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Test 2

1.I think the first thing to do when answering this question is to consult Scripture. The Spirit conception occurs in Luke 1:35 which says, “The angel answered, “The Holy Spirit will come on you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you. So, the holy one to be born will be called the Son of God.” This verse describes what we refer to as the virginal conception, a miracle vital to the birth and incarnation of Jesus. What happened at the conception of Jesus was a result of the overflowing creative power of the Spirit. The Spirit came over Mary in order to make it possible for the divine Son to be born. It is this conception that allows us to receive from him his anointing by the Spirit, because only God can impart the Spirit. And a Spirit conception was required to make him able to receive the Spirit in Luke 3:22 (“and 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 and am well pleased,’”) and then pour it out to us. The incarnation of the eternal Son was only made possible by the Holy Spirit’s role in the virgin conception. Now, an anointing of the Spirit is what happens when we receive the Spirit imparted to us. One of the easiest ways to explain the differences and commonalities between conception and anointing is to take a look at the lives of Jesus and John the Baptist. John the Baptist was filled with the Holy Spirit in the womb, Jesus was created by the Spirit in the womb. Thus, John could receive the Spirit, but only Jesus can pass it on to the believers. I think the Spirit conception is one of the main things that sets Jesus apart from humanity, because without it, he would not be the incarnation of the Son, he would not be fully man and fully God. It is also vital to our inclusion in the bond of the Trinity, we cannot experience the Trinity unless invited in full, which we are through the pouring out of the Spirit, by which we are able to experience the full personhood of God.

 2. The heresy of subordinationism was spread in 4th century Egypt by Arius, a deacon of Alexandria. Arius claimed that the Father is the True God while the Son is a lesser god who was created prior to general creation and time. Preceding this, the Father then created the universe and all else through the Son- painting the Son as not eternal. Subordinationism also says Jesus was the incarnation of the Word and the Son, but that the Word wasn’t God, it was god-like-glorious, but not divine. What the Nicene Creed of 325 CE accomplished was to establish a unified defense against this threat to Christ’s deity and eternal nature. By bringing bishops together under the pope and the decree of Emperor Constantine, they confirmed Christ as true God from true God, equal to the Father, begotten not made, of the same essence of the Father or homoousious. The first point I will combat with Titus 2:13-14, which says, “while we wait for the blessed hope-the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior, Jesus Christ, who gave himself for us to redeem us from all wickedness and to purify for himself a people that are his very own, eager to do what is good.” This verse addresses the equal deity of the Son quite simply. When arguing for the inequality of deity, Arius failed to consider this emphasis upon Jesus as God in such a verse. On a secondary note, this verse also claims Jesus Christ as both Savior and God, and since only God can save, Jesus is the true God. The next verse actually contradicts both parts of Arius’ claims. John 1:1 says, “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.” This first addresses the question of the Son’s creation. This verse shows the Son, the Word to exist before the beginning, confirming His eternal nature. Secondly, John shows that the Word was in fact God, making it divine in essence and truth. The last verse to include is John 20:21-22 which says, “Again Jesus said, “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.” Such a verse asserts Jesus Christ’s deity as only God can impart the Spirit. Christ’s deity is doctrinal in its importance as its fundamental to the truth of Scripture. Without Christ as God in Titus 2:13, He cannot be the Savior, and thus Scripture would be invalidated as the Old Testament anticipates and prophesies his arrival, and the Old Testament is the fulfillment of that arrival. Redemption would then be impossible because only God can save and then the doctrine of the Trinity would then be invalidated as it is dependent on a shared circle of deity and love, that we are invited to commune with.

5. McGrath says the title “Son of God” is an exclusive title, reserved uniquely for Jesus. I think this can be attributed to Jesus’ nature as the eternal Son and his conception by the Spirit. 2 Corinthians 6:18 says, “And I will be father to you, and you shall be sons and daughters to me,” says the Lord Almighty.” The sonship described here is one of our greatest blessings. What makes our son and daughtership different than that of Jesus? For one, ours in not a natural sonship. As McGrath notes, the relation between the Father and Son is a natural one while we are adopted as children of God. Even the phrase, “children of God”, showcases a contrast, as that is our designation, while Jesus is called, “Son”. As pictured in the New Testament writings, McGrath asserts that the relationship between Jesus and the Father has many forms. One of them being the Son and the Abba Father, a relationship of close intimacy. Next, the scripturally-apparent evangelists’ take on Jesus as the Son of God and His regard for God the Father. And lastly, the stress upon what John calls the identity of will and purpose of the Father and Son. this is indicative of their closeness, unique to only the Son and the Father. This is evident in the gospel of John and in the Christ’s crucifixion, death, and resurrection. The title Son of Man is often mistaken as interchangeable with that of the Son of Man. It is used in three contexts in the Old Testament, but I think its most important distinction is portraying the love and unity that Jesus shares with humanity, because it is that love that redeems us and allows us to be adopted into the family of God. John 1:12-13 says this, “Yet to all who did receive him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God-children born not of natural descent, nor of human decision or a husband’s will, but born of God.” And that is my favorite way to look at our adoption, being born of the love of God.

6. McGrath divides the role of the purpose of the Spirit into these four extensive categories: The active presence of God in the world, the revelation of God to humanity, the appropriation of salvation, and the energization of the Christian life. The active presence of God in the world is essential to understanding the nature and action of the Holy Spirit. The presence and work of God, particularly the Holy Spirit is evident in our lives daily. When Scripture talks about the transformation of our hearts and minds, it’s talking about the work of the Spirit. The Holy Spirit leads us to truth and guides us to choose righteousness and walk in the love of God. The revelation of God to humanity factors into His active presence. The Spirit who leads us to truth also makes that truth known to us. Therefore, God’s truth is impossible to know or understand without the help of the Holy Spirit. Important to this idea, is the divine inspiration of Scripture which McGrath says is the “means of grace.” Theopneustos or God-breathed tells us exactly where to see the Spirit, in Scripture’s inspiration. So, as the Spirit inspires truth, leads us to it, reveals it to us, he also applies it to our humanity. The appropriation of salvation makes a place for the Spirit to be sanctifying, making us like God, and thus healing us, transforming us, and allowing us to live lives with hearts turned towards Christ. The energization of the Christian life is how we see the Spirit’s presence in corporate and individual Christian life. Prayer, worship, and spirituality are experienced in each of us and unified only by the impartation of the Holy Spirit. The Spirit is made real in the sermons that just touch your heart, in those quiet whispered prayers where His presence is heavy and tears fall freely, in the joyful noise of worship, in dancing, in singing, in the lifting of hands, and in proclamation of the gospel that is Jesus Christ. I think it’s easy to neglect the Spirit’s presence in our lives. We are quick to ignore the little nudges He gives us, the whispers that say, “pay attention, see what I have to show you.” I find myself ignoring and neglecting Him at times, until I remember the the truth, the healing, and the love we only find in closeness, in His presence. By acting in obedience, building our spiritual endurance and listening to the call of the Lord, we can return to the blessing of His presence.

3. Jesus’ death and resurrection atoned for our sins and reconciled us to God through what is referred to as his faithful self-offering. This offering was Jesus’ own life, his perfect, unblemished life. Hebrews 10:5-7 tells us that the Father prepared a body, conceived through the Holy Spirit in Mary’s womb, because human offerings are insufficient. We could not be redeemed of our human sin through human atonement. Only God could make an offering, because what was required for the wages sin was death, but not just death, death gone willingly of a perfect Son. His perfect life, the life made perfect in obedience and faithfulness would be pleasing to the Father, overcoming our sin and death and providing a path for all of humanity to be reconciled to the Father. Philippians 2:6-8 says that when Chris became man, he humbled himself and willingly became obedient to death. The crucifixion was an ultimate expression of obedience for, as the verse says, He was and is, in very nature, God. This is what gives us the life everlasting, salvation, and redemption, his life offering. Its important to take notice that God did not ask nor require a satisfaction of his wrath through Christ’s offering. Instead he wanted a satisfaction and fulfillment in an offering of love. Our God saw us in the depths of our sin, our pain, our misery and sent His Son to enter into it. That we might be rescued, ransomed and redeemed. This prompt reminded me of my favorite verse, because its this offering that fulfilled it. Isaiah 43:1 says, “But now, thus says the Lord, he who created you, O Jacob, he who formed you, O Israel: ‘fear not for I have redeemed you; I have called you by name, you are mine.”