

Our Spiritual Journey:

Old Testament Introduction to the Holy Spirit

01/03 - 24/2021

Scripture Reference: I Corinthians 2:1-16

This is not an attempt to teach a theology lesson on the Holy Spirit. However, 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 (I Corinthians 2:1-5). Saving faith does not come 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). See Job 26:13; 33:4.

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 (His breath = His Spirit). This is not mentioned in the creation of animals. God has a soul (Isaiah 1:14; 42:1). To be created in His image, we needed 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 that part of man (Genesis 2:17; Romans 5:12; I Corinthians 2:14). Salvation through Christ restores it again (Ephesians 2:1-10; Titus 3:5-6).

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...”*)).

A word about conscience – It is the soul’s ability to know and discern between that which is morally right or wrong. The Greek word means “to know with” or “a co-knowledge.” The Latin word is described as “a joint-knowledge.” This causes people to reason with themselves. For some, it causes them to reason with God (Isaiah 1:18). Men fight with their consciences, as they do with God (Romans 2:14-15; I Timothy 4:1-2; Titus 1:15 cp. Psalm 10:1-13).

A word about the days of Noah – Evil and selfish thoughts, violent and cruel actions, sexual and homosexual rebellion, making plans in life with total disregard for God – these are some of the trademarks of Noah’s day. Do you see any similarities in today’s world? See Genesis 6:1 – 8:22; Romans 1:18-32; Luke 17:26-27; 18:7-8; II Peter 2:1-5; II Timothy 3:1-5; II Thessalonians 2:1-14.

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 and to empower and sustain us by His Word / His Spirit (Isaiah 40:6-8; 64:6; Psalm 51:10-13 (In Old Testament times it was possible for God’s Spirit to depart from people – Consider Judges 16:20; John 14:17.); Psalm 119:25,37,50,93,107,154; 143:10.

A word about God’s Spirit and Israel – Anything that was done in faith, by the people of Israel, had to be done by the work of God’s Spirit (Nehemiah 9:19-20; Exodus 28:3; 31:3-5; Numbers 11:16-17,25; 27:18; Judges 3:10; 6:34; 11:29; 13:25; 15:14; 16:20; I Samuel 11:6; 16:13; 19:18-24; Nehemiah 9:30; I Peter 1:10-12.

God’s Spirit, using the law, would show people their sin and their need of mercy and grace (Romans 3:9-24; 10:1-4; Galatians 3:24; John 6:63; Titus 3:3-6; Ephesians 2:1-10 [cp. Ephesians 2:11-22 especially note Ephesians 2:18]; II Corinthians 4:13 [note: we have the same Spirit of God as the believers had in the Old Testament. There is a uniqueness to our bond with Him in the Age of Grace cp. John 14:17; Romans 8:5-9; Ephesians 1:12-14; 4:30; Galatians 2:20; I John 3:24; 4:4; Hebrews 10:15-20])).

A word about God's Spirit, the New Birth, and the future of Israel – Jesus alerted Nicodemus that he and the other teachers of Israel should have known about the new birth from their knowledge of the Scriptures (John 3:1-12 – note vs. 10). There are Scriptures that have been used to foretell of a new covenant and a new birth. This is a work of the Holy Spirit through the gospel, in which both Jew and Gentile come into a relationship with God through His Son, Jesus Christ. This is the age of grace, in which we live (Romans 15:3-12).

These same Scriptures, when looked at carefully in their context also reveal God's plan to restore the nation Israel and make that nation a world-wide blessing. This is yet a future event. Consider Luke 4:16-30 cp. Isaiah 61:1-2a; Hebrews 8:6-13; 10:14-25 cp. Jeremiah 31:31-37; Romans 10:1-21 (Romans 10:5-10 cp. Deuteronomy 30:10-14). See Ezekiel 36:25-27 (Ezekiel 36:1 – 37:28; 11:16-20); Isaiah 44:3-4 (Titus 3:5); Zechariah 12:10.

I Peter 1:10-12 – In summary – It is God's Spirit that has been delivering, not only the conviction of sin, but the good news of the Gospel to us through the Scriptures. In the Old Testament He spoke in mysteries. In the New Testament He has brought things to light that are clear. Together, both Old and New Testaments (i.e., the whole Bible) is the Gospel of Jesus Christ

- *The Old Testament is the New Testament concealed.*
- *The New Testament is the Old Testament revealed.*

See John 6:63; 16:7-15; Romans 1:1-4; 3:19-22; Galatians 3:24; Hebrews 4:2; Ephesians 3:1-12; I Peter 1:22-25.

Also consider Matthew 26:46-54; Luke 24:13-32,44-48; John 5:39,45-47; Romans 16:25-27; I Corinthians 15:1-4; II Corinthians 4:6; II Timothy 1:8-11; 3:15-17; I John 5:4-13.