**Lesson 3**

**The Holy Spirit in the Old Testament**

Much ignorance prevails today concerning the work of the Holy Spirit in the Old Testament. There are a great many Christians who do not believe that the Holy Spirit was operative in the Old Testament, especially in the salvation of the Old Testament saints.

Pink states that “many suppose that they [O.T. saints] were saved in an entirely different way from what we are now.” As evidence for this different way of salvation John 7:39 is cited . . . But this He spoke of the Spirit, whom those who believed in Him were to receive; for the Spirit was not yet given, because Jesus was not yet glorified.

**What does the phrase was not yet given mean in regard to the operation of the Holy Spirit in the Old Testament?**

* The phrase was not yet given does not mean that the Holy Spirit had not yet been given or was not yet active in His role in salvation in Old Testament saints. It simply means that the Holy Spirit’s full ministerial function as Comforter did not fully begin until after the Lord’ ascension. In John 16:7 Jesus explained that the Holy Spirit’s ministry would not fully begin until after Jesus had departed.

***John 16:7— "But I tell you the truth, it is to your advantage that I go away; for if I do not go away, the Helper will not come to you; but if I go, I will send Him to you.***

Jesus explains to His disciples that the full ministry of the Holy Spirit would commence upon His own departure to heaven. From Pentecost the Holy Spirit would be the sole member of the Godhead operative in the church through His role in sanctification.

**What roles do we see the Holy Spirit performing in the Old Testament?**

**1. In the Creation of the world**—when the whole mass of inanimate matter lay in one undistinguished chaos, “***without form and void***,” we are told that, “***the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters***” (Gen 1:2).

**2. In the Creation of Adam**—the use of the plural pronouns “Us” and “Our” in Genesis 1:26 points to all three members of the Godhead participating in Adam’s creation.

***Genesis 1:26—Then God said, "Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness;***

* That Adam was originally made a partaker of the Holy Spirit is quite evident to the writer from Genesis 2:7, “***The Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life***.”
* In Job 33:4 we read of the Holy Spirit’s work in creating man as Job equates the Spirit of God with giving the breath of life.

***Job 33:4—“The Spirit of God has made me, and the breath of the Almighty gives me life.”***

* Following his resurrection we find the Savior giving the Holy Spirit to the Apostles.

***John 20:22—And when He had said this, He breathed on them and said to them, “Receive the Holy Spirit.”***

* + John 20:22 is the counterpart of Genesis 2:7: the one the original gift, the other the restoration of what was lost.

In relation to the creation of Adam, Arthur Pink quotes from the great Puritan, John Owen. In the paragraphs quoted by Pink, Owen states that “three things were required to render man fit unto that life to God for which he was made.”

* First, the Holy Spirit gave Adam an ability to discern the mind and wisdom of God with respect unto all the duty and obedience that God requires of him.
* Second, a free, uncontrolled, unentangled disposition to every duty of the law of his creation for living unto God.
* Third, an ability of mind and will, with a readiness of compliance in his affections, for a regular performance of all duties and abstinence from all sin. (This is the true definition of "free will"-the ability of mind and will to do as you ought.)

The three things mentioned above by John Owen constitute the principal part of the “image of God” created in man by the Spirit.

* Proof of this is seen in the fact that at regeneration the Holy Spirit restores those abilities in the souls of God’s elect:

***Colossians 3:10—“and have put on the new self who is being renewed to a true knowledge according to the image of the One who created him”***

* + The spiritual knowledge that man lost at the Fall is restored at the new birth. But it could not be restored or “renewed” if man had never possessed it!

**Question**: Based upon John Owen’s points listed below, what is it that makes man unique among all other creatures that man is said to be “created in the image of God”?

George Smeaton— “The doctrine that man was originally, though mutably, replenished with the Spirit, may be termed the deep fundamental thought of the Scriptural doctrine of man. If the first and second Adam are so related that the first Adam was the type (figure) of the second, as we see clearly stated in Romans 5:12-14, it is clear that unless the first Adam possessed the Spirit, the last Adam, the Healer or Restorer of the forfeited inheritance, would not have been the medium of giving the Spirit, Who was withdrawn on account of sin, and who could be restored only on account of the everlasting righteousness which Christ brought in.”

***Romans 5:12-15— 12 Therefore, just as through one man sin entered into the world, and death through sin, and so death spread to all men, because all sinned— 13 for until the Law sin was in the world, but sin is not imputed when there is no law. 14 Nevertheless death reigned from Adam until Moses, even over those who had not sinned in the likeness of the offense of Adam, who is a type of Him who was to come. 15 But the free gift is not like the transgression. For if by the transgression of the one the many died, much more did the grace of God and the gift by the grace of the one Man, Jesus Christ, abound to the many.***

**Question**: If the Holy Spirit restores in the elect the image of God that was marred by Adam’s sin, what does this mean for the non-elect? Are they or are they not created in the image of God?

* As we have learned in this section from John Owen, the thing that gives evidence that we are created in the image of God is . . . the Holy Spirit gave Adam an ability to discern the mind and wisdom of God with respect unto all the duty and obedience that God requires of him. Second, a free, uncontrolled, unentangled disposition to every duty of the law of his creation for living unto God. Third, an ability of mind and will, with a readiness of compliance in his affections, for a regular performance of all duties and abstinence from all sin. In our salvation the Holy Spirit has restored in us the freedom to do those things which God endowed Adam with at his creation.
* For the reprobate, they remain in bondage to their sin. They do not possess the ability to do as they ought. Because they remain in Adam, their sin nature prevents living for God.
* We see evidence that all men are created in the image of God in the warning of Genesis 9:6 regarding the penalty for murder . . .

***Genesis 9:6— “Whoever sheds man's blood, by man his blood shall be shed, for in the image of God He made man.”***

**3. In relation to the nation of Israel**—A very striking and comprehensive statement was made by Nehemiah when he reviewed the Lord’s dealings with His people of old:

***Nehemiah 9:20—"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.***

**But in relation to Israel, what sort of work did the Holy Spirit perform in the Old Testament?**

* Leon Wood—“When references are made to the Holy Spirit in the Old Testament, the interest is usually limited to noting that His existence is recognized in certain passages. Little is said relative to the nature of His work as manifested in these passages.”
* “When the Spirit’s work in the Old Testament is discussed at all, it is done usually in terms of His coming on people and leaving them. This is often taken to mean, among other things, that the Spirit, therefore, did not permanently indwell believers, as in the New Testament time.”

Leon Wood then insightfully asks, “But if the Old Testament saint was not permanently indwelt by the Spirit, how was he able to remain a child of God? Were Old Testament saints able to keep themselves?” It is not easy to believe so.

**How, and upon whom, did the Holy Spirit work in the Old Testament?**

* From Scriptural evidence it can be seen that the Holy Spirit was operative on **4 classes of people** in the Old Testament: the **Judges** of Israel, the **Craftsmen**, the **Prophets** and the **Civil Administrators**.

**1. The work of the Holy Spirit on the Judges**

* From the book of Judges we learn that 4 of the Judges of Israel are declared to have had the Spirit come upon them:

**Othniel**

***Judges 3:10—The Spirit of the LORD came upon him, and he judged Israel.***

**Gideon**

***Judges 6:34—So the Spirit of the LORD came upon Gideon***

**Jephthah**

***Judges 11:29—Now the Spirit of the LORD came upon Jephthah***

**Samson**

***Judges 13:24-25—24 Then the woman gave birth to a son and named him Samson; and the child grew up and the LORD blessed him. 25 And the Spirit of the LORD began to stir him in Mahaneh-dan, between Zorah and Eshtaol.***

* The important point to remember in this empowerment by the Holy Spirit in these 4 judges is that it involved empowerment for physical activity. None of these four references have to do with salvation from sin. They were simply empowered to accomplish a task.

**2. The work of the Holy Spirit in Craftsmen**

* There are occasions when the Holy Spirit empowered certain men who were craftsmen to accomplish a specific task. For example, Bezalel was the first craftsman chosen by God to work on the construction of the Tabernacle.

***Exodus 31:2-5— 2 "See, I have called by name Bezalel, the son of Uri, the son of Hur, of the tribe of Judah. 3 "I have filled him with the Spirit of God in wisdom, in understanding, in knowledge, and in all kinds of craftsmanship, 4 to make artistic designs for work in gold, in silver, and in bronze, 5 and in the cutting of stones for settings, and in the carving of wood, that he may work in all kinds of craftsmanship.***

* Along with Bezalel, the Holy Spirit empowered hundreds of other men to construct the Tabernacle. And throughout Israel’s history the Spirit would continue to empower thousands of craftsmen to construct the Temple and the implements used in the Temple worship, along with other items that He wanted made to His exact specifications. But, again, this empowerment was not unto salvation.

**3. The work of the Holy Spirit in the Prophets**

* The prophets of God fall into 2 categories:
  + 1. Those who were filled with the Spirit temporarily
  + 2. Those who were filled with the Spirit continuously.

**Those prophets who were filled with the Spirit**

* **Temporarily** 
  + There are 5 prophets who were temporarily filled by the Spirit only for a specific prophetic event.

**Azariah** (2 Chronicles 15:1-7) brought a message to King Asa.

**Jehoshaphat** (2 Chronicles 20:1, 22-23) warned of a coming invasion.

**Zechariah** (2 Chronicles 24:20) brought God’s rebuke to King Joash.

**Balaam** (Numbers 24) was a pagan who brought blessings upon Israel.

**Amassai** (1 Chronicles 12:18) was a military man who aided David.

* **Continually** 
  + Most of the Spirit-filled prophets of God fulfilled the office of Prophet throughout their lives.
  + In the 9th century B.C., before to first of the writing prophets of the Old Testament, we have evidence of the Holy Spirit indwelling two life-long prophets, Elijah and Elisha.

***2 Kings 2:9-11— 9 When they had crossed over, Elijah said to Elisha, "Ask what I shall do for you before I am taken from you." And Elisha said, "Please, let a double portion of your spirit be upon me.” 10 He said, "You have asked a hard thing. Nevertheless, if you see me when I am taken from you, it shall be so for you; but if not, it shall not be so.” 11 As they were going along and talking, behold, there appeared a chariot of fire and horses of fire which separated the two of them. And Elijah went up by a whirlwind to heaven.***

**Examples of those prophets who were filled with the Spirit continually**

* The prophet **Micah** testifies to his continual filling of the Holy Spirit.

***Micah 3:8—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.***

* The prophet Ezekiel testifies to the coming and continual filling of the Holy Spirit after having seen the vision of the angels in chapter 1.

***Ezekiel 2:1-3— 1 Then He said to me, "Son of man, stand on your feet that I may speak with you!” 2 As He spoke to me the Spirit entered me and set me on my feet; and I heard Him speaking to me. 3 Then He said to me, "Son of man, I am sending you to the sons of Israel, to a rebellious people who have rebelled against Me; they and their fathers have transgressed against Me to this very day.***

* Evidence that the Old Testament prophets were continually Spirit-empowered, though not explicitly stating it, is found in two ways:
  + 1. The testimony of two post-exilic writers that the pre-exilic prophets were Spirit-empowered.
  + 2. A comparison with other important people in the life of Israel who are indicated to have been continuously Spirit-empowered.
* The testimony of two post-exilic writers that the pre-exilic prophets were Spirit-empowered.
  + First, following the Babylonian exile, the prophet Zechariah speaks of the unwillingness of the Jews to hear the words of God’s prophets.

***Zechariah 7:12— "They made their hearts like flint so that they could not hear the law and the words which the LORD of hosts had sent by His Spirit through the former prophets; therefore great wrath came from the LORD of hosts.***

* + Second, seventy years after Zechariah, the prophet Nehemiah repeats the criticism of the obstinate Jews who would not listen to God’s prophets.

***Nehemiah 9:30— "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.***

**A comparison with other important people in the life of Israel who are indicated to have been continuously Spirit-empowered.**

* This category involved especially people who held public office.

1. The greatest example is Moses

***Numbers 11:17—"Then I will come down and speak with you there, and I will take of the Spirit who is upon you, and will put Him upon them; and they shall bear the burden of the people with you, so that you will not bear it all alone.***

2. When Joshua is chosen by God to lead the nation after Moses.

***Numbers 27:18—So the LORD said to Moses, "Take Joshua the son of Nun, a man in whom is the Spirit, and lay your hand on him;***

**4. The work of the Holy Spirit in Civil Administrators**

* This category involved especially people who held public office.

1. When Moses chooses 70 elders of Israel to help him judge.

***Numbers 11:17—"Then I will come down and speak with you there, and I will take of the Spirit who is upon you, and will put Him upon them; and they shall bear the burden of the people with you, so that you will not bear it all alone.***

2. As mentioned, Joshua is chosen by God to lead the nation after Moses.

***Numbers 27:18—So the LORD said to Moses, "Take Joshua the son of Nun, a man in whom is the Spirit, and lay your hand on him;***

3. Saul is chosen by God to lead Israel. Though temporarily empowered, he is not indwelt by the Spirit.

***1 Samuel 11:6— Then the Spirit of God came upon Saul mightily when he heard these words, and he became very angry.***

***1 Samuel 16:14— Now the Spirit of the LORD departed from Saul, and an evil spirit from the LORD terrorized him.***

4. David is chosen by God to lead Israel. As we see in 1 Samuel 16:13, the Spirit permanently indwelt David.

***1 Samuel 16:13— Then Samuel took the horn of oil and anointed him in the midst of his brothers; and the Spirit of the LORD came mightily upon David from that day forward. And Samuel arose and went to Ramah.***

“Closely related to the nature of the Spirit’s work in the Old Testament is the question of the change that came at Pentecost. The Scriptures teach that the day of Pentecost, following Christ’s resurrection, did mark the beginning of the church, and the Holy Spirit is definitely said to have come on its first members that day (Acts 2). What did the Spirit then begin to do in and through them that He had not done before?”

So far we’ve examined how and upon whom the Holy Spirit is said to come upon and empowered in the Old Testament. But the big question that needs to be addressed is, did the Holy Spirit give spiritual life in the Old Testament era as He does now? How do we know?

* What does the evidence from Scripture say?
  + The evidence that spiritual renewal, or regeneration, was true of the Old Testament people lies in two directions.

1. The people of the Old Testament, of whom salvation and righteousness are ascribed (Noah, Abraham, Joseph, Moses, David and those mentioned in Hebrews 11) lived in a way possible only for those who had experienced regeneration.

* + Despite enduring extreme injustice and affliction at the hands of his brothers and in Egypt, did Joseph blame God? Was Joseph naturally a man of upright character that he would not curse God?
  + Why did Job not curse God and die? Was he just a naturally good man?
  + Why did Daniel not withhold worship of God for 30 days, as commanded by Darius? Was he a good man?

2. The other avenue is based upon deductive reasoning.

* + The New Testament declares that all men are born condemned by Adam’s sin (Romans 3:23; 5:12-21)
  + Christ is the only way of salvation (John 14:6)
  + The way of salvation is through Christ’s atoning death (John 1:12; Acts 16:31).
  + When a person believes in Christ as his Savior, he experiences regeneration (Titus 3:5).

**Objection**

* One may object that Old Testament people could not exercise faith in Christ since Christ had not yet come. How do we answer this objection?

**Answer**

* Paul provides the biblical answer in Romans 4.

***Romans 4:3— For what does the Scripture say? “ABRAHAM BELIEVED GOD, AND IT WAS CREDITED TO HIM AS RIGHTEOUSNESS.”***

* + The Old Testament saints were counted righteous on the basis of believing what God revealed to them at the time.
  + If regeneration were not possible for the Old Testament saints, why did Jesus tell Nicodemus...

***John 3:7— "Do not be amazed that I said to you, 'You must be born again.’***

* + Jesus would not have told Nicodemus to do something that was impossible for him.

**Objection**

* If regeneration by the Holy Spirit did occur in the Old Testament, why is there no direct mention of this fact in the Old Testament writings?

**Answer**

* God saw fit to wait before revealing the reality of the Holy Spirit’s work in regeneration.
* The same can be said of Adam’s role as the Federal Head of the human race. It is not until the New Testament era that we learn that all men are condemned in Adam, even though it was always true.

**What about the Indwelling, Sealing and Filling ministries of the Holy Spirit?**

* First of all, what is the “indwelling” ministry of the Holy Spirit?
  + The term “indwelling” means “the continual residence of the Holy Spirit within the saint following regeneration.”
  + Multiple New Testament passages teach that believers are permanently indwelt by the Holy Spirit after regeneration.
    - Romans 5:5; 8:9, 11; 1 Corinthians 2:12, 6:19-20; 2 Corinthians 5:5; Galatians 4:6;

1 John 3:24; 4:13.

* What about the Old Testament believers? Were they permanently indwelt?
  + Again, the strongest argument comes from what Scripture teaches. New Testament teaching is clear that the believer is incapable of keeping himself, any more than he is capable of saving himself. We are only kept in a state of salvation by the power of God (1 Peter 1:5).

***1 Peter 1:5— who are protected by the power of God through faith for a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time.***

* What is the “sealing” ministry of the Holy Spirit?
  + The “sealing” ministry of the Holy Spirit is “the assurance of the sinner’s continued salvation. It is the assurance that one’s salvation will not and cannot be lost.”

***2 Corinthians 1:21-22—21 Now He who establishes us with you in Christ and anointed us is God, 22 who also sealed us and gave us the Spirit in our hearts as a pledge.***

***Ephesians 1:13-14— 13 In Him, you also, after listening to the message of truth, the gospel of your salvation—having also believed, you were sealed in Him with the Holy Spirit of promise, 14 who is given as a pledge of our inheritance.***

***Ephesians 4:30—Do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, by whom you were sealed for the day of redemption.***

* + If the Old Testament believers were ‘indwelt,’ then is naturally (and logically) follows that the permanent indwelling of the Spirit also resulted in them receiving the ‘sealing’ (assurance) ministry of the Spirit.
* What does the term “filling” refer to?
  + The term “filling” refers to “the control the Holy Spirit holds over the life and behavior of the believer.”
  + While “indwelling” refers to the continual presence of the Holy Spirit in the believer, “filling” is directly related to the believer’s degree of yieldedness to the will of the Spirit within him.
  + No person can be filled by the Spirit who is not indwelt, but a person may be indwelt without being filled.
  + The indwelling Spirit does not force His will on the believer, but seeks a voluntary submission, so that His will can dominate in the believer’s life. This domination by the Spirit is termed “filling.”
* Were the Old Testament believers able to experience the “filling” ministry of the Spirit in their lives?
  + There is no reason to exclude the Old Testament saints from this highly desired ministry of the Holy Spirit in their lives.