

## GREAT BIBLE TRUTHS



### 15. Holy Spirit in the Old Testament (1)

#### An Introduction

The Holy Spirit is one of the persons of the Godhead, the one through whom God works in us. Wheeler Robinson calls the Bible the 'Book of the Spirit', as there are 378 references to the Holy Spirit and 385 in the New Testament. Let's begin by seeing what the Old Testament teaches us about the Holy Spirit.

#### HOLY SPIRIT IN THE OLD TESTAMENT

The Holy Spirit isn't a 'form' of God who came after Jesus, but was present and active in the Godhead from the beginning. Although the Spirit isn't fully revealed in the Old Testament, his person and work is there in core, awaiting the time when he could be fully revealed after Jesus had returned to Heaven. We learn about him through his activities.

##### 1. Activity of Spirit: Cosmic Sphere

###### (a) Creation

- Genesis 1:2, Job 26:13, Psalm 33:6, Isaiah 40:12-13
- Compare Genesis 1:1-2 with John 1:3
- Creation came into being by the will of God, uttered by the Word and executed by the Spirit.

###### (b) Preserving & Sustaining

- Psalm 104:30, Isaiah 32:15

###### (c) Giving Life

- In the Hebrew and Greek languages there is one word used for spirit, wind and breath – the word 'ruach' and 'pneuma'. So when God breathed into man (Genesis 2:7, Job 33:4), he gave man life and the capacity for the spiritual.



*What connection can you see between spirit, wind and breath?*

*Why did Jesus say we must be born again of the Spirit if God has already given us life?*

##### 2. Activity of Spirit: On Men

In the Old Testament the Spirit came upon men who were within the covenant relationship between God and Israel. (Judges 6:34, 1 Samuel 10:6) When he came upon men they never lost control in the way someone does when an evil spirit takes control.

###### (a) Enabled extra-ordinary feats

- Gideon (Judges 6:34), Samson (Judges 14:6), Saul (1 Samuel 11:6)

###### (b) Enabled special skills

- God wanted the Tabernacle and Temple to be built in a special way to depict spiritual realities, so he gave the men who were building a gift of wisdom. This enhanced their natural abilities, enabling them to build for God's glory and purposes.
- Tabernacle in the wilderness: Exodus 31:1-5, 35:30-35, 36:1-2
- Solomon's Temple: 1 Kings 7:14
- The second Temple: Zechariah 4:6

**(c) Enabled leadership**

- Judges and warriors, leading the people and the army: Judges 3:10, 6:34, 11:29
- Elders as spiritual leaders: Numbers 11:16-17, 24-30
- Messengers: 1 Kings 18:12

**(d) Prophecy**

- This was the most distinctive manifestation of the Spirit in the Old Testament.
- In the earlier times it was more ecstatic, when actions were required to rely God's messages.
- Later prophecy became more educative, but the gift was always recognised as given by God.
- Prophecy was God speaking through someone to reveal God's mind to people and the message was conveyed to the prophet by vision, dream, inward voice or face to face.
- See Numbers 11:27-29, 1 Samuel 19:20-24, 2 Samuel 23:2
- All the great prophets declared, 'Thus says the Lord.'

**3. Activity of Spirit: In Man**

This is the highest form of activity, and prepares the way for the New Testament, where the relationship with the Spirit is inward and personal.

**(a) Conviction of sin**

- There is no clear reference, although several are close. Genesis 6:3, Nehemiah 9:29-30

**(b) Indwelling & filling men**

- Genesis 41:38-39, Exodus 31:2-3, 35:31, Deuteronomy 34:9

**(c) Teaching men**

- To do God's will. Psalm 143:10
- To fear God, Isaiah 11:2-5
- Righteousness. Isaiah 32:15
- Obedience. Ezekiel 36:26
- Prayer & penitence. Zechariah 12:10



*What were the spiritual realities of the Tabernacle and Temple? Hebrews 9:1-14*

*What difference did Pentecost make to the work of the Spirit?*



**We need the Holy Spirit to enable and equip us in all we do. Only then will we glorify God.**