

SYSTEMATIC THEOLOGY

Pneumatology— Study of Holy Spirit— Part 2
The Character and Work of the Holy Spirit

Introduction

- We will focus on the character and work of the Holy Spirit.
- In terms of the work of the Holy Spirit, we will classify His work into three time frames.
 - Old Testament
 - Christ's Ministry
 - The Church
- We will also address the gifts of the Spirit in the church.

Character of the Holy Spirit

- Many spirits exist in the world to deceive people.
 - 1 John 4:1-4 says if a spirit is from God, he will confess Jesus Christ came in the flesh.
- When we study the Holy Spirit, we see that much of His work is magnifying Jesus Christ by bringing people in faith to Christ and then sanctifying them afterward.
- The Holy Spirit is unique in that He has no personal name.
 - We simply see a neuter word in Greek to designate the Third Person of the Trinity.



Character of the Holy Spirit

- We do not recognize the Holy Spirit by His name, but instead by His character and work.
- He magnifies Christ and transforms believers through sanctification.
 - In contrast, we can recognize the spirit of antichrist when Jesus is not exalted.
 - The Spirit of God helps us to recognize counterfeiters.
 - He regenerates and sanctifies believers.
- Even though we don't have names for the Holy Spirit, we do see descriptions or designations of Him that describe His attributes.



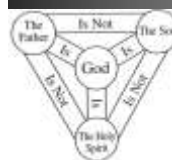
Designations

- He is called the Spirit of Holiness.
 - Romans 1:4 – and was declared to be the Son of God in power according to the Spirit of holiness by his resurrection from the dead, Jesus Christ our Lord,
- He is called the Power of the Most High.
 - Luke 1:35 – And the angel answered her, "The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; therefore the child to be born will be called holy—the Son of God.
- He is called the Eternal Spirit.
 - Hebrews 9:14 – how much more will the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without blemish to God, purify our conscience from dead works to serve the living God.
- These designations show He is YHWH.



Designations.

- Other describe His relationship to the Godhead.
 - The Spirit of God (Genesis 1:2), The Spirit of Christ (1 Peter 1:11), and The Seven Spirits (Revelation 1:4).



In terms of his relationship to humanity, the Scriptures offer the following designations.

- Comforter, Intercessor, Guide, and Teacher.
- All of the descriptive designations tell us more about the Holy Spirit than a name would anyway.

Holy Spirit in the Old Testament

- Although it seems easy for us with our completed English Bibles to find references to the Holy Spirit in the Old Testament, there are actually problems that many do not realize when doing so.
- In the Hebrew, often the phrase "Spirit of God" is a Hebraism that is a general reference to the will, mind, or activity of God.
- In fact, this is how most Old Testament Jews would have understood the phrase since they did not understand the nature of the Godhead.
- Back when we discussed the Trinity, it was pointed out that there are hints of it in the Old Testament, but the explicit revelation of the doctrine was brought forth by Jesus Christ and was not understandable prior to His ministry.
- As a result, it was impossible to distinguish the "Spirit of God" from the Father, just as it would have been equally difficult to do the same with the Angel of the Lord.



Clear Passages

- God gave a few clear passages that demonstrate the phrase Spirit of God (or Holy Spirit) is more than a Hebraic reference to the power of God.
 - Joel 2:28-29 shows the Holy Spirit to be distinct as He is poured out on God's servants.
 - Christ said He would send them the Holy Spirit in Acts 1:8, and Peter's use of Joel 2:28-29 in Acts 2:16-21 shows that he interpreted Christ's promise as a fulfillment of this Old Testament passage.
 - So this passage is a strong Old Testament statement about a personal ministry of the Holy Spirit.



Holy Spirit's OT Activity

- He was active in the creation of the universe.
 - Genesis 1:2 – The earth was without form and void, and darkness was over the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God was hovering over the face of the waters.
- He also providentially sustains creation.
 - Psalms 104:30 – When you send forth your Spirit, they are created, and you renew the face of the ground.
- In terms of creation, the Holy Spirit gives life.
 - Job 33:4 – The Spirit of God has made me, and the breath of the Almighty gives me life.
- The Holy Spirit measured order into the creation.
 - Isa 40:12-13 Who has measured the waters in the hollow of his hand or marked off the heavens with the span of his hand? Who has gathered the dust of the earth in a measure or weighed the mountains in a balance and the hills in scales? (13) Who has directed the Spirit of the LORD, or who gave Him His counsel?
- The universe was adorned by the work of the Holy Spirit.
 - Job 26:13 By his Spirit the heavens are garnished; His hand hath pierced the swift serpent.
- These passages show the Holy Spirit was active in the creation and providence.

Inspiration and Inerrancy of Scripture



- By way of reminder, there are three components to understand with regard to how the Holy Spirit gave us Scripture.
 - Without these three, Scripture would be meaningless.
- The first is revelation.
 - The process by which the Holy Spirit spoke to the forty human writers of the Bible the message He wanted them to transmit.
- The second is inspiration.
 - The process whereby the Holy Spirit guided the very pen of these forty writers so that the spoken message would be accurately written
- The third is illumination.
 - The process whereby the Holy Spirit takes the written Word when it is preached and read and enlightens those human ears who will hear it.



Old Testament Inspiration

- Many passages can demonstrate that the Holy Spirit was inspiring the OT texts.
 - 2 Samuel 23:2 – The Spirit of the LORD speaks by me; his word is on my tongue.
 - Isaiah 59:21 – "And as for me, this is my covenant with them," says the LORD: "My Spirit that is upon you, and my words that I have put in your mouth, shall not depart out of your mouth, or out of the mouth of your offspring, or out of the mouth of your children's offspring," says the LORD, "from this time forth and forevermore."
 - Jeremiah 1:9 – Then the LORD put out his hand and touched my mouth. And the LORD said to me, "Behold, I have put my words in your mouth.
 - Ezekiel 2:2 – And as he spoke to me, the Spirit entered into me and set me on my feet, and I heard him speaking to me.

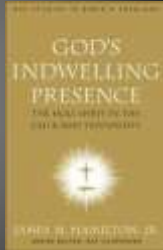


New Testament Corroboration

- Peter says the Old Testament prophets were guided by the Holy Spirit.
 - 2 Peter 1:21 – For no prophecy was ever produced by the will of man, but men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit.
- Paul says that the Scriptures (he refers to the OT) was God-breathed.
 - 2 Timothy 3:15-16 – and how from childhood you have been acquainted with the sacred writings, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus. 16) All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness,
- Paul's use of the word "God breathed" is quite graphic.
 - When we speak, our very breath comes from our mouths and forms words. This is the image that Paul paints of the Holy Spirit.
 - The Scriptures are His very breathed words etched in permanent form.
 - This is how the Holy Spirit's inspiration of the Old Testament is described by the New Testament.

Indwelt, Filled, and Gifted

- Within the pages of the Old Testament, we also see the Holy Spirit indwelt, filled, and gifted certain people.
 - Many Christians may shriek at the thought of this.
 - After all, we often assume that these qualities of the Holy Spirit were a new ministry manifested to the church.
 - This is true to an extent.
 - What we find is that the Holy Spirit worked in such ways in a much more limited form in the Old Testament, but grew in extent in the New Testament.



Old Testament Indwelling

- There are a number of individuals in the OT in which we are told the Holy Spirit was “in” them.
 - This makes it different from the filling of the Spirit.
- Joseph, Joshua, and Daniel are examples of this.
 - Genesis 41:38 – And Pharaoh said to his servants, “Can we find a man like this, in whom is the Spirit of God?”
 - Numbers 27:18 – So the LORD said to Moses, “Take Joshua the son of Nun, a man in whom is the Spirit, and lay your hand on him.
 - Daniel 5:11 – There is a man in your kingdom in whom is the spirit of the holy gods. In the days of your father, light and understanding and wisdom like the wisdom of the gods were found in him, and King Nebuchadnezzar, your father—your father the king—made him chief of the magicians, enchanters, Chaldeans, and astrologers,

Old Testament Gifting

- The Holy Spirit is said to “come upon” certain people to empower them for special services.
 - We see this in Numbers 11:25-26 when the Holy Spirit came upon the elders of Israel causing them to prophesy.
 - Also, in Deuteronomy 34:9, we see the Holy Spirit came upon Joshua for the purpose of granting him leadership.
 - Keep in mind, this was after it was said in Numbers that Joshua already had the Holy Spirit “in” him.
- Just like with believers today, we are indwelt, and then afterward we are gifted.



Old Testament Gifting

- Numbers 11:25-26 – Then the LORD came down in the cloud and spoke to him, and took some of the Spirit that was on him and put it on the seventy elders. And as soon as the Spirit rested on them, they prophesied. But they did not continue doing it. 26) Now two men remained in the camp, one named Eldad, and the other named Medad, and the Spirit rested on them. They were among those registered, but they had not gone out to the tent, and so they prophesied in the camp.
- Deuteronomy 34:9 – And Joshua the son of Nun was full of the spirit of wisdom, for Moses had laid his hands on him. So the people of Israel obeyed him and did as the LORD had commanded Moses.



Old Testament Filling

- Interestingly enough, we also see the “filling” of the Holy Spirit come upon people in the Old Testament.
- The filling of the Spirit is when the Holy Spirit literally fills a person thus granting them a certain ability to perform a certain task in a certain time. It is not a permanent condition.
- Every Christian should experience the filling of the Spirit, but it mainly happens when we are in the will of God trying to do the work of God.
- At times He will give us amazing power temporarily to accomplish a task.
- It was the same with the Old Testament saints.
 - For example, we see that those who built the Tabernacle were filled with the Spirit so that they would have skill to complete God’s task. This makes sense since the Tabernacle was an exact earthly replica of the true temple in heaven.
 - We also see that Samson’s strength was not in himself, but instead every single time he used super strength, it was because the Spirit filled him.

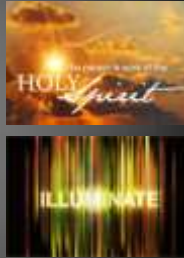


Old Testament Filling

- Exodus 35:30-35 – Then Moses said to the people of Israel, “See, the LORD has called by name Bezalel the son of Uri, son of Hur, of the tribe of Judah; 31) and he has filled him with the Spirit of God, with skill, with intelligence, with knowledge, and with all craftsmanship, 32) to devise artistic designs, to work in gold and silver and bronze, 33) in cutting stones for setting, and in carving wood, for work in every skilled craft. 34) And he has inspired him to teach, both him and Oholiab the son of Ahisamach of the tribe of Dan. 35) He has filled them with skill to do every sort of work done by an engraver or by a designer or by an embroiderer in blue and purple and scarlet yarns and fine twined linen, or by a weaver—by any sort of workman or skilled designer.
- Judges 14:19 – And the Spirit of the LORD rushed upon him, and he went down to Ashkelon and struck down thirty men of the town and took their spoil and gave the garments to those who had told the riddle. In hot anger he went back to his father’s house.
- Judges 15:14-15 – When he came to Lehi, the Philistines came shouting to meet him. Then the Spirit of the LORD rushed upon him, and the ropes that were on his arms became as flax that has caught fire, and his bonds melted off his hands. 15) And he found a fresh jawbone of a donkey, and put out his hand and took it, and with it he struck 1,000 men.

Holy Spirit and Illumination

- Nehemiah 9:20 shows the Holy Spirit illuminate Israel and instruct them while they were in the wilderness.
 - Nehemiah 9:20 – You gave your good Spirit to instruct them and did not withhold your manna from their mouth and gave them water for their thirst.



Issues to Address

- If all of these various works of the Holy Spirit that we thought were unique to the church were actually prevalent in Israel in the Old Testament, then how could Christ speak of the ministry of the Holy Spirit as something new and future?
- This is not a difficult question to answer.
- First, God's method of salvation was same from the time of Adam up to now.
 - Beware of the Covenantalist strawman against Dispensationalists concerning two different ways of salvation.
 - We learn in the New Testament that we are saved the same way Abraham was.
 - If that be the case, we can learn just as much about Abraham's salvation by studying our own as we can learn about our salvation by studying Abraham's.
 - The New Testament makes it clear that when we are saved, the Holy Spirit is involved in every step of the process. He must regenerate us and give us spiritual life so that we can receive grace by faith. He then keeps us in salvation by sanctification, which corresponds to indwelling. By dwelling within us, He keeps us to the day of Jesus Christ.
 - If we are saved like Abraham, then Abraham is also saved like us.
 - Therefore, we would expect to see the same things the Spirit does for us to be done for the saints of the Old Testament. The main difference is they did not know Jesus Christ since He had not yet been revealed. The saved Old Testament saints had to wait in Abraham's bosom until Christ died at Calvary and then they enjoyed the completeness of salvation.
 - Also, the indwelling of the Holy Spirit could be taken away from Old Testament saints.

Issues to Address

- So how is the Holy Spirit's work and ministry in the New Testament different from the Old Testament? How is it a new work?
- The manner in which the Holy Spirit is given to the church was in greater extent, duration, and effect.
 - To the Old Testament saints, they often feared that the Holy Spirit would be taken away from them, as demonstrated by David in Psalm 51:11.
- Furthermore, the ability to do miracles and prophesy was limited only to one class of people, the prophets.
 - Occasionally, men like David also had the gift of prophesy.
- Joel anticipated a much more complete giving of the Holy Spirit to Israel in chapter 2 as he speaks of Israel's sons and daughters prophesying, its old men having dreams, and its young men having visions.
 - This is why the gifts and power of the Holy Spirit is far greater than anything recorded in the Old Testament.
- Furthermore, the gift of illumination appears to be greater as Christ promised the Spirit would grant remembrance to His disciples and Paul in 1 Corinthians 2 tells us we have the Spirit of God instructing us.

Issues to Address

- In our dispensation, the Holy Spirit gives us direct access to God by keeping us permanently sanctified and holy, whereas in the Old Testament daily rituals of purification were needed.
- Finally, the work of the Holy Spirit was limited to Israel in the Old Testament.
 - In the church it is given to all flesh.
- In summation, there are three completely new elements to the work of the Holy Spirit as found in the church:
 1. Universal – not just to Israel.
 2. Permanent – the Holy Spirit departed from Old Testament saints such as Samson and Saul. David knowing it could happen to him begged that the Holy Spirit would not depart from him.
 3. Perfecting – The Holy Spirit's ministry would allow repentant sinners to grow in grace and be conformed to the image of Jesus. This is not the case in the Old Testament. Samson and Saul may have had the power of the Spirit, but their character was not advanced by His presence.