

The Office and Ministry of the Holy Spirit in the Old Testament, Part 1

1. The Presence of the LORD and His Filling/Dwellings of Locations

- While the LORD, as Spirit, is not geographically bound (omnipresent), He does manifest himself in greater degrees in certain locations, especially in the Old Testament.

Locations:

- Tabernacle (Ex. 25:8): God dwells “in their midst.”
- Zion/Jerusalem (Ps. 74:2): “You have dwelled.”
- Temple (1 Kgs. 8:13): “a place for you to dwell in forever.”
- Midst of the Nation (Isa. 63:11-11-12; Hag. 2:3): God dwelled with the people as they crossed the Red Sea. He also caused a great panic on the Egyptians as they pursued the host of Israel (Ex. 14:21-25).
- Pillar of Cloud by Day and Fire by Night (Ex. 14:19-20).

Effect of His Presence:

- There was a changing, warming, conviction, sobering, and sanctifying work at these locations (Num. 17:4; Ps. 73:16-17). Isaiah, in his vision of the LORD in heaven, repents and pronounces judgment on himself (Isa. 6:1-5).

The LORD is noted as dwelling among the nation, not “in the individuals” who lived in the nation. Coming into the presence of the LORD is Old Testament language because the LORD manifested Himself through His dwelling place (tabernacle and temple).

2. The Spirit of the LORD and His Filling of Leaders (in, on, with, or upon)

- In the Old Testament, each time it describes someone as “having” the Spirit, it does so to mark that person out from other covenant believers. These kinds of people have a special experience that empowers them to serve the LORD in a particular manner, for a short time.
 - Bezalel and Oholiab (Ex. 31:1-11), Joseph (Gen. 41:38), Seventy Elders (Num. 11:14-26), Joshua (Num. 27:18)
- “God will be with the Judge” (Judg. 2:18)
 - Othniel (Judg. 3:10), Gideon (Judg. 6:34), Jephthah (Judg. 11:29), Samson (Judg. 13:25; 14:6, 19; 15:14)
- The Spirit of the LORD is described as coming upon these four judges to empower them. Nothing is noted about the “indwelling” of the Spirit.
- The Spirit of the LORD was sovereign and transient; He came and went according to His own purposes. The Spirit of the LORD was “with” the people, not “in” them; God dwelt inside certain places and habitations; not in each one individually.

- Only the leaders whom God raised up are described to have the Spirit of God “resting/rushing/filling” them. What about the other Israelites of faith?

3. The New Covenant (Jer. 31:31-34; Ez. 36:22-37; Joel 2:28-29)

- The Old Testament speaks of a day, in the future, where God’s people will experience a fuller expression of His Spirit (Isa. 32:15; 44:3; Ez. 36:27; 37:14; 39:29; Joel 2:28-29).
- Both Jeremiah 31:31-34 and Ezekiel 36:22-37 were partially fulfilled in John 20:22 and Acts 2:14-21 and will have a complete fulfillment prior to the Millennial Kingdom. Joel’s prophecy was fulfilled in Acts 2:17-25.

4. Regeneration, Renewal, Abiding, Circumcision of Heart, and John 3

- Regeneration is a New Testament term that means “to be born again, born from above, born anew, or begotten.”
- It is used to describe those who have been born again “to” a living hope (1 Peter 1:3, 23). James says that God has “brought us forth” (James 1:18).
- The only place where “regeneration” is used is in Titus 3:5 (“washing” of regeneration and “renewal” of the Holy Spirit). This is only through Jesus Christ.
- In John 3:3 the word “begotten” or “born again” is used 97 times in the NT and has a variety of meanings. In John 3:3-9, Nicodemus appears to have no clue what Jesus is talking about.
- The New Testament word “regeneration” cannot be used to describe the Old Testament saints because regeneration has an element of union with Christ.
- Regeneration is through the lens of God; what God does to the soul/spirit of a man or woman. It is an indispensable, instantaneous, secretly wrought transformation that is below the consciousness, and only known in its result. It unites the soul to Christ (2 Cor. 5:17).
- The Old Testament saints experienced some kind of newness, rebirth, abiding that is distinct from the New Covenant term regeneration, although not mutually exclusive. This newness is the only reason why the saints of the Old Testament revered the LORD, and it also describes how the disciples of Jesus Christ were able to love Jesus (John 14:15-16).
- Regeneration is never commanded; it describes what happens to the sinner who is given newness of spiritual life; it is not physical, but spiritual in nature.

Circumcision of Heart: There is a passive circumcision of the heart, done by the Spirit (Romans 2:28-29; 9:6-9), and also an active command for one to circumcise their own heart (Lev. 26:41; Deut. 10:16; Jer. 4:4). This command refers to a humble and repentant heart before the LORD. While there is no command to be regenerated, there is regarding the circumcision of the heart.