

## Series: The Gift of the Holy Spirit

# The Spirit of God in the Old Testament Part One

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Because of John 7:39, which says, “**The Holy Spirit was not yet given, because that Jesus was not yet glorified,**” many people think those words mean nothing much was going on with the Holy Spirit in the Old Testament. But these words simply mean that the Holy Spirit had not yet been given in His full administrative authority and that He was not yet publicly manifested here on earth. All believers in every age have been sanctified and comforted by the Holy Spirit; but the “ministration of the Spirit” (2 Cor. 3:8) was not fully introduced in OT times and the outpouring of the Holy Spirit, with His gifts, had not yet taken place.

So today we want to begin looking at the operation of the Holy Spirit in nature and in grace; in the supernatural gifts conferred upon gifted people, and in the prophecies relating to the Messiah prior to Pentecost. We will begin by considering the testimony to the spirit of prophecy in the Books of Moses and in Job.

First we will look at the work of the Holy Spirit in connection with the material creation. Before the worlds were framed by the Word of God, and things which are seen were made out of things which do not appear, (Hebrews 11:3) the whole mass of inanimate matter lay in undistinguished chaos, “without form and void.”

Genesis 1:2 tells us that the Spirit of God moved on the face of the waters. The word “Ruach” here denotes a breath, a wind, and also an intelligent thinking Being. Like the title Son of God, the designation “the Spirit of God” implies distinct personhood and indicates that the Holy Spirit is from God, or of God. The word for “God” here is Elohim.

Job 26:13: By His Spirit He garnished the heavens. This spirit referred to is God’s Spirit. He is of the same essence with God and from God. The personal Spirit, or finger of God, and the power of God, adorned the heavens, and framed them to display the divine glory.

Job 33:4: The Spirit of God made me, says Elihu, and the breath of the Almighty has given me life. Again, we have a personal agent standing in a unique relationship with God—that is, from God but personally distinct.

Psalms 104:30 **You send forth Your Spirit, they are created; and You renew the face of the earth.** God gives the animals their food. He hides His face and they are troubled.

He takes away their breath and they die. He sends forth His Spirit, and a fresh succession of animated beings is created. The Spirit of God is not created or finite, but is the fountain of life. Creation receives from Him its renovating and rejuvenating power. Manifold gifts which hold society together are all the workmanship of the Spirit of God.

Secondly, let's think about the Holy Spirit in relation to Adam. In Genesis 2:7 we learn, **"The Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life."** "Life" here is actually plural, lives. Adam was the federal head of the human race. He was made in the image of God. He bore a moral likeness and was placed in a peculiarly close relation to all the Godhead. **Genesis 1:26, "Let us make man in our image, after our likeness."** Adam had the divine image and life from the Spirit of Life. Adam fell from this estate and plunged humanity into the estate of sin and misery.

John Owens noted in 1680 some points relative to Adam. Three things were required to render man fit unto that life to God for which he was made. 1) He had to have an ability to discern the mind and will of God, with respect unto all the duty and obedience that God required of him. 2) He had to know the nature and properties of God in order to believe Him as to the proper object of all acts and duties. Then, 3) he needed a free, uncontrolled, disposition to every duty of the law of his creation, for living unto God. He also had to have an ability of mind and will, with a readiness of compliance in his affections in order to perform his duties and abstain from sin. Adam had those things which belonged unto the integrity of his nature and with the uprightness of the state and condition wherein he was made. All of these things were the peculiar effect of the immediate operation of the Holy Spirit. Adam, John Owen wrote, may be said to have had the Spirit of God in his innocence in the peculiar effects of the power and goodness of the Spirit of God. He had the Holy Spirit according to the tenor of the covenant of creation a/k/a the Adamic covenant a/k/a the covenant of works. Owens wrote that Adam had the Holy Spirit not by some special inhabitation, because the whole world was then the temple of God. In the covenant of grace, founded in the person and on the mediation of Christ, it is different.

"On whomsoever the Spirit of God is bestowed for the renovation of the image of God in him, He abides with him forever." (John Owen, 1680)

**So man was originally, though mutably, replenished with the Holy Spirit.** The first man figured the second man. (Romans 5:12-14). The Holy Spirit was withdrawn because of sin. Jesus is the Healer and Restorer of the forfeited inheritance. Only on account of the everlasting righteousness which Christ brought in can a person now receive the Holy Spirit and become the habitation of the Spirit, the temple of God.

By Genesis 6:3 we learn, **My Spirit shall not always strive with man, for that he also is flesh.** A time of forbearance was coming to a close. The Spirit of Christ speaking by Noah was about to leave that corrupt generation to its doom. The Spirit of Christ, who filled and moved all the prophets had their testimony in Noah, but no repentance came. 1 Peter 1:11; 1 Peter 3:19.

Abraham was called a prophet, and therefore had the Holy Spirit (Genesis 20:6). In fact the three patriarchs, the first-fruit and root of the covenant people (Romans 11:16), had the spirit of prophecy. We see the same gift in Joseph. Pharaoh himself testified: **Can we find such a man as this—a man in whom the Spirit of God is? (Genesis 41:38)**

Moses also was raised up and qualified by the Spirit of God for the work to which God called him. The LORD said, when 70 elders were appointed to bear rule with Moses, “I will take of the Spirit that is upon you, and put it upon them.” (Numbers 11:17) That served to accredit their commission. Joshua was said to be a man in whom was the Spirit; for Moses had laid his hands on him (Numbers 28:18: Deut. 34:9).

Many times in the OT we read of the Spirit of God coming upon people in a supernatural way in order that they might be equipped for official service. The miraculous gifts were but a sign, and might be withdrawn, while the Spirit of Life remained. The same spirit of faith and the same new nature were always found in a remnant.

“The presence of the Spirit appeared in the drops from heaven accompanying the Sinai covenant, which, with its sternness and shadows, was a mode of administering the covenant of grace. (Psalm 68:8)” (Smeaton, page 19)

We see the work of the Holy Spirit in inspiring Moses to write the Torah. We see the Holy Spirit’s work in the theophanies and when the voice of the Lord came to this one or that one. We see the Holy Spirit as Comforter in Nehemiah 9:20 and Isaiah 63:11, 14. We see the Holy Spirit upon the members of the Sanhedrin (Numbers 11:16, 17) until quenched.

The Holy Spirit prompted true prayer, inspired spiritual worship, and produced His fruit in the lives of believers then as much as He does now. (Zechariah 4:6) We have “the same Spirit of faith.” (2 Cor. 4:13).

“All the spiritual good which has ever been wrought in and through men must be ascribed unto the Holy Spirit. The Spirit was given to the OT saints prospectively, as pardon of sin was given—in view of the satisfaction which Christ was to render unto God.” (A. W. Pink, 1970, page 24)

The Holy Spirit is expressly called *Jehovah*, a name utterly incommunicable to all creatures and one which can be applied to none except the Supreme God. Luke 1:68, 70; 2 Peter 1:20; Psalm 78:17, 18; Isaiah 63:10.

We can compare Deuteronomy 32:12 with Isaiah 63:14. We can also compare Isaiah 6:8, 9 and Acts 28:15, 16. Look this up on your own and discover interesting things.

The Holy Spirit is holy. He is the spirit of holiness. Exodus 15:11, Romans 1:4. The Holy Spirit is a Person; He is God. Hebrews 9:14; Psalm 139:7; 1 Cor. 2:10, 11; Luke 1:35. The Holy Spirit has absolute sovereignty and supremacy. Matthew 4:1; John 3:8; 1 Cor. 12:11; Acts 13:2-4; Acts 20:28.

Works are ascribed to the Holy Spirit here that demonstrate His Godhood. Job 26:13; Isaiah 40:13-15; Acts 16:6, 7; 2 Peter 1:21; Matthew 1:20; John 3:34; Luke 4:18, 19; 2 Timothy 3:16; Matthew 12:38; Romans 8:11.

At regeneration, the Holy Spirit restores abilities in the souls of God’s elect that were lost by Adam’s sin: an ability to discern the mind and will of God, a free and uncontrolled disposition to every duty of the law of his creation for living unto God, and an ability of mind and will, with a readiness of compliance in his affections, for a regular performance of all duties and abstinence from all sin; all of which were the peculiar effects of the immediate operation of the Holy Spirit. This refers to spiritual knowledge. See Colossians 3:10; Genesis 2:19-23.

Finally, many today say that the Holy Spirit was never in any believer before Pentecost. But if we look at Numbers 27:18, Nehemiah 9:30, and 1 Peter 1:11 along with Isaiah 63:10 and Acts 7:51, we have an answer Do we have the “same Spirit of faith” (2 Cor. 4:13) as OT people?

“The Spirit was given in the OT saints *prospectively*, as pardon of sin was given—in view of the satisfaction which Christ was to render unto God.” (A. W. Pink, 1970).

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