

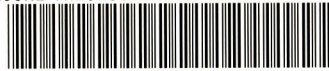
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ANointed WITH THE SPIRIT

(Holy Spirit II)

By D.B. Knox

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THE PROTESTANT FAITH

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We modern Christians customarily speak of Jesus as the "Lord Jesus Christ" and we treat this as a single three-fold name. In doing this we lose sight of some very important truths. Jesus was known to His contemporaries as "Jesus", the Greek form of Joshua it wasn't an uncommon name and so to distinguish Him from others of the same name He was often referred to as "Jesus of Nazareth" from the town where He had been brought up. His followers called Him the "Lord" because they recognised that He was divine, and so they gave to Him the name which the Old Testament used for God. The test of being a Christian is whether we are able to say that Jesus is Lord - Lord not merely theoretically but personally, accepting His lordship over our own lives.

The other term of the trilogy, namely, "Christ" was used by Jesus' followers to draw attention to the unique mission that Jesus as man fulfilled. He was God's Messiah (which is the Old Testament word for Christ). Messiah in the Hebrew or Christ in the Greek simply means the "anointed one" and refers to the Holy Spirit promised by God (Isaiah 11:2), Jesus was the man whom God anointed with His own spirit.

The advent of a king who would rule in God's name according to God's heart and will, had been predicted by the Old Testament prophets, and in particular by Isaiah in the well-known passage "unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given and the government shall be upon his shoulder..... of the increase of his government and of peace there shall be no end.....and the spirit of the lord shall rest upon him". (Isaiah 9:6 and 7; 11:2) Kings are commissioned by anointing and the messiah King, Christ the King, was anointed not

with the symbol of oil but with the reality of the Holy Spirit. Thus, Isaiah prophesied of the Christ "the spirit of the lord God is upon me because he has anointed me to preach good tidings to the poor..." (Is. 61:1). In the gospels we read how the Holy Spirit came on Jesus at the beginning of His ministry. It is this gift of God's spirit which the term "Christ" points to, Jesus is the Christ, the anointed One, the One who has received the Spirit of God, and so in Acts 10 Peter tells Cornelius "how God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and with power; how he went about doing good and healing....for God was with him". (Acts 10:38). John the Baptist described how "I saw the spirit descending as a dove out of heaven and it rested upon Him". (John 1:32).

To possess the Spirit of God means to be in a relationship with God. And to possess the Spirit fully as Jesus did means to be in full personal fellowship with God, Spirit to spirit. It was a consequence of this relationship that Jesus carried out His ministry. Through the power of the Spirit his human life and character conformed at every point to the character of God. He was the image, the reflected likeness of God. "He went about doing good." and by the power of the Spirit He performed the signs and wonders of the miracles as evidence of His Messiahship. The healing of the sick (Is. 53:4/Lk. 8:17) the opening of the eyes of the blind, the healing of the dumb, the restoring of the lame and the deaf (Is. 35:5) and the raising of the dead by the powers of the Spirit (Ezekiel 37: 12-14) and the preaching of the gospel to the poor (Is. 61:1) were the things which the Old Testament predicted the Messiah would bring about when God's kingdom came. And thus, Jesus, the Messiah, the Christ, the One anointed by God to be king after His own heart, not only preached the gospel of the kingdom but accompanied His preaching with acts of

goodness in accordance with God's character as occasion served and so drew attention to the fact that God's King was now, after so many centuries, present.

Jesus is the exemplar, the example par excellence of the Spirit filled man, the Spirit led man. The fruit of the spirit, to which Paul refers, of love, joy and peace were all present in Jesus' experience and showed up in His character. He was full of faith and obedience and thankfulness. He was not (as far as we can judge from the records) temperamentally an enthusiast nor did he get excited. His object in life was what should be every Christian's desire, always to do what is right (Hebrews 13:18, N.E.B.). This keenness and readiness to do the will of God resulted from knowledge on the one hand and prayer on the other - knowledge of the truth of God, of the heavenly world, of transientness of this life and of the conflict with the devil in which we are involved; and prayer, which is fellowship with God on the basis of the truth of His Word. Knowledge (which comes from hearing, reading and meditating on God's Word) and prayer in agreement with that knowledge, are the two means by which the Spirit of God leads us in the way of God's Will.

I was very interested to learn from an acquaintance of mine in England (who is a minister of one of the leading London churches) that the world-famous evangelist, Billy Graham, had told him recently that if he had his time over again he would give more time to study and to prayer. Study leads to the knowledge of God's Word, and prayer is the way by which we existentially grasp this knowledge.

Not only is Jesus the exemplar of the Spirit filled man but he is the source of the Spirit's presence in the people of God, He had promised this gift in John 7:39; 16:17 and 20:22. And Peter had interpreted the day of Pentecost as Jesus pouring out of His Spirit from His heavenly throne (Acts 2:33). Like their master, all Jesus' followers are anointed with the Spirit (I John 2:20). Together with Jesus they form the Christ (I Cor. 12:12). The gift of the Spirit to His people is consequential on Christ's exaltation. The Spirit's presence in our hearts is the presence of Christ, the presence of the Father (John 14:18 and 23). The test of the Spirit's presence in any person's life is the fruit of the Spirit in the character and in particular love and righteousness. This is the only real test, the test of character, for only the Spirit of God can give this fruit. It is, however, possible to exercise powers which might appear to be spiritual without being so. For example, it is possible to prophesy in Christ's name without having the Spirit of Christ or to speak with tongues without having the Spirit of Christ. This is plain from what Jesus says in Matthew 7:22,23 and from what St. Paul says in I Cor. 12:3 and 13:1.

The Spirit of God not only transforms us into the character of Christ (II Cor. 3:18). But He also gives us power. Jesus promised (Acts 1:5) "You shall receive power when the Holy Ghost is come upon you and you shall be my witnesses". What is meant by this power? Primarily, it means the power to live a God-like life in contrast to the powerlessness of the people of God under the old covenant when they said with their lips "all the Lord has spoken we will do and be obedient" (Ex. 24:2), immediately they turned aside and made a golden calf and worshipped it. The rest of their history was in keeping with this. They had no power to resist the devil, and they were led by

him into all sorts of Godlessness, immorality and idolatry. The Christian, however, in receiving the Spirit of God receives power to live the Christian life, that is to say, power to put the devil to flight, as St. Peter says, "resist the devil and he will flee". What greater power imaginable is there than this? The power to trample down satan under our feet (Romans 16:20) (This power includes, of course, the power to drive out devils in the name of Jesus from those who are devil-possessed. All Christians have this power). The power to keep on keeping on in the Christian life (Col. 1:11). The promise includes power to witness. This will primarily be, of course, the witness of character, for words without character to support them are empty. But it extends to a witness to Jesus without words. Through the Holy Spirit we have power to witness according to our circumstances and calling. Thus, if we are brought before kings and governors as were those early Christian disciples we need have no doubt that the Holy Spirit will speak through us words of witness to Christ. Or when we are called upon in a private capacity to give "a reason for the hope within us" it is the Spirit of God which will prompt us to speak in a way that will glorify Him. If it is the will of God to support our witness by external signs as it was at the beginning of the gospel this too will be worked through the power of the Spirit, though there is nothing to suggest that this is the way that God supports our testimony today; much more effective for testimony is the support of a transformed life and words of witness to the power of Christ which accompany it.

How do we receive this gift of God's Spirit? What are the conditions for being baptised with the Spirit and being filled with the Spirit? The New Testament knows of only one condition, namely, believe that Jesus is Lord. Thus, Jesus promised

the Holy Spirit to all who believe in Him (Jn. 7:39) and Peter reaffirmed the promise in Acts 2:38. Nowhere in the New Testament is there any other condition laid down to be fulfilled for the receiving of the fulness of God's presence in His Spirit than the acknowledgement of Jesus as Lord. Of course there may be inadequacies in believing because of inadequacies in comprehension or perhaps inadequacies of teaching about Christ, and when this inadequacy is overcome, there will be a deeper experience of God, but if we believe truly in Jesus as a result of a true preaching of the gospel then Christ has promised that He will come into our lives through His Spirit; and when Christ comes in the fulness of the Godhead comes because in Jesus the fulness of the Godhead dwells and if Jesus lives in us through His Spirit, there is power; power to live the Christian life and power to put the devil to flight.

6/72. 19.3.72

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