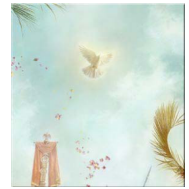


Mt. 1:18-21; Luke 2:25-26; Mt. 3:11; Lk. 3:22,4:1, 10:21; John 14:25-27,
20:21-23; Mt. 28:19 3/29/09 (Triumphant Entry #10) **THE HOLY SPIRIT**

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Slide: Triumphant Entry. Highlight Dove, bring up Dove



On this tall painting, the dove that we focus on today is so far above everything that it almost seems out of the picture. Nothing could be further from the truth. The bible says that at Jesus' baptism, the Holy Spirit descended on Him in bodily form like a dove. And the artist, Tom Dubois captures that idea beautifully with this dove at the very pinnacle of the painting. Folks, the Holy Spirit wasn't just present at Jesus' baptism, as though He went down to earth and peeked, took a look around and then safely hid Himself back in the heavens. The Holy Spirit was present through it all. He saw the whole picture of Jesus life, death and resurrection. Perhaps better to say that He "**oversaw**" it all. The readings I laid out for you are an attempt to show just that. These are by no means the only "Holy Spirit passages" in the Bible. But they give you a good look at the involvement of God the Holy Spirit in bringing the world to see our Savior, right from the very conception of Jesus in Mary's womb. The Bible says...

Slide: Annunciation pic and Scripture "...she was found to be with child through the Holy Spirit..." (Matthew 1:18)

The Holy Spirit was the active agent of that conception as God, the Creator of DNA, became united to that egg and became one of us. Perhaps you never thought of this in the whole pro-life, pro-abortion argument, but Jesus Christ, the Lord of the universe, sanctified our journeys in the womb with His own. And was Jesus Christ any less a human being before He showed Himself outside Mary's womb? From the moment of conception, God the Son joined Himself to us forever by taking humanity into Himself.

The righteous Simeon was privileged to be one of the earliest witnesses to His coming. The Bible says:

Slide: Simeon pic and Scripture "He was waiting for the consolation of Israel, and the Holy Spirit was upon Him. It had been revealed by the Holy Spirit that he would not die before he had seen the Lord's Christ." (Luke 2:25-26)

That term, "the Lord's Christ" is a very specific revelation that Jesus was the Messiah of the Old Testament, the Savior promised right from the Fall of Adam and Eve and again and again throughout the history of God's people. Simeon was privileged to hold the salvation of the world in His arms and the Holy Spirit was well pleased to show Him and use Him to show and tell others.

In the same way, John the Baptist was privileged to speak of that Savior and to prepare the way for Him, saying:

Slide: "He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and with fire." (Matthew 3:11)

And then John was put in the incredible position of baptizing the Son of God, as His anointing for the beginning of His public ministry. He watched with the crowd as

Slide: "...the Holy Spirit descended on Him in bodily form like a dove. And a voice came from heaven: "You are my Son, whom I love; with You I am well pleased."" (Luke 3:22)

There the world got a glimpse of the Trinity, with the voice of God the Father, the presence of the Holy Spirit as a dove, and of course, God the Son standing with John the Baptist in the Jordan River.

No sooner did Jesus receive that anointing, than He began the work He came to do. The Bible says:

Slide: “Jesus, full of the Holy Spirit, returned from the Jordan and was led by the Spirit in the desert, where for forty days He was tempted by the devil.” (Luke 4:1-2)

We’d say, “Thanks a lot, Holy Spirit! Can’t you lead me someplace else?” But for that reason Jesus came into the world, and for that reason, the Holy Spirit proceeded from the Father and the Son, to do battle with the devil and to win that war as our representative so that Satan’s power over us would be crushed.

In the heart of that battle, as He was instructing His disciples, Jesus got caught up in the moment and in the wonder of what He was doing there on earth in God’s incredible plan of salvation. The bible says

Slide: “At that time Jesus, full of joy through the Holy Spirit, said, “I praise you, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because You have hidden these things from the wise and learned, and revealed them to little children. Yes, Father, for this was Your good pleasure.” (Luke 10:21)

It’s good to know Jesus journey here on earth was not only about suffering, but that the Holy Spirit brought Him joy in the journey, just as He wants to bring it to you.

Then folks, we may not understand the Trinity, that God is three persons in One God, but it sure shows up throughout the Bible. It does here again as Jesus teaches His disciples shortly before His death. The Bible says...

Slide: “All this I have spoken while still with you. But the Counselor, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you all things and will remind you of everything I have said to you.” (John 14:25-26)

How much more intimately connected can God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit be, than is represented in these words of Jesus, again, the Holy Spirit proceeding from the Father and the Son, as we say in the Nicene Creed.

Then to His Church, Jesus says

Slide: “Peace be with you! As the Father has sent me, I am sending you.” And with that He breathed on them and said, ‘Receive the Holy Spirit.’ If you forgive anyone His sins, they are forgiven; if you do not forgive them, they are not forgiven.” (John 20:21-23)

This is Jesus giving His Church the Holy Spirit, and what we call “the Office of the Keys”, the ability to forgive the sins of those who repent and to withhold forgiveness for those who do not repent and turn to Jesus.

And finally, Jesus gives to us the Great Commission. To stop being “pew potatoes” and to join in His mission:

Slide: “Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit...” (Matthew 18:19)

Folks, I don’t know exactly how it all works within the Trinity. How there are three persons but only One God... I know how to describe it, using the words of the Athanasian Creed, that

Slide: “...in this Trinity none is before or after another; none is greater or less than another; but the whole three persons are coeternal with each other and coequal, so that in all things...the Trinity in Unity and Unity in Trinity is to be worshiped.”

And I believe that. I just don’t understand it and that doesn’t bother me anymore because I know that God is bigger than my understanding, plain and simple. At the same time, the more I get to know God through His Word, as Father, as Son, and as Holy Spirit, the truer the picture

of the Trinity becomes, and the clearer His great love for us becomes. You know, the world tries to talk about Jesus as though He was just a man caught up in events He could not control. He was just a misguided martyr. The truth is exactly the opposite. God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, knew exactly what was happening. Jesus wasn't caught up in anything. He knew exactly what He was doing, and overseeing it all, was God the Holy Spirit.

Slide: Triumphant Entry – Highlight Dove

And what was He seeing?

(PowerPoint Slides and pics of each highlighted below as they come)

He saw **Pilate**, who may have thought he was the one in that position, and who would later sell Jesus out to save his own political career – not the last politician to do so...

He saw the **fickle crowds**, who were ready and willing to join in the celebration at a safe distance, but who would easily switch their allegiance and shout “crucify” when that was the politically correct opinion.

The Holy Spirit saw the cold and dead ways of this world, represented in the **stone statue of Caesar**, the ways of power and pride, lifting up his hand to his own glory. But the foundation of that thinking is a **hollow** and **dead** tomb, and worse – that is really the way of **Satan**, who came to “steal and kill and destroy”, and who is looking right at you as his next target.

The Holy Spirit saw those in that generation and those to come, who would be forced to live in a corrupt and cold and careless government and society, nevertheless who would try to be **lights in the darkness** and who forever after would know that Jesus is the true light of the world, the One to whom they could point men for the ages to come – until the dawn breaks on His final coming.

The Holy Spirit saw the **Pharisees, Sadducees and Teachers of the Law**, the keeper of the prophecies, the leaders of the church who should have been the first to lay their cloaks at Jesus feet, instead plotting to kill Him.

He saw the **uncaring, lukewarm** people in their rich finery, keeping their flowers and their gifts to themselves.

The Holy Spirit saw the **disciples** with their huge egos and their misguided shouts of “blessed is the King Who comes in the name of the Lord.” He knew they would soon be running away from Jesus.

He saw the **Roman soldiers** who would soon be ordered to scourge Jesus and who would enthusiastically follow those orders, forcing a cruel crown of thorns on Jesus' head and bowing down to Him in false worship... But at least one of whom, would be the first to profess Jesus as the Son of God.

The Holy Spirit saw the **temple guards** who stood next to those in power. They were only following orders perhaps, not thinking up the plans to condemn and kill the Savior of the world, but complicit in their refusal to think for themselves and stand against the cosmic injustice of the treatment that was doled out to Jesus.

He saw poor **Simon of Cyrene**, who would be forced to carry Jesus' cross and He knew precisely what He was going to do with that experience later in life, as Simon led his family to believe in Jesus and become His disciples.

The Holy Spirit saw those whom Jesus had **healed** and **Lazarus** whom He had raised from the dead, singing their Hosannas of Praise to their Savior.

He saw those who were so **ashamed** of their sin they couldn't even bear to lift up their heads to see Jesus and He knew that it was His job to get them to lift up their heads to see Jesus, their salvation, who came to relieve them from their sin and shame.

The Holy Spirit saw the **little children** and all the little children to come and He felt in His very being as Jesus felt and said: "Let the little children come to Me and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of God belongs to such as these." (Mark 10:14)

He saw the **blemished lamb** and the blemished sacrificial system of the Jews, which was only a reminder of our sins, and next to it He saw and oversaw the unblemished Lamb of God who came to take away the sins of the world for real and for good.

In and through this and every picture of all mankind, the Holy Spirit saw the means through which He would reach out to them. He saw the **Law and the Gospel**, the word of God, to show people their sin and to show them their salvation in Christ and urge them to receive it.

He saw others in the crowd who were **curious**, (*The lady sticking her head out on the right side of the picture*) who weren't sure what it all meant, but would like to know, and He was and is determined to show them.

The Holy Spirit saw those who were pretentious, **showing off their palms**, but keeping them to themselves instead of laying them at Jesus' feet.

He saw those who were overjoyed at the coming of Christ, ready to share their **fruits of faith**, and He was ready to produce ever more of those fruits in them as He tabernacled over them in grace.

The Holy Spirit saw and blessed those who would offer praise to Jesus with **flutes** and cymbals and drums and all manner of musical instruments, singing and making music in their hearts to God to Whom and for Whom all praise is due.

The Holy Spirit saw and blessed those who were willing to **lay their best at Jesus' feet**. Considering it all rubbish compared to knowing and being known by Christ.

He saw the many and varied colors and light available to God's fallen creation in this world and knew that it was but a dim reflection of the world He had originally created for man and of the new earth He will make for us to dwell in when Christ comes again in glory.

And somehow, in people who were so unworthy, so messy, so flawed with sin, so much like sheep who have gone astray, he saw those who would believe in Jesus as their Savior from sin, and He saw them as a beautiful bride prepared for her husband. He saw the Church, you and me, as the **bride of Christ!**

And always in all ways, the Holy Spirit saw **Jesus**, and wants us to see Jesus. He was One with Jesus and the Father, One in power and One in purpose, to reach out to you, a **blind beggar** in need of healing on the outside and healing on the inside, the cleansing of a guilty conscience. Next Sunday we'll turn our focus solely to Him, the Center of interest in this picture, the center of History, the center of the universe. The day of this picture is called in the Church, Palm Sunday. But it is also called "The Passion of our Lord" Sunday. Folks, I've already said, I don't exactly know how it all works within the Trinity, but I know it's God who loves you. It's God, Father and Son and Holy Spirit, who orchestrated this journey from the Triumphant Entry, to the journey that would go out the other way, the Via Dolorosa, the Way of Sorrows as Jesus carried the cross upon which He would bare the sins of the world, your sins and mine. I want to show you as we finish today a small glimpse of the kind of love and passion that we're talking about, from the film, "Most."

Slide: Most – “Bridge” clip. (*Father must choose between the train crashing or his son dying*)

For an unknowing and uncaring people,

Slide: Jesus on the cross pic and “God so loved the world that He gave His one and only Son that Whoever Believes in Him shall not perish but have eternal life.” (John 3:16)

That’s how much He loves you. That’s how much you matter to Him.

God the Father, I thank You for Your Amazing Grace that led You to this plan of salvation, whereby You would save people like us, soiled with sin, by offering up Your own Son in our place so that we would not perish.

God the Son, I thank You for Your willingness to drink the cup of suffering and death that we deserved. I thank You for the cross!

God the Holy Spirit, I thank You for taking the Bible, the Word of God, and making it come alive in my heart and for creating and sustaining my faith in Jesus, My Savior. As a new season brings new life around me, but also new distractions and challenges to my schedule, stay with me. Dwell in me as You have promised and help me to stay focused on the center, on Christ, and to reflect His love to my world. Amen.