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BIBLICAL SOTERIOLOGY
An Overview and Defense of the Reformed Doctrines of Salvation

Limited Atonement, part 15

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Arguments Supporting the Doctrine of Limited Atonement (cont.)

IV. MEANS BY WHICH THE ATONEMENT WAS ACCOMPLISHED: AGENTS (cont.)

C. God the Holy Spirit — The work of God the Holy Spirit was necessary to the atonement because it was through the Holy Spirit that the Son came into the world, offered the oblation, and rose from the dead.

1. Incarnation — It was the Holy Spirit that came upon Mary and begot Jesus.

"Now the birth of Jesus Christ was as follows. When His mother Mary had been betrothed to Joseph, before they came together she was found to be with child by the Holy Spirit. And Joseph her husband, being a righteous man, and not wanting to disgrace her, desired to put her away secretly. But when he had considered this, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream, saying 'Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary as your wife; for that which has been conceived in her is of the Holy Spirit' ([Matt 1:18-20](#)).

Jesus did not have a human genetic father, but was miraculously conceived in Mary by the Holy Spirit.

"And Mary said to the angel, 'How can this be, since I am a virgin?' And the angel answered and said to her, 'The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; and for that reason the holy offspring shall be called the Son of God'" ([Luke 1:34-35](#)).

While still a virgin, Mary miraculously conceived Jesus by the Holy Spirit.

2. Oblation — It was through the Holy Spirit that the Son offered the oblation.

"For if the blood of goats and bulls and the ashes of a heifer sprinkling those who have been defiled, sanctify for the cleansing of the flesh, how much more will the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered Himself without blemish to God, cleanse your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?" ([Heb 9:13-14](#)).

Christ rendered himself as an offering for sin out of his own free will — he was not compelled to do so. But it was the Holy Spirit who strengthened Jesus to offer himself.

3. Resurrection — The resurrection is attributed to the power of "God," the Son claims the power as his own, and several verses potentially support that it is the work of the Holy Spirit. This is really not a problem since we understand "God" to be triune, and since Jesus operated "through the eternal Spirit."

"Who was declared the Son of God with power by the resurrection from the dead, according to the Spirit of holiness, Jesus Christ our Lord" ([Rom 1:4](#)).

By his resurrection from the dead, Jesus was declared the Son of God with power. Since the "declaration" was the resurrection itself, the phrase "according to the Spirit of holiness" refers both to the resurrection and to the declaration. Thus, the resurrection was performed with power according to the Spirit of holiness, that is, according to Holy Spirit's power.

"But if the Spirit of Him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, He who raised Christ Jesus from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through His Spirit who indwells you" ([Rom 8:11](#)).

The "Spirit of Him who raised Jesus from the dead" obviously refers to the Holy Spirit. That Christians are to be given life "also" through the Holy Spirit indicates that the Holy Spirit was responsible for giving life to Christ to raise him from the dead — in raising Jesus from the dead, the Father employed the agency of the Holy Spirit.