

The Spirit of God in the Old Testament
Study Guide for the Message: *Flesh vs. Spirit*
sermon series: *Who Is the Holy Spirit?*, pt. 2

Review:

Last week we began this series on the Holy Spirit by examining the doctrine of the Trinity. While the “three-in-oneness” of the Godhead is seminal in Genesis (e.g., Gen. 1:26, 3:22, 11:7), it blossoms in the NT. (e.g., Mt. 28:19, 2 Co. 13:14). Like the dawning of a day, the testimony of Scripture shines light upon three central truths:

- God is three Persons;
- Each Person of the God-head is fully God; and,
- God is one.

Today’s focus:

This morning our attention focuses on the third Person of the Trinity: God, the Holy Spirit. Specifically we’re focusing upon the testimony of the Old Testament about His character and conduct – who He is and what He does. We’ll also underscore the One to whom He points.

His Name: *Holy Spirit*

The Old Testament uses the name “Holy Spirit” only three times (Ps. 51:11, Is. 63:10-11). Compare this to the more than 80 times the full name is used in the New Testament. It’s more common to find in the OT the names: “Spirit of God” or “The Spirit of the Lord”.

Holy = Hebrew: *qadosh* , Greek: *hagios* - distinctive, pure, separate
Spirit = Hebrew: *ruach* (wind, breath, power); Greek: *pneuma* from the Greek verb *pneo* “to breath” or “to blow” – the focus is not so much on immateriality as on power, force, activity, & energy.

The OT’s Testimony about the Holy Spirit’s General Work

- The Holy Spirit energizes nature (Genesis 1:2)
- The Holy Spirit conserves, renews, withdraws life by a continuous process in nature (Job 33:4; Ps. 33:6, 104:30)
- The Holy Spirit breathes life into humankind (Genesis 2:7)
- The Holy Spirit equips humankind uniquely:
 - Our reason (Job 32:8)
 - Our endowments and gifts (Genesis 41:38; Exodus 28:3)
 - Our artistic skills (Exodus 36)
 - Our cunning in war as displayed in Joshua (Deut. 34:9)
 - Our heroism as displayed in Judges (Judges 13:25)
 - Our wisdom as celebrated in Solomon (I Kings 3:28)
 - Our insights as displayed by the poets and prophets (Numbers 11:17, 25f, 29; II Sam. 23:21; I Kings 22:24; Ezekiel 11:5; Daniel 4:8-9)
 - Our purity as seen in the strength and penitence of the righteous (Neh. 9:20; Psalm 51:11; Isaiah 63:10; Ezekiel 36:26; Zechariah 12:10)

The OT's Testimony about the Holy Spirit's Saving Work

Deliverance was wrought for Israel by the Spirit of the Lord

- Through the judges (Judges 3:10, 11:29, 14:6; I Sam. 11:6)
- Through the kings (I Samuel 16:13, 26:11)
- Through the prophets (II Sa. 23:2; Ez. 2:2, 3:12, 14; Mi. 3:8)

The Holy Spirit Shines Light upon the Coming Messiah

This external deliverance ("salvation") in the Old Testament, though, was temporal, short-lived. The prophets found the people stiff-necked and unwilling to hear (Jeremiah 17:19-23; Isaiah 53:1).

Ultimate deliverance -- eternal deliverance -- was needed from One who would uniquely combine the roles of prophet, priest and king and who would be uniquely endowed (anointed) with the Spirit of God. This Messiah, the Anointed One, would be a shoot out of Jesse's stock. He would be the branch from his roots (Isaiah 11:1). This Messiah would manifest the gifts of the Spirit in their fullness (Isaiah 11:2, 42:1, 61:1). Thus, Jesus, would come as the ideal Prophet, Priest, and King because He would be perfectly anointed with the Spirit of God.

The Old Testament anticipated that when the Messiah came, the Spirit would be poured out on all flesh like the rain that gives life to the earth (Isaiah 32:15) and as life that animates dry bones (Ezekiel 37). This effusion of the Spirit would transform the hearts of believing humankind making them receptive to the voice of God and obedient to His word (Isaiah 59:21; Ps. 143:11).

This vision of the age of the Spirit remained for the OT prophets a hope, not a reality. The people rebelled and grieved God's Holy Spirit so that He was turned into their enemy (Isaiah 63:10). In order for this hope to be a reality, it was necessary that God should do the impossible: that He should come Himself in Person. The prophet Isaiah writes:

Oh, that you would rend the heavens and come down,
that the mountains would tremble before you! (**Isaiah 64:1**)

The Good News is that in the fullness of time God did come down in the Person of Jesus Christ. Throughout the Old Testament, the Holy Spirit progressively shines light on that anticipated and glorious Advent and that glorious pouring forth of the Spirit upon all who follow Christ.

Application:

As you ponder the morning message and this study guide what specific ways do you purpose to apply the Word to your life this week?
