

- I. Session 2: The Spirit's Work in the Old Testament Part 1
- a. Note: This is new for the first time in this series.
  - b. Purpose: In this session we shall look at three ways the Holy Spirit works in the Old Testament.
  - c. The Holy Spirit is Creator
    - i. In the previous session we already saw the Spirit is Creator according to **Psalm 104:30** and **Job 33:4**.
    - ii. *“By the word of the Lord the heavens were made, And by the breath of His mouth all their host. 7 He gathers the waters of the sea together as a heap; He lays up the deeps in storehouses. 8 Let all the earth fear the Lord; Let all the inhabitants of the world stand in awe of Him. 9 For He spoke, and it was done; He commanded, and it stood fast.” (Psalm 33:6-9)*
      1. The word “breath” in **verse 6** is the Hebrew word *ruach* which is the same word for “Spirit.”
      2. Here we see the Spirit's involvement in creating three realities of Creation: the heavens (**v.6**), the waters (**v.7**) and the earth (**v.8**).<sup>1</sup>
      3. Often in ancient times the heavens (**v.6**), the waters (**v.7**) and the earth (**v.8**) were worshipped as powerful gods but here the Spirit created them showing He is greater than these creation.
        - a. As great as the heavens with the stars are yet *“By the word of the Lord the heavens were made” (v.6b)*.
        - b. The Canaanites who were Israel's enemies and neighbors worshipped a powerful god of the sea called Yamm. Yet the Spirit *“lays up the deeps in storehouses” (v.7b)*.<sup>2</sup>
  - d. The Holy Spirit is Sustainer of life
    - i. Explanation: The point here is that not only is the Spirit Creator but also the one who allows life to continue to be life.
    - ii. *“For as long as life is in me, And the breath of God is in my nostrils, 4 My lips certainly will not speak unjustly, Nor will my tongue mutter deceit.” (Job 27:3-4)*
      1. Here in the context it is Job speaking.
      2. Job's main point in these two verses is to say that He has integrity in how he speaks.
      3. Job makes the point that this is true *“for as long as life is in me” (Job 27:3a)*
      4. *“for as long as life is in me”* is paralleled with *“the breath of God is in my nostrils” (Job 27:3b)* showing God's breath or Spirit being in Job's own nose is the same thing as Job being alive.
    - iii. *“If He should determine to do so, If He should gather to Himself His Spirit and His breath, 15 All flesh would perish together, And man would return to dust.” (Job 34:14-15)*
      1. Here in the context it is Elihu one of Job's friend that is speaking.
      2. Whereas **Job 27:3-4** stated in positive form that God's Spirit gives life here this passage shows that if God takes away His Spirit (**v.14**) the consequences is that *“All flesh would perish together” (v.15a)*
      3. To make the point clear that without the Spirit we are dead the second line states *“And man would return to dust.” (v.15b)*

<sup>1</sup> Christopher Wright, *Knowing The Holy Spirit through the Old Testament* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2006), 16.

<sup>2</sup> Christopher Wright, *Knowing The Holy Spirit through the Old Testament* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2006), 18.

- iv. *“Then the Lord said, “My Spirit shall not strive with man forever, because he also is flesh; nevertheless his days shall be one hundred and twenty years.””* (Genesis 6:3)
  1. In the context this describe the condition of man before Noah’s flood.
  2. Here God says that because of man’s sin man *“days shall be one hundred and twenty years”*
  3. This is because God’s *“Spirit shall not strive with man forever”* which once again show that without the Spirit within man, man’s life is gone.
- v. Since the Spirit gives life it is no surprise then that in creating man as a living creature God’s Spirit/breath is breathed into man’s nostril: *“Then the Lord God formed man of dust from the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living being.”* (Genesis 2:7)
- e. The Holy Spirit empowers His people
  - i. *“But they rebelled And grieved His Holy Spirit; Therefore He turned Himself to become their enemy, He fought against them. 11 Then His people remembered the days of old, of Moses. Where is He who brought them up out of the sea with the shepherds of His flock? Where is He who put His Holy Spirit in the midst of them, 12 Who caused His glorious arm to go at the right hand of Moses, Who divided the waters before them to make for Himself an everlasting name, 13 Who led them through the depths? Like the horse in the wilderness, they did not stumble; 14 As the cattle which go down into the valley, The Spirit of the Lord gave them rest. So You led Your people, To make for Yourself a glorious name.”* (Isaiah 63:10-14)
    1. In the context this is a look back to the days of Moses by the prophet Isaiah: *“Then His people remembered the days of old, of Moses.”* (Isaiah 63:11a)
    2. Among the things they remembered is *“His Holy Spirit in the midst of them”* (Isaiah 63:11c)
    3. Twice in this passage the *“Holy Spirit”* is mentioned in one of the rare instances of the term appearing in the Old Testament.<sup>3</sup>
    4. Because of the Holy Spirit we see power associated with Moses as suggested in a set of rhetorical questions:
      - a. *“Where is He who brought them up out of the sea with the shepherds of His flock?”* (v.11b)
      - b. *“Who caused His glorious arm to go at the right hand of Moses, Who divided the waters before them to make for Himself an everlasting name, 13 Who led them through the depths?”* (v.12-13)
    5. The second mentioned of the Holy Spirit states: *“The Spirit of the Lord gave them rest”* (v.14a). Note rest could only come by the Spirit’s power working and the Spirit’s power worked through Moses.
  - ii. *“The Lord therefore said to Moses, “Gather for Me seventy men from the elders of Israel, whom you know to be the elders of the people and their officers and bring them to the tent of meeting, and let them take their stand there with you. 17 Then I will come down and speak with you there, and I will take of the Spirit who is upon you, and will put Him upon them; and they shall bear the burden of the people with you, so that you will not bear it all alone.”* (Numbers 11:16-17)
    1. Context: Earlier in the context the people were complaining to Moses about missing the good food from Egypt (v.4). This led Moses to complain to God in verses 10-15 about the burden of leading the people.
    2. Note how in verse 16 God responds by asking Moses to gather seventy men from Israel to help him.

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<sup>3</sup> Christopher Wright, *Knowing The Holy Spirit through the Old Testament* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2006), 45.

3. But then in **verse 17** we see it wasn't just seventy men to help Moses; God's Spirit is going to empower them!
- iii. *"And He has filled him with the Spirit of God, in wisdom, in understanding and in knowledge and in all craftsmanship;" (Exodus 35:31)*
  1. In the context Moses is speaking and tells the listeners that Bezalel the son of Uri is going to receive the task of building God's tabernacle.
  2. To help Uri we see He is given the *"Spirit of God"*
  3. The Spirit helps Bezalel to attain *"wisdom...understanding...knowledge and...all craftsmanship"*
  4. While the Spirit is not mentioned in **Exodus 35:34-35** the context strongly suggest the Spirit will also help *"Oholiab, the son of Ahisamach"* since God has *"has filled them with skill to perform every work"* in **Exodus 35:34**, using the same language of fill as earlier in **v.31** about the Spirit.
  5. Thus *"these are the first people in the Bible who are described as 'filled with the Spirit of God.'"*<sup>4</sup>
- iv. In the book of Judges there are many instances of the Spirit empowering the Judges. There are languages of the *"the Spirit of the Lord came upon"* someone which gives the individual power: **Judges 3:10, 6:34, 11:29, 14:6, 14:19, 15:14-15.**<sup>5</sup>
- v. The activity of the Holy Spirit in King Saul's life shows the Spirit is the source of his power.<sup>6</sup>
  1. The Spirit of the Lord coming upon Saul with power was predicted in **1 Samuel 10:6**: *"Then the Spirit of the Lord will come upon you mightily, and you shall prophesy with them and be changed into another man."*
  2. This was fulfilled in **1 Samuel 10:10** with Saul prophesying as a sign: *"Then the Spirit of the Lord will come upon you mightily, and you shall prophesy with them and be changed into another man."*
  3. The Spirit of the Lord coming upon Saul with power is also described in **1 Samuel 11:6**: *"Then the Spirit of God came upon Saul mightily when he heard these words, and he became very angry."* → As a result of this Saul was able to defeat the Ammonites
  4. This is contrast to what happen when the Spirit is withdrawn from Saul: *"Now the Spirit of the Lord departed from Saul, and an evil spirit from the Lord terrorized him."* (**1 Samuel 16:14**)
    - a. Now instead of Saul being strong he is terrorized by an evil spirit.
    - b. The rest of the book of **1 Samuel** will show how powerless Saul is.
- vi. *"Then he said to me, 'This is the word of the Lord to Zerubbabel saying, 'Not by might nor by power, but by My Spirit,' says the Lord of hosts.'" (Zechariah 4:6)*
  1. In the context this is the prophet Zechariah seeing a vision and an angel speaking to him to help interpret a vision.
  2. Here we see the angel tells Zechariah of what God wants to say Zerubbabel which later in **verse 8** fills in more details that He will finish building the temple.

<sup>4</sup> Christopher Wright, *Knowing The Holy Spirit through the Old Testament* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2006), 37.

<sup>5</sup> Christopher Wright, *Knowing The Holy Spirit through the Old Testament* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2006), 40-41.

<sup>6</sup> Christopher Wright, *Knowing The Holy Spirit through the Old Testament* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2006), 41-43.

3. Thus the completion of the temple by Zerubbabel is certain and is meant to encourage him to finish the temple since this is accomplished by God's Spirit empowering Him.
  4. Note how this verse contrasts God's Spirit with man's "might" and "power."
- f. Application
- i. Application of the Spirit as Creator for working well with others as a team
    1. Sometimes when we struggle to be working together in a team it is because someone thinks they are more important than others.
    2. What is amazing is that both Jesus and the Holy Spirit are involved in creation. Yet they somehow work together even though they are both important since they are both God.
    3. How much more should we not let pride lie to us that just because we are a pastor, leader or evangelist that should get in the way of us working together with others in the church if we are not as important as God based upon the example of the Holy Spirit and Christ!
  - ii. Application of the Spirit as Sustainer of life for evangelism
    1. When you evangelize point out to the people: Grieving the Spirit with your sins is grieving the very one who allows you to live!
    2. That is like someone on life support in the hospital getting a scissor and trying to cut all the wires off because they want to do things their own way and not be encumbered by wires and tubes! When you harden your heart against the conviction of sin brought about by the Spirit, you are going against the very one who has given you the present ability to be alive!
  - iii. Application of the Spirit as Power for humility in trials with ministry
    1. Earlier we look at **Numbers 11:16-17** of the Spirit empowering seventy men to help Moses' burden of leading the people.
    2. Are you aware of the ministry leadership difficulties that Moses faced similar to pastors today?<sup>7</sup>
      - a. Administrative overload
      - b. People complain about trivial things: Food!
      - c. Moses' own outbursts
      - d. Family arguments and disapproval of Moses' marriage
      - e. People rejecting Moses' authority of speaking for God
      - f. Attacks from outsiders
      - g. Sexual immorality
      - h. Those serving under Moses being found unfaithful
    3. Serving God does not mean you will not have problems in ministry. It means the Spirit will enable you to go through those trials.
    4. What I said could easily be abused by pastors to think the Spirit's help means they can be proud or think they are right just because God is helping them.
    5. Yet Moses models humility in knowing the Spirit's help: Moses is not jealous (**Numbers 11:26-30**)
      - a. It turned that besides the seventy the Spirit also empowered two other men named Eldad and Medad: "*But two men had remained in the camp; the name of one was Eldad and the name of the other Medad. And the Spirit rested upon them (now they were among those who had been registered, but had not gone out to the tent), and they prophesied in the camp.*" (**Numbers 11:26**)

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<sup>7</sup> The following is modified from a list by Christopher Wright, *Knowing The Holy Spirit through the Old Testament* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2006), 40-41.

- b. A young man reported this to Moses in **Numbers 11:27**.
- c. This provoke a follower of Moses name Joshua to jealousy: “*Then Joshua the son of Nun, the attendant of Moses from his youth, said, “Moses, my lord, restrain them. ”*” (**Numbers 11:28**)
- d. But Moses response display humility: “*But Moses said to him, “Are you jealous for my sake? Would that all the Lord’s people were prophets, that the Lord would put His Spirit upon them!”*” (**Numbers 11:29**)→We too need to be like that.