

III. The Work of the Spirit in the Old Testament

A. The Holy Spirit's part in creation

The Spirit's part in creation was related to giving the creation life (Psalm 104:30; Job 33:4), order (Isaiah 40:12, 13; Job 26:13), adornment to the glory of God (Psalm 33:6; Job 26:13) and continual renewing or preservation (usually associated with Christ, but in Psalm 104:29, 30 related to the Spirit).

B. The Holy Spirit's part in revelation

Old Testament prophets were moved and guided by the Holy Spirit (2 Peter 1:21; 2 Samuel 23:2, Micah 3:8). Also, the New Testament directly attributes many Old Testament verses to the Spirit (Matthew 22:43, 44; Acts 1:16; 4:24-26).

In the New Testament, the Lord promised that the Spirit would help the apostles remember the things He had taught them (John 14:26).

C. The Holy Spirit's relation to man

1. Selective (though not necessarily permanent) indwelling.

The Bible says the Spirit was in certain Old Testament people (Genesis 41:38; Numbers 27:18; Daniel 4:8). However, when the Lord contrasted the relationship of the Spirit to Old Testament men to those living after Pentecost, He said the Spirit had been dwelling with them and that He would be in them and abide with them forever. This seems to show a definite difference in the pre- and post-Pentecost relationships. Today all believers are permanently indwelt. This universality and permanency were apparently not guaranteed in Old Testament days (1 Samuel 16:14; Psalm 51:11).

2. Enablement for special service

Sometimes the Spirit is said to have filled (Exodus 31:3) or come upon (Numbers 11:14; Judges 3:10; 14:6,19; 1 Samuel 16:13; 2 Chronicles 20:14; 24:20) Old Testament people. This was a special empowerment for particular tasks as well as other mighty works.

3. General restraint of sin

Restraint was a special work of the Holy Spirit from the earliest of times (Genesis 6:3).

IV. The Work of the Spirit in the Life of Christ

A. In the virgin birth Gabriel told Mary plainly that the baby to be born to her would be conceived by the Holy Spirit (Luke 1:35), and Joseph was told the same thing by an angel (Matthew 1:20). This made it possible for Him to be free from the taint of human corruption.

B. In His life

- Jesus was anointed by the Spirit in a very special way at the time of His baptism (predicted: Isaiah 61:1-3; fulfilled: Matthew 3:16; Luke 3:22; John 1:32-34; explained: Luke 4:18). As He had been sanctified in His humanity at birth by the Spirit, so at His baptism He was consecrated [to induct to a permanent office with a religious rite - to dedicate to a sacred purpose] to the office of Messiah (the Anointed One, Psalm 2:2) by the same Spirit.
- Jesus was empowered by the Holy Spirit to fulfill His ministry including His victory over the tempter (Matthew 4:1-11), the authority He demonstrated in His teaching (Mark 1:22) and His ability to perform miracles (Matthew 12:28; Acts 10:38). The obvious fact that Christ depended on the power of the Spirit is a sharp reminder of our need to walk by the power of the Spirit as we live our lives on earth.
- The question might well be asked, Why, since Jesus is Himself God the Son, was the power of the Spirit so necessary to carry out His mission? A part of the answer must lie in the real humanity that Jesus assumed when He became incarnate. Jesus was no less a man because He was divine, as though He were divine omnipotence masquerading as human frailty. Since God had made man by His Spirit, and since man always lived in dependence upon God's Spirit, therefore Jesus, if He was one with mankind, must also have depended upon the indwelling Spirit of God.
- That is why, in the economy of salvation, He assumed the role of the Messiah, the One who was anointed by the Spirit of God. Yet He was also conscious of His own divine absolute authority. Unlike the prophets in their dependence upon the Spirit, He did not say, "Thus says the Lord," but "truly, I say unto you." [P.K. Jewett, "Holy Spirit," The Zondervan Pictorial Encyclopedia of the Bible (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan, 1976), 3:185-186.]

C. In His death and resurrection

Hebrews 9:14: Jesus offered Himself as a sacrifice through the Spirit.

1 Peter 3:18: Jesus was made alive by the Spirit.

Acts 1:2: Jesus gave commandments to the apostles (and through them to us) by the Spirit.