

# The Person and Work of God the Holy Spirit

## A Study

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### Part I - The Person of God the Holy Spirit

#### Lesson 5 - The Anointer

Throughout the Old Testament, the Holy Spirit is a fleeting presence. He appears from time to time, but His ministry is never described in great detail in the thirty-nine books of the Old Testament. The way that the Old Testament Scriptures describes the interaction between man and God the Holy Spirit is by using words that show that the fullness of the indwelling of God the Holy Spirit had not yet been manifest like:

- ✓ The Holy Spirit “came upon” someone
- ✓ The Holy Spirit “moved upon” someone
- ✓ The Holy Spirit “rested upon” someone

We must understand that all redeemed people are saved in the very same way. God the Holy Spirit comes into them to open their blind eyes, unstop their deaf ears, take out of them a stony heart and give them a heart of flesh, and to dwell within them. No one is saved without the sovereign move of God the Holy Spirit to regenerate them. But the understanding of that was not as complete under the Old Covenant as it is under the New.

One role that God the Spirit plays repeatedly in the Old Testament is that of *empowering* the leaders of Israel for their God-given tasks. These leaders were those who were given the “anointed” tasks of prophet, priest, and king. The Spirit rested on these men, though His presence with them was usually temporary. He anointed them to empower them for specific tasks.

There are numerous Old Testament examples of the Spirit anointing leaders:

#### **Judges 3:10**

**The Spirit of the LORD came upon him (Othniel), and he judged Israel. When he went out to war, the LORD gave Cushan-rishathaim king of Mesopotamia into his hand, so that he prevailed over Cushan-rishathaim.**

#### **Judges 11:29a**

**Now the Spirit of the LORD came upon Jephthah...**

#### **1Samuel 11:6a**

**Then the Spirit of God came upon Saul mightily when he heard these words...**

#### **1Samuel 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...**

All of these examples show that the Spirit's anointing for ministry was limited. But all throughout the Old Testament, God gave hints that the nature of the Spirit's anointing would be much broader and lasting someday in the future. One of these hints is found in the book of Numbers. We read there,

#### **Numbers 11:4-9**

**4 The rabble who were among them had greedy desires; and also the sons of Israel wept again and said, "Who will give us meat to eat?"**

**5 "We remember the fish which we used to eat free in Egypt, the cucumbers and the melons and the leeks and the onions and the garlic,**

**6 but now our appetite is gone. There is nothing at all to look at except this manna."**

**7 Now the manna was like coriander seed, and its appearance like that of bdellium.**

**8 The people would go about and gather *it* and grind *it* between two millstones or beat *it* in the mortar, and boil *it* in the pot and make cakes with it; and its taste was as the taste of cakes baked with oil.**

**9 When the dew fell on the camp at night, the manna would fall with it.**

Here we see that God had redeemed Israel from 400 years of bondage in Egypt. As He led them through the desert toward the promised land, He sovereignly cared for their daily needs giving them miraculous provisions from heaven in the form of manna.

At first, the people of Israel rejoiced in their freedom and the kind hand of providence that gave them food to eat every day. But soon they became dissatisfied. They forgot the whips, the torture, the sweat, and the impoverishment of their slavery. Now their deepest dreams were filled with visions of the fish, the cucumbers, the melons, the leeks, the onions, and the garlic they had eaten in Egypt. They were unhappy about having to eat the same thing, manna, for every meal.

As the account in Numbers continues, we read,

#### **Numbers 11:10**

**Now Moses heard the people weeping throughout their families, each man at the doorway of his tent; and the anger of the LORD was kindled greatly, and Moses was displeased.**

So it seems that everyone was displeased at this point. In Moses' case, however, it was much more. He was beside himself:

#### **Numbers 11:11-15**

**11 So Moses said to the LORD , "Why have You been so hard on Your servant? And why have I not found favor in Your sight, that You have laid the burden of all this people on me?"**

**12 "Was it I who conceived all this people? Was it I who brought them forth, that You should say to me, 'Carry them in your bosom as a nurse carries a nursing infant, to the land which You swore to their fathers'?"**

**13 "Where am I to get meat to give to all this people? For they weep before me, saying, 'Give us meat that we may eat!'"**

**14 "I alone am not able to carry all this people, because it is too burdensome for me.**

**15 "So if You are going to deal thus with me, please kill me at once, if I have found favor in Your sight, and do not let me see my wretchedness."**

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Now we can judge the depths of Moses' despair by the Words of the prayer he made on this occasion,

**... if You are going to deal thus with me, please kill me at once, if I have found favor in Your sight, and do not let me see my wretchedness.**

Moses had thousands of people complaining to him to give them something he had no way to provide. At that point, death seemed preferable to continuing to lead the Israelites. But God's response was not what Moses expected,

**Numbers 11:16-20**

**16 The LORD therefore said to Moses, "Gather for Me seventy men from the elders of Israel, whom you know to be the elders of the people and their officers and bring them to the tent of meeting, and let them take their stand there with you.**

**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.**

**18 "Say to the people, 'Consecrate yourselves for tomorrow, and you shall eat meat; for you have wept in the ears of the LORD, saying, "Oh that someone would give us meat to eat! For we were well-off in Egypt."' Therefore the LORD will give you meat and you shall eat.**

**19 'You shall eat, not one day, nor two days, nor five days, nor ten days, nor twenty days, 20 but a whole month, until it comes out of your nostrils and becomes loathsome to you; because you have rejected the LORD who is among you and have wept before Him, saying, "Why did we ever leave Egypt?'"**

The lesson here is this:

*Be careful what you pray for.*

The people were crying for meat, so God said,

*"OK, if you want meat, I'll give you meat. I'll give you meat for breakfast, meat for lunch, meat for dinner, and meat for a midnight snack, and not just for one or two days but for a whole month, until it is coming out of your noses."*

God said He would give them meat until they could not stand the sight of it anymore.

Now it would seem that Moses should have been relieved at this news. God was going to give the people what they wanted, taking the pressure off Moses. It would have been logical for

Moses to say: *“Thank you, Lord, for taking charge of this situation. I appreciate it very much.”* But this is not what happened. Instead, Moses had a crisis of faith. He said to God,

#### **Numbers 11:21&22**

**21** But Moses said, "The people, among whom I am, are 600,000 on foot; yet You have said, 'I will give them meat, so that they may eat for a whole month.'

**22** "Should flocks and herds be slaughtered for them, to be sufficient for them? Or should all the fish of the sea be gathered together for them, to be sufficient for them?"

Now when Moses spoke of six hundred thousand men of foot here, he was referring to the size of the Israelites army- the men who were ready for battle. This figure did not include the young boys, the children, the elderly, the infirm, or the women. So, all in all, Moses was responsible for well over two million people. And he simply could not see any way that God could fulfill His promises to give this vast host of people meat to eat for a month. But God responded,

#### **Numbers 11:23**

**The LORD said to Moses, "Is the LORD'S power limited? Now you shall see whether My word will come true for you or not."**

So basically, God asked Moses, “Am I God or am I not God?” Then He challenged Moses to simply watch and see what He would do. Hearing that, Moses said no more. He simply did as God had commanded him.

#### **Numbers 11:24&25**

**24** So Moses went out and told the people the Words of the LORD. Also, he gathered seventy men of the elders of the people, and stationed them around the tent.

**25** Then the LORD came down in the cloud and spoke to him; and He took of the Spirit who was upon him and placed *Him* upon the seventy elders. And when the Spirit rested upon them, they prophesied. But they did not do *it* again.

#### **Assistants for Moses**

Now as we begin to explore this important incident, it is helpful to consider an earlier event that is recorded in **Exodus 18**. There we are told that after God brought the people of Israel out of Egypt, Moses’ father-in-law, Jethro, the priest of Midian, came to visit him at the Israelite camp at Sinai. During his visit, Jethro saw that Moses sat to decide disputes among the people from morning till evening (vv. 1–13). Then we read,

#### **Exodus 18:14-26**

**14** Now when Moses' father-in-law saw all that he was doing for the people, he said, "What is this thing that you are doing for the people? Why do you alone sit *as judge* and all the people stand about you from morning until evening?"

**15** Moses said to his father-in-law, "Because the people come to me to inquire of God.

**16 "When they have a dispute, it comes to me, and I judge between a man and his neighbor and make known the statutes of God and His laws."**

**17 Moses' father-in-law said to him, "The thing that you are doing is not good.**

**18 "You will surely wear out, both yourself and these people who are with you, for the task is too heavy for you; you cannot do it alone.**

**19 "Now listen to me: I will give you counsel, and God be with you. You be the people's representative before God, and you bring the disputes to God,**

**20 then teach them the statutes and the laws, and make known to them the way in which they are to walk and the work they are to do.**

**21 "Furthermore, you shall select out of all the people able men who fear God, men of truth, those who hate dishonest gain; and you shall place *these* over them *as* leaders of thousands, of hundreds, of fifties and of tens.**

**22 "Let them judge the people at all times; and let it be that every major dispute they will bring to you, but every minor dispute they themselves will judge. So it will be easier for you, and they will bear *the burden* with you.**

**23 "If you do this thing and God *so* commands you, then you will be able to endure, and all these people also will go to their place in peace."**

**24 So Moses listened to his father-in-law and did all that he had said.**

**25 Moses chose able men out of all Israel and made them heads over the people, leaders of thousands, of hundreds, of fifties and of tens.**

**26 They judged the people at all times; the difficult dispute they would bring to Moses, but every minor dispute they themselves would judge.**

Moses took Jethro's advice and appointed men to serve as judges under him, while he functioned as the "chief justice," hearing the most difficult cases. In the account in Numbers, God did something similar. God had told Moses to gather seventy men who were elders of the people and to bring them to the tabernacle (11:16). In effect, God was saying: "I will ease the burden of leadership on you. I am going to give you not just one assistant but seventy." When they gathered, God took some of the Spirit that was on Moses and placed it on the seventy elders. As a result, there was no longer just one anointed leader in the camp, there were seventy-one of them.

Moses had been anointed by the Holy Spirit to act as the mediator of the old covenant. Now, God anointed seventy more people to participate in this work. It is significant that He did not give them an anointing of their own. Rather, He disbursed the Spirit that was upon Moses among the seventy elders. When He did so, they all began to prophesy in a unique way, a way they had never done before and never did afterward. This outward manifestation showed that they had been empowered by the Holy Spirit.

And then almost as a footnote, we read,

**Numbers 11:26&27**

**26 But two men had remained in the camp; the name of one was Eldad and the name of the other Medad. And the Spirit rested upon them (now they were among those who had been registered, but had not gone out to the tent), and they prophesied in the camp.**

**27 So a young man ran and told Moses and said, "Eldad and Medad are prophesying in the camp."**

Now this was scandalous. The people did not yet know that God had commanded this distribution of the Holy Spirit beyond the person of Moses to the seventy elders. So, when they observed Eldad and Medad prophesying, they were horrified that this might be the sign of a false prophet. So, they ran to inform Moses about it.

When the news reached Moses, his assistant, Joshua, was particularly upset.

**Numbers 11:28**

**Then Joshua the son of Nun, the attendant of Moses from his youth, said, "Moses, my lord, restrain them."**

Now why did Joshua make this request? Was he opposed to prophecy? Was he against the Power of the Holy Spirit? Not at all. Joshua was simply concerned that this was a threat to Moses' leadership. He saw it as an attempted uprising against the duly constituted authority of the Old Testament Church.

And so, Moses' response is vital for our understanding of the work of the Holy Spirit. We read,

**Numbers 11:29**

**But Moses said to him, "Are you jealous for my sake? Would that all the LORD'S people were prophets, that the LORD would put His Spirit upon them!"**

So, while Joshua protested the expansion of the anointing of the Holy Spirit to empower God's people for ministry, Moses actually delighted in it. He even expressed the desire that God would place His Spirit on each and every one of His people.

You see, in ancient Israel, during the time of Moses, the notion that the Spirit might rest on every believer was merely a hope or a prayer on the lips of God's people. But later on, that hope became a prophecy. The prophet Joel wrote,

**Joel 2:28&29**

**28 "It will come about after this That I will pour out My Spirit on all mankind; And your sons and daughters will prophesy, Your old men will dream dreams, Your young men will see visions.**

**29 "Even on the male and female servants I will pour out My Spirit in those days.**

Under the Spirit's inspiration, Joel said that in the last days, God would pour out His Spirit on "all flesh," that is, on all the people of God. The empowering of the Holy Spirit for ministry would no longer be limited to isolated individuals or to a small core of people, but every person in the fellowship of God would be so endowed.

## Prayer and Prophecy Fulfilled

What was a prayer for Moses and a prophecy for Joel became a historical reality on the day of Pentecost, when God took of the Spirit that was upon Jesus, the mediator of the New Covenant, and distributed Him not to seventy, but to all the believers.

Jesus had told the disciples that this would happen. In the book of The Acts, Dr. Luke writes,

### The Acts 1:4&5

**4 Gathering them together, He commanded them not to leave Jerusalem, but to wait for what the Father had promised, "Which," He said, "you heard of from Me;**

**5 for John baptized with water, but you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days from now."**

One of the last things Jesus told His disciples before He ascended to His Father was that they should stay for a short time in Jerusalem so that they might receive the fulfillment of a promise the Father had made. Jesus was talking about the promise of the baptism of the Holy Spirit in the prophecy of Joel. He told them it would happen in the very near future. Luke continues,

### The Acts 1:6-8

**6 So when they had come together, they were asking Him, saying, "Lord, is it at this time You are restoring the kingdom to Israel?"**

**7 He said to them, "It is not for you to know times or epochs which the Father has fixed by His own authority;**

**8 but you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be My witnesses both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and even to the remotest part of the earth."**

Here Jesus associated the baptism of the Spirit with power to be His witnesses. In all the passages that we have discussed: **Numbers 11, Joel 2**, and especially here in **The Acts 1**, the anointing of the Holy Spirit is associated with a gracious divine gifting. The Greek word for this kind of gift is "charisma". Thus, the gifts that the Spirit brings are known as the "charismatic" gifts or the "charismata". The Bible teaches that God the Holy Spirit gives these gifts to Christ's Church to empower the people of God to carry out the mission that Christ gave to His people- to go into all the earth and to bear witness of Him to the peoples of the world.

So, that was the Promise. And after the Resurrection, on the day of Pentecost, the Spirit indeed came upon the disciples with power,

### The Acts 2:1-11

**1 When the day of Pentecost had come, they were all together in one place.**

**2 And suddenly there came from heaven a noise like a violent rushing wind, and it filled the whole house where they were sitting.**

**3** And there appeared to them tongues as of fire distributing themselves, and they rested on each one of them.

**4** And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit was giving them utterance.

**5** Now there were Jews living in Jerusalem, devout men from every nation under heaven.

**6** And when this sound occurred, the crowd came together, and were bewildered because each one of them was hearing them speak in his own language.

**7** They were amazed and astonished, saying, "Why, are not all these who are speaking Galileans?"

**8** "And how is it that we each hear *them* in our own language to which we were born?"

**9** "Parthians and Medes and Elamites, and residents of Mesopotamia, Judea and Cappadocia, Pontus and Asia,

**10** Phrygia and Pamphylia, Egypt and the districts of Libya around Cyrene, and visitors from Rome, both Jews and proselytes,

**11** Cretans and Arabs — we hear them in our *own* tongues speaking of the mighty deeds of God."

Pentecost was an annual feast that was held in Jerusalem. Jewish pilgrims from all over the world came to Jerusalem for the feast of Pentecost. So, there was a huge assembly of Jews from many regions speaking many languages. But the feast was interrupted by a supernatural event that was marked by a visible manifestation of the Holy Spirit- tongues of fire that rested over the heads of the disciples. And an audible manifestation: the disciples spoke about "the mighty works of God" in the languages of all of those who were present.

After that anointing by the Spirit, the disciples were changed men. They began to preach that Jesus was the Christ, the Savior, and they would not be silenced even by threats of execution. Soon, they began to take the message of the Gospel everywhere, just as Jesus had commanded them, and soon it was said of them that they had "turned the world upside down" (The Acts 17:6).

This is the power of the anointing that the Spirit gives to each and every person who trusts in Jesus Christ under the New Covenant.

Martin Luther, the great German reformer of the sixteenth century, spoke of "*the priesthood of all believers.*" Some people, especially in the modern church, take this to mean that there is to be no distinction in the Church between clergy and laity, but that is not what Luther meant. He was saying that the work of the kingdom of God is not given solely to those who have the vocations of preacher, teacher, deacon, or elder. In other words, every Christian is called to participate in the ministry of Christ and in the ministry of the Church. That can be intimidating, but with that call comes the gift of the Holy Spirit, who anoints and empowers all of Christ's people to serve Him.



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The Covenant of Peace Church 13600 John Clark Road Gulfport, Mississippi 39503 228.832.7729 [www.covenantofpeace.net](http://www.covenantofpeace.net)

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