

Our Spiritual Journey: Old Testament Introduction to the Holy Spirit

Scripture Reference: I Corinthians 2:1-5

This is not an attempt to teach a theology lesson on the Holy Spirit. However, in order to understand and cooperate with the work of the Holy Spirit in our lives, we must get some background on the One who is our continual, invisible companion, helper, and comforter. Our Scripture reading shows us that Paul did not depend on academic and intellectual prowess when he preached the gospel. Men will not believe in Christ by means of worldly wisdom (I Corinthians 1:18-21). On the other hand, there needs to be the knowledge of God revealed through Scripture. This is when the Spirit of God demonstrates Himself, while at the same time drawing attention to Christ – not Himself (John 16:12-15 cp. 14:26; I Corinthians 2:9-13).

Our purpose in this lesson is to notice some basic references to God's Spirit in the Old Testament Scriptures. We emphasize that we are not talking about a mere power or influence of God. The Holy Spirit is the third person of the Trinity (Luke 3:21-22; Matthew 28:19; Romans 8:9; II Corinthians 13:14). So, we refer to "Him" – not "it" (John 16:7-15; I Timothy 4:1).

Genesis 1:1-2 – As God is describing the creation of the world, He mentions that "the Spirit of God moved upon (was hovering over) the face of the waters." In both Hebrew and Greek, the word for "spirit" means "wind" or "breath." The significance of this word should help us, as we continue our study. Here, in Genesis 1:2, we are made aware of the universal presence of God's Spirit and of His power. God's Spirit is active and free like wind (John 3:8).

Genesis 1:26; 2:7 – As God declares that He will create man in His own image, He breathes into him the breath of life. This is not mentioned in the creation of animals. As God's Spirit is described as breath, we would not be created in His image unless we had a soul like His. We are unique, not an evolution from animals. Man, as originally created, had a soul that could know and love God. The fall of man into sin destroyed part of that (Genesis 2:17; Romans 5:12; I Corinthians 2:14).

Genesis 6:3,5-6 – The effects of man's fall into sin multiplied into continual evil and rebellion against God. God's heart was grieved (i.e., filled with pain). His Spirit had been striving with rebellious people. He was tugging at their consciences (Proverbs 20:27). There was, perhaps, a small remnant that were speaking out against the sin in society. People resisted and rebelled all the more.

The Hebrew arrangement of the first part of Genesis 6:3 is something like this: *“My Spirit shall not always rule over rebellious man / will not always argue and contend with man. In erring and going astray (rebellious) they are flesh.”*

So, we see God’s Spirit convicting men of their sin through conscience and perhaps through the preaching of the Word (II Peter 2:5 cp. Acts 7:51-52). Because of their continual rebellion against His Spirit, God was going to change things. Man’s lifespan would be shorter (Genesis 6:3b). In Genesis 6:5-6 note that God’s Spirit feels grief and pain – sorrow for the sin of man (Ephesians 4:30; Isaiah 63:10 cp. Psalm 139:23-**24** (note Psalm 139:24 – *“and see if there be any wicked hurtful, grievous, offensive way in me...”*)).

Zechariah 4:6 – Simply stated, we can do nothing pure and good before God without the aid of His Spirit. We are like grass – short-lived and vulnerable, needing God to reveal Himself, empower and sustain us by His Word / His Spirit (Isaiah 40:6-8 Psalm 51:10-12 cp. Psalm 119:25,37,50,93,107,154; 143:10).

I Peter 1:10-12 – It is God’s Spirit that has been delivering, not only the conviction of sin (John 16:7-11; Romans 3:19; Galatians 3:24), but the good news of the Gospel to us through the Scriptures (Ephesians 3:1-6; I Peter 1:22-25 cp. II Timothy 3:16-17).