

2. The Spirit and Sacred Space in Fulfillment

With regard to both Old Testament promise and New Testament fulfillment, the Bible expresses the ultimacy and permanence of the messianic recovery of sacred space in terms of a *new creation*. And being a work of creational renewal, this recovery is associated in a unique way with the Holy Spirit. The reason is that the Spirit exercises the power of God in all creative activity – the cosmic and spiritual re-creation as much as the original material creation.

But more important than the fact of the Spirit's agency in creation is the recognition that His creational work has its goal in the establishment of God's dwelling place within His creation: *The goal of the Spirit's work is to transform the creation into sacred space*, a truth attested first in the creation of Eden and man, the divine image-bearer, and later in the nation of Israel and its tabernacle and temples.

This principle is foundational to the Old Testament's promise of the recovery of sacred space in the new creation. In that day, *Yahweh would send His Spirit in order to renew the creation and restore it to Himself as His everlasting sanctuary*. And, consistent with the pattern established in the first creation, this re-creation resulting in the full realization of sacred space has its focal point in the recovery of man and his reconciliation and regathering to God. Though their proclamations left some issues unresolved, the prophets were unequivocal that sacred space would reach its intended fulfillment when all the nations of the earth were gathered together to Yahweh at His eschatological sanctuary (ref. again Isaiah 2:1-4; Micah 4:1-8; Zechariah 6:9-15, 8:1-23; etc.).

These themes importantly find their point of convergence in the Old Testament's developing revelation of *Messiah*. Cleansing, renewal and global ingathering were to result from His coming and the accomplishment of His messianic work (cf. esp. Isaiah 11:1-12, 42:1-7, 43:1-9, 48:16-55:5). Isaiah revealed that Yahweh was going to send His Spirit in conjunction with the coming of His Servant (48:16), but, more specifically, that He would do so by the *Spirit's indwelling presence* with the Servant.

a. The Man of the Spirit

The coming Servant of Yahweh was to be preeminently the "Man of the Spirit." Like the First Adam, the Last Adam and Servant/Branch would be conceived by the divine power of the Spirit (Isaiah 7:10-14 with 9:6-7), but He would also be indwelled by the Spirit and, in that way, empowered to accomplish His messianic mission. This is the prophetic picture of Messiah, and this is the way the gospel writers present Jesus of Nazareth. All four of them show Him to be uniquely a man of the Spirit, emphasizing the Spirit's presence and power in relation to the three phases of Jesus' life and work.

- 1) The first phase of Jesus' life in relation to the Spirit was centered in His *incarnation*. Yahweh had promised a virginal conception such that the resulting child would embody the reality of Immanuel – "God with us."

This child that uniquely represented Yahweh's presence was to be sent by Him as His son ("a *son* shall be *given* to us"), and yet this son of God was also to be the promised son of David through whom David's house, throne, and kingdom would be established forever (Isaiah 9:7).

So it was that, in the fullness of the times, the angel Gabriel appeared to Mary and announced to her that, according to Yahweh's word to Isaiah, the Holy Spirit would come upon her and conceive a son within her womb. Mary, the descendent of David, was to bear the promised covenant seed whose name is Immanuel (Matthew 1:18-23; Luke 1:26-35).

- 2) The prophets had only indirectly connected the Spirit with the coming of Immanuel (the Immanuel child was also the messianic Servant/Branch), but Isaiah, in particular, explicitly associated the Servant's *ministry* with the Spirit's power and presence (11:1-5, 42:1-7, 59:15-21, 61:1-7). Thus the gospel writers moved immediately from the Spirit's involvement in Jesus' conception to His anointing by which the Lord was prepared and empowered for His ministry as the Last Adam and Servant of Yahweh.

Little is recorded of Jesus' *childhood*; Luke alone addresses it, and then only by way of mentioning one incident in order to exemplify his thematic statement that Jesus matured in wisdom in accordance with the power of God's grace (ref. 2:39-52). All of the gospel accounts, however, record Jesus' *baptism*, and the reason is that this event was hugely significant in establishing His identity and the purpose for His coming.

- For all their differences in content and emphases, each of the gospel writers had as his primary goal demonstrating that Jesus was the promised Messiah, and this meant showing, among other things, that He had come as a *new Adam* and *new Israel*.
- No other aspect or incident in Jesus' life more clearly highlighted these identity markers than His baptism.

John didn't understand the significance of Jesus being baptized, and so resisted baptizing Him. Knowing that his baptism symbolized repentance toward God, John was startled that Jesus would seek to undergo it. But Christ understood that, by submitting to this ritual, He was affirming His full alignment with His people (Matthew 3:13-15). More than that, He was suggesting His identity as the **new Israel** promised by Yahweh to Isaiah.

And what was only suggested by Jesus' baptism became explicit when He immediately departed the Jordan to endure forty days of *testing* in the wilderness (Luke 4:1-2). The first Israel had undergone its own wilderness testing and had failed to fulfill its calling as the son of God; the new Israel would succeed, and He would do so by the power of the Spirit.

From the time Israel departed Egypt the Spirit had resided in their midst (Haggai 2:4-5; Isaiah 63:11), and His presence affirmed Yahweh's previous declaration that Israel was His elect son (Exodus 4:22). So it was with the new Israel: He, too, was openly attested to be the Son of God by the presence of the Spirit upon Him, and He, too, had gone into His time of testing in the wilderness armed with the Spirit's presence and power.

“The temptations of Jesus recapitulate, in his individual life as the Son of God, the temptations of the nation of Israel in their corporate life as the son of God... The temptation stories thus vindicate the declaration of the ‘voice from heaven’ heard directly after the baptism of Jesus, which immediately precedes the temptation narratives: ‘This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.’ By so doing Jesus gains the victory over Satan and makes it possible for his people to inherit the promises of God.” (New International Dictionary of New Testament Theology, Vol. 3)

Jesus' baptism and subsequent testing identified Him as the new Israel, but they also showed Him to be a **new Adam**. Adam had been created by the power of God's Spirit, and, though the text doesn't speak of Adam as being indwelt by the Spirit, it does point to the Spirit breathing the divine life into the image-son. Being thus empowered by the life of God as image-bearer, the “son of God” was subsequently brought into a time of testing, the outcome of which would affect the fate of the entire human race. Such was the case also with the eschatological (last) Adam. Each man was subjected to his own unique temptation, but both were ultimately tested at the point of authentic humanness: *Each man's righteousness – and therefore the obligation of his obedience – consisted in his finding his true identity, purpose and blessedness in intimate, submissive and delightful communion with his Creator-Father.*

Both Adam and Christ were called upon to fulfill their identity as *man*, but it is crucial to note that this humanness is preeminently *spiritual*. Both “Adams” were charged with meeting the obligation of their nature (namely, dominion in God's name in the context of perfect communion with Him) in the power of the Spirit. What was only implied with the first man became explicit with the second: **True man is man of the Spirit.**

“The fact that Jesus was the Man of the Spirit is not merely a theological categorization; it was a flesh-and-blood reality. What was produced in him was fully realized human holiness. He was the incarnation of the blessed life of the covenant and of the kingdom-beatitudes which are its fruit (Mt. 5:1ff; cf. Ps. 1).” (Sinclair Ferguson, The Holy Spirit)

Isaiah revealed that the Servant would appear as a man indwelt by Yahweh's Spirit, and he indicated that the Spirit's indwelling presence would equip and empower Him to accomplish His messianic mission.

That work – grounded in His vicarious self-offering – was to secure and inaugurate a comprehensive renewal having its focal point in the recovery of man back to God.

So Luke recorded that Jesus, anointed with the Holy Spirit at His baptism and returning from His Spirit-enabled triumph over Satan in the wilderness, embarked upon His ministry as the tested Son of God, Last Adam, and True Israel in the power of the indwelling Spirit (3:21-4:21; cf. Isaiah 61:1-2 and 42:1-7). From that point forward, His work as Yahweh’s messianic Servant would be accomplished in direct association with the presence and power of the Spirit (ref. Matthew 12:1-32; Luke 5:17; John 6:53-63; Acts 10:34-38; also Matthew 8:14-17 with Isaiah 53:1ff).

Jesus’ words and work in the power of the Spirit testified to His generation that the promised kingdom had come. The Old Testament scriptures had spoken of that kingdom in terms of the presence of unparalleled divine power – power that would bring about the conquest of the serpent, the vanquishing of the curse and the ushering in of a new age defined by cosmic renewal and the recovery of all things to God. *The consistent message across the prophetic witness was that the coming of the messianic Servant heralded the Day of the Lord in which His enemies would be defeated, His people liberated, cleansed, forgiven and restored, and the unending age of the Spirit inaugurated.*

It was upon this foundation of divine promise that Luke recorded the return of the seventy heralds of the kingdom, showing how their preparatory proclamation of the “in-breaking” of the kingdom – attested by demonstrations of the Spirit’s power (10:1-9) – signaled the impending overthrow of the god of this age and the establishment of the supreme and everlasting dominion of the Son of David (10:17-22). The victory of the Servant meant the “binding of the strong man”: No longer would he be able to keep the nations in darkness; the gospel of the glory of God in the face of Christ would soon be dawning upon the whole world of men (cf. Isaiah 9:1-7 with Luke 1:76-79, 11:15-22; John 12:27-32, 14:30-31; also Acts 1:4-8 with 14:11-16, 17:29-31; 2 Corinthians 4:1-6).

“For Luke, the whole of Jesus’ ministry following his baptism is exercised in the power of the messianic Spirit. He has been anointed to engage in a power-conflict. But in him the final year of Jubilee has now come; there is freedom (Lk. 4:18-29; cf. Lv. 25:8-55). The result is that his preaching has authority (Lk. 4:32), his word has exorcising and liberating power (Lk. 4:33-37), and his touch heals ‘all’ (Lk. 4:40). Nothing is outside of his dominion. The wonders he performs are accomplished in the energy and by the presence of the Holy Spirit (cf. Mt. 12:28). That is why they serve as signs of the coming messianic age in which the Spirit’s power will be fully manifested and all nature will be healed.” (Ferguson, The Holy Spirit)