
Christ Our Representative

Studies on the Work of Christ

One of the things that is often useful to us in our study of the Bible is an overview of just what is going on. The purpose of this series of studies is to give that kind of understanding with regard to what DeVern Fromke called "The Ultimate Intention" (his book of that title is well worth reading). To do this we shall not study one particular passage, but will cull truths from all over the Scriptures, attempting to bring strands together so that the large picture emerges.

Some of the areas that we shall cover:

- The Nature of God; the Eternal Covenant
- The Image of God in mankind; extending the Covenant
- The Fall of mankind and its effects; Sin, Flesh, Death
- God's dealings with the Patriarchs; the Law
- The coming of Christ —the Fall undone
- The Life of Jesus as our Pattern
- The Work of the Cross
- The coming of the Spirit; Regeneration; Metaphors of the New Birth; what is meant by Salvation

Week 1 The Image of God

It is always wise, when dealing with truth, to begin with God, for He is the Truth. If we begin with anything else, we shall generally go wrong. Ultimately all things will be reconciled with Him; that is to say, all will be brought into conformity with His nature as well as His purpose, so that God might be all in all (Eph 4:6).

The Nature of God

The Bible teaches us firstly that God is—that is, that He exists from the beginning (Gen 1:1; Heb 11:6). Not to believe this is to be a fool (Psalm 14:1). His Name Jehovah (Yahweh) means "The One who was, who is, and who will be". This Name is translated as LORD in the OT.

His Attributes

- Eternal and unchanging—Gen 21:33; 1 Sam 15:29; Heb 1:12
- All-knowing and omnipresent—Psalm 139
- Invisible and Unsearchable—John 1:18; Psalm 145:3
- Holy and Just—Rev 4:8; Rev 15:3

- Faithful and True—1 Cor 1:9; Rom 3:4
- Loving and Merciful—1 John 4:7-16; Luke 6:36

Tri-Unity

- One Lord—Deut 6:4
- Three Persons: Father and Son (John 1:1-18; 8:58); Holy Spirit (Heb 9:14; Psalm 39:7-13).

Note: Not three different manifestations of the same Person (an idea called Modalism). At Jesus's baptism all three Persons were present at the same time (Mark 1:9-11).

Their Relationships

The relationships between Father, Son and Spirit, like the ones in a human family, are of voluntary order, not of superiority—see 1 Cor 11:3. So the Father sends the Son (John 20:21), and Father and Son send the Spirit (John 14:26; 15:26; 16:7). The Son and the Spirit proceed from the Father (John 8:42; 15:26).

The Eternal Covenant

Fatherhood implies a Child. Sonship implies a Father.

Fatherhood implies procreation. Sonship implies birth.

These sound like elementary statements, but in fact they are profound insights into the nature of God. Christ is the Eternal Son, the Word (John 1:1). It is in the nature of God to create (see Gen ch. 1); when He does so, He does it through His Word (Gen 1:3,6,9, etc; John 1:3; Col 1:16). The creative aspect of God is a part of His procreative nature; He makes things as expressions of Himself. The eternal generation of the Son is a consequence of the eternal Fatherhood of God. The Son is “the streaming forth of His glory, and the express image of His substance” (Heb 1:3).

The Son lives a life that is constantly laid down (John 10:17,18) and constantly raised (John 5:26; 6:57). This is the eternal covenant which exists in God. So John saw a Lamb “slain from the foundation of the world” (Rev 13:8); and the way into the Holy of Holies is “newly-slain, and living” (Heb 10:20, literal translation).

Note that in Scripture the Holy Ghost is often associated with the feminine aspects of the nature of God (e.g. Gen 1:2; Matt 1:18,20; John 3:5,6,8).

The Covenant Extended

Of all the creation, God said only of mankind that they were to be “in our image, after our likeness” (Gen 1:26 – notice the plural “our”). That image is associated with the in-breathing of the Holy Ghost (ch.2:7). Note that ch.1:27 stresses the male-and-female nature of the image of God (see also Gen 5:1,2).

The Ultimate Intention is expressed in Rom 8:29—to bring many brethren into the covenant. But only if they are willing to accept its terms (Matt 16:24,25). It is impossible to live the Christian life on any other terms.

Further study

- Read through Ephesians and make a note of all the uses of the word "all".
- What else does Jesus say about His relationship with the Father in John 5:17-30?

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Week 2 The Fall

Our last study dealt with the nature of God, the relationships between the Persons of the Godhead, and the eternal covenant. In the creation of man, the Lord had it in mind to extend the covenant to include many others, so that the Son would be “the firstborn among many brethren” (Rom 8:29). This is still the ultimate intention of God.

However, as we know all too well, that intention of the Lord was subverted by the intrusion of Satan and of sin. Satan's target in all his works is primarily God Himself, not us. His hatred of humanity is a natural result of this. In tempting man, the enemy thought to align the whole race against God and to overthrow Him. It is instructive to see how he went about it.

The Enemy Revealed

The Bible does not speak very much of the origin of Satan. We know that he was created by God and was one of the highest angelic beings. Two Old Testament passages give us some clues to what changed this marvellous angel into the devil he now is. These passages are Isa 14:12-15, and Ezek 28:12-17. Note from these passages:

- his characteristics: beauty, wisdom, anointing, brightness, etc.
- his proximity to, and intimacy with God.
- his downfall: pride, ambition, violence.

See also John 8:44; 2 Cor 11:13-15.

Satan (which means Adversary) has other names too: Abaddon (Destruction), Apollyon (Exterminator), Beelzebub (Lord of Flies), Belial (Worthless), and Lucifer (Light-bearer).

The Temptation of the Woman

Genesis ch.2 describes the situation in Eden before the fall. It is a scene of peace, harmony, plenty (v.9), and fellowship with God. Into that scene there intrudes the first jarring note.

Paul's two references to the events in Eden are in 2 Cor 11:3 and 1 Tim 2:14. Note that in both cases he says that the serpent beguiled the woman, i.e. deceived her (the Greek means “strongly deceived”).

The method of Satan is very instructive.

- He by-passed Adam, subverting the headship that God laid down in the beginning (1 Cor 11:3).
- He questioned, and then contradicted (Gen 3:1,4).
- He focused her attention on the one thing that was forbidden to her, in the midst of the plenty that God had provided.
- He imparted to her his own original thoughts (compare Gen 3:5 and Isa 14:14).

The response of the woman: here James 1:14,15 gives us an amazingly apt explanation.

- She listened to the word of satan.
- She allowed lust to arise in her (Gen 3:6; James 1:14)
- She conceived sin by marrying her will with the word of satan; she took the fruit at his bidding (Gen 3:6; James 1:15).

Note the threefold attraction of that tree now (Gen 3:6): good for food; pleasant to the eyes; to be desired to make one wise. Link these 3 things with 1 John 2:16: the lust of the flesh; the lust of the eyes; the pride of life.

These are the three avenues—appetites, aesthetics, and ambition—that satan is still using today to enslave men and women.

The Temptation of the Man

Note that Adam was not tempted by the devil directly, but by the woman. She offered him the fruit and he ate. However, that is not to lay more blame on her; Paul says quite clearly that whereas she was deceived, he was just downright disobedient. (In a later study we shall see how the Lord has moved to erase that stain from the character of Woman.)

- Genesis ch.2 tells us of the creation of the woman from the rib of the man. God graciously and very creatively showed Adam his need for one who would “correspond” to him (v.18). None of the animals could provide that companionship that he needed (v.19,20).
- When presented to Adam, he immediately recognised her as “like me—but different” (Hebrew “Issah” means “woman”; “Ish” means “man”).
- He knew that she was “flesh of his flesh” (v.23).

Now then, the man is faced with a choice. Before him is this woman, flesh of his flesh, inviting him (pleading with him?) to cross the line (this is the literal meaning of “transgress”) to where she now stood. Within him is the knowledge that to do so is to disobey the God who loves him. He reaches forth his hand and chooses her—his flesh—in preference to God. In doing so he fell.

The fall was:

- from spirit, to flesh
- from God, to satan
- from innocence, to knowledge
- from purity, to guilt
- from life, to death

Further study

- Re-read Genesis chapters 2 and 3 slowly and carefully.
- Read the accounts of the temptations of Christ (Matt 4; Mark 1; Luke 4) and see how they compare with the temptation in Eden.

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Week 3. The Consequences of the Fall

Whenever satan makes a tempting offer, inciting people to disobey the Lord, he always sells them short on the consequences. It is a useful thing to remember. In this study we examine some of the things that took place as a result of the woman's and the man's disobedience.

The Internal Consequences, Genesis 3:7-13

This chapter records the consequences so briefly that we are likely to overlook them. Note the following:

- Self-consciousness and shame (v.7). Compare Mark 10:46-52; Heb 4:12,13.
- A terror of God (v.10). See 1 John 4:18,19.
- Desire to hide from Him (v.8).
- Avoidance of accountability (v.12,13). Compare 1 Tim 1:12-15.
- Alienation between all the parties concerned.

So we have: an insecure woman who cannot trust her husband, though she desperately needs him; and a fearful man who has abdicated his position of headship.

The Intended Consequences, Genesis 3:14-19

These verses in particular give us insights into the human state, and why the world functions as it does. Try to read them in the light of the general state of 99% of the world, not as referring to a privileged generation in our day!

- Enmity between the devil and the woman (v.15).
- Physical and emotional changes in the woman (v.16).
- A futile struggle for existence in the man (v.17-19). See also Rom 8:19-22.

Apart from all else, these verses remind us that God was still in control.

The Invisible Consequence, Genesis 2:17

To all *physical* appearances, Adam and his wife did not immediately die. Yet the Lord had stated clearly, "In the day you eat of it, dying you shall die". In reality they did. It was primarily a spiritual death; it outworked itself later in physical death too, but we should remember that usually when the N.T. speaks of life and death it is referring to spiritual life and death. See, for example, John 5:24. From that day, they lived dead.

The Irrepressible Consequence

Note that Adam and Eve did not come together until after the fall (ch.4:1). Their children also were born spiritually dead. See ch.5:5,8,11,etc.; Rom 5:12,17,21. That legacy of death passed all the way to us; see Eph 2:1. So the dead Adam became the “federal head” of all the human race. Note the irony (or downright perversity) of Gen 3:20, where Adam calls her “Living” even though God said she was dead.

The Irreversible Consequences, Genesis 3:21-24

These verses describe the first gracious acts of God towards His disobedient children. He did not drive them out merely because He could no longer have fellowship with them—far less out of pique or temper—but as an act of mercy.

The clue is in v.22,23. He sent them out so that they could not eat of the tree of life and live for ever. In other words, He preserved unto them the possibility of dying, so that Calvary was still possible. The irreversible consequence was avoided.

Things to Note

- Adam chose his flesh—his wife—over God. Note from this point how the flesh begins to predominate, with its emphasis on sex, pride and ambition, up to the Flood (see ch.6:1-7, especially v.3), and then beyond.
- Though Adam and Eve and their descendants became instruments of satan in his war against God, they did not become controlled by him; they maintained their independence.
- Death, the consequence of the fall, was held open so that later it could become the way to life. This is part of the symmetry of the gospel, and is entirely consonant with the nature of God as we saw it in the first study.
- Even in the midst of disaster, the Lord had His plan (see Gen 3:15; 2 Tim 1:9,10).

Further Study

- Read Romans ch.5 and draw up a chart comparing Adam and his disobedience on one side, and Christ and His obedience on the other.
- Read Roman 1:18-32 to see what happened next!

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Week 4. Illustrations from the Patriarchs

In the lives of the patriarchs we gain glimpses of the principles upon which the Lord works in redemption. After the Fall there was an almost overwhelming spread of wickedness and sin which threatened to carry away the whole human race and to unite them with the devil against God. In the life of Noah we see how the Lord moved to prevent this; and in the life of Abraham we see increasing revelation of the Lord's ways to the man of faith. These are the ground from whence He will later bring forth His salvation.

The End of All Flesh

The Fall, as we have seen, was a fall from spirit to flesh. From that point on, the carnal nature ruled and the spirit was dead. (By "flesh" we mean the nature that is ruled by selfish desires, not the physical body). We are told in Gal 5:17 that the spirit and the flesh "are contrary one to another". See also 1 Peter 2:11.

- Overflowing wickedness—Gen 6:1-7:10. Note how many times the word "flesh" occurs here. See 1 Peter 3:20.
- Overflowing judgment—Gen 7:11-8:14. The Flood is a picture of the new birth; the earth was in a real sense "born again", and came forth out of the water just as the original earth had done (Gen 1:9,10). The same idea is represented in John 3:5; 19:34; 1 John 5:6-8.
- A new race—Gen 8:15-9:7. Note the command in Gen 9:1 is the same as in 1:28. The various descendants are listed in ch. 10.
- A new covenant— Gen 9:8-17. The next judgment will be by fire (2 Peter 3:7-13).
- Note, however, that sin raises its head again at the end of ch.9.

The ark is a type of Christ, in Whom all are borne safely through the judgment. Where was God?? See 7:1; 8:15,16; 2 Cor 5:19!

The Father of Faith

Between Noah and Abraham we see the spreading out of mankind, helped by the confusion of languages (why did God do this?). We see too that the Lord is beginning to narrow down His purpose to a single man, and then to a single nation arising from him. In the gospel, this "narrowing down" is reversed. See Eph 2:11-13; 3:3-6.

- God led Abraham through several stages of revelation, of obedience, and of faith. The climax is in Gen ch. 22. Note the following principles:
- The Law of Moses is nowhere in view. It came 500 years later.

- Abraham's destiny was to become the father of many nations (Gen 12:1-3; 17:4); the gospel would be for all the world.
- The Lord dealt with him on the basis of faith—see Gen 15:6; Rom 4:1-5; Gal 3:29,29.
- The end in view is the coming of the Seed (Gen 15:1-5); but beyond that, or perhaps an explanation of it, it is the coming of the Spirit, Gal 3:14. We are reminded that the gospel challenge is to faith in Jesus Christ - unto the coming of the Spirit! Why stop half-way?

Relatively early on, we read that Abraham was justified on account of his faith (Gen 15:6). However, that was only the beginning! We then go on to read of:

- His greatest mistake, Gen ch. 16. This was the flesh in action; not, in this case, in terms of lawlessness and disobedience, but in unbelief and presumption. The similarity with Adam's action is interesting... See Gal 4:22,23. Only one son counted before God (Gen 22:2).
- The cutting off of the flesh, Gen ch. 17. This (to us perhaps somewhat bizarre) ritual was the essential sign of the covenant, and is highly significant.
- Abraham is given time for his natural powers of begetting children to die. Compare his age in 16:16 and 17:1, and see ch. 18:11-14 and Romans 4:18,19. From this we learn that the Seed comes through a dead man.
- His initiation into the secret of the Lord, Gen ch.22. The life, once given, had to be offered up. We see here the outworking of the nature of God. Abraham saw Jesus's day (John 8:56). See Heb 11:17-19.

Further Study:

- We saw that Abraham's second son was in the line of promise. What other second sons are also in this line? There are at least 3 more.
- How do the principles seen here work themselves out in the lives of Jacob and Joseph?

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Week 5 The Law

The period between the Patriarchs and the coming of Christ—a span of about 1500 years—is the period of the Law, i.e. the “old covenant” spoken of in Hebrews chapter 8. Through Abraham, Isaac and Jacob the nation of Israel came into being, and through it the knowledge of God was preserved in the world. Sometimes we hear people speak of “the Law” as opposed to “grace”. This is not correct; the Law was a gracious provision of God. But it was limited in its effect, and could not give life. In fact, we read in Hebrews chapter 11 that faith was the important thing all the way through.

The Need for a Law

Lawlessness is graphically described in Genesis 6:1-12; Romans 1:18-32, and Eph 2:2-12. We see from these verses that sin, the flesh and evil powers quickly dominate where there is no law.

The ancient world abounded in examples of lawless peoples. In the OT one example is the Amorites, i.e. the inhabitants of Canaan. See Gen 15:16. The Lord gave them chance to reform, as He had in the time of Noah (1 Peter 3:20). See also the story of Sodom and Gomorrah. God ordered the Israelites to “utterly destroy” the Amorites (Deut 7:2-6). Deut 18:9-14, and the curses of Deut 7:2-6, describe practices that were common among these people.

The results of lawlessness: multiplied wickedness; social disorder; immense suffering; disease; immorality; invasion by evil spirits.

The Blessings of the Law

- Preservation of the knowledge of God, Rom 3:1,2.
- Control of sinful tendencies, Gal 3:19.
- Obedience produces material blessing, Deut 28:1-14 (this still applies in some ways—think of the Jews in business, the Quakers, etc.).
- Peace, order, stability, harmony—up to a point.

The book of Deuteronomy contains much of the Law of Moses. It is often thought of as dry and forbidding; but there are some wonderful promises given, e.g. in ch. 8 and ch. 11. The Lord gave the Israelites a “good land”!

The Inadequacy of the Law

The Israelites invaded Canaan with the intention of obeying God. Under Joshua’s leadership they first succeeded, but it did not last. See Joshua ch. 24, especially v.19, 31; see also Judges 1:19-35, where their failure is described. From this point the decline is steady, with some periods of revival, e.g. under David,

Solomon, Josiah, Hezekiah. Finally they were all carried away into captivity because of idolatry and disobedience.

Why was this so? Because beneath all the good intentions there was a force operating in their hearts, the power of sin. The Law could control it, suppress it up to a point, but, like a weed under a path, sin would push its way to the surface.

The Effects of the Law

The NT reveals that the Law, far from overcoming the power of sin, actually made it worse. See Rom 3:20; 4:15; 7:8,13.

Moreover, the Law points out failure, and leads to condemnation. See Rom 7:7; 2 Cor 3:6-9.

The Law is completely unable to justify anyone, Gal 2:16; 3:11.

Gal 3:21 sums it up: If there had been a law given which could have given life, verily righteousness should have been by the law; but the scripture hath concluded all under sin...

The letter to the Galatians deals with Legalism, i.e. the foolishness of returning to Law as a means of salvation (or even as something added on to salvation). Paul shows that legalism is itself a work of the flesh (Gal 4:21-24), and the flesh cannot control the flesh (John 3:6; 6:63). Pharisaism arose after the Exile as a kind of “never-again” reaction to the disobedience that had caused them to be exiled. It was the Pharisees and teachers of the Law who had Jesus crucified—the flesh persecuting the Spirit (Gal 4:29). Instead of immorality and idolatry there arose pride and hypocrisy. It is the same in any age.

The Achievement of the Law

It drives us to seek a Saviour—Gal 3:24.

Deliverance from the Law.

We are delivered from the Law as a means of salvation by one route, and only one—the Cross of Christ (Rom 10:4; Col 2:13,14). That Cross has to be applied to our heart so that we too die (death unto life!)—see Rom 7:1-4; Gal 2:19,20.

Yet deliverance from Law does not mean that we can do as we like (that is called Antinomianism)—see Rom 8:4; 13:10; 1 Cor 9:21; Gal 6:2; James 2:8.

Further study

- Read through Galatians, noting what Paul says about the flesh (i.e. legalism).
- Look for the promises in Deuteronomy 8 and 11.

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Week 6. The Last Adam

The Fall gave rise to a race of people who were held under the power of sin and death, and moved upon by the devil. Even Israel, highly privileged in that they possessed the revelation of God, were included, as Romans 3:9,22,23 tell us. The Law, good as it was, was unable to give life, and could not eradicate sin. Into this situation, in the fulness of time (Gal 4:3), stepped the only One who was able to remedy it.

The Second Man, the Last Adam

Read 1 Cor 15:45-47. We see that He was the Living One (John 1:4; 5:26; 11:25; 14:6,19 (note that the disciples were obviously still dead according to Christ, for “you will live also”).

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*Jesus, we follow Thee, In all Thy footsteps tread,
And pant for full conformity to our exalted Head.
We would, we would partake Thy every state below,
And suffer all things for Thy sake, And to Thy glory do.*

*We in Thy birth are born, Sustain Thy grief and loss...
Share in Thy want, and shame, and scorn, And die upon Thy Cross.
Baptised into Thy death, We sink into Thy grave,
Till Thou the quickening Spirit breathe, And to the utmost save.*

Wesley

His Conception

This was the fulfilment of Gen 3:15. Mary’s encounter with the angel (Luke 1:26-38) was the counterpart to Eve’s conversation with the devil, and the spiritual process was the same—listening, believing, obeying, conceiving. If the Christ is to be conceived in us, we have to go through the same process. He is conceived, by the Holy Ghost, in a virgin heart.

N.B. It is not the *birth* of Christ that is the miracle, but the conception.

His Early Years

- His first words, Heb 10:5-7. His body was prepared so that He could die.
- Subjection to Mary and Joseph, Luke 2:51,52.

His Commission and Anointing

Luke 3:21,22. Jesus was not *baptised* in the Holy Ghost at Jordan (He had no need); He was *anointed* with the Holy Ghost (see Acts 2:38).

His victory over temptation—Luke 4:1-13. Note that all the temptations offered a short-cut to the kingdom, evading the Cross (see also John 6:15).

All these things we have to go through too if we follow Him.

The Self-Awareness of Christ

In John's gospel we read many statements of Jesus about Himself:

- I came down from heaven, John 3:13,31; 8:23; 13:3; 16:28.
- The Father sent me, 3:17; 4:34; 5:30; 6:29; 7:29; 17:8,18, etc.
- I came to do His will, 4:34; 5:30; 6:38; 17:4, etc.
- I came to die, 3:14; 8:28; 12:32,33; 13:1.
- I shall return to the Father, 7:33; 14:2,3; 16:5; 17:11,13.
- I shall bring you to the Father, 12:26; 14:3; 17:34.

The Reasons for His Coming.

- To destroy the power of sin (Heb 1:3; 9:26), satan (Heb 2:14; 1 John 3:8), and death (1 Cor ch. 15; 2 Tim 1:10; Rev 1:18).
- To reconcile us to God—Rom 5:10,11; 2 Cor 5:19.
- To fulfil the Law—Matt 5:17; Rom 10:4; 1 Tim 1:5.
- To clear the way for the Holy Ghost—John 7:37-39; 14:16; 15:26; 16:7,13.

His Death and Resurrection.

Our first study described the eternal Son as constantly laying down His life unto the Father, and the Father constantly raising Him up. At Calvary we see this mystery unfold with some “new” elements:

- It was in a physical body.
- It involved identification with sin (2 Cor 5:21).
- It involved separation from the Father (Matt 27:46).
- It was out of love for the Father, but also out of love for us (Rom 5:8).
- It had cosmic significance (Rom 8:18-22).

The Cross was the perfect undoing of all that satan achieved in the Fall.

As before, we note that the real miracle was not the resurrection (see Acts 2:24), but the death. This death is truly an unfathomable mystery.

The Lord's final cry from the Cross—IT IS FINISHED!! (John 19:30). We may ask, What was finished? The whole heritage of Adam, the Old Man, the reign of sin and death.

*'Tis finished! the Messiah dies, Cut off for sins, but not His own.
Accomplished is the sacrifice; The great atoning work is done.*

*The reign of sin and death is o'er, And all may live from sin set free.
Satan hath lost his mortal power, 'Tis swallowed up in victory!*

Wesley

Further Study

- Find the “I AM” statements of Jesus in John's gospel.
- Read slowly and carefully Jesus’ prayer in John 17.

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Week 7. The Coming of the Spirit

In the Person of the Lord Jesus, the Lord from heaven (1 Cor 15:47) came to earth. He was utterly different from all men around Him; He was alive, whereas they were all dead. He came, at the Father's wish, to lay down His life as a ransom for sinners, to bear their guilt and to conquer the power of sin and the devil. As a result of that, we can be forgiven.

Yet we must not stop there, for Jesus didn't. He had removed the obstacle; now He was to enter upon His greatest work, the sending of the Holy Spirit and the building of His church.

The Restricted Christ

Jesus was restricted when He was on earth. He could only be in one time and place, but in His heart He wanted to reach all people. Luke 12:50 "I have a baptism to be baptized with, and how am I straitened (restricted) till it be accomplished!"

The answer to this problem is the coming of the Holy Spirit, Who can be everywhere at once. John 16:7—"It is expedient for you that I go away; for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you." See also John 7:37-39. Jesus lived and died with an end in view—to pour out the Spirit on men and women so that they could live the same life that He lived.

This shows us that the primary purpose of the Holy Ghost is to re-create in us the life of Jesus Christ.

The Temporary Spirit

In the OT we read of the Spirit "coming upon" someone for a time and for a specific purpose, e.g. Samson (Judges 14:6,19) or Saul (1 Sam 10:10). This kind of coming was temporary and left the person essentially unchanged. Compare this with the words of Jesus in John 14:16-20. Notice particularly v.17: "he shall be in you (he was with them in Jesus)", and v.16 "he may abide with you for ever." Jesus was talking about regeneration by the Spirit, leading to permanent indwelling.

The Spirit of Life

In Hebrew (OT) and in Greek (NT) the words for "spirit", "wind" and "breath" are the same, i.e. Heb. "ruach" and Greek "pneuma".

Gen 2:7—Adam became a "living soul" when God breathed into his nostrils the breath/wind/Spirit of life. Read Ezek 37:1-10 and interchange the words here also; the dead bodies lived when the Spirit/wind/breath came into them.

See also James 2:26; Rom 8:2. This is why Jesus said to those who had followed Him (and seen His miracles, and performed miracles themselves), "because I live, you will live also" (John 14:18,19).

John the Baptist was “filled with the Spirit from his mother's womb” (Luke 1:15). Jesus, however, was born of the Holy Ghost (Matt 1:18,20). Which is greater?

The Fulness of the Time

The Holy Ghost could not be sent, and the building of the Church could not begin, until Jesus was glorified (John 7:39), i.e. until after His death, resurrection and ascension. Note in Matt 16:18 He said, “I will (future) build my church.”

When He ascended He offered to the Father His own blood (Heb 9:11,12), was accepted, and sat down (Heb 1:3) at the right hand of the Majesty on high. He then “prayed (asked) the Father” for the Holy Ghost (John 14:16), received what He asked, and shed forth the Spirit on those waiting people in Jerusalem on the day of Pentecost (Acts 2:33).

The Ministry of the Spirit

One thing is immediately clear about those people after the Spirit came: they were alive!

Jesus had told them what the ministry of the Spirit would be. See John 14:15-20,25,26; John 15:26,27; John 16:7-15. They came to a position where they knew (John 14:20) that they were in the Father, and they were in Jesus, and Jesus was in them. The devil does not fear a man who is a new creature—but he does fear a man who *knows* he is a new creature.

When a baby is born it does two things immediately: (i) it takes a breath, and (ii) it cries. It cannot cry until it takes a breath. This is exactly what Paul says in Gal 4:6 and Rom 8:15. The breath is the coming of the Spirit; the cry is “Father!” It is the evidence of birth, the knowledge of sonship, the recognition of fatherhood.

From that point the Spirit leads us (Rom 8:14), teaches us (John 14:26—not just theology, but everything!), shows us the things of God (John 16:14; 1 Cor 2:9-13), produces His sweet fruit (Gal 5:22,23), and empowers with gifts and ministries (1 Cor 12, etc.).

So now “there is one body, and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling, one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all” (Eph 4:4-6).

Further Study

- Read through the things that Jesus says the Holy Ghost will do, and expect Him to do all these things in and through you.
- Look through the letter to the Romans and see what Paul says about the Holy Spirit.