

# OpenTheo

## The Holy Spirit (Part 1)



### The Holy Spirit - Steve Gregg

Exploring the nature of the Holy Spirit, Steve Gregg delves into the power and presence of God in the believer's life. Drawing from biblical texts, Gregg examines the unique role of the Holy Spirit in prayer, decision-making, and guiding the actions of believers. Emphasizing the personal nature of the Holy Spirit, Gregg highlights the Spirit's ability to communicate and work within individuals, while also clarifying the distinctions between the Spirit, Jesus, and God the Father. As he delves into the Old and New Testament references to the Holy Spirit, Gregg underscores the transformative role of the Spirit in the lives of believers both past and present.

### Transcript

. . . . . sessions we're going to be talking about the Holy Spirit and His work in the life of the believer. And that's a wide subject, and we'll talk as much as we can about the whole range of what the Bible has to say on that subject. And hopefully not just learn information.

In my opinion, when we study the Word of God, we're studying that which is alive and powerful and sharper than any intuitive sword. So the Word of God is not supposed to simply transmit information, as valuable as that may be, since the truth will set you free. But also, life.

I believe the Word of God is supposed to be imparting life as well as truth to us. That's what I pray will happen as we discuss things that maybe are familiar to you. This is a diverse group here, so I don't really know the backgrounds.

I don't know how much any of this will be new. How much any of it will be agreeable with what your background is. Because there's obviously some of the points that are related to the work of the Holy Spirit in the life of the believer that not all Christians see quite alike.

And we'll do what we can to be faithful to the Scriptures on this. Because I don't know the background of everyone here, I'm going to start at the most basic point. And that is who the Holy Spirit is.

Actually, there are many Christians, who have been Christians a long time, who when they speak of the Holy Spirit, they don't think of Him as a who, but as an it. What the Holy Spirit is. People often very naturally speak of the Holy Spirit and use the word it when speaking of the Spirit.

Because frankly, the Holy Spirit for some people doesn't seem very personal. Of course, there are some people, depending on their tradition, who don't even think of the Holy Spirit as a person, but as a mere power. And of course, the power of God, it comes upon us when the Holy Spirit comes upon us.

But that's not because the Holy Spirit is power. The Holy Spirit is God. And that's what we want to examine first of all.

Instead of thinking of the Holy Spirit as it, you know, the Jehovah's Witnesses would say the Holy Spirit is God's active force. And although we, who are Trinitarian, would say something a little more orthodox than that. Still, whatever we may say about our theology, there are still tendencies to think certain ways, to image things certain ways.

And how do you image the Holy Spirit? Like, you really can't. I'm not sure we're supposed to. God told Israel when He met them on the Mount, you know, you saw no image of me.

You saw no likeness. And He's basically saying, therefore, don't try to make any images of me. You don't know what I look like.

And that remains true. I guess the most that God looks like now is Jesus. But we don't even know exactly what He looked like.

In fact, not very much at all. We're not necessarily called upon to picture God in our minds. But to picture Him in our understanding, perhaps more.

To understand who He is. What He's there for. What it is He expects of us.

And actually what we can expect from Him. These are the things that have to do with the relationship with the real person. And just to start out by demonstrating that we're talking about a person and not a force.

And this, as I say, may not be new to many of you. But it is to some people. And therefore, I'm going to start in the most basic place.

We can see that the way the Scripture speaks about the Holy Spirit, He is a personal being. Now, I know a spirit-filled Christian man who objected to me saying that God is a person. And he and I argued about it a great deal.

And, of course, when I say person, I mean not impersonal, but personal. Has personality. Has personhood.

He was thinking of person like a human person. But even though I told him that's not what I meant, he still couldn't get that out of his head. When you say God's a person, or three persons for that matter, many people think of three human beings in a room.

The Trinity is like a committee of people. The word person means having the qualities of personhood as opposed to something impersonal. Electricity is an impersonal force.

Nuclear power is an impersonal power. God's power is simply part of His person, part of one of His attributes. And He has personality.

And personality involves having a mind. I suppose many animals, we could say, have personality. They're not human persons, but they have, if you have cats or dogs, I mean, it's hard to believe they're not human sometimes, because they definitely have personalities sometimes.

This would be true of some of the higher animals. But in terms of humans, we are made persons in God's image to have an interpersonal relationship with a personal God. And the Holy Spirit is not just an aspect of God.

He is God. We see, for example, when Paul is speaking about the Spirit, in Romans 8, verse 27, he's talking about our prayer life. It says, And he who searches the hearts knows what is the mind of the Spirit, because the Spirit intercedes for the saints according to the will of God.

Now, the point I wanted to draw from that statement is that there is a mind of the Spirit. The Holy Spirit has a mind. And He does things.

He intercedes. Like that's praying. He intercedes on our behalf according to the will of God.

But the mind of the Spirit is what I'm wanting to call attention to, first of all, because electricity and other kinds of natural powers don't have minds. Only persons have minds. And in the book of Acts, when the Jerusalem council met and decided the issue of the degree to which Gentiles had to take on Jewish norms in order to be really saved, they came up with a favorable decision from my point of view.

We don't have to be circumcised. And that's it. I'm glad it went that way, frankly.

But in Acts chapter 15, when they wrote a letter to the Gentile churches about this, it says, For it has seemed good to the Holy Spirit and to us to lay on you no greater burden than these requirements. And they list a few things they wanted the Gentiles to do that did not include keeping the whole ceremonial love of the Jews. But it says, It seemed good to the Holy Spirit.

If something seems good to somebody, they have an opinion about things. They have a

mind. They're thinking about something.

They favor something and they disfavor other things. This is personality. This is personhood.

And the Holy Spirit has that. And he also has emotions. In Isaiah 63, 10, it says that Israel vexed, in the King James, I think, modern verses, when I say grieved the Holy Spirit of God.

He experiences grief in Ephesians 4, 30. Paul says, Do not grieve the Holy Spirit. Now, grief is an emotion.

We know back in Genesis 6 that when God saw the violence filling the earth, it grieved him at his heart, it says. Well, the Holy Spirit grieves at certain things, so we're told not to grieve him in our conduct. So we're dealing with somebody who has a mind, who has opinions, who has emotions, who can be upset, who can be unhappy and grieved.

He also, like human persons, but not entirely like us, of course, he communicates. He not only thinks, but he communicates what he thinks. He not only emotes, but he communicates his emotions.

He lets us know what's going on in his mind. And so we read frequently, of course, about the Holy Spirit speaking. Of course, the entire Bible, in a sense, we could equate with the Holy Spirit speaking, since all Scripture is given by inspiration of God.

And as Paul said in 2 Timothy, and also in 2 Peter 1, it says that holy men of God, they spoke as they were moved by the Holy Spirit. But that language would not necessarily clarify that the Holy Spirit is the one speaking. I mean, I suppose an active force could move somebody to speak for God without declaring necessarily that that force is the one who's doing the talking.

In 2 Samuel, chapter 23, in verse 2, it says, This is David, of course, writing. The Spirit of the Lord speaks by me. His word is on my tongue.

Now, David wrote lots of the Psalms, at least half of them. And the New Testament quotes the Psalms more than it quotes any other Old Testament book. And it does so in order to show that the Psalms spoke about Christ.

We know that in Acts, chapter 2, Peter on the day of Pentecost was quoting from Psalm 16 and said that David being a prophet spoke of the resurrection of the Christ. In his sermon he said that. And here David says, The Spirit of the Lord speaks by me.

The way Jesus put it when he's talking about Psalm 110, he said, Why did David say, Through the Spirit? The Lord said to my Lord, Sit here at my right hand until I make your enemies your footstool. David spoke by the Spirit. But as David put it, The Holy Spirit

speaks by me.

David speaks by the Spirit like a prophet, but that's the Holy Spirit speaking through him. It's the Holy Spirit who has something to say. He's got something to communicate.

He's a communicating God. In John, chapter 15, Jesus is obviously in the upper room with the disciples. He's preparing them for the fact that the Holy Spirit is going to come.

And that he himself is going away, but they will have another comforter, another paracletos, advocate with the Father, the Spirit of truth. And he's telling them various things about what to expect when the Spirit comes. And he says in verse 26 of John 15, He says, But when the Helper comes, whom I will send to you from the Father, the Spirit of truth, who proceeds from the Father, he will bear witness about me.

Now, bearing witness is speaking. In a courtroom, they call a witness and they bear witness to certain things that they know and that they've seen. And that is, of course, what the Holy Spirit does.

He bears witness of Christ. Of course, Jesus goes on to say, And you also who have been with me will bear witness. So, just as we communicate with people about Christ, the Holy Spirit himself does.

There's been many times in my younger years when I did a lot more street evangelism stuff and evangelizing non-Christians one-on-one, that if they were not accepting immediately what I was saying, but they weren't trying to get away, they wanted to talk, I would say to them, You know, I don't have to convince you of this because the Holy Spirit's telling you that what I'm saying is true. Anyway, you know it's true because the Holy Spirit's bearing witness to what I'm saying. They never said, No, he isn't.

They never denied that. And I don't know that that ever was more effective in causing them to get saved than something else, but that was nonetheless something I counted on because of what Jesus said. The Holy Spirit bears witness of him.

And in the next chapter, chapter 16 of John, in verse 13, Jesus said, When the Spirit of truth comes, he will guide you into all truth, for he will not speak on his own authority, but whatever he hears, he will speak, and he will declare to you things that are to come. So again, the Holy Spirit is hearing things and speaking things and declaring things. Again, this is the activity of a person, not an impersonal force by any means.

In 1 Timothy 4, 1, Paul said, Now the Spirit speaks expressly that in the latter times many shall depart from the faith. And he goes on with this oracle from the Holy Spirit. He says the Holy Spirit speaks these things clearly, expressly.

Now, because he is a person, he not only communicates with us, but we communicate apparently with him, including the possibility of lying to him. In Acts chapter 5, verse 1,

Peter told Ananias and Sapphira, You have lied to the Holy Spirit. Why has Satan filled your heart to lie to the Holy Ghost, the Holy Spirit? Now, obviously you can't lie to this table in front of you.

It would make no sense. You're not trying to communicate anything to it, even misinformation. And you communicate things to God and to his Holy Spirit.

And it's also possible to insult him, according to Hebrews 10, 29, that those who continue in sin after having known the truth, they insult the Spirit of grace, the writer says in Hebrews 10, 29. So here we have many, many evidences in Scripture that when we talk about the Holy Spirit, we're not talking about a thing. We're talking about someone, a being that is personal, that communicates, that we communicate with, that can be upset, that can be grieved, that can be insulted, that has a mind, opinions, preferences.

We're dealing with a relationship, interpersonal between ourselves and another person who is the Holy Spirit. Now, many people are confused, and I would have to include myself among them, concerning exactly what the differences are between our relationship with the Spirit and with Jesus and with God, the Father, and so forth. Because these three we know from the doctrine of the Trinity that most of us, I'm sure, adhere to.

We understand these are three personal centers of consciousness in God. Each having his own identity, and yet, in some sense, one God. And the lines are a little blurred between them in some ways, so that sometimes even Paul speaks about the Holy Spirit and Christ almost interchangeably.

And if you look, for example, at Romans 8, an example of that, Romans 8, 9 and 10, Paul said, And you, however, are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if in fact the Spirit of God dwells in you. Anyone who does not have the Spirit of Christ does not belong to him. But if Christ is in you, although the body is dead because of sin, the Spirit is alive because of righteousness.

Now, notice the progression of his thought here. You are not in the flesh, you are in the Spirit, if the Spirit of God dwells in you. Then he says, and if the Spirit of Christ is in you, or if you don't have the Spirit of Christ, he's now changed the term Spirit of God to the Spirit of Christ, and then the next line is, and if Christ is in you.

So Paul is definitely blurring the lines here. There's a sense in which the Holy Spirit in me is the Spirit of Christ in me, which is Christ in me. When we tell little children that Jesus lives in their heart, what do we really mean, and what do they think we mean? Do they think there's a little Jesus, that they picture him like from the pictures of him, and he's a little Jesus in there somewhere in their blood pump under the fifth rib? Or what do we mean by that? Well, to say that Christ dwells in us is really more exactly the Spirit of Christ dwells in us.

Jesus is at the right hand of God, and Peter said in Acts chapter 3 that he will remain there. The heavens must retain him until the time of the restoration of all things, Peter said, which apparently has not yet happened. So Christ is still in heaven.

His glorified, resurrected body is apparently at the right hand of God, not here. But he is so one with his Spirit that his Spirit in us is the same as him being us. Christ dwells in us through the Holy Spirit, through the Spirit of Christ.

Peter also refers to the Holy Spirit as the Spirit of Christ. In 1 Peter chapter 1 and verses 10 through 12, he talks about how the prophets, wishing to know more, inquired diligently of what it was that the Spirit of Christ in them was saying. It's interesting, he's talking about the Old Testament prophets.

The prophets before Jesus came, we would say the Holy Spirit was in them. In fact, honestly, Peter himself says that in 2 Peter 1. They were moved, he said, by the Holy Spirit. But in 1 Peter 1, he refers to the Holy Spirit as the Spirit of Christ that was in them.

That particular statement is in 1 Peter 1.11. Also in Philippians 1.19, Paul refers to the Spirit as the Spirit of Christ. So we have essentially Christ dwelling in us through the impartation of his Spirit. I don't know how we're supposed to really picture this, if we're supposed to try to picture it at all.

But the way I understand it, and this is something that's not anything I would insist on anyone else seeing quite the same way. This is just how I think about it. I think of Jesus when he was here on earth.

He was obviously the body of Christ. The Spirit of Christ dwelt in him and only in him. We read in John chapter 7 and verses 37 through 39, Jesus at the Feast of Tabernacles stood up and said, If anyone thirsts, let him come unto me, and he that believes in me, as the Scripture has said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water.

And then John comments on that in verse 39, John 7, 39, and he says, This he spoke of the Holy Spirit, who was not yet given, because Jesus was not yet glorified. So certainly Jesus operated through the Holy Spirit. And we'll see evidence of that scripturally too as we go along here.

He possessed the Holy Spirit, the Holy Spirit possessed him. He was in a sense baptized in the Holy Spirit at his water baptism. The Spirit came upon him in the form of a dove.

And after that he said he was doing things through the Holy Spirit. He taught through the Spirit, it says in Acts chapter 1. He cast out demons by the Spirit, he said. He was operating in the power of the Holy Spirit.

But he was the only one doing so. Until he was glorified, that is after his resurrection when he sat at the right hand of God, only he possessed and embodied the Spirit of

Christ in a mere mortal body really. I mean when you think of Jesus, he's obviously unique.

But what was unique was not his physical body. He had the same kind of body everyone else has. Mortal, capable of becoming fatigued, certainly needed to eat, needed to do all the bodily functions that a human body does.

There was nothing supernatural about the physicality of Jesus. Of course it was supernaturally generated in the womb since he had no human father. But the body that was born, we're not given any evidence in Scripture that his physical body was any different significantly than yours or mine physical body.

But what made him different was God was in Christ reconciling the world to himself. He was the Word made flesh. The flesh part was not exceptional.

It's the Word that was in him, the flesh embodied or was a vessel. But we also possess this treasure in earthen vessels, Paul tells us in 2 Corinthians 4. So that we now are embodiment in a sense of the Spirit of Christ, but not me or you, but me and you, all of us collectively make the body of Christ. That the body of Christ was one human person walking around on the earth filled with the Spirit of Christ, operating through the Spirit of God during the lifetime of Jesus.

But he said, if I don't go away, the helper can't come to you. I've got to go so that I can send the same Spirit to you. And he said, and you know him because he's with you.

He said that in John chapter 14. You know him already because he's with you, but he will be in you, he said. That's interesting.

What sense was the Holy Spirit with them at that moment? No doubt in Jesus himself. You've come to know this Holy Spirit because he's in me and I'm the incarnation of that Spirit and you've known me, I'm with you. But he's going to be in you now.

And what happened I believe at Pentecost when the Spirit was sent or possibly even on the resurrection day when Jesus breathed on them and said receive the Holy Spirit, not entirely clear what happened there that would be debated by some. But when the Holy Spirit came to take a presence in the Christians, plural, they, plural, became the singular body of Christ. There's one body.

But that body of Christ collectively functions in the world as a continuation of the same Spirit embodied in human beings that was embodied in one human being, the Word made flesh and dwelling among us, God incarnate. In that sense, none of us is really like Christ because none of us is the complete body of Christ as he was. But collectively all Christians are the body of Christ.

But you might be a hand or a foot or a nose or an ear or something. Jesus had all the



parts and apparently all the gifts. He operated in the gifts of the Spirit that Paul mentions.

We don't have any record of him, of Jesus ever using the gifted tongues. Whether he did or not we have no idea. But some people say he couldn't use the gifted tongues because gifted tongues requires that you don't know the language and Jesus knew everything.

But they think Jesus knew everything. I think when he was on earth he operated under human limitations and he didn't know everything. I think he depended on his Father through the Holy Spirit to reveal to him things just like he expects us to do.

There's a sense in which God when he became flesh had to trim down his attributes of magnitude into a small container in Jesus. So that although Jesus before he came to earth when he was in the form of God, before he emptied himself according to Philippians 2, before he emptied himself and took on the form of a servant, he was omnipresent, he was omniscient, he was omnipotent. That's what God is and that's what Jesus was.

That's what the word was. The word was God. But in coming to dwell in a human vessel he had to trim down some of those things.

He wasn't omnipresent. Jesus wasn't everywhere at once. He even said so.

When Lazarus died he told his disciples, our friend Lazarus is dead and I'm glad I wasn't there so that you might believe. I wasn't there. No, you're not omnipresent when you're in a human body.

You're in one place at a time. He wasn't omniscient and he said that too. He made that very clear when he said, when will you come? He said, well, no one knows that, not even me.

Only the Father knows that. He says no man nor the angels nor the Son knows that. Only the Father knows that.

So Jesus said there's things he didn't know. There's places that he was not. And certainly there was also limits to his power.

When he went to Nazareth he could do no mighty works there because of their unbelief. He marveled at that. And when he did miracles something went out of him.

Remember when the woman said if I touch the hem of his garment my issue of blood will stop? And she was right, she did. But Jesus said, I felt power go out of me. Who did that? Who touched me? And so Jesus had the Holy Spirit operating through him because he had taken on the form of a servant.

He didn't have to do that. He didn't have to limit himself like that. But he did that that he

might live among us and be mortal.

If he hadn't done that he couldn't die. God can't die. If he hadn't done that he couldn't be tempted.

God cannot be tempted with evil but Jesus was tempted. He had to go through all that we go through and that required him taking on limits of humanity. So we have in Jesus the body of Christ, a normal human body, but filled with and completely always walking in the spirit of God.

So that the power of God, the gifts of the spirit are operating through him. But you see the same miracles Jesus did or at least many of them were done by his apostles after Pentecost. Some people think Jesus did those miracles to prove he was God.

Well then did Peter prove that he was God when he did miracles like that? Or did Peter, Paul, was Paul God? No this is proving that God was operating through him. Certainly Jesus was God but he was also man and as man he had taken on the limitations of human flesh. And like we have, we have the limitations of human flesh.

But like him we are to be filled with the Holy Spirit operating through the power of the spirit. It's just that I don't have all the gifts. I've never worked a miracle to my knowledge.

I prayed for the sick and I think sometimes they've gotten better, sometimes I got sick. I don't have the gift of healing or the gift of miracles. We can all pray for the sick, we can all pray for something.

I remember once praying for the rain to stop and it stopped instantly. It hadn't stopped for two weeks. I won't give the details, it's a side issue.

But there was a need in the ministry to move some electrical equipment across a lawn to do some ministry at a prison. And there was no way to get the equipment closer and it had been raining incessantly for two weeks. It was flooding, it was a big nationwide news thing.

The Love Creek mudslides in Santa Cruz were from this over saturation because the rain just kept coming. Bridges washed out, the electricity was out for weeks. But we needed to move this electrical amplifier and some things like that.

And there was a skeptical guard kind of sneering because he knew we were not going to be able to get those things safely across the distance we had to take it. There was no way to bring the car closer. So he said, what are you going to do? I said, I guess we'll just have to pray for the rain to stop.

He sneered so I went over with the other guys, members of the band and we prayed.

And when it stopped raining, the rain had stopped. We took the equipment in, did the concert, came back, covered it with the tarp, started home and the rain started again.

It rained for days. We just had a brief thing there. Now that doesn't mean anything about me.

I prayed for rain to stop other times and it didn't happen. It's just God. But I don't have a gift of miracles.

But God might answer anyone's prayer about anything. You don't have to have special gifts for prayers to be answered. But there are special gifts that God invests in individuals that when they do those things, they're doing part of what Jesus did when he was here.

He did other things too. Other people will do those things, not you. There's a body of Christ, there's a collective phenomenon in whom the spirit of Christ works as he worked in the body of Christ when he was one man in the Middle East 2,000 years ago.

Now, the fact that he's the spirit of Christ, we know he's also God and God is Christ. I mentioned a moment ago when Peter told Ananias and Sapphira they had lied to the Holy Spirit. In the very next verse, he said, you have not lied to man but to God.

He apparently acquainted the Holy Spirit with God. That's in Acts 5, 3 and 4. In 2 Corinthians 3, 17, Paul said, now the Lord is that spirit. And where the spirit of the Lord is, there's liberty.

The Lord is that spirit. Usually when Paul says the Lord, he means Jesus. Of course, in the Old Testament, the Lord means Yahweh or God probably.

The Father is how we would normally understand it. But in the New Testament, the word the Lord is almost always a reference to Jesus. And Paul said, the Lord is that spirit.

So this mixture, this sense in which the Holy Spirit is one with Jesus, one with the Father, he is God, he's his own person. I've never been able to sort that out completely. And because I haven't, and frankly, Jesus never tried to explain that.

Nor did any writer of the New Testament. Which seems strange to me because that's what Christians puzzle with. How do you explain the Trinity? I guess in some ways you just gotta live with the ability not to explain.

But at the same time, realize that when we are talking about the Holy Spirit, we're talking about nothing less than God. He is God. He's the spirit of Christ.

Even the interaction we have with Christ is through the spirit of Christ who is in us. Christ is in heaven at the right hand of God interceding for us. Who is this working through us? It's the spirit of Christ we're talking about.

And so this is what we are referring to in talking about the Holy Spirit. Now, he was active in the Old Testament. And I want to survey some of the ways in which he was active in the Old Testament.

Because God's the same all the time. Jesus is the same yesterday, today, and forever. And so is the Holy Spirit.

And we see that much of what he did in the Old Testament has parallels in the New Testament. Though some things are unique like at creation in Genesis chapter 1. We don't read that the Holy Spirit did the creating. But we don't read that he didn't.

What we read is that God in the beginning created the heavens and the earth. The earth was without formless. It was void.

And darkness on the face of the deep. We don't read that the Holy Spirit, the Spirit of God, moved. As some translations would say, hovered or brooded over the face of the waters.

Now, we don't read of the Holy Spirit doing anything except that. But then nothing is happening yet at that point. Then suddenly God says, let the relighted things start happening.

When God speaks, that's the Word of God. And we know that in speaking about Jesus in Colossians 1, Paul says that, you know, through him all things were created. Even in the Old Testament in Psalm 33, 6, it says, by the Word of the Lord the heavens were made.

And the host of them by the breath of his mouth. So, the Word of the Lord, we know it's Jesus. In the beginning was the Word and later the Word became flesh.

So Jesus was very much involved in the creation. But so was the Holy Spirit in some sense. How? We don't know.

But we don't get very far into the Bible at the very beginning without being introduced to him. He's there before anything else is there. He's hovering over the face of the waters before anything happens.

No doubt when God speaks, it may be that Christ through his Spirit is the one who's doing this. We are not, it's not explained, but we do find the full Godhead in the creation event. God created the heavens and the earth, certainly must include the Father.

He spoke, that was the Word, that's Christ. And the Spirit was there too. So we find that the Old Testament opens with at least an introduction to the existence.

If not a clear explanation of his activity in creation. We find his existence right there as something that apparently God wanted to make sure we knew about. He doesn't tell us much.

He wants us to know that he was there. In Genesis chapter 6, you know, that's preparatory to the time of the flood. And I'm going to take this verse avoiding the context because the context raises the questions about the Nephilim.

Which is certainly something I don't have any interest in talking about today. But in chapter 6, in the conditions that prevailed before the flood and that precipitated the flood. God was looking on the earth, seeing that it was filled with violence.

And that the thoughts and intents of men's hearts were only evil continually. And it says in verse 3, God said, Now I'm reading the English Standard Version. And other versions say my spirit will not strive with man forever.

God's spirit was involved with man in some way. And he's saying, you know, I'm not going to be eternally patient here. I'm going to give them 120 years and if they don't get it right then I'm going to wipe them out with a flood.

And so it was God's spirit among men. He says, will not abide among men or with men forever in this particular translation. But God's spirit not only was at creation but involved with the human race.

Even striving with them when they were wicked. Convicting them I would assume. And yet they were not responding.

We think of the Holy Spirit striving with sinners when we think of Saul on the road to Damascus. And Jesus appears and says, it is hard for you to kick against the goats. Well what goats? Something was pricking Saul in his conscience.

And I think the New Testament tells us that this is the Holy Spirit. Jesus said when the spirit comes he will convict the world of sin and righteousness and judgment. So apparently in the Old Testament he was involved trying to turn man around too.

He was going to give them 120 more years from that time until he just lowered the boom. Which of course he had to do. More specifically the Holy Spirit was involved in anointing the leaders of his people.

God established Israel as his own kingdom, his own special people. Unlike any others. To be his own nation.

A holy nation and a kingdom of priests. And as such he wanted to rule them. He was the direct ruler of his own kingdom.

And he ruled through the Holy Spirit. They were human leaders. But they were to be charismatic we would say.

Now when I say charismatic you might think of people who speak in tongues. Often that term is associated with that in our modern day. Because there is the charismatic

movement.

But the word charismatic comes from the Greek word charisma. A gift of grace. Which is also the same term that is used for gifts of the spirit in the Bible.

A charisma is a gift of the Holy Spirit. And God did not initially allow Israel to have kings. They eventually demanded kings and God acquiesced.

But it was not really his first choice. He wanted to be their king. But he wanted them to have occasional leaders and rescuers and heroes.

And these were the judges during the period of the judges. Which could have been as much as 380 years. There is a difference of opinion how long that period was.

But in that time God would periodically raise up leaders for Israel. Normally they were just supposed to follow God's law and mind their own business. And not do things that got them into trouble.

But from time to time the nation would get into trouble because they would serve other gods. And then because they served other gods God would discipline the nation. And bring in the Arameans or the Philistines or the Midianites or somebody.

To overrun them and to oppress them so that they hurt for it. And they would cry out to God and they would repent. And they did that many times.

But when they cried out to God and repented God would rescue them. But he would do so by raising up a hero. Who they were called judges when they rose up.

And the Bible indicates that the spirit of God would rush upon these men. Would come upon these men. We read of this being the case with Othniel in Judges.

In chapter 3 in verse 10 we read of it being true with Gideon. In Judges chapter 6 verse 34 the spirit of the Lord, the spirit of God came on Gideon. And in Samson of course on many occasions we read of the spirit of God coming upon him.

Chapter 11 verse 29 being one of those times. But in the story of Samson which covers several chapters in Judges. We read repeatedly of the spirit of God came upon him.

The spirit of God came upon him. Now notice that the Holy Spirit didn't remain on him. He had to come upon him repeatedly.

In the Old Testament the Holy Spirit did not reside in people for the most part. But he came and went. He would come upon them and when he did something powerful happened.

In the case of Samson when the Holy Spirit came upon him he could tear the jawbone off

of a lion with his bare hands. Or he could take the jawbone of a donkey and kill a thousand Philistines. Or he could push down pillars of a temple and bring it down on three thousand people including himself.

Supernatural feats of strength. You should never think in terms of Samson being a muscular guy necessarily. He might have been muscular but probably no more than the average person.

The Philistines when they saw him do these they had no idea how he could do them. They had to hire a woman to find out the mystery. How can you do these things? It's not like he looked like a giant or like a mystery universe.

He was operating through the power of the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit would come upon him and he did things supernaturally strong. God worked through the judges and then eventually of course the people demanded a king and God reluctantly gave them a king.

Saul and then David. And these two kings we read when they first were anointed to be king the Spirit of God came upon them initially. With Saul when Samuel anointed him it says the Spirit of God came upon him.

And he prophesied which was an indicator that he was now a charismatic leader like the judges before but now a king. When Saul rebelled Samuel anointed David to be the king and it says the Spirit of God left Saul and came on David. And the evil spirit from the Lord came on Saul instead.

But these leaders were to be anointed by the Spirit of God and enabled and empowered because they were leading God's people. This was no ordinary nation. God was supposed to be their king even if he's ruling through a human king.

It's got to be him. His spirit guiding them and that's why Saul was rejected because Saul didn't operate that way. Now after David some of the kings did and some of the kings didn't follow God.

But God just kind of let it go for a while until he finally sent them off into Babylon. But initially when he set up the kings certainly as a precedent that should have been followed continually but it wasn't. They had to be spirit filled men.

By the way I believe the way God set up Israel is a paradigm that God intended the church to be set up as too but it hasn't been. You see in the time of the judges there was no central government. There was no standing army.

There was no taxation. There was no administrative machinery in Israel. People just were on their farms and they came to the tabernacle for celebrations and things like that.

And the rest of the time they were in their farms living hopefully according to the laws of

God. When they got out of line God sent oppressors in to discipline them and bring them back around. But God was supervising the nation personally.

People had more or less freedom. It says in the book of Judges they did what was right in their own eyes. There was no king in Israel in those days.

And every man did what was right in his own eyes. Which most preachers think is a bad thing because most preachers don't want people in their church doing what's right in their own eyes. They want them to do what the pastor wants.

But that's what kings do. They make you stop doing what's right in your eyes and you have to start doing what's right in the king's eyes. By the way it's not necessarily a bad statement to say they did what was right in their own eyes.

It's either that or have a king. There was no king in Israel so they did what was right in their own eyes. As opposed to what? As opposed to what's right in the king's eyes.

Well if you've got a good king fine but if you've got a bad king better to have a situation where people can do what's right in their eyes. Because some people still do the right thing. If a king makes people all do what he wants he's wicked.

You've got problems. And this was the problem. In the period of the judges there were no kings deliberately.

God didn't want them to have a king. He was the king. He would by his spirit raise up ad hoc leaders when they were needed.

But when those leaders died they were not replaced. There was no succession. The spirit was upon a certain man.

A charismatic individual leader that God raised up. He led the people for the rest of his lifetime usually or her lifetime in the case of Deborah. But when they were gone there was no one there.

It went back to the way it was before they rose up. And that was fine. That's how God wanted it apparently.

Moses left a successor in Joshua but Joshua left no successor. It was God who was going to rule there. When they wanted kings that's because they wanted to have institutional government.

Institutional government is a government that has offices that need to be filled. And those offices outlive the officers. When a king dies there's still the office of king to be filled.

So usually his son or usurper becomes the next. When the judges died there was no



office to fill. They were the officers God raised up to lead at that time.

And when they were gone they didn't need any officers or offices. God only raised up spirit filled men when they were needed to do special tasks. But Israel wanted a kingship and even during the period of the judges they tried to do that with Gideon.

In Judges chapter 8 they said Gideon you have delivered us from the Midianites. Rule over us you and your son and your sonson. They wanted to set up a dynasty, a kingdom.

And Gideon said I will not rule over you neither will my son rule over you but the Lord will rule over you. That's how God had it in mind. It wasn't until the days of Samuel that they insisted they wanted a king and God said give them what they want.

And he gave them their request and with it leanness of soul. But the thing is they wanted an institutional government. Institutional means it's predictable.

After this king dies we know this guy is going to be king. We're not going to have a vacuum here. We've got something that keeps going.

But the problem with an institutional government is like Solomon said in Ecclesiastes. There's a great vanity under the sun and that is a man by his wisdom builds up something and he leaves it to his son who might be a fool. And that's the problem when you've got institutional government.

Where you've got predictability about okay this next guy is in line to be the next king. He might not be filled with the spirit like the guy before him. God might start a movement even a denomination by a spirit filled leader.

But they institutionalize it so that when he's gone other guys take over and when they're gone other guys take over. And you've got this ongoing succession without any guarantees that the Holy Spirit is involved anymore at all. It starts out in the spirit but it sometimes continues in the flesh.

And that's what institutionalization does. That's what it did in Israel. At least although Israel strayed sometimes during the period of the judges.

They couldn't stray too long because God was on the job. He'd send in an oppressive army and get them straightened out again and raise up a judge to sort of normalize them again. And when the judge was gone it's all good again for a while.

When the kings came Israel spent more time in apostasy in the period of the kings than they did in the period of the judges. Because even though they were godly people they weren't allowed to do what was right in their own eyes. Which would have been the right thing in many cases.

But the kings like Ahab and Jezebel they killed people who were godly. And you've got

bad kings. Manasseh he saw Isaiah in two because Isaiah did what was right as Isaiah understood it before the Lord.

And we would agree with Isaiah. Manasseh however the king killed him and probably other prophets too that we don't know about. Lesser known.

The point here is when you institutionalize something it ceases to be a spiritual phenomenon. And it becomes a mechanical phenomenon. It may start out with a spiritual man but there's no guarantee that his successor or the successor down the line is going to be a spiritual man.

There's an automatic replacement in an institutional system like that. That's what Israel got when they got the kings. That's what the church eventually became.

You see God started the church with charismatic leaders the apostles. The Roman Catholic Church says that there was apostolic succession. Well if there was it sure got carnal.

But I'm not sure there was succession. I don't think God ever set up successors to the apostles. I think God raises up charismatic leaders in revival times when he wants to.

The rest of the time he expects Christians to walk in the spirit and to be spiritual people. Anyway that's a separate subject. An interesting one but separate.

The point is that God wanted the leaders of Israel to be filled with the spirit and that's what he raised up among them. And of course even Jesus was filled with the spirit as the leader. Isaiah chapter 11 verse 2 when it's a prophecy about the Messiah.

It says a branch will grow out of Jesse's root. Let me just get to it. Isaiah chapter 11 speaking of the Messiah who would come.

Verse 2 says the spirit of the Lord shall rest upon him. The spirit of wisdom and understanding. The spirit of counsel and might.

The spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the Lord. Certainly these different designations tell us things about the function of the Holy Spirit. Counsel, might, understanding, fear of the Lord and so forth.

But Christ is here referred to as the one that the spirit of the Lord rests upon. Jesus himself in the synagogue at Nazareth in Luke chapter 4 quoted Isaiah 61. Which says the spirit of the Lord God is upon me because the Lord has anointed me to preach good tidings to the poor and so forth.

Jesus quoted that in Luke 4 and said this has been fulfilled in your hearing. That's me he's saying. He was the one that the Holy Spirit anointed to be the new king permanently.

He's the king that would never lose his throne. So we see the empowering of his servants that way. Including the prophets.

Not only the rulers but this people who spoke for God. The prophets were filled with the spirit and that's one of the functions of the Holy Spirit in the Old Testament. Probably the primary one that you see most often is that God's spirit would come upon a man.

And he would begin to have an oracle from God for the nation of Israel for Judah. And there were a lot of those. There are of course like 16 of them who wrote books for us in the Bible.

And then there's a bunch of them that didn't write anything that we know of. Elijah and Elisha would be in that crowd. Plus there's a bunch of unnamed prophets.

An old prophet of Judah who got killed by a lion. Actually that was a young prophet. An older prophet had warned him that was going to happen.

We don't have their names or much about them. But there were prophets throughout Israel. In fact there were sons of the prophets as they were called.

Samuel set up these communities of prophets in different towns. So that there were people always in Israel who were filled with the spirit and could speak to Israel by the spirit of God. That is supposed to still be true about the church.

And I suppose it is. But the church and its experience is so different than the Old Testament in this respect. Jesus said, I will send you another comforter who will abide with you forever.

Now the Holy Spirit in the Old Testament was not given permanently to anyone as far as we know. Saul had the spirit of body but the spirit left him. The spirit came on David.

But when David sinned he prayed in Psalm 51, do not take your Holy Spirit from me. In other words, don't do to me as you did to Saul, please. The spirit would come upon a prophet and he'd speak.

It would come upon Samson and he'd kill a lion. But then the Holy Spirit would not just reside in him. He did not become a temple of the Holy Spirit.

He did not become an embodiment of the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit is given to us to remain with us and never leave us. This is a phenomenon of the New Testament.

And that is why it says in the verse I quoted earlier from John 7.39 that this he spoke of the Holy Spirit who was not yet given because Jesus was not yet glorified. And when he was glorified, then the Holy Spirit was given. Now there was the Holy Spirit in the Old Testament but not given in the same sense.

Israel did not have the Holy Spirit residing in them like Christians do now. Even the prophets may not have had the Holy Spirit residing in them continually but coming upon them and they prophesied. We see Saul, the evil king, on occasion he gets mixed up with a group of prophets.

The spirit comes upon him and he prophesies. But certainly he wasn't filled with the spirit. This is after the spirit had left him.

If the spirit comes upon someone, it's an event that brings about some kind of manifestation of power in that person's life or through them, whether they're good or bad, frankly. And in the Old Testament, the first great prophet was Moses. And of course his leadership included not only prophesying but giving the law and administrating and judging the people, a whole bunch of stuff and taking a lot of pain and grief from them too.

And he complained to God about it in Numbers chapter 11, you might remember. He said, God, why do I have to babysit all these kids? They're not my kids. I didn't bring them into the world.

These are your kids. How come I have to take care of these troublemakers? It's too much of a burden for me. And God said, OK, I'm sympathetic towards you.

I'll tell you what. I'm going to share that burden with some more people. You get 70 of the elders of Israel.

Bring them to the tabernacle door and I'll put some of the spirit that's on you on them. And they will bear the burden with you, he said. So there were 70 men selected and they were brought to the tabernacle door.

And the Bible says the Holy Spirit came upon them and they prophesied. But only once. It says they only prophesied once.

But I guess that was the way that God showed that the Holy Spirit would come upon them. They did prophesy. And now they, along with Moses, shared in the burden bearing of the leadership of Israel.

But when that happened, there were two of the 70 that weren't in the right place. They were out in the camp. They weren't at the tabernacle door.

Apparently this was important. Because Moses, as the spokesman for God, could have rivals if there were other people that had the spirit of God upon them. And so God said, bring them to the tabernacle door.

Apparently they could be supervised by Moses. Moses could, he's overseeing them. So even though they're prophesying, they're not his equals.

They're subordinate to him. But here's some guys that aren't under his oversight. They're out in the camp somewhere and they're prophesying.

This could be a volatile situation, especially since so many people wanted to rival Moses as leaders. And someone came running to Moses and his friends and said, Eldad and Medad are in the camp prophesying. These were two of the 70, but they were in the wrong place.

And Joshua was concerned and he said, oh my Lord Moses, forbid them. And Moses said, are you jealous for me? He said, would to God that all the Lord's people were prophets and that he'd put his spirit upon them. That's what Moses said in Numbers chapter 11, verse 29.

Would to God that all the Lord's people were prophets and that he'd put his spirit upon them. But it didn't happen. That's something Moses thought would be a good thing.

But it didn't happen in Old Testament times. But a later prophet, Joel, prophesied that that's exactly what would happen. In Joel chapter 2, in verse 28, he said, After this says the Lord, I will pour out my spirit upon all flesh.

And your sons and your daughters will prophesy. And your old men shall dream dreams, your young men shall see visions. And upon my handmaidens and my manservants in those days, I will pour out my spirit and they'll prophesy.

I know this will be a general outpouring of the Holy Spirit on everybody, on all flesh. This is all the Lord's people will become prophets. All the Lord's people will have the spirit upon them, just like Moses wished it would happen.

Of course, Moses didn't live to see it, nor did any of the Old Testament prophets. But Amos knew that that was going to happen. God was going to do that.

In Isaiah, there's many references. You'll see them in your notes. To an age of the Messiah that would also be an age of the Holy Spirit.

The language of Isaiah, and the imagery he used, was that of a desert land or a wilderness. Having waters poured out in it, and it blossoms and buds and becomes fruitful. I was raised in an eschatological milieu where we were told that this is about what's going on in Israel today.

Where they're irrigating the desert and it's producing a third of the world's oranges or something and exporting them. My pastor used to say, you see, the Bible says the desert will blossom and bud and fill the earth with its fruit. And Israel's providing a third of the world's navel oranges.

Well, that's not what Isaiah's talking about. He's not talking about navel oranges. In fact,

when fruit is mentioned in Isaiah, it's more likely grapes.

Because Israel is a vineyard. And God came looking for fruit, grapes. But he found wild grapes.

Remember that in Isaiah chapter 5. But he does speak of a time when the desert will produce a lot of fruit. Not the vineyard, Israel, but the desert, the wilderness, will produce the fruit. Because water will be poured out, rivers of water in the desert.

Now, at least in one of those passages, Isaiah specifies that he's talking about the Holy Spirit being poured out. I think that one is in chapter 32. Notice in Isaiah 32, verse 14 and 15, he says, For the palace is forsaken, the populous city is deserted.

The hill and the watchtower will become a den forever, a joy for wild donkeys, pasture for foals. In other words, a wilderness, uncultivated. Until the Spirit is poured upon us from on high, and the wilderness becomes a fruitful field, and the fruitful field is deemed a forest.

This is that imagery that comes up again and again in Isaiah in different language. Usually he says rivers in the desert and waters will be poured out. This time he says the Spirit will be poured out.

He makes it very clear. Like when Jesus said, living water will flow from the believer. And John said, he's talking about the Holy Spirit.

So here also, when Isaiah talks about rivers in the desert, he's talking about the Holy Spirit. The fruit he's talking about is the fruit of the Spirit, not oranges, not citrus fruit, not grapes even, literally. But the imagery is that God's kingdom will be producing fruit because the Spirit of God has been poured out on it.

This age of the Holy Spirit corresponds with the age of the Messiah in the Old Testament prophets. And there are these many references to it, sometimes referring to a river being poured out. In Ezekiel chapter 47, a part of Ezekiel that many people find difficult, and for good reason.

There are some very difficult parts of it. But in Ezekiel 47, 1 and following it says, Then he brought me back to the door of the temple, and behold, water was issuing from below the threshold of the temple toward the east, for the temple faced east. And the water was flowing down from below the south end of the threshold of the temple, south of the altar.

Then he brought me out by the way of the north gate and led me around to the outside, to the outer gate, and so forth. He talks about how he goes and checks the water depth. And as this water flows out of the threshold, under the threshold of the temple, it gets deeper and deeper and it gets to be a great torrential river.

Now this is figurative of course. And it's not only spoken of here, but in two other important places in the Old Testament. The same river.

One of them is in Joel. Who as we saw, Joel chapter 2 predicted this outpouring of the Holy Spirit. In chapter 3 of Joel, in verse 18.

He says, and in that day the mountains shall drip sweet wine, the hills shall flow with milk, all the stream beds of Judah shall flow with water, and a fountain shall come forth from the house of the Lord and water the valley of Shittim. Now, this is that river coming out from the temple. And watering the valley of Shittim, that's in Moab, that's across the Jordan River.

How does a river cross a river? How does a river come out of Jerusalem and go to Moab across the Jordan? Rivers don't cross each other. This is not literal. But it's the same thing that Ezekiel is talking about.

This river coming out from the threshold. But the last place we read about this river in the Old Testament is in Zechariah chapter 14. And we find from this, that this is talking about the new covenant and the outpouring of the Holy Spirit as Moses had desired to see.

And as the prophet said God would do. In Zechariah chapter 14, again we have this river flowing out of Jerusalem, as referred to here. Also found in Ezekiel 47.1, also found in Joel 3.18. Now here again, but this time it says living waters will flow.

Now that's significant because in a verse we looked at earlier, John 7 verse 37, Jesus said, Whoever is thirsty, let him come to me and drink. And as the scripture has said, out of him shall flow rivers of living water. Well where in the scriptures, when Jesus said the scriptures, he means the Old Testament.

Where do you find in the Old Testament a reference to living waters flowing out of the believer? Well you don't find that exact language, but the only place you read about living waters in the Old Testament is Zechariah 14.8. So he must be referring to that scripture. There we see the living waters flowing out of Jerusalem. But the New Testament writers thought of the church as Jerusalem.

In Hebrews chapter 12, 22 and following, the writer of Hebrews said, You have come to Mount Zion, to the heavenly Jerusalem, to the city of God, the general assembly and church of the firstborn who are written in heaven. The Jerusalem that the living waters flow out of is the believers, the church. And Jesus said, If you are thirsty, out of your belly, if you believe in me, out of your belly shall flow rivers of living water, as the scriptures had said.

What scriptures? Well, Zechariah 14.8 says living waters are going to flow out of Jerusalem. But this is a reference to the spiritual Jerusalem. All these references to the

river and to the desert and the wilderness being watered are references to the Holy Spirit poured out as he was at Pentecost.

So that at that time, Peter, in explaining the phenomenon to those who had gathered out of curiosity, he quotes Joel 2 and says, This is that which was spoken by the prophet Joel. In the last days, he says, Lord, I'll pour out my spirit and all my flesh. The prophets had all spoken, well, not all, but many of them had spoken, of this age of the Holy Spirit and used this image of living water or rivers of water and fruit coming from the former wilderness and so forth.

Israel had become a wilderness for 400 years. No prophets had spoken, no word from the Spirit between Malachi and John the Baptist. But now Jesus was introducing the age of the Messiah, the age of the Spirit, which we are in.

And therefore, understanding what God prophesied and what we learn about this in the New Testament is what we're going to be interested in examining here. But we'll take a break at this point.