



The Same Spirit

The accounts of the baptism of Jesus in Matt. 3:13-17, and the temptation Jesus faced in the wilderness in Matt. 4:1-11, are linked by one thought. Actually, by one Person—the Spirit. Notice that the same Spirit that descends “like a dove” at Jesus’ baptism is the One that leads Him

“into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil.” First, baptism; then, temptation. ***The same Spirit.***

Much mystery here, for sure. The Son of God baptized by John—whose difficulty accepting that he should baptize Him is understandable—and then the Son of God facing the enemy who was identified long before as the one who would “bruise His heel” (Gen. 3:15). Baptism. Temptation. ***The same Spirit.***

As much as I am drawn to the biblical-theological implications of these two events, I have a stronger pull toward the practical application of it all. There is something profound, yet relatable in the role of the Spirit in these two moments in Jesus’ life. The same Spirit that affirms God’s presence and calling for Jesus at His baptism also leads Him to face His enemy. ***The same Spirit.***

My struggle is knowing that I would gladly receive the affirmation of the Spirit’s presence in the first instance, and then doubt His presence in the second. My faith is strong in the special moments but can quickly falter when conflicts arise. Ironic, isn’t it, that I know the Spirit is present in one moment and then, when spiritual warfare begins, I am not so sure. I struggle to accept that in both instances—in my moments of clear and compelling affirmation by God and in my struggles against the enemy of my soul—the same Spirit is with me. ***The same Spirit.***

I suppose my problem is one of expectations, of what I anticipate, of what I look forward to when I consider the work of the Spirit in my life. I talk of the

reality of the Spirit, His presence, His purpose...but somehow I have not yet captured—or been captured by—the symphonic movements of the Spirit in my life. He is moving me back and forth between affirmation and adversity, between consecration and conflict, between moments of enlightenment and enigma. But always...always...He is with me. ***The same Spirit.***

So, I am praying for a better ear to discern and appreciate the Spirit's melody. I'm praying my sensibilities will be less offended by the sharps and flats of His tune, and that I will cultivate a taste for whatever music He plays. I'm praying that I will recognize moments like baptism and temptation as part of the same score—as the beautiful sound of the same Spirit. ***The same Spirit.***