

Jesus Baptism and the Dove

Many take the description of Jesus' baptism, when the Holy Spirit descended in the form of a dove on His head, as "proof" that the Holy Spirit is a third Divine Being.

- "And Jesus, when he was baptized, went up straightway out of the water: and, lo, the heavens were opened unto him, **and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove, and lighting upon him:** And lo a voice from heaven, saying, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." Matthew 3:16-17

Upon a deeper analysis we can see that the dove didn't speak, but the Father's voice was heard from heaven. Yet the Holy Spirit is called the Spirit of God! The whole Bible speaks about the Father bearing the name of God. The Holy Spirit proceeds from the Father! According to a trinitarian interpretation of the Bible, the Holy Spirit must also be a Father, for it was the Holy Spirit who conceived Jesus in Mary's womb:

- "But while he thought on these things, behold, the angel of the Lord appeared unto him in a dream, saying, Joseph, thou son of David, fear not to take unto thee Mary thy wife: for **that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Ghost.**" Matthew 1:20

Actually it was the who Father Personally through the Holy Spirit conceived Jesus in Mary's womb, otherwise He wouldn't be a Father. So even this verse proves that the Holy Spirit isn't a third being! Why didn't the Father's voice speak from heaven saying, "this is Our beloved Son"? When we carefully read the words below the truth will become still clearer:

- "And the angel answered and said unto her, **The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee:** therefore also that holy thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God." Luke 1:35

Who is the Highest according to the Bible? In countless places the Bible calls God the Father the Highest, certainly not the Holy Spirit! Here we clearly read that the Holy Spirit represents the Father's presence, Whose power overshadowed Mary. What does the word power mean in this instance?

That the Father Himself brought Jesus into Mary's womb! And that the Holy Spirit proceeds from Him. That's how the through the Holy Spirit the Father overshadowed the Son!

Were the Holy Spirit an autonomous being, then it would have been the Holy Spirit Himself who overshadowed Jesus!

We get the same confirmation from the Spirit of Prophecy as well. Why in this instance does the Holy Spirit proceed only from the Father and represent only His presence, during Jesus' earthly mission? Because the Holy Spirit, which Revelation describes fully as the seven Spirits, according to that book, proceeds from God on the throne, and then goes to the Lamb, i.e. Jesus, Who sends His Holy Spirit to the whole universe.

As we have seen in other chapters, Jesus during His dwelling on the earth gave up His Divine attributes of power, nature and omnipresence as the Holy Spirit.

During that time the Holy Spirit proceeded only from the Father. Although we cannot grasp this, it shouldn't be a reason for us to go off into the incorrect interpretation of the Trinity. This theme is further expanded in other chapters.

- "At the **Saviour's baptism**, Satan was among the witnesses. He saw the **Father's glory overshadowing His Son**. He heard the voice of Jehovah testifying to the divinity of Jesus." Ellen White, Desire of Ages, p. 116.2

- “Never before had angels listened to such a prayer as Christ offered at his baptism, and they were solicitous to be the bearers of the message from the Father to his Son. But, no! **direct from the Father issues the light of his glory. The heavens were opened, and beams of glory rested upon the Son of God and assumed the form of a dove, in appearance like burnished gold. The dove-like form was emblematical of the meekness and gentleness of Christ.** While the people stood spell-bound with amazement, their eyes fastened upon Christ, from the opening heavens came these words: “This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.” The words of confirmation that Christ is the Son of God were given to inspire faith in those who witnessed the scene, and to sustain the Son of God in his arduous work. Notwithstanding the Son of God was clothed with humanity, yet Jehovah, with his own voice, assures him of his sonship with the Eternal. In this manifestation to his Son, God accepts humanity as exalted through the excellence of his beloved Son.” Ellen White, Review & Herald, January 21, 1873, par. 5
- “...After Christ was baptized, He bowed on the banks of Jordan, and never before had heaven listened to such a prayer as came from His divine lips.... **The glory of God, in the form of a dove** of burnished gold, rested upon Him, **and from the infinite glory was heard these words, ‘This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.’** The human race is encircled by the human arm of Christ, while with His divine arm He grasps the throne of the Infinite One. The prayer of Christ cleaved right through the darkness and entered where God is. To each of us it means that heaven is open before us. It means that the gates are ajar, that the glory is imparted to the Son of God and all who believe in His name.... Christ entered into the wilderness with the Spirit of God upon Him, to be tempted of the devil.... Satan left the field as a conquered foe. Our Saviour passed over the ground and was victor.... What has He done for the human family? He has elevated us in the scale of moral value. We may become conquerors through our Sufficiency. There is hope for the most hopeless, in Christ.... What did Christ come here for? To represent the Father. What a heart of love and sympathy! ... When God gave His Son, He gave all heaven. He could give no more.—Manuscript 27, 1893 (Temperance, 283-287).” Ellen White, Christ Triumphant, p. 207.4 - 207.6

In the above quotes we can discern that the Holy Spirit as the dove wasn't an autonomous being, but rather a manifestation of God's glory. Simultaneously we can see that Jesus, Who was a Son since forever, on the earth was clothed in the garb of human nature, i.e. He took the form of human nature into Himself.

God encouragingly confirmed to Jesus that He was still His Son, and that He did not lose His Sonship in coming to the earth. The prophet of God expands the meaning of the title of Son, explaining that Jesus is a heavenly, divine Son of God, and that on the earth He had the status of the Son of an earthly man:

- “The only being who was one with God lived the law in humanity, descended to the lowly life of a common laborer, and toiled at the carpenter's bench with his **earthly** parent.” Ellen White, Signs of the Times, October 14, 1897, par. 3
- “The divine Son of God saw that no arm but his own could save fallen man. He determined to help man.” Ellen White, Review & Herald, February 24, 1897, par. 33