the attributes of Deity. But...Through an act Paul describes as "kenosis", Jesus stripped Himself of all divine capability and limited Himself only to such properties that are natural to any human being.

Philippians 2:5-8 (gw) *Have the same attitude that Christ Jesus had. Although He was in the form of God and equal with God, He did not take advantage of this equality. Instead, He emptied Himself by taking on the form of a servant, by becoming like other humans, by having a human appearance. He humbled Himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, death on a cross.*

Hebrews 2:17 (gnb) *This means that He had to become like His people in every way, in order to be their faithful and merciful High Priest in His service to God, so that the people's sins would be forgiven.*

As a result of this, Jesus needed to be empowered to fulfil His mission and therefore needed the same baptism in the Holy Spirit as we do, and He obtained it on the same conditions, as we do.

Isaiah 11:1-2 (niv) *Then a shoot will come out from the stump of Jesse, and a branch from its roots will bear fruit. The Spirit of the LORD will rest (settle down and remain) on Him - the Spirit of wisdom and understanding, the Spirit of advice and power, the Spirit of knowledge and fear of the LORD.*

So necessary was this baptism of the Holy Spirit, that without it Jesus couldn't have accomplished the awesome mission given to Him by His Father.

Isaiah 42:1 (gnb) *The LORD says, "Here is My servant, whom I strengthen – the One I have chosen, with whom I am pleased. I have filled Him with My Spirit, and He will bring justice to every nation.*

In the former condition Jesus was with God, and was God (**John 1:1-3**), the Creator and Upholder of all things, in whom all fullness dwelt (**Colossians 1:16-19**)

In the latter condition Jesus “*emptied Himself*” and was “*made in the likeness of a man*” becoming “*in all respects like His brothers and sisters*” (**Philippians 2:7-8**, **Hebrews 2:17**). Jesus retained His divine identity, but surrendered His divine powers.

...The “Kenosis”

Meaning - Jesus surrendered all His divine attributes before He came down to earth, and therefore was actually void of them during His earthly life.

In His struggle against sin and Satan, and in His obedience to His Father's will, in which He acted as a Man, Jesus in practice used only those resources that are available to any godly man or woman.

Although Jesus (*in adult life*) was fully aware of His divine identity, He voluntarily chose to act within the confines of a human nature.

a) How then was Jesus identified as the Son of God?

If He did only what a man can do, using nothing beyond the resources that are available to all humans, how could His divinity ever be shown?

Jesus' divine nature was revealed through the following:

- The many prophecies that were fulfilled in Him revealing His unique call.
- His sinless and miraculous birth.
- The repeated testimony of the Father, at His birth, at His baptism, and on several other occasions.
- The authority He claimed for His teaching and the claims He made about Himself as part of that teaching.
- His empowerment and His reliance on the Holy Spirit.
- The testimony of the demons who on occasions cried out His real identity.
- Above all, His claim that no one could kill Him against His will; He alone had power to lay down His life and to take it up again (*John 10:18*), which he demonstrated in His resurrection (*Romans 1:4*).

None of these things gave Him resources beyond what are available to other servants of God (*the Word, faith, the power of the Holy Spirit, prayer, and His heavenly identity*). Except for the last one.

So we are plainly told that He “*emptied Himself*” and was “*in all respects made like His brothers and sisters.*” This means that not once during “*the time He lived among us*” did Jesus draw on the attributes of His deity.

Jesus lived His whole life span only in such strength and ability as his humanity provided. He met life on the same terms that we must meet it.

...The Example of Jesus

As a man, Jesus endured the same temptations we meet, and mastered them with the same weapons that are available to us.

Hebrews 2:14-18 (msg) *Since the children are made of flesh and blood, it's logical that the Savior took on flesh and blood in order to rescue them by His death. By embracing death, taking it into Himself, He destroyed the Devil's hold on death and freed all who cower through life, scared to death of death. It's obvious, of course, that He didn't go to all this trouble for angels. It was for people like us, children of Abraham. That's why He had to enter into every detail of human life. Then, when He came before God as high priest to get rid of the people's sins, He would have already experienced it all Himself - all the pain, all the testing--and would be able to help where help was needed.*

The three weapons are: Prayer, the Word of God and the Holy Spirit baptism.

Luke 3:21-22 (nlt) *One day when the crowds were being baptized, Jesus Himself was baptized. As He was praying, the heavens opened, and the Holy Spirit descended on Him in the form of a dove. And a voice from heaven said, "You are my beloved Son, and I am fully pleased with You.*

Luke 4:1 (nlt) *Then Jesus, full of the Holy Spirit, left the Jordan River. He was led by the Spirit to go out into the wilderness*

Luke 4:4 (nlt) *But Jesus told him, "No! The Scriptures say, `People need more than bread for their life.'*

Luke 4:14 (nlt) *Then Jesus returned to Galilee, filled with the Holy Spirit's power. Soon He became well known throughout the surrounding country.*

Without the use of these weapons, and especially without the baptism in the Spirit, Jesus could not have fulfilled the mission of His Father.

Jesus was dependent upon the baptism of the Spirit to equip Him for the service of God.

Isaiah 61:1-2 (nlt) *The Spirit of the Sovereign LORD is upon Me, because the LORD has appointed Me to bring good news to the poor. He has sent Me to comfort the broken hearted and to announce that captives will be released and prisoners will be freed. He has sent Me to tell those who mourn that the time of the LORD's favor has come, and with it, the day of God's anger against their enemies.*

See also **Isaiah 11:1-3.**

The promise made through Isaiah was fulfilled at the beginning of the Lord's public ministry. Jesus made no attempt to commence ministry until He had received this endowment of power - See again **Luke 4:1,4,14**

Jesus Himself quoted the prophecy of (*Isaiah 61:1-2*), and applied it to Himself, after the Spirit had fallen upon Him at Jordan (*Luke 4:14-19*) (read).

Only then do we read that He was "*full of the Holy Spirit*" **Luke 4:1**; that He ministered "*in the power of the Spirit*" **Luke 4:14**; and that He had the Spirit "*without measure*" **John 3:34** (av)

Aside from Holy Spirit baptism there was apparently little that was remarkable about Jesus:

He merged easily into the crowd (**John 8:59; 7:10-15, 20**) the authorities had to bribe Judas to identify Him (**Matthew 26:48-49**)

Jesus was known as “*Josephs son*” (**Luke 4:22**). Even His name was common: “*Jesus*” is known in English as “*Joshua*”, a name that would have belonged to many Jewish boys in those days.

a) So, how did Jesus receive Holy Spirit Baptism?

Simply by utilising the same spiritual principles that we must employ:

- He recognised that obedience was an essential pre-condition (**Matthew 3:15** cp. **Acts 5:32**)
- He claimed the promise of God by prayer (**Luke 3:21**; cp. **11:9-13**)
- He believed the promise of the Father (**Isaiah 11:1-3**; **61:1**)
- He knew the hour had come for the fulfilment of the promise;
- He yielded to the leading of the Spirit (**Luke 4:1,14**) and notice that Jesus did not come in the “*power*” of the Spirit until after He had permitted the Holy Spirit to lead Him into the wilderness.
- He stayed faithful under testing (**Luke 4:1-3** cp. **Ephesians 6:10-11, 17-18**)

If it was essential for Jesus to be equipped with the power of the Holy Spirit, how much more do we need this infilling of power? In His own ministry He conclusively demonstrated the value and the need of Holy Spirit baptism.

...Conclusion

- So we see that Jesus was born of the Spirit (**Matthew 1:20**)
- His ministry was performed in the anointing of the Spirit (**Luke 4:18**)
- He suffered and died in the enabling of the Spirit (**Hebrews 9:14**)
- He was raised from the dead by the Spirit (**Romans 1:4**; **8:11**)
- In His ascension He received the Holy Spirit from the Father to be given to the church (**Acts 2:33**)

There was a vital relationship between Jesus and the Spirit throughout the whole of His life and ministry. And that relationship continues through the Holy Spirit baptism of the church.

If Jesus is our master, then we should be delighted to follow in His steps. Let us then claim the promise of the Father just as He did and in the power of the Spirit complete all that the Father has given us to do.