

Nuggets and Gems from the Bible

THE BAPTISM
AND
ANOINTING
OF THE
MAN-SAVIOR

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Living Stream Ministry

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In [Luke 3:21 and 22](#) we have the baptism and anointing of the Man-Savior: “Now it came about that, when all the people were baptized, and as Jesus was baptized and was praying, the heaven was opened, and the Holy Spirit descended in bodily form as a dove upon Him; and a voice came out of heaven, You are My beloved Son, in You I delight.” The Lord Jesus was baptized not only to fulfill righteousness according to God’s ordination ([Matt. 3:14-16](#)), but also to allow Himself to be put into death and resurrection that He might minister not in a natural way, but in the way of resurrection. By being baptized He lived and ministered in resurrection even before His actual death and resurrection three and a half years later.

The Lord’s being baptized to fulfill God’s righteousness and to be put into death and resurrection brought Him three things: the open heaven, the descending of the Spirit of God, and the speaking of the Father. This should be the same with us today in our experience.

PUTTING HIMSELF ASIDE TO EXPRESS GOD

The fact that John the Baptist baptized the Man-Savior with water indicates that it was necessary even for Him to be baptized. For the Lord Jesus to be baptized means that He put Himself aside. He allowed Himself to be put into death so that He might minister not in a natural way, but in the way of resurrection. Therefore, as a Man it was necessary for the Lord Jesus to put Himself aside in order that He might live God.

If we would have a proper understanding of the significance of the baptism of the Man-Savior, we need to consider further what is the highest standard of morality. The highest standard of morality is actually the result of the God-created man ([Gen. 1](#)) with the human virtues created by God plus the tree of life ([Gen. 2](#)), a tree that signifies God as life to us with all His divine attributes. What is the highest standard of morality? The highest standard of morality is the result of the God-created man plus the tree of life.

In the man created by God there were the human virtues. These virtues are in God's image and according to His likeness. In particular, these virtues are according to God's love, light, holiness,

and righteousness. According to [chapter two of Genesis](#), this God-created man with his human virtues was placed in front of the tree of life. The tree of life signifies God as life with His divine attributes. When the tree of life is added to the God-created man, the result is a living in the highest standard of morality.

The Lord Jesus was baptized in order that He might live a human life expressing God's attributes. If we see this, we shall realize that not only does fallen man need to be set aside, but even the man created by God in His image needs to be set aside so that he may live a life that expresses God. Therefore, no matter what kind of person we may be, if we would live a life to express God, we need to be put aside.

Although the Lord Jesus was a complete and perfect Man, He needed to be put aside in order to live a life that expressed God. To be baptized simply means to be put aside, to be terminated and buried so that we may live not by ourselves but by God. If we are set aside in this way, we shall be able to live a human life with the divine attributes expressed in the human virtues.

IN THE LIKENESS OF THE FLESH OF SIN

The Lord Jesus was a perfect Man, a Man with

all the human virtues, yet He was nevertheless in the likeness of the flesh of sin. Of course, the Lord Jesus did not have the nature of fallen mankind; however, He did possess the likeness, the outward form or appearance, of fallen mankind. In [Romans 8:3](#) Paul says that Christ came in the likeness of the flesh of sin. He did not have the nature of sin, but He had the likeness, the appearance, the form, of the flesh of sin. It was necessary for this likeness of the flesh of sin to be judged, terminated, and buried. This was another reason for the baptism of the Man-Savior.

THE REPRESENTATIVE OF MANKIND

When the Lord Jesus came out to minister at the age of thirty, He was the representative of mankind in two aspects. On the one hand, He represented the God-created man; on the other hand, in appearance He represented fallen man. Have you ever realized that when the Lord Jesus came to be baptized by John, He represented the God-created man and, in outward appearance, the fallen man? We would emphasize the fact that the Lord Jesus did not have the actual nature of fallen man, but He did have the appearance of fallen man. Therefore, in actual nature

He represented the God-created man, and in appearance, likeness, but not in nature, He also represented fallen man. In His actual human nature He represented the man created by God; in appearance He represented the man who had become fallen.

We have seen that fallen man certainly needs to be judged, terminated, and buried. We have also seen that even the God-created man must be set aside in order to live a life in which the human virtues express the divine attributes. For this, even a good, complete, and perfect God-created man must be set aside. This is the reason that the Lord Jesus as the God-man said in the Gospel of John that He did not do anything by Himself. In [John 5:19](#) He said, “The Son can do nothing from Himself except what He sees the Father doing.” In [John 5:30](#) He said again, “I can do nothing from Myself.” In [John 8:28](#) the Lord declared, “I do nothing from Myself.”

In order that He might express God in His human living, at the beginning of His ministry the Lord put Himself aside through baptism. He was a perfect and complete Man, but He would not live by Himself. Instead, He lived by God the Father who was in Him. This matter is crucial, and we all need to see it.

OUR NEED TO BE TERMINATED AND BURIED

The first aspect of the Lord's inauguration was for Him to be set aside. This principle applies to all of us in our service to God. If we would enter into a particular service to God, we need to be set aside; that is, we need to be terminated and buried. Both as a God-created man and as a fallen man, we need to be terminated. The first aspect of the Man-Savior's inauguration into His ministry for God was for Him to be set aside. We also need to be terminated and buried in the waters of death.

THE ANOINTING OF THE MAN-SAVIOR

Immediately after the Lord Jesus was baptized, He was anointed by God ([Luke 3:22](#)). After John the Baptist had baptized the Lord Jesus, God the Father sent His Holy Spirit upon this baptized Man. Hence, the Spirit of God descended upon a terminated and buried Man to inaugurate Him into His living ministry for God.

[Luke 3:22](#) says that the Holy Spirit descended upon the Man-Savior in bodily form as a dove. Before the Spirit of God descended and came upon Him, the Lord Jesus was conceived and

born of the Spirit ([Luke 1:35](#)). This proves that He already had the Spirit of God within Him for His birth. Now, for His ministry, the Spirit of God descended upon Him. This was the fulfillment of [Isaiah 61:1](#); [42:1](#); and [Psalm 45:7](#) to anoint the Man-Savior and introduce Him to His people.

[Luke 3:22](#) says that the Holy Spirit descended in bodily form as a dove. A dove is gentle, and its eyes can see only one thing at a time. Hence, a dove signifies gentleness and singleness in sight and purpose. By the Spirit of God descending upon Him as a dove, the Lord Jesus ministered in gentleness and singleness, focusing solely on the will of God.

THE HOLY SPIRIT IN ESSENCE AND IN POWER

The Holy Spirit's conceiving of Jesus in [1:35](#) is essential, related to the divine Being, the divine Person, of Jesus. The essence of the Holy Spirit's divine element in the conception of Jesus is unchangeable and cannot be removed. However, the Holy Spirit's descending upon Jesus here is economical, related to the ministry, the work, of Jesus. The power of the Holy Spirit for the ministry of Jesus ([4:1](#), [14](#), [18](#); [Matt. 12:28](#)) is removable

according to the condition of need for it. It was in this economical way that God forsook Jesus and left Him when He was carrying the sinners' sin in dying for them on the cross ([Matt. 27:46](#)). Before the Holy Spirit in power descended upon Him, He already had the Holy Spirit in essence from His birth. Furthermore, while the Holy Spirit in power was descending upon Him, He was existing with the Holy Spirit in essence.

THE HOLY SPIRIT IN RELATION TO THE LORD'S PERSON AND WORK

At this point I would like to say a further word concerning the Person of the Lord Jesus and His work. The Lord's Person is His being, His existence, and His work is His ministry or His office. Therefore, with the Lord Jesus there is the matter of His Person and the matter of His ministry. For His Person He had the Holy Spirit as His intrinsic essence from the time of His conception. This is the Spirit for the Lord's being, for His existence. He was constituted of the Holy Spirit as the intrinsic essence of His being when He was conceived in the womb of the virgin Mary. Hence, He was born with the Holy Spirit as His essence. In other words, He was born with the essential Spirit for His Person, being, existence.

For thirty years the Lord Jesus lived on earth by the Holy Spirit as the intrinsic essence of His Person. Then at the age of thirty He came forth to work, to minister, to fulfill His office. For His ministry He needed the Holy Spirit in a further way, not essentially but economically. After He was baptized, the Holy Spirit descended upon Him in bodily form as a dove. This was the Holy Spirit coming upon the Lord economically for the carrying out of God's economy through the Lord's ministry.

TWO ASPECTS OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

It is very important that we see these two aspects of the Holy Spirit—the essential aspect and the economical aspect. The essential aspect of the Holy Spirit is for the Person, the being, the existence, of the Lord Jesus. The economical aspect of the Spirit is for the Lord's work, ministry, and office.

I can testify that for more than fifty years I have been studying the Bible for the purpose of understanding these aspects of the Holy Spirit. However, only in recent years have I seen clearly that the inward aspect of the Holy Spirit, which we may call the indwelling of the Spirit, is a matter of the essential Spirit, the Spirit for essence,

being, existence, and that the outward aspect of the Holy Spirit, the Spirit coming upon us, is the economical Spirit for work, for service. The outward aspect is not a matter of essence for existence; it is a matter of economy related to the work and ministry we render to God and the office we fulfill.

In principle, both aspects of the Holy Spirit are the same with us as they were with the Lord Jesus. With Him there was the essential aspect for His Person and the economical aspect for His ministry. With us, there is also the essential aspect of the Spirit for our existence as regenerated believers, and there is the outward aspect of the Spirit for our Christian work.

For many years I was not able to understand or explain adequately why the Lord Jesus, who was conceived of the Holy Spirit and who lived by the Spirit for thirty years, still needed the Spirit to descend upon Him at the time of His baptism. When He was baptized, did He not already have the Spirit within Him? Certainly He already had the Spirit inwardly. Then why did the Spirit descend upon Him? This definitely does not indicate that there are two Spirits, one who indwelt the Lord Jesus and one who descended upon Him. Since there is only one Spirit

([Eph. 4:4](#)), how could this one Spirit both indwell the Lord Jesus and descend upon Him? The answer to this question lies with understanding that with the one Spirit there are two aspects, the essential aspect and the economical aspect.

FOR EXISTENCE AND FOR MINISTRY

Through years of study not only of the Bible but also of other writings, we have been enlightened to see the essential and economical aspects of the Holy Spirit. Therefore, we have the confidence to say that the indwelling Spirit is essential; it is a matter of essence for being, for existence. The outward aspect of the Spirit is economical; it is for the fulfilling of an office and the carrying out of the ministry that accomplishes God's economy. This economical aspect is not for existence, for being. Rather, this aspect of the Holy Spirit is for work, for ministry. Praise the Lord for these two aspects of the Holy Spirit!

In [Luke 3:21 and 22](#) we see that the Lord Jesus as the Man-Savior was inaugurated into His office and ministry by two steps. These two steps are baptism in water and the anointing of the Holy Spirit. After the Lord Jesus was baptized by John the Baptist, God the Father sent

the Holy Spirit upon the Lord economically for His ministry. It was in this way that the Man-Savior was inaugurated.

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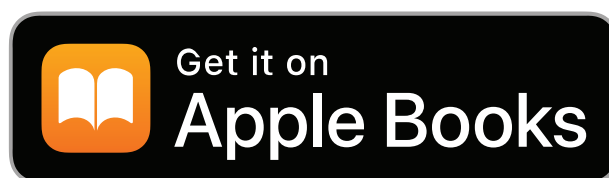
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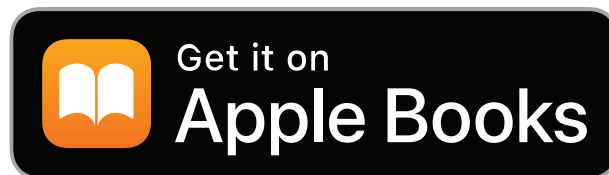
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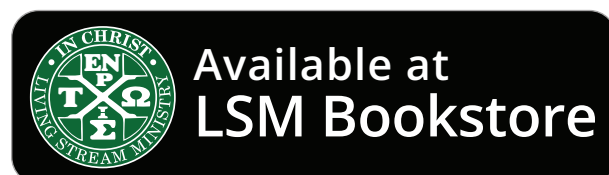
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