

# Week 2 The Spirit And Israel's Leaders

## Why is it important to see the Holy Spirit in the Old Testament?

Seeing the Holy Spirit in the Old Testament is crucial for understanding the full biblical narrative of God's redemptive work and the empowerment of His people.

- **Continuity of God's Work:** The Holy Spirit's presence in the Old Testament confirms the consistency and continuity of God's work. The Spirit's role in creation, salvation, and guidance is integral to God's eternal plan, not a new concept.
- **Theological Insight:** Grasping the Spirit's Old Testament work deepens our understanding of the Trinity and God's interaction with people. The Spirit, Father, and Son are interwoven in the plan of redemption.
- **Preparation for the Messiah:** The Spirit inspired OT prophetic insights into the Messiah and the New Covenant, thus preparing the way for Jesus Christ.
- **Anticipation of the New Covenant:** Old Testament promises of a future, universal indwelling of the Spirit are fulfilled in the New Testament. Seeing the Spirit's OT presence and work highlights the significance of the New Covenant and the Spirit's permanent indwelling in believers.

## **The Spirit in Creation**

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### **Genesis 1:1-2**

*<sup>1</sup> In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth. <sup>2</sup> The earth was without form and void, and darkness was over the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God was hovering over the face of the waters.*

The Spirit acted as an ordering agent in creation, bringing structure and wholeness to the cosmos. Working with God's creative word throughout the six-day account, the Spirit shaped reality.

Theologically, the Spirit's creative work reflects what early church fathers called the "perfecting cause." While the Father originates all things and the Son creates them, the Spirit perfects creation—enabling things to fulfill their created purpose.

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### **Psalm 33:6**

*By the word of the LORD the heavens were made,  
and by the breath of his mouth all their host.*

### **Deuteronomy 32:11**

*Like an eagle that stirs up its nest,  
that flutters over its young,  
spreading out its wings, catching them,  
bearing them on its pinions*

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### **Genesis 2:7**

*... then the LORD God formed the man of dust from the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and the man became a living creature.*

The creation of the first man, formed from dust and given God's own breath, was unique and personal, unlike other animals brought forth by the earth (1:24). The Lord "forms" (yatzar) man like a potter (yotser), emphasizing divine sovereignty (cf. Jeremiah 18:6; Romans 9:20). While man's dust origin shows his fragility (Psalm 103:14), the Bible promises not a purely spiritual existence, but a bodily resurrection where the earthly body is transformed into a heavenly one (1 Corinthians 15:35–49).

For Israel, the essence of life is breath, powerfully symbolized by the creation of Adam. This divine breath is the very substance of humanity; without it, humans, like animals, perish. The term *nephesh* (breathed) encapsulates this concept, signifying the continuing human existence that God grants with breath.

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### **Job 33:4**

*The Spirit of God has made me,  
and the breath of the Almighty gives  
me life.*

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The Israelites understood that all life on earth is sustained and renewed by the Spirit of the one living God—from the grass-roots level (literally) to the human pinnacle of creation. If it were not for the life-sustaining Spirit of God, life would be instantly extinct, dead in the dust.

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**Job 34:14-15**

*<sup>14</sup> If he should set his heart to it  
and gather to himself his spirit and his  
breath,*

*<sup>15</sup> all flesh would perish together,  
and man would return to dust.*

**Psalm 104:27-30**

*<sup>27</sup> These all look to you,  
to give them their food in due season.*

*<sup>28</sup> When you give it to them, they  
gather it up;*

*when you open your hand, they are  
filled with good things.*

*<sup>29</sup> When you hide your face, they are  
dismayed;*

*when you take away their breath, they  
die*

*and return to their dust.*

*<sup>30</sup> When you send forth your Spirit,  
they are created,*

*and you renew the face of the ground.*

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**Genesis 6:3**

*Then the LORD said, "My Spirit shall  
not abide in man forever, for he is  
flesh: his days shall be 120 years."*

**Ecclesiastes 12:7-8**

*<sup>7</sup> and the dust returns to the earth as it  
was, and the spirit returns to God who  
gave it. <sup>8</sup> Vanity of vanities, says the  
Preacher; all is vanity.*

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The term "flesh" in Genesis 6:3, in contrast to "spirit," signifies our mortality. The essential point is that human beings are not inherently immortal; our life span is determined by the duration of the life God's Spirit grants us. Therefore, while God's Spirit undeniably energizes all

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human life, enabling us to live and breathe in His creation, this life is fundamentally mortal. We remain alive only as long as that Spirit indwells us. When God retracts the Spirit, we revert to our essence—flesh—and return to our origin—dust.

The Old Testament presents a paradox: the Spirit of God provides the breath of physical life, shared with all creatures, yet humans are spiritually dead due to rebellion and destined for physical death when the Spirit departs.

So, is there any hope for us? This where we have to cling to:

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### **Ezekiel 36:25-27**

*<sup>25</sup> I will sprinkle clean water on you, and you shall be clean from all your uncleannesses, and from all your idols I will cleanse you. <sup>26</sup> And I will give you a new heart, and a new spirit I will put within you. And I will remove the heart of stone from your flesh and give you a heart of flesh. <sup>27</sup> And I will put my Spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes and be careful to obey my rules.*

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God promised new life, hearts, and spirit, which the New Testament fulfills, offering regeneration and eternal life through Christ's life-giving Spirit.

## **The Spirit in the Lives of Israel's Leaders**

Joseph (Genesis 39:1–41:57)

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### **Genesis 39:2-6**

<sup>2</sup> The LORD was with Joseph, and he became a successful man, and he was in the house of his Egyptian master. <sup>3</sup> His master saw that the LORD was with him and that the LORD caused all that he did to succeed in his hands. <sup>4</sup> So Joseph found favor in his sight and attended him, and he made him overseer of his house and put him in charge of all that he had. <sup>5</sup> From the time that he made him overseer in his house and over all that he had, the LORD blessed the Egyptian's house for Joseph's sake; the blessing of the LORD was on all that he had, in house and field. <sup>6</sup> So he left all that he had in Joseph's charge, and because of him he had no concern about anything but the food he ate.

### **Genesis 41:38-39**

<sup>38</sup> And Pharaoh said to his servants, "Can we find a man like this, in whom is the Spirit of God?" <sup>39</sup> Then Pharaoh said to Joseph, "Since God has shown you all this, there is none so discerning and wise as you are."

Bezalel and Oholiab (Exodus 35:1–39:43)

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### **Exodus 31:1-6**

<sup>1</sup> The LORD said to Moses, <sup>2</sup> "See, I have called by name Bezalel the son of Uri, son of Hur, of the tribe of Judah, <sup>3</sup> and I have filled him with the Spirit of God, with ability and intelligence, with knowledge and all craftsmanship, <sup>4</sup> to devise artistic designs, to work in gold, silver, and bronze, <sup>5</sup> in cutting stones for setting, and in carving wood, to work in every craft. <sup>6</sup> And behold, I

*have appointed with him Oholiab, the son of Ahisamach, of the tribe of Dan. And I have given to all able men ability, that they may make all that I have commanded you.*

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Moses (Numbers 11:1-35)

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**Numbers 11:10-17**

*<sup>10</sup> Moses heard the people weeping throughout their clans, everyone at the door of his tent. And the anger of the LORD blazed hotly, and Moses was displeased. <sup>11</sup> Moses said to the LORD, “Why have you dealt ill with your servant? And why have I not found favor in your sight, that you lay the burden of all this people on me? <sup>12</sup> Did I conceive all this people? Did I give them birth, that you should say to me, ‘Carry them in your bosom, as a nurse carries a nursing child,’ to the land that you swore to give their fathers? <sup>13</sup> Where am I to get meat to give to all this people? For they weep before me and say, ‘Give us meat, that we may eat.’ <sup>14</sup> I am not able to carry all this people alone; the burden is too heavy for me. <sup>15</sup> If you will treat me like this, kill me at once, if I find favor in your sight, that I may not see my wretchedness.”*

*<sup>16</sup> Then the LORD said to Moses, “Gather for me seventy men of the elders of Israel, whom you know to be the elders of the people and officers over them, and bring them to the tent of meeting, and let them take their stand there with you. <sup>17</sup> And I will come down and talk with you there. And I will take some of the Spirit that is on you and put it on them, and they shall*

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*bear the burden of the people with you, so that you may not bear it yourself alone.*

**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 on them!”*

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Judges

**The vicious cycle**

1. Israel turns away from God;
2. Israel’s apostasy leads to oppression by an outside power;
3. The oppression leads Israel to repent and call on God for deliverance;
4. God responds by providing a judge to deliver his people;
5. The judge defeats the outside power and preserves the Israelites;
6. The next generation forgets and abandons God and the cycle begins again.

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**Judges 2:10-13**

*<sup>10</sup> And all that generation also were gathered to their fathers. And there arose another generation after them who did not know the LORD or the work that he had done for Israel.*

*<sup>11</sup> And the people of Israel did what was evil in the sight of the LORD and served the Baals. <sup>12</sup> And they abandoned the LORD, the God of their fathers, who had brought them out of the land of Egypt. They went after other gods, from among the gods of the peoples who were around them, and bowed down to them. And they provoked the LORD to anger. <sup>13</sup> They abandoned the LORD and served the Baals and the Ashtaroth.*

## **Judges 2:16**

*<sup>16</sup> Then the LORD raised up judges, who saved them out of the hand of those who plundered them.*

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These cycles document the activities of 13 judges—6 major and 7 minor. Four of them specifically experience the Holy Spirit's empowering:

- Othniel — Delivers Israel from an oppressive foreign king (Judges 3:9–11)
- Gideon — Delivers Israel from the Midianites (6:1–8:28)
- Jephthah — Delivers Israel from the Ammonites (11:1–12:7)
- Samson — Combats the Philistines (13:1–16:31)

## **The first kings: Saul and David**

Saul

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### **1 Samuel 10:1**

*Then Samuel took a flask of oil and poured it on his [Saul's] head and kissed him and said, "Has not the LORD anointed you to be prince over his people Israel? And you shall reign over the people of the LORD and you will save them from the hand of their surrounding enemies. And this shall be the sign to you that the LORD has anointed you to be prince over his heritage.*

### **1 Samuel 10:5-6**

<sup>5</sup>After that you shall come to Gibeath-  
elohim, where there is a garrison of  
the Philistines. And there, as soon as  
you come to the city, you will meet a  
group of prophets coming down from  
the high place with harp, tambourine,  
flute, and lyre before them,  
prophesying. <sup>6</sup>Then the Spirit of the  
LORD will rush upon you, and you will  
prophesy with them and be turned  
into another man.

### **1 Samuel 11:5-6**

<sup>5</sup> Now, behold, Saul was coming from  
the field behind the oxen. And Saul  
said, "What is wrong with the people,  
that they are weeping?" So they told  
him the news of the men of Jabesh. <sup>6</sup>  
And the Spirit of God rushed upon Saul  
when he heard these words, and his  
anger was greatly kindled.

### **1 Samuel 15:24-26**

<sup>24</sup> Saul said to Samuel, "I have sinned,  
for I have transgressed the  
commandment of the LORD and your  
words, because I feared the people and  
obeyed their voice. <sup>25</sup> Now therefore,  
please pardon my sin and return with  
me that I may bow before the LORD."  
<sup>26</sup> And Samuel said to Saul, "I will not  
return with you. For you have rejected  
the word of the LORD, and the LORD  
has rejected you from being king over  
Israel."

### **1 Samuel 16:14**

Now the Spirit of the LORD departed  
from Saul, and a harmful spirit from  
the LORD tormented him.

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## David

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### **1 Samuel 16:1**

*The LORD said to Samuel, “How long will you grieve over Saul, since I have rejected him from being king over Israel? Fill your horn with oil, and go. I will send you to Jesse the Bethlehemite, for I have provided for myself a king among his sons.”*

### **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 rushed upon David from that day forward. And Samuel rose up and went to Ramah.*

### **Psalm 51:10-12**

<sup>10</sup> *Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within me.*

<sup>11</sup> *Cast me not away from your presence, and take not your Holy Spirit from me.*

<sup>12</sup> *Restore to me the joy of your salvation, and uphold me with a willing spirit.*

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**Next:** *The Spirit and Israel's Prophets*