

What has the Holy Spirit done? Lesson Two

HIS PART IN CREATION

Sometimes in the Old Testament it is not always clear whether a reference which uses the word spirit is referring to the Holy Spirit or, for instance, to the breath of God's own mouth (see Ps 33:6). Nevertheless, there are indications from specific references that the Holy Spirit did have a part in the work of creation. In addition, the fact that He is God and as God is immanent (present) in the world would involve Him in all the works of God, including creation.

Particularly, the Spirit's part was related to giving the creation life (Ps 104:30; Job 33:4), order (Is 40:12–13; Job 26:13), adornment to the glory of God (Ps 33:6; Job 26:13), and continual renewing or preservation (an aspect usually associated with Christ, though in Ps 104:29–30 related to the Spirit).

HIS PART IN REVELATION

The chief human instrument that God used in the Old Testament to give His message to man was the prophet, but behind him was the Holy Spirit moving and guiding so that the writer communicated exactly what God wanted man to know. Referring to the Old Testament writers, Peter said that "men spake from God, being moved by the Holy Spirit" (2 Pe 1:21, ASV). This general statement is supported by many specific examples (2 Sa 23:2; Mic 3:8). In addition, the New Testament directly attributes many Old Testament Scripture verses to the Spirit (Mt 22:43; Ac 1:16; 4:25). Concerning the New Testament, the Lord promised that the Spirit would recall to the apostles' minds the things which He had taught them (Jn 14:26). Thus the Spirit was the single Author guiding and guarding the revelation; the instruments or agents were men, and the ultimate source was God.

1. Definitions

- i. **Revelation**-(Gk. *apokalupsis*) means "disclosure" or "unveiling" and is used to describe the unveiling of a statue upon completion by a great sculptor.
- ii. **Inspiration**-biblical inspiration is God's superintendence of the human authors so that, using their own individual personalities, they composed and recorded without error His revelation to man in the words of the original autographs. Several features of the definition are worth emphasizing: (1) God superintended but did not dictate the material. (2) He used human authors and their own individual styles. (3) Nevertheless, the product was, in its original manuscripts, without error.

2. Inspiration of the Old Testament

- i. *Old Testament writers were conscious that the Holy Spirit was guiding their writing (2 Sam. 23:2–3).*
- ii. *Christ taught that the Old Testament writers were guided by the Holy Spirit (Mark 12:36).*
- iii. *Apostles taught that the Old Testament writers were guided by the Holy Spirit (Acts 1:16; 4:24–25; 28:25).*

3. Inspiration of the New Testament

- i. *Christ affirmed the inspiration of the New Testament (John 14:26; 16:14).*
- ii. *The New Testament writers recognized they were writing Scripture (1 Cor. 14:37; Gal.1:12).*
- iii. *The New Testament writers recognized each others' writings as inspired. Dual Biblical Authority, (1 Timothy 5:18; cf. Deut. 25:4, Luke 10:7; 2 Peter 3:2,16)*

HIS RELATION TO MAN

Selective (though not necessarily permanent) indwelling. The Bible declares that the Spirit was in certain Old Testament people, so there can be no question but that He did indwell in those days (Gen 41:38; Num 27:18; Dan 4:8; 1 Pe 1:11). But sometimes the Spirit is said to have come upon Old Testament people (Judg 3:10; 1 Sa 10:9–10). Is there any difference between being in and coming upon? Probably only that “coming upon” may indicate the possibility of going away as well (cf. Judg 15:14 with Judg 16:20). When the Lord contrasted the relationship of the Spirit to Old Testament men and those living after the day of Pentecost, He said that the Spirit had been abiding with them and that He would be in them (Jn 14:17). This seems definitely to indicate a difference in the pre- and post-Pentecost relationships, though the word *abides* shows that His ministry was not an erratic one in Old Testament times. Today all believers are permanently indwelt. This universality and permanency were apparently not guaranteed in Old Testament days.

Enablement for special service. The Spirit’s special empowerment was for particular tasks like the construction of the tabernacle (Ex 31:3) as well as for other mighty works (Judg 14:6; 1 Sa 16:13).

Selective Indwelling; Ability for Service-Restricted to Leaders of the Nation Israel

- i. Craftsmen: Oholiab and Bezalel (Exodus 36:1,2)
- ii. Leader of the Nation: Joshua (Numbers 27:18, Deut. 34:9)
- iii. Judges: Othniel (Judges 3:9,10); Gideon (11:29); Jephthah (13:25)
Samson (13:24-25; 14:6,19; 15:14)
- iv. Prophets: Daniel (Daniel 4:8-9,18) Ezekiel (Ezekiel 2:2) Micah (Micah 3:8)
- v. Kings: Saul (1Samuel 11:6) David (16:13)

General restraint of sin. Restraint was apparently His special work from the earliest times (Gen 6:3), and it is also possible that His very names and titles had a restraining effect on men as they thought about Him (Neh 9:20; Ps 51:11).¹

HIS PART IN THE VIRGIN BIRTH

Gabriel told Mary plainly that the baby to be born to her would be conceived by the Holy Spirit (Lk 1:35), and Joseph was informed of the same fact by an angel (Mt 1:20).

¹ Charles Caldwell Ryrie, *A Survey of Bible Doctrine* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1972).

HIS PART IN THE LIFE OF CHRIST

Christ was anointed by the Spirit in some special way at the time of His baptism (Lk 4:18; Jn 1:32). This empowered Him for service for God (Ac 10:38). Our Lord was also filled with and led by the Spirit (Lk 4:1; see also Jn 3:34; Is 42:1) and He was empowered by the Spirit to do miracles (Mt 12:28). The obvious fact that Christ depended on the power of the Spirit illuminates the depth of His condescension, and it is a sharp reminder of our need of the Spirit's power as we live our lives on earth. If He depended, how much more must we?

Let's take a closer look at Luke 4: 1-18

Luke 4:1-18 (NKJV)

¹ Then Jesus, being filled with the Holy Spirit, returned from the Jordan and was led by the Spirit into the wilderness, ² being tempted for forty days by the devil. And in those days He ate nothing, and afterward, when they had ended, He was hungry. ³ And the devil said to Him, "If You are the Son of God, command this stone to become bread." ⁴ But Jesus answered him, saying, "It is written, '**Man shall not live by bread alone**, but by every word of God.'" ⁵ Then the devil, taking Him up on a high mountain, showed Him all the kingdoms of the world in a moment of time. ⁶ And the devil said to Him, "All this authority I will give You, and their glory; for *this* has been delivered to me, and I give it to whomever I wish. ⁷ Therefore, if You will worship before me, all will be Yours." ⁸ And Jesus answered and said to him, "Get behind Me, Satan! For it is written, '**You shall worship the LORD your God, and Him only you shall serve.**'" ⁹ Then he brought Him to Jerusalem, set Him on the pinnacle of the temple, and said to Him, "If You are the Son of God, throw Yourself down from here. ¹⁰ For it is written: 'He shall give His angels charge over you, *To keep you,*' ¹¹ and, 'In their *hands they shall bear you up,* Lest you dash your foot against a stone.'" ¹² And Jesus answered and said to him, "It has been said, '**You shall not tempt the LORD your God.**'" ¹³ Now when the devil had ended every temptation, he departed from Him until an opportune time. ¹⁴ Then Jesus returned in the power of the Spirit to Galilee, and news of Him went out through all the surrounding region. ¹⁵ And He taught in their synagogues, being glorified by all. ¹⁶ So He came to Nazareth, where He had been brought up. And as His custom was, He went into the synagogue on the Sabbath day, and stood up to read. ¹⁷ And He was handed the book of the prophet Isaiah. And when He had opened the book, He found the place where it was written: ¹⁸ "*The Spirit of the LORD is upon Me, Because He has anointed Me To preach the gospel to the poor; He has sent Me to heal the brokenhearted, To proclaim liberty to the captives And recovery of sight to the blind, To set at liberty those who are oppressed;*

HIS PART IN THE DEATH AND RESURRECTION OF CHRIST

If Hebrews 9:14 refers to the Holy Spirit (and not to Christ's own spirit as some believe), then He offered Himself as a sacrifice through the Spirit. Romans 1:4 (and some think 1 Pe 3:18) may refer to the Spirit's work in His resurrection. Too, He gave commandments to the apostles and through them to us by the Spirit (Ac 1:2).²

² Charles Caldwell Ryrie, *A Survey of Bible Doctrine* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1972).