

# a study of the *Holy Spirit*

## Lesson 3: The Holy Spirit in the Old Testament

Many think it is unusual to discuss the Holy Spirit in relation to the Old Testament. Most will associate Him with the New Testament never knowing the mighty things He accomplished in the Old Testament. The presence of the Holy Spirit in the Old Testament is not as prominent as in the New Testament but it is there.

- He is specifically mentioned over eighty times in over seventy verses.
- He is referenced in over half of the Old Testament books.
- He is known by these names: The Spirit; the Spirit of God, of Jehovah, of the Lord; and the Holy Spirit (only three times in the Old Testament).
- He is identified as a separate Person of the Godhead (Isaiah 48:12-16).

The scarce mention in the Old Testament is explained by considering the "Dispensations of the Godhead." "Dispensation"—an epoch of time; a system of principles, promises, rules ordained and administered for a period of time.

- **God the Father**—dispensation was from the creation to the coming of Christ (Hebrews 1:1).
- **God the Son**—dispensation began when the Word became flesh and ended with His ascension.
- **God the Spirit**—dispensation began on Acts 2 and continues until today.

### Works performed by the Holy Spirit in the Old Testament

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- **Creation** (Genesis 1:2; Job 26:13; Psalm 104:30).  
This is the first work the Holy Spirit did. It seems that in creation every member of the Godhead had a role—the Father planned, the Son produced, and the Spirit finished or organized.
- **Creation of man** (Genesis 1:26; Job 33:4).  
Paul calls the Holy Spirit "the Spirit of life" (Romans 8:2) and thus the reference in Job 33 is understood—the work of the Holy Spirit was to give life to Adam's body (Genesis 2:7).
- **Protected Scripture** (2 Peter 1:21; 2 Timothy 3:16).  
The Old Testament prophets spoke as they were "moved"—superintended—by the Holy Spirit. This is a reference to the purity of Holy Scripture.
- **Revealed the unknowable** (Genesis 41:16-38; Daniel 2:28; 4:8; Isaiah 61:1-3; Luke 4:16-21).
- **Guided speakers** (2 Samuel 23:2; Acts 4:25, 26; Isaiah 61:1; Nehemiah 9:30).  
The Holy Spirit made sure the prophets spoke the right things.
- **Enabled talents** (Exodus 31:1-5; 35:31; 1 Samuel 10:10; 11:6; 2 Peter 2:5).  
The Holy Spirit gave aid to certain people who had duties that affected Israel's faith.
- **Strengthened leaders** (Judges 3:10; 6:34, 35; 11:29; 13:25; 2 Samuel 23:2; 1 Samuel 16:13).
- **Stimulated courage** (2 Chronicles 24:20, 21; Ezekiel 11:1, 5, 24; Micah 3:8; Zechariah 7:12).

### **A summary about the mission of the Holy Spirit in the Old Testament**

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His primary mission was to bring order to God's creation and ultimately to man. The progressive mission of the Holy Spirit seen in Scripture:

- He began in organizing the chaos of the newly created material universe (Genesis 1:2; Job 26:13).
- He took society and ordered its relationships (Genesis 6:3).
- He took the individual man and ordered his character (Nehemiah 9:20).



### **▶▶▶▶ Looking Ahead**

**Lesson 4** The Holy Spirit in the New Testament

**Suggested Reading:** Rom. 8; John 14-16