

## I. Session 3: The Spirit's Work in the Old Testament Part 2 and New Testament Continuation

a. Note: This is new for the first time in this series.

b. **Purpose:** In this session we shall continue our look at other ways the Holy Spirit works in the Old Testament.

c. The Holy Spirit reveals God's Word

- i. *"You gave Your good Spirit to instruct them, Your manna You did not withhold from their mouth, And You gave them water for their thirst."* (Nehemiah 9:20)
  1. In the context this is spoken by Levites (Nehemiah 9:5) praising God for the history of what God has done and confessing the sins of the people to God.
  2. Notice God's Spirit is called "good Spirit" for He is Good!
  3. How is the Spirit Good? The Spirit "instruct them"
  4. The specific instance the Levites singing had in mind was during the era of Moses as evident from the mention of "manna" and God providing them water as mentioned within this verse.
  5. The means in which the Spirit instructs them of course would have been through Moses who was a Prophet and wrote the Law of Moses but also the men who prophesied by the Spirit resting upon them such as Eldad and Medad in Numbers 11:26.
- ii. *"However, You bore with them for many years, And admonished them by Your Spirit through Your prophets, Yet they would not give ear. Therefore You gave them into the hand of the peoples of the lands."* (Nehemiah 9:30)
  1. This follows then verses after our first verse we looked at with the same context.
  2. Note God "admonished them by Your Spirit through Your prophets" showing clearly now that the means the Spirit admonished throughout Israel's history was through the Prophets.
- iii. **Are Prophets themselves aware that the Holy Spirit is speaking through them?** *"On the other hand I am filled with power— With the Spirit of the Lord— And with justice and courage To make known to Jacob his rebellious act, Even to Israel his sin."* (Micah 3:8)
  1. This is the prophet Micah speaking.
  2. Here we see Micah saying that He is filled with the Spirit of the Lord.
  3. Because Micah is filled with the Spirit He is filled with power, justice and courage.
  4. This is needed for Micah's purpose as a prophet: *"To make known to Jacob his rebellious act, Even to Israel his sin"*
- iv. The unusual case of Balaam<sup>1</sup>: *"And Balaam lifted up his eyes and saw Israel camping tribe by tribe; and the Spirit of God came upon him."* (Numbers 24:2)
  1. Balaam was a pagan false prophet who was hired by king Balak to curse Israel in Numbers 22:6= *"Now, therefore, please come, curse this people for me since they are too mighty for me; perhaps I may be able to defeat them and drive them out of the land. For I know that he whom you bless is blessed, and he whom you curse is cursed."*
  2. Note the words in Numbers 22:6 goes against God's Word in Genesis 12:3: *"And I will bless those who bless you, And the one who curses you I will curse. And in you all the families of the earth will be blessed."*
  3. **Whose words will win?** We see three separate times God made Balaam bless Israel instead of cursing them, and three times Balak being upset and three

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<sup>1</sup> Much of my materials for this verse is from Christopher Wright, *Knowing The Holy Spirit through the Old Testament* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2006), 76-79.

times Balaam saying he had no choice but to speak what God makes Him speak: **Numbers 23:11-12, Numbers 23:25-26, Numbers 24:10-13.**

4. **Numbers 24:2** explains why this is so: It is because of the Spirit of God coming upon Him to make Him prophesy and speak God's Word.
5. We see here the lesson is very clear that the Spirit of God is Sovereign when He reveals Himself that He can even make a false prophet speak the truth.

#### d. The Holy Spirit gives understanding

- i. Recall we looked at **Exodus 35:31**: "*And He has filled him with the Spirit of God, in wisdom, in understanding and in knowledge and in all craftsmanship;*" → Note the Spirit gives understanding.
- ii. "*But it is a spirit in man, And the breath of the Almighty gives them understanding.*" (**Job 32:8**)
  1. In the context it is Elihu, Job's younger friend that is speaking.
  2. From our previous sessions we have seen that "*the breath of the Almighty*" is associated with the Holy Spirit.
  3. Thus the Holy Spirit here is stated as the One who "*gives them understanding.*"
- iii. From both **Exodus 35:31** and **Job 32:8** we see that the Holy Spirit not only reveals the Word of God objectively but subjectively inside a person He gives understanding.

#### e. The Holy Spirit's work in the Old Testament is reaffirmed in the New Testament

- i. A principle to keep in mind: If the New Testament doesn't talk about something the Spirit does in the Old Testament sometimes that doesn't mean what is taught in the Old Testament is not true but that the Old Testament has already laid the foundation so that the New Testament can teach further on other areas.
- ii. The Holy Spirit also empowers people to serve God in the New Testament.
  1. Jesus's disciples in **Acts 1:8**.<sup>2</sup>
  2. Stephen in **Acts 6:5, 6:8**.
  3. Paul in **Romans 15:19; 1 Cor. 2:4**.
  4. According to Wayne Grudem: "Another aspect of empowering Christians for service is the Holy Spirit's activity of giving spiritual gifts to equip Christians for ministry... (1 Cor. 12:11 NASB)."<sup>3</sup>
- iii. The Holy Spirit also reveals God's Word in the New Testament.
  1. "*But know this first of all, that no prophecy of Scripture is a matter of one's own interpretation, 21 for no prophecy was ever made by an act of human will, but men moved by the Holy Spirit spoke from God.*" (**2 Peter 1:20-21**) → Those who wrote Scripture were moved by the Holy Spirit.
  2. According to Wayne Grudem: "Several other passages mention this work of the Holy Spirit in Old Testament prophets (see Matt. 22:43; Acts 1:16; 4:25; 28:25; 1 Peter 1:11). Scripture were also guided 'into all the truth' by the Holy Spirit (John 16:13)."<sup>4</sup>

#### iv. The Holy Spirit also gives understanding in the New Testament

1. This is what Jesus taught about the role of the Holy Spirit: "*But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My name, He will teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all that I said to you.*" (**John 14:26**) → Notice His role in teaching.
2. This is what the Apostle taught about the role of the Holy Spirit: "*For to us God revealed them through the Spirit; for the Spirit searches all things, even*

<sup>2</sup> Wayne Grudem, Systematic Theology, (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1994), 638.

<sup>3</sup> Wayne Grudem, Systematic Theology, (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1994), 639.

<sup>4</sup> Wayne Grudem, Systematic Theology, (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1994), 640.

*the depths of God. 11 For who among men knows the thoughts of a man except the spirit of the man which is in him? Even so the thoughts of God no one knows except the Spirit of God. 12 Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is from God, so that we may know the things freely given to us by God, 13 which things we also speak, not in words taught by human wisdom, but in those taught by the Spirit, [b]combining spiritual thoughts with spiritual words.” (1 Corinthians 2:10-13)→Notice His role in making believers know things.*

**f. Application**

- i. Often various kinds of Christians would say “the Holy Spirit says” and they are really referring to their own feelings and opinions. Biblically the Holy Spirit speaks through the Scripture.
- ii. If the Spirit is the source of knowledge and understanding, do you ask God the Father to have the Holy Spirit help you?