

THE HOLY SPIRIT IN THE OLD TESTAMENT

Dr. Charles Ryrie, Dallas Theological Seminary professor and editor of the *Ryrie Study Bible*, noted: "The approximately 100 references to the Spirit of God in the Old Testament give evidence of His working during that time."

The people who lived in Old Testament times would not have known the doctrine of the triune God as we do today; however, they would have understood the power, wisdom, and strength of the Spirit of God. Psalm 104:30 and Isaiah 48:16 reveal this understanding.

HIS WORK IN CREATION

- Genesis 1:2 records, "The Spirit was hovering over the face of the waters."
- Job 33: 4 states, "The Spirit of God has made me, and the breath of the Almighty gives me life." This verse confirms Genesis 2: 7 - "And the LORD God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living being."
- Job also recognized, "By His Spirit He adorned the heavens. . ." (26:13).

HIS WORK WITH CREATION

- The Spirit of God instructs and gives understanding. Job 32:8 states: "But *there is* a spirit in man, And the breath of the Almighty gives him understanding."
- David in Psalm 143:10 – "Teach me to do Your will, for You are my God; Your Spirit is good. Lead me in the land of uprightness."
- In Nehemiah, Nehemiah declared, "You also gave Your good Spirit to instruct them" (9:20).
- God himself says in Genesis 6:3 – "My Spirit will not strive with man forever."

HIS WORK FOR HIS CHOSEN ONES

Before being sent to the believers at Pentecost (Acts 2), the Spirit of God did not permanently indwell his people.

- I Samuel 16:14 – "The Spirit of the Lord departed from Saul."
- David in Psalm 51:11 – "Do not take Your Holy Spirit from me."
- Joseph was filled with the Spirit causing Pharaoh to realize there was no one like Joseph (Genesis 41:38).
- When the tabernacle was being built in the desert, craftsmen Bezalel and Aholiab became filled with the Spirit of God and received "wisdom, in understanding, in knowledge, and in all manner of workmanship, to design artistic works" (Ex. 31:3 – 4; 35:31- 36:1)
- When the prophet Samuel anointed David to be king, I Sam. 16:13 states, "the Spirit of the Lord came upon David from that day forward."
- All the judges of Israel were filled by the Spirit to accomplish a specific task usually one that involved rescuing the Jewish people from their enemies. Examples: Judges 3:10; 6:34; 11:29; 13:25, 15:14.

- The prophets were filled by the spirit, enabling them to minister. Examples: Ezekiel, Daniel, Isaiah.

HIS WORK POINTS TO THE MESSIAH

Isaiah spoke much about the Messiah, giving great details about his person and work. Through Isaiah, God said, “Behold! My servant whom I uphold, My elect one in whom my soul delights! I have put My Spirit upon Him” (Isaiah 42:1). Isaiah 42: 1 – 9 shows the Spirit’s powerful role in the prophecy of the coming Messiah.

Jesus himself was in a synagogue on the Sabbath. When Jesus went up to read the text for the that day, he took the scroll and read Isaiah 61:1: “The Spirit of the Lord is upon me.” In that moment it was clear that Jesus was the Promised One of Israel.

We find that the Holy Spirit worked mightily in the Old Testament period. His work was not limited to the New Testament era.