

Not by Might nor by Power, but by My Spirit - Part 1

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God appeared to Abraham and made a covenant with the patriarch when he was 99 years old. The covenant stipulated among other things that Abraham would become the father of many nations and kings. God also promised to give Abraham's descendants the fertile land of Canaan to possess. (Genesis 17:1-14)

About 190 years later, Abraham's great-grandson, Joseph sat on Egypt's throne, second only to Pharaoh. Joseph invited his father Jacob and his brothers to Egypt because of a severe famine in Canaan. God blessed Abraham's descendants in Egypt by making them so "fruitful," they quickly filled the land. After Joseph died, a Pharaoh came to power who feared the Israelites – there were too many of them! To secure his throne, he made slaves of Abraham's descendants and for the next 200 years, many of Abraham's descendants gave up hope. They doubted God's covenant with Abraham, they thought their suffering and hardship would never end.

When God sent Moses to deliver Abraham's descendants from slavery, Pharaoh was not impressed with the authority of Israel's God. However, after ten devastating plagues (including the death of every Egyptian firstborn son, Exodus 11:5), the king grudgingly allowed the Israelites to leave Egypt. About three months later, they camped at Mt. Sinai and heard God speak the Ten Commandments. (Exodus 20:1-17) The glory and power of God's presence was so intimidating that everyone trembled. (Exodus 19:16) The Israelites feared they would die if God continued speaking to them. (Exodus 20:19) They asked Moses to approach God and speak with Him. Moses met with God and God gave him a comprehensive set of laws that Israel must follow. Moses recited God's words and the Israelites vowed to obey everything God had said. Afterwards Moses built an altar and sacrificed the blood of bulls on it and then sprinkled some of the bull's blood on the people to affirm the covenant which God made with Abraham's descendants. (Exodus 24:8)

Later on, God summoned Moses to meet Him on the mountain top. During this visit, God gave Moses a set of plans. He wanted an Earthly tabernacle constructed for a precise and intricate plan of services to be conducted. God also told Moses that He had chosen a specific person to create the items for the tabernacle. **"See, I have chosen Bezalel son of Uri, the son of Hur, of the tribe of Judah, and I have filled him with the Spirit of God, with skill, ability and knowledge in all kinds of crafts."** (Exodus 31:2,3)

God chose Bezalel and **"filled him with the Spirit of God."** Obviously, the Spirit of God filled other Bible characters who lived before Bezalel as well. In fact, the Pharaoh who promoted Joseph to his throne recognized Joseph was filled with **"the Spirit of God!"** (Genesis 41:38) However, Bezalel is the first person mentioned in the Bible where God declares that He filled a person with the Holy Spirit.

This article is the first in a multi-part series on the Holy Spirit and how this unique member of the

Godhead works within people. We will consider the work of the Holy Spirit during Bible times; we will examine different descriptions of the Holy Spirit; and we will study the relationship that exists among the Holy Spirit, Jesus, and the Father. As this study unfolds, we will identify key characteristics of the Holy Spirit so that we can better understand how the Holy Spirit will work during the Great Tribulation.

The story surrounding Bezalel provides a starting point in our quest to learn what the Bible teaches about the Holy Spirit. Please consider the following:

- The Holy Spirit can fill a person. The Holy Spirit filled Bezalel and enabled him **“to make artistic designs for work in gold, silver and bronze, to cut and set stones, to work in wood, and to engage in all kinds of craftsmanship.”** (Exodus 31:4,5)
- The Holy Spirit gives specific gifts to people. (1 Corinthians 12:11) The Holy Spirit gave Bezalel wisdom, understanding, knowledge, and skills to do the work which God wanted done.
- From time to time, God chooses specific people to fulfill the roles necessary for accomplishing His goals. He chose Bezalel to build the sanctuary and He chose others to assist Bezalel. **“Moreover, I have appointed Oholiab son of Ahisamach, of the tribe of Dan, to help him. Also I have given skill to all the craftsman to make everything I have commanded you.”** (Exodus 31:6)
- The Spirit of God is a separate entity from Jesus and the Father. Notice the language: **“Then the Lord said to Moses, ‘See, I have chosen Bezalel. . .and I have filled him with the Spirit of God.’** For reasons beyond the scope of this article, this text suggests the existence of three divine entities, “the Lord,” “the Spirit of God,” and “God” the Father. I believe the Bible teaches there are three separate, distinct, co-eternal Gods. The Hebrew word for “Lord” used in Exodus 31 is Jehovah. Jehovah is a title meaning “eternal God” and this title is used to describe both Jesus and the Father. (Psalm 45:7; Hebrews 1:9) We know from Scripture that Jesus is the Creator of everything that exists. (See Exodus 20:1,2, 8-11, John 1:1-14, 1 Corinthians 10:4 and Colossians 1:15,16.) It is interesting to know Jesus sent the Spirit of God to enable Bezalel to do what needed to be done in 1437 B.C. in the same way Jesus later sent the Spirit of God to His disciples in A.D. 30 so they could accomplish His goals. (John 16:7-15)

Since Jesus is the Jehovah in Exodus 31, a third party is necessary because Jesus did not send “the Spirit of Himself” to fill Bezalel. Jesus identified the Holy Spirit as the Spirit of God. Jesus is referring to God the Father.

Some people claim the Holy Spirit is not a separate being, distinct from the Father and Jesus. Advocates of this view claim the Holy Spirit is just another component of the Father and the Son. In future studies, we will examine this issue in detail. Meanwhile, if you are willing to consider what the Bible teaches on this topic, I will share some verses which lead me to believe the Holy Spirit is a separate, distinct, co-eternal member of the Godhead. The Holy Spirit has many capabilities and responsibilities. He is the only God who can be everywhere at once. He is the God that enables the will of Jesus and the Father to be carried out. He is the God that connects every child of God with Jesus and the Father. (Romans 8:26) Sometimes, God the Father directs the Holy Spirit. (See Luke 11:13; Acts 5:32; 2 Corinthians 5:5 and Ephesians

1:17.)

The Spirit of God is mentioned in 47 of the 66 books of the Bible. The Bible does not always use the title, "Holy Spirit." In fact, the Old Testament uses this title only three times; but it references titles such as "Spirit" and "the Spirit of God" eighty-eight times. The New Testament mentions the "Holy Spirit" many times and He is mentioned in all but three of the New Testament books (Philemon, 2 John, and 3 John).

- The Bible indicates the Holy Spirit was present before Creation Week began. **"In the beginning God created the Heavens and the Earth. Now the Earth was formless and empty, darkness was over the surface of the deep, and the Spirit of God was hovering over the waters."** (Genesis 1:1,2) This text refers to the Holy Spirit as the "Spirit of God." This is the same language found in Exodus 31:3. Before we go further in our study on the Holy Spirit, please consider some background information.

The Hebrew words that are translated into "Spirit of God" are "*Elohim Ruach*." The Hebrew word "*ruach*" means "breath," "wind," or "spirit." When these words are associated with God in the Bible, they point to a divine power that is real, but unseen. (John 3:8) The word "*ruach*" can also apply to a human being. For example, the word "*ruach*" is found in the following texts: Job said, **"As long as I have life within me, the breath [*ruach*] of [from] God in my nostrils, my lips will not speak wickedness, and my tongue will utter no deceit."** (Job 27:3,4, insertions mine) Solomon wrote, **"And the dust returns to the ground it came from, and the spirit [*ruach*] returns to God who gave it."** (Ecclesiastes 12:7) Both verses use "*ruach*" to mean "the breath from God in my nostrils."

- The Holy Spirit may be invisible or use any physical form. He can enter into a person like Samson and fill him with incredible strength. (Judges 16:20) He can enter a person like Bezalel and give him awesome skills; and He can enter a person and give him the gift of prophecy, like King Saul. (1 Samuel 10:6) Genesis 1:2 indicates when Creation Week began, **"The Spirit of God was hovering over the waters."** The Bible does not say what His physical form (if any) was at Creation, but there are three physical descriptions of the Holy Spirit in Scripture. The first is when John the Baptist baptized Jesus. All four of the gospels describe the Holy Spirit descending on Jesus in the form of a dove. (Matthew 3:16; Mark 1:10; Luke 3:22; John 1:32) A second physical form occurs when the apostles received the Holy Spirit. **"When the day of Pentecost came, they were all together in one place. Suddenly a sound like the blowing of a violent wind came from heaven and filled the whole house where they were sitting. They saw what seemed to be *tongues of fire that separated* and came to rest on each of them."** (Acts 2:1-3, italics mine) Finally, the four living creatures in Revelation 4:6 are a representation of the Holy Spirit. (For more information on this topic, please see: <https://wake-up.org/?p=4735>) The Holy Spirit can appear or disappear in different ways at different times. Therefore, it is impossible to develop a meaningful physical description of the Holy Spirit.

On the sixth day of Creation, the Lord created Adam. Genesis 2:7 describes it this way: **"The Lord God formed the man from the dust of the ground and *breathed into his nostrils the***

***breath* [neshamah] of life, and the man became a living being** [soul].” (Italics and insertions mine) Despite the fact that this text and the previous one from Job use a different Hebrew word for breath (“*ruach*” versus “*neshamah*”), Job uses both words to identify the Holy Spirit. (For deeper study, compare the Hebrew words for breath and spirit used in Job 27:3 and Job 33:4) This is so meaningful. Jesus got down on His hands and knees and breathed His own breath into Adam. This divine act brought Adam to life. This divine act created an intelligent soul and immediately, the Holy Spirit entered Adam. The Spirit of God entered him so that Adam had continual access and fellowship with His Creator and the Father.

The Holy Spirit lived within people prior to Noah’s flood. The Bible says Enoch and Noah walked with God. (Genesis 5:24; 6:9) How can a person walk with God if he will not allow the indwelling presence of the Holy Spirit? The world was destroyed in Noah’s day because all but a handful of people refused to listen and obey the voice of the Holy Spirit. Consider Paul’s words in Hebrews 11. Abel, Enoch, Noah, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Joseph, and Moses were commended for their faith in God. Obviously, these ancient men could not have had faith in God if the Holy Spirit was not living within them. One of the gifts of the Spirit is faith. (Romans 12:3; 1 Corinthians 12:9) These and many other Biblical heroes could not have achieved all they accomplished unless the Holy Spirit had entered and empowered them.

During the Great Tribulation, the work of the Holy Spirit will be profoundly evident for 1,260 days. He will empower the 144,000 and He will strongly impress those who are honest in heart with conviction. In this time of extreme distress, the Holy Spirit will be poured out on all people! (Joel 2:28-30) Although the Bible only mentions the Holy Spirit 94 times, it mentions Jesus 1,275 times. Therefore, it is easier to develop a greater understanding about Jesus because so much was written about Him. But the irony is this: If it weren’t for the Holy Spirit, we could not know Jesus! If we want to know God’s character, ways, and plans we have to allow His Spirit to live within us. If we are willing to do this, we can walk with God and enjoy the wonderful fruits of the Spirit. (Galatians 5:22,23) My prayer is that the Holy Spirit will fill each of us every day. Many people have accomplished great tasks for God and so can we if the Spirit lives within us. **“This is the word of the Lord to [king] Zerubbabel: [The temple will be built, but] ‘Not by might nor by [human] power, but by my Spirit,’ says the Lord Almighty.”** (Zechariah 4:6, insertions mine)