

# Research Hebrew/Greek Holy Spirit

Understanding the OT terms “Holy Spirit” and “the Spirit of God (or the LORD)” and the theology associated with them depends on grasping the significance of the fact that, in about 40% of its occurrences, the Hebrew word “spirit” (ruakh) basically means “wind or breath,” not “spirit.” The NT word (pneuma) is also used in this way on occasion. And when these Hebrew and Greek words mean “spirit,” the reference is often to the human “spirit.” Furthermore, certain passages draw out the correspondence between the Spirit of God and the human spirit, and the importance of God’s work through this correspondence (e.g., 1 Cor. 2:10-12). The Spirit of God is the person of God that vivifies the spirit of people to God (Ezek 37; Rom 8:16). The baptism of the Spirit shifts the metaphor from “wind” to “water,” the point being that physical purification by water has a corresponding reality in the purification of the human spirit through the Holy Spirit (Matt 3:11; John 1:32-34; Ezek 36). Similarly, like physical water, one can drink of the Spirit as water that gives life to the human spirit (e.g., John 7:37-39). The Holy Spirit did all of these things for both Old and New Testament believers, so in this sense the Holy Spirit not only indwells NT believers, but also did something similar in the lives of OT believers.

The goal of this essay is to examine the foundations of the biblical teachings about the Holy Spirit in the Hebrew Bible (Old Testament). Although along the way I will mention most of the important ways the term “spirit” (Hebrew j~Wr, ruakh ) is used in the Hebrew Bible, it is not my intention to provide an exhaustive or even comprehensive review of the uses of the term. There are a number of good surveys of various kinds already available to the reader.<sup>1</sup> Instead of that, I intend to highlight and investigate certain expressions and specific contexts in which the term “spirit” occurs in the Old Testament and their importance for expressions and patterns found in the New Testament, specifically as it relates to our Christian understanding and experience of the Holy Spirit. The focus will be on the Old Testament patterns of expression and some of the most important passages in which they occur, but we will also follow them through into the New Testament to the degree that is possible in this short paper.

## **“Holy Spirit” in the Old Testament**

The term “Holy Spirit” actually occurs only three times in the Hebrew Bible. The expression itself is literally “ your (God’s) Spirit of holiness” (;v=d+q\* j^Wr, ruakh qod<sup>e</sup> shkha), but the Hebrew language often creates adjectival expressions by means of what is known as the construct genitive relationship between words (i.e., the construction “the...of...”; so the “Spirit of holiness” = “the Holy Spirit”). In these three instances, therefore, the LXX (the Greek translation of the Hebrew Bible) renders this expression with the same combination of Greek words that the New Testament uses for what we translate as “Holy Spirit” in the English versions (i.e., in Greek the noun pneu'ma [pneuma] “Spirit” with [it is usually only followed by the adjective in anarthrous constructions] the adjective a{gion [hagion] “Holy”).

The first occurrence is in Ps 51:11[13], when David prays in penitence to the Lord, “Do not reject me! Do not take your *Holy Spirit* away from me!”.<sup>2</sup> The two other occurrences are in Isa 63:10 and 11, where the Lord refers to the Israelites as those who had grieved his Holy Spirit by rebelling against him even though he had so graciously delivered them in the days of old:

But they rebelled and offended his *[H]oly Spirit*,  
so he turned into an enemy  
and fought against them.  
His people remembered the ancient times.  
Where is the one who brought them up out of the sea,  
along with the shepherd of his flock?  
Where is the one who placed his *[H]oly Spirit* among them...

Isaiah 63:14 then refers back to the “[H]oly Spirit” in vv. 10–11 as “the Spirit of the Lord” who had given them rest in the days of old. The latter expression and its interchangeable counterpart “the Spirit of God” (compare, for example, 1 Sam 10:6 with 10:10) occur a total of about 94 times in the Hebrew Bible;<sup>3</sup> that is, if one includes instances where “the (my, your, his) Spirit” clearly refers to “the Spirit of the Lord/God” in the context.

Of course, in the Jewish tradition the Holy Spirit referred to in the Hebrew Bible is not taken to be the third person of the “Trinity,” so in such passages the Hebrew word is translated “spirit,” not capitalized “Spirit.”<sup>4</sup> In general, the Jewish view is that “the spirit of God referred to in the Bible alludes to His energy (Isa 40:13; Zech 4:6).”<sup>5</sup> Accordingly, it is recognized that “the divine origin of the spirit” is

implied by the term “his (the Lord’s) spirit of holiness” (ovd+q\* j^Wr, ruakh qad<sup>e</sup> sho), “Yet this does not mean that the holy spirit was regarded as a hypostasis distinct from the divine presence

(sh<sup>e</sup> kina).”<sup>6</sup> In other words, according to the Rabbis, although the “spirit of God” is of divine origin, this does not mean that there is a “Holy Spirit” as a divine person. On the contrary, the holy spirit is a mode of the one and only God’s self-expression in word and action.

As Christians we insist that we too believe in only one God (we are monotheists), but articulate this in terms of the tri-unity of the one God—Father, Son, and Holy Spirit—the Trinity (see, for example, the baptismal formula in Matt 28:19, “baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit”). This is as it should be, but that does not mean we have no difficulties with our understanding of the “Trinity.” Specifically with regard to the Holy Spirit, there has been no small debate in two areas that are of special concern in the present essay: (1) the degree of revelation of the *person and divinity* of the Holy Spirit in the Old Testament as compared to the New Testament (compare, for example, the Jewish view outlined briefly above), and (2) the *work* of the Holy Spirit *in the life of the believer* in the Old Testament as opposed to the New Testament, regarding the Holy Spirit’s “regenerating” and especially “indwelling” of believers in the Old Testament.<sup>7</sup>

## Wind, Breath, and the Spirit of God and People

Any meaningful understanding of the Holy Spirit of God in the Bible will need to begin with an understanding of the term “spirit.” The various ways ruakh (“spirit”) is used in the Hebrew Bible contributes a great deal to our understanding of the revelation of the person and divinity of the Holy “Spirit” in the Old Testament and in the New. To begin with it is important to realize that out of the 378

occurrences of the term “spirit” in the Old Testament it actually means “wind” or “breath,” not “spirit,” about 140 times (the exact number depends on how one reads certain passages). Thus, almost 40% of the time *ruakh* refers to the literal *movement of air* in: (1) natural weather (e.g., Gen 3:8; 1 Kgs 18:45; Ps 1:4; Eccl 1:6, 14, etc.; note also the “four winds” for the four compass directions, Jer 49:36), which is, of course, under the control of God and sometimes a means through which he acts in the world (e.g., Gen 8:1; Exod 10:13; Num 11:31), or (2) “air breathing” animate beings, mankind and animal (e.g., Gen 6:17; 7:15), or (3) even metaphorically for God’s “breath” as expressed through the “wind” of nature (e.g., Exod 15:8; cf. 14:21-22, 29).

## Wind, Breath, and the Human Spirit

The connection between “wind” and “breath” seems natural to us even today and appears, for example, in our common expression for having the “wind [actually the ‘breath’] knocked out” of a person (through a physical “blow” of some kind). The link between “wind/breath” and “spirit,” however, is not so transparent to us. The linguistic data suggest that *in the Bible the link between “wind” and “breath” clearly extends also to “spirit.”* In other words, it is easy for us to see the connection between wind and breath simply by reference to the “movement of air” that they have in common, but in the Hebrew Bible both wind and breath are just as closely related to “spirit.” This is apparent from early in the canon, extending all the way through it; it is also extremely important to our understanding of the nature of “spirit” and, therefore, the Holy “Spirit.” The connection to Greek *pneuma* is there for us in such words as “*pneumonia*,” and even for English “spirit” we have words like “*aspirate*” and “*aspirator*” (cf. also “*aspiration*,” etc.), but it is not explicit to us on the surface of our language as it is in the Bible.

Compare, for example, Gen 2:7 “the Lord God formed the man from *the soil* [rp\*u\*, àafar] of the ground and breathed into his [i.e., the man’s] *nostrils* the *breath* (hm^v\*n+, n<sup>e</sup>shamah) of *life*...,” with Genesis 7:22b, where all mankind and land animals “in whose *nostrils* was the *breath* [n<sup>e</sup>shamah] of the *spirit* [ruakh] of *life*, died” (nasb) in the flood (except those on the ark of course).

The former verse refers only to man and links “breath” (n<sup>e</sup>shamah) to “life,” but the latter refers to both man and air-breathing land animals and, above all, links “breath” to “spirit” (ruakh) and then to animate “life.” Moreover, according to Eccl 3:19–21, both animals and people “have the same breath [or ‘spirit,’ ruakh]” (v. 19), and “Who really knows if the spirit [or ‘breath,’ ruakh] of man ascends upward, and the spirit of the animal goes downward to the earth?” (v. 21). By and large, the English versions translate *ruakh* as “breath” in v. 19, but, for example, net, niv, and nrsv switch to “spirit” in v. 21 while nasb retains “breath.” Whatever one makes of the theology in this passage (i.e., the relationship between people and animals), it is not sound method to shift from one translation to the other in these verses when the same word is being used and the topic has not changed. The point is that we have trouble with this in the English versions precisely because in our language we do not see the natural link between “wind/breath” and “spirit” in the same way and to the same degree as the ancients did when they used the term *ruakh*.

Hebrew *ruakh* is often used for elements of the human “spirit” in scripture (ca. 120 times). As such, it refers to vitality of life (e.g., Gen 45:27; Josh 5:1; 1 Kgs 10:5; Isa 38:16), moral and spiritual character (e.g., positive: Isa 26:9; Mal 2:16; and negative: Isa 29:24; Ezek 13:3), capacities of mind and will (e.g., Exod 28:3; Job 20:3 lit. “the spirit of my understanding”; Pss 51:10 [12], 12[14]; 77:6 [4]), and various dispositions or states of the human person and personality (e.g., Num 5:14 “spirit” = feelings, suspicions; Judg 8:3 “spirit” = anger, resentment; Prov 16:18–19 “low of spirit” = humble, but “high spirit” = prideful; 17:22 “a crushed spirit” = discouraged, depressed; Eccl 7:8 “long of spirit” = patient; Prov 14:29 “short of spirit” = quick-tempered; etc.).

Toward the end of Ecclesiastes, at the climax and conclusion of the book, we find the same term used for the immaterial component of a person as opposed to the material in terms that recall Gen 2:7 (cited above): when a person dies “*the dust* [àafar] returns to the earth as it was, and *the spirit* [ruakh] returns to God who gave it” (Eccl 12:7; cf. Ps 146:4; Isa 42:5). Similarly, but in a context where we

once again see the close connection between “spirit” (*ruakh*) and “breath” (*n<sup>e</sup> shamah*), Elihu says, “If God were to set his heart on it, and gather in his *spirit* and his *breath*, all flesh would perish together and human beings would return to *dust*” (Job 34:14–15). God is the one “who forms *the human spirit* within a person” (Zech 12:1), so it naturally returns to him at death.

### **Breath, Spirit, and the *Person* of the Spirit of God**

On at least one occasion David expressed his trust in God in the midst of life-threatening circumstances by exclaiming, “Into your hands I commit my spirit; redeem me, O Lord, the God of truth” (Ps 31:5[6] [niv]). David was entrusting his spirit to God for deliverance from death. Jesus drew upon this expression at the point of death on the cross, entrusting his spirit to God in death, “Father, into your hands I commit *my spirit* [*pneuma*]” (Luke 23:46).<sup>8</sup> Here Jesus, like David before him, was referring at least to his human spirit (if not also the Holy Spirit), so we have the Old Testament concept of the “human spirit” coming into the New Testament even in regard to the Son of God himself. Jesus was as fully human as he was divine. The parallel passages in Matthew and John simply refer to the fact that at this point Jesus “gave up his spirit” (Matt 27:50; John 19:30). Interestingly, Mark 15:37 puts it this way: “And Jesus uttered a loud cry, and *breathed* his last” (Greek ejxevpneusen [**exepneusen**]; note the root *pneuma* [“spirit”] in this verb).

This shows that, as in the Old Testament, in the New Testament also there is a close connection between “spirit” and “breath” or “breathing.” When the “spirit” of a person departs their physical body dies because it no longer “breathes.” The same idea appears, for example, in Jas 2:26, “For just as the *body* without the *spirit* is dead, so also faith without deeds is dead.” Even in life one can refer to the combination of “body” (*soma*, or “flesh” *sarx*) and the “spirit” (*pneuma*) as making up the whole person (e.g., 1 Cor 7:34; 2 Cor 7:1; Col 2:5, and the combination of body, flesh [as embodied sin], and spirit in 1 Cor 5:3–5), although other combinations can also be used (see, e.g., “soul and body” in Matt 10:28 and “spirit, soul, and body” in 1 Thess 5:23). Moreover, like in the Old Testament, the “spirit” is the seat of human character as well as capacities and dispositions. For example, it can be treated as the seat of intuition (Mark 2:8), discouragement or internal despair (Mark 8:12), joy (Luke 1:47 // with “soul” in v. 46), intense affection (John 11:33), an internal sense of being in one form or another (2 Tim 1:7, a spirit of fear, as opposed to a spirit of power, love, and self-discipline), and so on. When referring

to the human spirit, therefore, *ruakh* (“spirit”) can refer either to an immaterial element of the human person or personality, or to the whole of the immaterial person.

The point is that there is a great deal of continuity from the Old Testament on into the New Testament in regard to the concept of “spirit” (including “breath” and “wind,” see more on the latter below). For purposes of our discussion here, it is absolutely essential to observe that this continuity extends also to “the Spirit of God.” Perhaps one of the best places to see this is in 1 Cor 2:10b–12:

For the Spirit searches all things, even the deep things of God. For who among men knows the things of a man except the man’s *spirit* [lit. *the spirit of the man*] within him? So too, no one knows the things of God except *the Spirit of God*. Now we have not received the *spirit* of the world, but *the Spirit who is from God*, so that we may know the things that are freely given to us by God.

The grammatical structure of the expression “the spirit of man” in v. 11 corresponds to that of “the Spirit of God” later in the same verse.<sup>9</sup> This correspondence provides one of the most obvious, simple, and helpful ways of approaching the subject of God’s Spirit in the Old Testament in relation to the Holy Spirit in the New Testament. *Just as people have a “spirit,” so does God.*

We will discuss the activities of the Spirit of God in the next major section of this essay. For now our concern is with the nature and divinity of the God’s Spirit. As noted above, the expression “the Spirit of God/the Lord” and its pronominal equivalents (e.g., “my Spirit”) occur many times in the Hebrew Bible, while “Holy Spirit” occurs only three times. In the New Testament the situation is very different, almost reversed. “The Spirit of God/the Lord” occurs only about 25 times, but “(Holy) Spirit” over 150 times. At least on one level it seems most natural that since “the spirit of man” fits his nature as human, similarly, “the Spirit of God” fits God’s nature as divine.

This may seem simplistic, but the New Testament actually sets the precedent for it in certain passages, one of the most important being 1 Cor 2:11 in its context (cited above), where the very point of the argument depends on seeing the correspondence and relationship between the Spirit of God and the spirit of man. The “spirit” of the man knows the deep things of the man, that is, his thoughts (v. 11a). Similarly, the “Spirit” of God knows the deep things of God (v. 10b), that is, his thoughts (v. 11b). Moreover, the way we come to understand “the things that are freely given to us by God” by his grace through faith in Jesus Christ (v. 12b; cf. vv. 1–9) is by receiving the Spirit of God in our human “spirit” (v. 12–13; cf. v. 10a). Having the Spirit, we are “spiritual” and “have the mind [*nou*] (nous)] of Christ” (v. 16b).

Compare also, for example, Rom 8:16, where we again find that “The *Spirit* [of God; see the context] himself bears witness to *our* [human] *spirit* that we are God’s children.” Moreover, in both the Old and the New Testaments God has set his Spirit “in” and “among” his people for guidance and empowerment (see the New Testament passages just cited and compare Gen 41:38; Num 27:18; and note esp. the term “Holy Spirit” in Isa 63:11–12 with “the Spirit of the Lord” in v. 14). This makes it possible for us to “grieve the Holy Spirit” of the Lord/God through various forms of rebellious misbehavior (Isa 63:10; cf. esp. Eph 4:30). As a human person’s spirit can be grieved, so can the Spirit of God who dwells in our human spirit and among us (see more on the matter of “indwelling” later in this essay).

So it seems we can think about our subject in the following way from the point of view of certain passages in scripture. The spirit of a human person is distinguishable from his or her body. The spirit is the person whether embodied or not. If in this sense the spirit of a person is the person, then the Spirit of God is God. If the human spirit separates from the body, the body dies (to be resurrected later),

but you still have the person in the form of his or her spirit. The Spirit of God is God, one of the divine persons of the Godhead. Moreover, if and when the Spirit of God occupies the human spirit of a person, that person is made alive to God on the level of her or his spirit. The close relationship between “breath” and “spirit” as translations of the same Hebrew word suggests that if a person has “breath” they are alive physically and if they have the Spirit of God they are alive spiritually. The Spirit of God is the person of God who vivifies the spirit of people to God. The analogy is not perfect, of course. For example, the scriptures are not suggesting by this analogy that God the Father somehow corresponds to our physical body. “God is spirit, and the people who worship him must worship in spirit and truth” (John 4:24). Nevertheless, on certain points at least we can reason back by analogy from a biblical understanding of the human person as a way of approach to a good biblical understanding of the person of God, especially in terms of the “Spirit” of God as a divine person, the Holy Spirit.

## Wind, Spirit, and the Nature of the Spirit of God

If one of the explicitly biblical perspectives from which to approach an understanding of the Holy Spirit of God is through comparison and contrast with the human spirit of people, then another is through the nature and effects of “wind.” We have already referred to several passages in the Old

Testament where *ruakh* means “wind.” Conceptually, “wind” is closely related to “breath,” since they both involve the movement of air, and both of them are closely related to “spirit” because if a person stops “breathing” their life “expires” and the person’s body gives up their “spirit.” In turn, “spirit” also sometimes refers to that which constitutes the unique nature of a particular person—their individual personal vitality and personality, character, dispositions, and so forth. In the latter sense, the term also applies to the Spirit of God. I am not suggesting that Hebrew *ruakh* always means all these things, but that it can potentially mean any of them.

The close connection between “wind” and “spirit” comes to the forefront immediately at the beginning of the Bible. In Gen 1:2b we read that the “the Spirit of God [*h!Oa\$ j^Wr*, *ruakh áelohim*] was moving over the surface of the waters” before the beginning of God’s creative words in verse 3 (see “And God said...” through the chapter). Some have treated *áelohim* here as an adjective (i.e., its superlative use) meaning “mighty” or “terrible” so that the whole expression means “a mighty wind” or “terrible storm.” However, there is no other instance in the Old Testament where *ru,ah£ áelohim* or any of its equivalents mean anything other than “the S/spirit of God/the Lord” or “the wind of God/the Lord.” Moreover, the adjectival use of *áelohim* is foreign to this chapter where the term is used so many times to mean “God,” and, in fact, serves as the primary focus throughout the chapter both conceptually and structurally. See Gen 1:1a, “In the beginning God ...,” and recall the repeated formula, “And God said...,” beginning in verse 3 and running through the whole chapter as the common introduction to each creative movement of God.

The nrsv translates “a wind from God swept over...” rather than the niv “the Spirit of God was moving over...,” reflecting both the ancient Near Eastern background in which cosmologies sometimes include wind in the creative process, and some translations and discussions in the history of interpretation of Gen 1:2.<sup>10</sup> The rendering “wind of God” finds support in Gen 8:1b, where God “caused a wind to blow over the earth and the waters receded” after the waters of the flood had covered the earth. The context is similar to Gen 1:2 where waters are also covering the earth and God intends to cause them to recede in the following verses so that the dry ground might appear (later, on the third day of creation).

Consider also the watery context in Exod 14:21–22, 29 where the Lord enabled Israel to cross the Reed Sea on dry ground by sending a strong east “wind” (*ruakh*) to drive the waters back. The poetic account in Exod 15 refers to this wind as a “blast” (*ruakh*) from the Lord’s nostrils that piled up the waters (v. 8), and then he “blew” again with his “breath” (*ruakh*) to drown the Egyptian army with the same waters (v. 10). There are also a few instances in which the expression “the *ruakh* of the Lord” refers his “breath” or “wind” (e.g., Isa 40:7; 59:19). Moreover, the next occurrence of *ruakh* in the canon after Gen 1:2 is 3:8 in reference to the Lord God “walking in the garden in the cool [lit. ‘to the wind’] of the day.”

However, we also need to take seriously the fact that the vast bulk of occurrences of “the *ruakh* of the Lord/God” in the Old Testament refer to God’s “Spirit” understood as the person of God that corresponds to the human “spirit” in people (see the reflections on this biblical analogy in the previous section above). Consider, for example, the third occurrence of *ruakh* in the canon (after Gen 1:2 and 3:8), where the Lord says, “My Spirit will not contend with man forever” (Gen 6:3 [niv]). “Wind” would make no sense as an English rendering for *ruakh* in this context, and there are many like it. This must be taken into consideration in the translation and interpretation of Gen 1:2. It is especially significant that this is the third and last of the three clauses of verse 2 describing the condition of the earth before God’s repeated pronouncement of creative words beginning immediately in verse 3. Some have argued that since “the Spirit of God” does not appear anywhere else in this chapter, therefore, translating “the wind of God” suits the focus on forces of nature throughout the chapter. However, translating “the Spirit of God” corresponds to the focus on God “speaking” (i.e., “breathing out” his pronouncements) throughout the chapter. In other words, the latter rendering would provide a more natural lead into the “And God said...” sequence of the chapter, beginning immediately after this clause.<sup>11</sup>

In any case, it seems to me that our problem in handling Gen 1:2 arises in the first place because we tend to think that “wind” and “Spirit” are mutually exclusive. In my opinion, there is no reason that *ruakh* in Gen 1:2 cannot be a reflection of the power of God present and ready to work through “wind” in this watery environment (cf. Gen 8:1 and Exod 14:21–22 and 15:8–10 cited above) as well as the work of the “Spirit” of God in shaping the creation through pronouncements (Gen 1:3ff), both at the same time (i.e., an instance of *double entendre*). As I have already explained and illustrated above, there is a very close connection between *ruakh* as wind/breath (i.e., the movement of air) and *ruakh* as (human) “spirit” or “Spirit” of God in the Hebrew Bible.

The Old Testament passage in which this stands out most clearly is Ezek 36–37. The well-known vision of the valley of dry bones in Ezek 37:1–14 begins with “the Spirit of the Lord” transporting the prophet to the valley (v. 1).<sup>12</sup> Of course, the dry bones represent the house of Israel as a whole, and the real question is whether or not there was any hope for Israel in the future (v. 11). A valley of dry bones suggests not, but God has something to say about that. As the vision goes, God tells Ezekiel to prophesy that God “will make breath (*ruakh*) enter” them so that they “will come to life” (v. 5). Ezekiel prophesies as he has been instructed and the bones rattle, come together, and receive from the

Lord flesh and life-giving “breath” (*ruakh*) from “the four winds” (i.e., the four *ruakh*; vv. 7–10).<sup>13</sup> Note the link between “breath” and “wind” here. Finally, in the interpretation of this vision in vv. 11–14 God says that he will bring the people of Israel back to the land (i.e., out of their graves, vv. 12–13) in accord with the promise that, “I will put my Spirit (*ruakh*) in you and you will live” (v. 14). So here the “Spirit” of God is identified with the “breath” and the four “winds” of the vision. The oracle begins with “the Spirit of the Lord” transporting the prophet to the valley of dry bones and ends with the “Spirit” reviving the people (i.e., the dry bones) to bring them back from exile (i.e., the valley of dry bones) into the land of Israel.

This combination of wind, breath, and spirit extends also into the New Testament where its importance for understanding of the Spirit of God is maintained. For example, in his well-known “born again” (or perhaps better, “born from above”) encounter with Nicodemus in John 3,<sup>14</sup> Jesus uses the wind/spirit correspondence to explain the nature of spiritual birth: “What is born of the flesh is flesh, and what is born of the Spirit is spirit” (v. 6), and especially, “The *wind* [*pneuma*] blows wherever it will, and you hear the sound it makes, but do not know where it comes from and where it is going. So it is with everyone who is *born* of the *Spirit* [*pneuma*]” (v. 8). We will say more about this passage below. What concerns us presently is the fact that Jesus rebuked Nicodemus for being “Israel’s teacher” and not understanding the significance of the nature of “spirit” and the “Spirit” of God in spiritual birth into the kingdom of God (vv. 9–10). Later in the same Gospel we read that Jesus “breathed on them [i.e., his disciples] and said, ‘Receive the Holy Spirit’” (John 20:22). It is as if his breathing on them was the means by which he passed the Holy Spirit over to them.

The dependence on the Ezek 37 imagery of wind, breath, and Spirit is hard to miss in John 3 and 20. Similarly, in Acts 2, “the blowing of a violent *wind*” accompanies the filling of the Holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost (vv. 2–4). Again, in 2 Pet 1:21b, Peter affirms that the Old Testament prophets “*carried along* by the Holy Spirit spoke from God” when they articulated the word of God we now know as the Old Testament. As many have observed, the verb “carried along” (Greek *ferovmenoi* [*pheromenoi*] from the verb *fevru* [*phero*„]) is the same verb as that used for a boat being “driven along” by the wind in Acts 27:15. The main point is this: God’s Spirit is like the wind.

We need to take this biblical analogy seriously in both understanding the nature of God’s Spirit and in welcoming and engaging with his work. Wind is a mysterious and powerful force. We cannot always predict what it is going to do, and it is not under our control. The same is true of God. We cannot always predict what he is going to do, and he is not under our control even if he has told us what he is going to do. He is God. We are not. All this is true also of the Spirit of God. However, although we cannot completely understand and control the Holy Spirit, we can draw upon his power. Using the analogy of a ship driven by the wind (see above), we can “put up the sails” in our lives and thereby take advantage of the blowing of the Spirit in and through our lives. We are empowered by the Holy Spirit as long as we have our sails up.

Putting up the sails begins, above all, with being “born” of the Spirit into the kingdom of God (John 3). It continues through continuing attentiveness to God in our lives on various levels and in all sorts of ways, including, for example, the serious study of the scriptures that the Spirit himself “*inspired*” (see 2 Tim 3:16, “Every scripture is inspired by God [*God-breathed* (*qeovpneusto*“, *theopneustos*)]”; cf. 2 Pet 1:21 cited above), the practice of “unceasing” prayer (1 Thess 5:17), loving involvement with other

believers (see, e.g., the fruit of the Spirit in Gal 5:16, 22–24), giving witness in the world to the truth and effectiveness of the gospel (Acts 1:8), and so on. The more we are attentive to God in all the various dimensions of our lives, the more we invite the Holy Spirit to empower us by “putting up our sails,” to the degree these things are true of us, to that degree we live our lives by the power of the Holy Spirit.

## **Water, Spirit, and Transformation by the Spirit of God**

Another whole set of biblical images associated with the Holy Spirit are those that in some way have to do with water. The vision of Ezek 37 is actually an extension of the previous oracle in Ezek 36:22–38, in which the Lord promised to respond to the rebellious defilement of the nation and their profaning of his holy name among the nations. This is his promised response:

I will *sprinkle you with pure water* and you will be clean from all your impurities; I will purify you from all your idols. I will give you a new heart, and I will *put a new spirit within you*; I will remove the heart of stone from your body and give you a heart of flesh. *I will put my spirit within you*; I will take the initiative and you will obey my statutes and carefully observe my laws. Then you will live in the land I gave to your fathers; you will be my people, and I will be your God (Ezek 36:25–28).

Three points in this passage are especially important to our present discussion. First, the Lord promised to “cleanse” the nation from their all their “impurities” and “idols” by sprinkling (actually “splashing”) the people with “pure water.” Second, the Lord promised to change their human spirit by putting within them “a new spirit.” Thus, he will change their “heart” from being hard like stone (non-responsive) to being soft like human flesh and, therefore, responsive to God’s touch. The third point is actually closely related to the second. The Lord promised to put his “spirit *within* [the midst of]” them and thereby move them to follow the Lord’s covenant law (v. 27). This, of course, is the essence of putting “a new [human] spirit *within* [the midst of]” them (v. 26).

## **Water Purification and Baptism with the Spirit**

It is important to observe the close pattern of parallels between this passage and what Jesus said to Nicodemus in John 3:5–6, “I tell you the solemn truth, unless a person is born of *water* and *spirit*, he cannot enter the kingdom of God. What is born of the flesh is flesh, and what is born of the *Spirit* is *spirit*.” The combination of water, spirit, and Spirit here recalls the same elements in Ezek 36:25–27 (cited above) and the relationship between them. Water is mentioned first because purification from impurity and infidelity is the necessary environment for revival of the heart and spirit of people by the work of God’s Spirit. Ezekiel was both born as a priest and called to be a prophet (Ezek 1:1–3), and the two offices come together here. In Ezekiel’s day Israel needed both purification by water and vivification by the Spirit. John the Baptist was also both born a priest (Luke 1:5, 57–66) and called to be a prophet (Matt 3:1–4; 11:7–15; note especially the quotations from Isa 40:3 in Matt 3:3 and Mal 3:1 in Matt 11:10, and compare John’s lifestyle with Elijah, Matt 3:4; 11:7–8; and 2 Kgs 1:8).

The connection of John 3 back to John 1 is important here. John the Baptist came to prepare the people for the Messiah, and he did this through water purification, a baptism of repentance (John 1:24–28; cf. Matt 3:2, 8, 11; Mark 1:4–5; Luke 3:3, 8). But the Son of God himself would be the one who would “baptize with the Holy Spirit” (John 1:33b). The Jewish leaders had sent “priests and Levites” (v. 19) to question John about who he was (vv. 19–23) and the purpose of his baptismal water purification practices (v. 25). Of course, this would be natural since priests and Levites were the ones responsible for such purifications in Israel (cf., e.g., Lev 14 with Matt 8:4). John’s ministry continued along this

line of “ceremonial washing,” over which disputes sometimes also arose between John’s disciples and other Jews (see, e.g., John 3:25).<sup>15</sup>

John the Baptist made the connection between his own ministry and that of Jesus through a theologically creative metaphorical parallel between his own baptism “with water” (John 1:31) and Jesus’ baptism “with the Holy Spirit” (John 1:33). I am aware of no precedent for this analogy (water baptism > Spirit baptism) in the Old Testament or intertestamental literature.<sup>16</sup> John seems to have coined the term as a graphic image that would serve to both compare and contrast his own ministry with that of Christ. People of the day were accustomed to ritual washings with water, but “washing with the Holy Spirit” was another matter. Even if the expression itself derives from John the Baptist, nevertheless, the idea behind it is Ezekiel’s prophecy of the Spirit of God transforming the spirit of people from death to life in the same context as God cleansing his people by washing them with clean water (Ezek 36:25–27 with 37:13–14). This is clear from the correspondences between John 3 and Ezek 36:25–27 outlined and explained above.

The metaphorical image of “baptism with the Holy Spirit” caught on in the New Testament and came to serve as a pivotal theme of continuity from the Gospels into Acts and the Epistles. *The metaphor takes the idea of purification of the human body through physically washing with water and extends it to purification of the human spirit through spiritual washing with the Holy Spirit.* This constitutes the pivotal shift from the water baptism of John to the Spirit baptism of Jesus that John the Baptist was so concerned to emphasize (see, e.g., Matt 3:11 and John 1:32–34). Similarly, when Jesus himself met with the apostles immediately before his ascension (Acts 1), in anticipation of the day of Pentecost (Acts 2), he once again called their attention to the importance of the link between John’s baptism with water and his own baptism with the Holy Spirit: “John baptized with water, but you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days from now” (Acts 1:5), and “you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the farthest parts of the earth” (Acts 1:8).

Although the term “baptism of the Holy Spirit” is not used in the record of Philip’s ministry in Samaria, nevertheless Acts 8 emphasizes the importance of maintaining a direct connection between baptism “into the name of the Lord Jesus” (Acts 8:16) and receiving “the Holy Spirit” (Acts 8:15, 17). Peter recalled Jesus’ baptismal teaching in Acts 1:5–8 when he was asked to explain and justify the water and Spirit baptism of the first gentiles (Acts 11:15–16; cf. 10:44–48). Similarly, Paul came to the believers in Ephesus when they had been baptized with John’s “baptism of repentance” (Acts 19:4) but not yet “into the name of the Lord Jesus.” Therefore, they had not received the Holy Spirit (vv. 2, 6). In fact, they had not yet “even heard that there is a Holy Spirit” (v. 2b). The phraseology here recalls John 7:39. Jesus had once again used a water motif to speak of “the Spirit, whom those who believed in him were later to receive.” John adds further, “For the Spirit had not yet been given [lit. ‘for (the) Spirit was not yet’], because Jesus was not yet glorified.”

### **Pouring, Drinking, and the “Indwelling” of the Holy Spirit**

This brings us to the Holy Spirit’s “indwelling” of believers. Clearly, according to Paul there is no being a Christian without being “baptized by the Holy Spirit.” As he puts it in 1 Cor 12:13, “for in one Spirit we were all baptized into one body. Whether we are Jews or Greeks or slaves or free we were all made to drink of the one Spirit.” In Acts 19 Paul immediately led the Ephesian disciples (v. 1) to faith in Jesus, “baptized” them “into the name of the Lord Jesus,” and laid his hands on them so that “the Holy Spirit came on them” (vv. 4–6). We have already observed that, as a motif, “baptism” in (with, or by) the Holy Spirit is new in the New Testament, but we have also seen that it is based on the

combination of divine promises in Ezek 36:25–28. God promised that he himself would purify Israel with clean water (cf. the water baptism of John the Baptist) and, in association with that, put a new (human) spirit in them by putting his Spirit in them to vivify their spirit (see also Ezek 37:14; cf. the Spirit baptism of Jesus).

Paul's other image of the Spirit in 1 Cor 12:13 calls up another whole set of expressions in the Old Testament that serve as background for the New Testament teaching of the indwelling Holy Spirit. He writes: "we were all made to drink of the one Spirit." There is a very real difference between using water for purification (i.e., baptism) and drinking it. Likewise, baptism in (with, or by) the Holy Spirit is quite another thing from "drinking" of the Holy Spirit. We have already discussed the person(ality) of the Holy Spirit based on the comparison to the human spirit (he is personal and manifests the divine nature of God). We have also investigated the nature of the Holy Spirit as (life-giving) "breath" and mysterious yet empowering "wind." Furthermore, we have already begun our discussion of the Holy Spirit as "water" with the remarks above on the Spirit's baptism that cleanses the human spirit.

On the latter point the connection back to Ezek 36–37 binds cleansing from impurities with vivification of the human spirit by God putting his "Spirit" there (Ezek 36:25–27 and 37:14). This combination of divine activities constitutes the regenerating and renewing of peoples' hearts and lives about which both the Old and New Testaments speak.<sup>17</sup> In Ezekiel's terminology it changes the heart from a "heart of stone" to "a heart of flesh" (Ezek 36:26). Jeremiah refers to the same essential thing with a different image when God speaks through him, "I will put my law within them and write it on their hearts and minds" (Jer 31:33). Again, this is what Moses means when he says, "Circumcise then your heart, and stiffen your neck no more (Deut 10:16 [niv]; cf. 30:6, Lev 26:41; Jer 4:4; 6:10 [lit. "ears are uncircumcised"]; 9:25–26; Ezek 44:7). Paul applies this to saving faith in Rom 2:28–29, where he refers to "circumcision is of the heart *by the Spirit*" (see also Phil 3:3; Col 2:11; and implied elsewhere, e.g., Eph 2:11). There is no "circumcision of the heart" without the work of the Spirit of God in the heart/spirit of the person involved. This is true no matter whether we are talking about the Old Testament or the New.

God has always wanted the same thing from everyone and, according to passages like those cited just above, his resources have always been available and at work to bring this about in the lives of believers whether in Old or New Testament days. The scriptures talk about this in all sorts of different ways and illustrate it through various kinds of metaphors, a few of which are listed above. Therefore, when God spoke through Ezekiel looking forward to a future day when this would take place in Israel, he was not suggesting that this kind of work in the hearts of people had never been seen before in anyone's life. What he was saying is that there was a day coming when God will restore Israel as a nation, bringing them back from exile to reoccupy the land. This would require a work of the Spirit of God changing their hearts and, historically, it took place when they were restored to the land after the Babylonian exile.

This is not the place to deal with all the historical and spiritual factors that bear on Israel's restoration from their captivity in Babylon and the work of Holy Spirit in that instance (see, e.g., Hag 2:5 and Zech 4:6). The point is that this kind of work of the Holy Spirit took place before the time of Ezekiel and at the time of the restoration that Ezekiel predicted. It also continued after the restoration into New Testament times when John the Baptist, Jesus, Paul, and others drew upon Ezekiel's words to explain and illustrate the work of the Holy Spirit in the lives of Christians. Consider, for example, all the background concepts Paul draws upon in Titus 3:5–6, where he writes that God "saved us not by works of righteousness that we have done but on the basis of his mercy, through the *washing* of the new birth

and the *renewing of the Holy Spirit*, whom he *poured out* on us in full measure through Jesus Christ our Savior” (cf. also Eph 5:26–27). There is no regeneration anywhere or anytime without the pouring out of the Holy Spirit.

Finally, we come to the matter of the outpouring and indwelling of the Holy Spirit in the Old and New Testaments, about which there has been no small amount of disagreement. This is especially the case regarding whether or not the Holy Spirit indwelt Old Testament believers like he does New Testament believers (for the latter see especially Rom 5:5, 8:9; 11, 1 Cor 2:12; 6:19–20; Gal 4:6; 1 John 3:24; 4:13). On the one hand, it seems difficult to suggest that regeneration could take place in the Old Testament without the Holy Spirit indwelling the believer. On the other hand, some passages in the New Testament, especially in the Gospel of John, seem to suggest that indwelling began in the New Testament at Pentecost. For example, as Jesus put it to the apostles in John 14:17, the Holy Spirit “resides *with* you and will be *in* you.” There are several difficulties in this verse even on the text-critical level,<sup>18</sup> but as the text reads it there appears to be a suggestion that there will be a shift from the Holy Spirit being “with” them while Jesus was still with them to the Holy Spirit being “in” them after he leaves.

This accords well with the normal understanding of John 7:37–39:

On the last day of the feast, the greatest day, Jesus stood up and shouted out, “If anyone is thirsty, let him come to me, and let the one who believes in me drink. Just as the scripture says, ‘*From within him will flow rivers of living water.*’” (Now he said this about the Spirit, whom those who believed in him were going to receive, for *the Spirit had not yet been given* [lit. ‘for [the] Spirit was not yet’], because Jesus was not yet glorified.)

The context is the “Feast” of Tabernacles, at which there was traditionally a water-pouring ceremony (cf. Zech 14:8, 16–18).<sup>19</sup> Jesus took the opportunity to pronounce that the one who believes in him will have “streams of living water” flowing “from within him” (cf. Jesus with the woman at the well in John 4:10, 14). John the apostle, in turn, explains that Jesus was referring to the Spirit of God, whom such believers would later receive. The reason they had not yet received the Spirit was because this was to happen only after Jesus had been glorified, which is the point of John 14:17 (cited above), and, in fact, “the Spirit was not yet” (a literal translation).

Now, John could not mean by this explanation that there was no Holy Spirit in existence yet because he had already made much of the Holy Spirit’s presence and work earlier in his Gospel (see especially John 1:32–34 and 3:5–8, and the discussion above), and had even recorded Jesus’ rebuke of Nicodemus for not knowing about these things (John 3:9–10). Even if John was not fully aware of and did not understand the Old Testament background of the Holy Spirit at the time Jesus made this statement, certainly by the time he wrote his Gospel and made the explanatory comment we are considering here, he had experienced the work of the Holy Spirit in his own life (see especially Pentecost) and learned of the Spirit’s activities in Old Testament days. By that time he knew that it is not true that the Holy Spirit “was not yet” in existence in Jesus’ day, so that cannot be the correct interpretation of John 7:39. The same may be true of the similarly-worded remark in Acts 19:2, when the disciples at Ephesus said, “we have not even heard that there is a Holy Spirit,” although at that time they may have been functioning at the same level of ignorance about the Holy Spirit as Nicodemus was in John 3.

The most natural way to understand the intent of these passages is to say that in the days of Jesus the Holy Spirit was not yet active in the lives of believers in the way that he would be after Jesus was glorified, starting on the day of Pentecost (Acts 2). Some would extend the argument back to the whole Old Testament period as well, although it is difficult to understand how this makes sense in light of

Ezek 36:27, “I will put my Spirit within you,” unless one makes it to be entirely eschatological into the future beyond the restoration from the captivity (see the problem with this approach discussed above), or exclusively collective, referring to God putting the Holy Spirit “in the midst of” Israel as a nation, not “within” individuals. It is true that the pronoun “you” is plural in Ezek 36:27, but the same is true of the whole passage, including the references to changing their heart (v. 26) and so on. One can hardly speak of changing the heart a nation without changing the heart of the people who make it up. Moreover, the New Testament writers did not read the passage this way. They allude to it on both communal and individual levels (see, e.g., 2 Cor 3:3–6 and, again, the personal individual remarks of Jesus to Nicodemus which so clearly draw upon Ezek 36).

In reality, there is probably a combination of things going on here. First, there is the Jewish tradition about the cessation of the time of prophecy with the last of the Old Testament prophets.<sup>20</sup> There is evidence for this tradition of “the quenched Spirit” in intertestamental and rabbinic literature, as well as Josephus, perhaps based on Old Testament passages such as Ps 74:9, Zech 13:2–3, and Mal 3:1, 4:5–6. This suggests that, at least in part, the point of the passages about the lack of the indwelling work of the Spirit in the days of Jesus arises from the fact of the cessation of prophetic activity since the Old Testament prophets. This does not necessarily mean that there was a complete lack of prophetic activity (see, e.g., Luke 1:67 and 2:25–32), but perhaps the time from the last Old Testament prophets to the time of Jesus was like the time of Eli’s decline: “Word from the Lord was rare in those days; revelatory visions were infrequent” (1 Sam 3:1; contrast vv. 19–21).

The second point is related to the first. The fact of the matter is that, from Pentecost forward, the indwelling of the Holy Spirit is closely tied to his prophetic work. Peter explained the activities of the Spirit at Pentecost by citing Joel 2:28–32a (3:1–5a in Hebrew). Peter’s quotation of the first two verses reads this way (Acts 2:17–18):

“And in the last days it will be,” God says, “that I will *pour out my Spirit* on all people,  
and your sons and your daughters *will prophesy*,  
and your young men will see visions,  
and your old men will dream dreams.  
Even on my slaves, both men and women,  
I will *pour out my Spirit* in those days, and *they will prophesy*.”

“Pouring out” of the Spirit (like water) is associated, therefore, with the prophetic activity of the Old Testament. In Ezek 39:29, the last verse of the section that includes Ezek 36–37, God uses the same expression to refer to his commitment to transform and restore Israel: “I will not hide my face from them any longer, *when I pour out my spirit* on the house of Israel, declares the Sovereign Lord.” There are other expressions used for the same thing, but they all associated this kind of Spirit-activity with the institution of prophecy. Consider especially Num 11:29b, where Moses says, “Oh that all the Lord’s people were *prophets*, that the Lord would *put his Spirit* on them!”(cf. also 1 Sam 10:10–13 and many other places).

The point of Joel 2 as well as Peter’s quotation of it in Acts 2 is that there will be a difference in the last days (i.e., the days since Pentecost). Namely, Moses would have his wish come true. The Lord did “put his Spirit on” all his people, and they all became prophets. The same has been true of all born-again (from above) Christians since that day until now. We have all received the Holy Spirit into our lives by whom we have been cleansed (i.e., baptism of the Holy Spirit, 1 Cor 12:13a) and of whom we drink as he wells up within us (1 Cor 12:13b). All believers are called to be prophets and, therefore, proclaimers of the gospel. This is indeed new in the New Testament. Jesus even hinted at this early in his ministry:

“Blessed are you when *people* insult you and persecute you and say all kinds of evil things about you falsely on account of me. Rejoice and be glad because your reward is great in heaven, for they persecuted the prophets before you in the same way”(Matt 5:11–12).

That brings me to a third point. The coming of the Holy Spirit into our lives today brings with it the accomplished work of Christ in his life, death, burial, and resurrection. This also is new compared to Old Testament believers. The indwelling of the Spirit is, of course, metaphorical. If we cut open our bodies we will not find the Holy Spirit visible there. He inhabits our human spirit, which is immaterial by nature, just as God is (John 4:24). This means that what he brings with him into our lives is the full force of “the things freely given to us by God” in Christ Jesus (1 Cor 2:12). Yes, there is “indwelling” in the Old Testament, but not in this way and to this degree of the fullness of God’s salvation plan accomplished. The Holy Spirit now can bring all this to bear upon us, and that is his very purpose as Paul observes in 1 Cor 2:12.

## Summary and Conclusion

There are some things that are completely new about the work of the Holy Spirit in the New Testament compared to the Old Testament. The Holy Spirit as the agent of Jesus’ conception through Mary springs to mind immediately. But much of what is there in the New Testament already has its roots sunk deep into the soil of the Old Testament. What I have written here is something of a phenomenology of the Holy Spirit based in the Old Testament. It is true that the term “Holy Spirit” only occurs three times in the Old Testament, but “the Spirit of God” occurs many times and we see the latter pattern in other terminology as well, for example, “the Spirit of Christ.”

Our understanding of the person(ality) of the Holy Spirit finds its base in the comparison to the human spirit (he is personal and manifests the divine nature of God). The nature and power of the Holy Spirit is based in the fact that he is (life-giving) “breath” and mysterious yet empowering “wind.” Like water, he is also the one who cleanses our hearts (baptism of the Holy Spirit) and constantly provides water for us to drink as we carry out our prophetic ministry in the Church and in the world. Some of this is new in some ways in the New Testament, but the foundations for them are laid in the Old Testament. The implications of all these images are not always clear in the Old Testament, and sometimes not even in the New Testament in certain places, but they are there nevertheless.

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1 . The following are good places to begin: Leon J. Wood, *The Holy Spirit in the Old Testament* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1976); Lloyd Neve, *The Spirit of God in the Old Testament* (Tokyo: Seibunsha, 1972); Benjamin Breckinridge Warfield, “The Spirit of God in the Old Testament,” in *Biblical and Theological Studies*, ed. Samuel G. Craig (Philadelphia: The Presbyterian and Reformed Pub. Co., 1952); and for special clarity see especially M. V. Van Pelt, W. C. Kaiser, Jr., and D. I. Block, “j~Wr, ru,ah,” in *New International Dictionary of Old Testament Theology and Exegesis*, ed. Willem A. VanGemeren (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1997) 3.1073-1078 and the literature cited there.

2 . We will discuss this important verse further below.

3 . The statistics used in this article are taken from Francis Brown, S. R. Driver, and Charles A. Briggs, *Hebrew and English Lexicon of the Old Testament* (London: Oxford Univ. Press, 1906) 924-926 and Abraham Even-Shoshan, *A New Concordance of the Bible* (Jerusalem: Kiryat Sefer Pub. Hs., 1989) 1063-1066.

4 . Consider, e.g., the renderings of Psalm 51:13 “Your holy spirit” and Isa 63:10-11 “His holy spirit” in the *Tanakh* translation of the Jewish Publication Society (1985). Similarly, in Num 11:29b, Moses’ remark is handled this way: “Would that all the Lord’s people were prophets, that the Lord put His spirit upon them!”

Likewise, in his *The JPS Torah Commentary: Numbers* (Philadelphia: The Jewish Publication Society, 1990) 87, Jacob Milgrom renders 11:17, “I will draw upon the spirit that is upon you,” and on p. 90 Moses’ statement in v. 29 is translated, “... that the Lord put His spirit upon them!” (See also Milgrom’s excursus on ecstatic prophecy and the spirit on pp. 380-383.) However, it should be noted that this translation issue is not limited to exclusively Jewish translations since, for example, the *New Revised Standard Version* (nrsv) renders these passages with “holy spirit” (Psalm 51:11 and Isa 63:10, 11) and “his spirit” (Num 11:29).

5 . Israel Abrahams, “God in the Bible,” *Encyclopedia Judaica* vol. 7, ed. by Cecil Roth (Jerusalem: Keter Publishing House, 1971) 643.

6 . F. W. Horn, “Holy Spirit,” translated by Dietlinde M. Elliott in *The Anchor Bible Dictionary*, ed. David Noel Freedman (New York: Doubleday, 1992) 3.264. Although scarred by some non-conservative presuppositions and relatively light treatment of the Old Testament, this article is a very fine concise and well-documented discussion of the evidence regarding the Holy Spirit/holy spirit in the intertestamental and rabbinic sources as well as the New Testament.

7 . See, e.g., Warfield, “The Spirit of God in the Old Testament,” 149-156; Gary Fredricks, “Rethinking the Role of the Holy Spirit in the Lives of Old Testament Believers,” *Trinity Journal* 9 NS (1988) 81-84; Van Pelt, Kaiser, and Block, “j~Wr, ru,ah,” 1076-1077; and Wood, *The Holy Spirit in the Old Testament*, 16-22 and 64-77.

8 . See Peter C. Craigie, *Psalms 1-50*, The Word Biblical Commentary, vol. 19 (Waco: Word, 1983) 262-263 for a brief but very helpful explanation of the relationship between the intent of this verse in Psalm 31 and Jesus’ quotation from it on the cross.

9 . For those readers who know Greek, the grammar of the expressions for “the spirit of the man” and “the Spirit of God” in v. 11 are exactly the same. They are toV pneu'ma tou' ajnqrwvpou' (to pneuma tou anthro„pou) and toV pneu'ma tou' qeou' (to pneuma tou theou), respectively.

10 . From ancient times until today there has been an ongoing dispute among translators and scholars over the proper interpretation of ruakh áelohim in this verse. See the helpful review of the debate in Claus Westermann, *Genesis 1-11: A Commentary*, trans. John J. Scullion S. J. (Minneapolis: Augsburg, 1984) 106-108. He translates “God’s wind was moving to and fro . . .” (76). For a helpful discussion favoring “the Spirit of God” see Edward J. Young, “The Interpretation of Genesis 1:2,” *Westminster Theological Journal* 23 (1960-61) 174-178. See James K. Hoffmeier, “Some Thoughts on Genesis 1 & 2 and Egyptian Cosmology,” *Journal of Ancient Near Eastern Studies* 15 (1983) 44 and the literature cited there favoring “the wind of God.” For mediating somewhere between the two positions see Kenneth A Matthews, *Genesis 1-11:26*, New American Commentary, vol. 1A (Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 1996) 134-136.

11 . See, e.g., Gordon Wenham, *Genesis 1-15*, Word Biblical Commentary, vol. 1 (Waco: Word, 1987) 2, 16-17, where he translates “the Wind of God hovered” (note the capital W) and takes it to be “a concrete and vivid image of the Spirit of God.” As I see it, the main point is that even if “wind of God”

were to be the best English rendering in Gen 1:2 (which is still very much in doubt), the expression still indicates that God was actively present in the primeval unformed and unfilled, deep and dark, watery abyss into which God spoke his creative words beginning in Gen 1:3.

[12](#) . See the especially helpful treatment of Ezek 37:1-14 in Michael V. Fox, "The Rhetoric of Ezekiel's Vision of the Valley of the Bones," *Hebrew Union College Annual* 51 (1980) 1-15.

[13](#) . The close connection here between the four "winds" and the "breath" that gives life to the dry bones causes one to wonder if there is not a similar link between the "windstorm (hr`u\*s= j^Wr, ruakh s<sup>e</sup> `aarah) coming out of the north" in Ezek 1:4, "the spirit" of the living creatures in 1:12, and "the spirit of the living beings" (probably better rendered 'the spirit of life') that animated the wheels in 1:20. See the discussion in Daniel I. Block, "The Prophet of the Spirit: The Use of *RWH* in the book of Ezekiel," *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society* 32 (1989) 36-37 and idem, *The Book of Ezekiel: Chapters 1-24*, New International Commentary on the Old Testament (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1997) 101.

[14](#) . See the remarks on this issue in D. A. Carson, *The Gospel according to John* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1991), 188-189.

[15](#) . For the relationship between water baptism, purification, repentance, and making disciples see Richard E. Averbeck, "The Focus of Baptism in the New Testament," *Grace Theological Journal* 2 (1981) 265-301.

[16](#) . See Gordon D. Fee, *God's Empowering Presence: The Holy Spirit in the Letters of Paul* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1994) 910-915 for brief remarks on the Holy Spirit in the intertestamental period.

[17](#) . For the following discussion I have found certain articles to be especially helpful: Geoffrey W. Grogan, "The Experience of Salvation in the Old and New Testaments," *Vox Evangelica* 5 (1967) 12-17; John Goldingay, "Was the Holy Spirit Active in Old Testament Times? What was New about the Christian Experience of God?" *Ex Auditu* 12 (1996) 14-28; Block, "The Prophet of the Spirit," 40-41; and Fredricks, "Rethinking the Role of the Holy Spirit in the Lives of Old Testament Believers," 81-104.

[18](#) . Carson, *The Gospel according to John*, 500-501 and 509-510.

[19](#) . See the extensive discussion of the background and interpretation of this passage in Carson, *The Gospel according to John*, 321-329.

[20](#) . For a good summary of this matter see Fee, *God's Empowering Presence*, 914-915 and the literature cited there.

## **What The Holy Spirit Is... And Isn't**

By  
Anthony V. Gaudiano

Many people believe the 'Holy Spirit' is *male* because it is referred to in bible translations with masculine pronouns, and a *person* because of the Trinity doctrine. It is neither.

A study with a concordance shows that the words translated 'Holy Spirit' in the bible literally mean: a *sacred or holy movement of air- breath, or wind*. As such it is an inanimate invisible force. It isn't male, a person, or named. It is indescribable power emanating from Almighty Yahweh, directed by his Son, Yahshua the Anointed.

### What a Concordance shows

This paper utilizes *Strong's Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible with brief Dictionaries of the Hebrew and Greek Words of the Original with References to the English Words* (Strong's), Thomas Nelson Publishers, Nashville, TN. Strong's is based upon the King James Version (KJV) bible. Other Concordances and bibles are equivalent and superior in some aspects..

For each occurrence of a word in a given bible verse, Strong's assigns a reference number, shows original language spelling, English accented spelling, phonetic pronunciation, and definition(s).

The phrase *Holy Spirit* is not found in Strong's because concordances are keyed to individual words, not phrases. A reader is told to "See HOLY and SPIRIT "heading. Seventeen words are listed. The foregoing will show all definitions of the word most frequently used under each heading in relation to others. The first italicized word in a definition is the most common meaning, thereafter the meanings decrease to infrequent nuances.

### OLD TESTAMENT (OT)

Holy - Thesix words from the Old Testament translated as Holy occur 342 times. They are defined in Strong's Hebrew Dictionary as:

2623 **châçîyd**, *khaw-seed'* - corresponds to #6918.= kind, 5.

4720 **miqqedâsh**, *mik-dawsh'* = consecrated place or thing, 3.

6918 **qâdôsh**, *kaw-doshe'* = *sacred*, ceremonially or morally, 93.

6922 **qaddîysh**, *kad-deesh'* = holy, 7.

6942 **qâdâsh**, *kaw-dash'* = *to be* clean, ceremonially or morally, 7.

6944 **qôdesh**, *ko'-desh* = from 6942; a *sacred* place or thing; rarely abstr. *sanctity*:- consecrated (thing) dedicated (thing), hallowed (thing), holiness, (x most) holy (x day, portion, thing) saint, sanctuary, **234 of 342 total occurrences**.

The dominate Hebrew word **qôdesh**, means: a **sacred place, thing, or condition**.

Spirit - The *four* words from the Old Testament translated as Spirit occur 208 times. They are defined in Strong's Hebrew Dictionary as:

178 'ôwb, obe = *prattling* a father's name; a *mumble*, 5.

5397 n<sup>e</sup>shâmâh, nesh-aw-maw' = a *puff*, i.e. *wind*, angry or vital *breath*, 1.

7307 rûwach, roo'-akh = from 7306; *wind*; by resemblance *breath*, i.e. a sensible (or even violent) exhalation; fig. *life*, *anger*, *unsubstantiality*: by extens. a *region* of the sky; by resemblance *spirit*, but only of a rational being (includ. its expression and functions):-air, anger, blast, breath, x cool, courage, mind, x quarter, x side, spirit ([ual]), tempest, x vain, ([whirl-]) wind (-y), **201 of 208 total occurrences**.

7308 rûwach, (Aramaic) roo'-akh - corr. to 7307 = mind, spirit, wind, 1.

The dominant Hebrew word **rûwach**, means: a '**movement of air - breath or wind.**'

The principal Hebrew word translated 'Holy' and 'Spirit' in the Old Testament essentially describe: a *sacred or holy movement of air - breath, or wind*, a sensible inanimate force.

### NEW TESTAMENT (NT)

Holy - The *five* words from the New Testament translated as Holy occur 167 times. They are defined in Strong's Greek Dictionary as:

37 hagiázÇ, hag-ee-ad'-zo = *to make holy* i.e. *purify* or *consecrate*, 1.

39 hagi4n, hag'-ee-on' = neuter of #40, a *sacred* thing, 1.

40 hagi4s, hag'-ee-os = (an *awful* thing)[comp. 53 {*clean*, *innocent*, *modest*, *perfect*}, 2282 {*to brood*, *foster*, *cherish*}]; *sacred* (phys. *pure*, mor. *blameless* or *religious*, cer. *consecrated*):- (most) *holy* (one), thing, saint, **157 of 167 total occurrences**.

2413 hillr4s, hee-er-os' = *sacred*:- *holy*, 2.

3741 h4si4s, hos'-ee-os = *right* by intrinsic or divine character; thus distinguished from 1342, which refers to *human* statutes and relations, 6.

The dominant Greek word **hagi4s**, means: a **sacred or holy condition**.

Spirit - The *two* words from the New Testament translated as Spirit occur 254 times. They are defined in Strong's Greek Dictionary as:

4151 pn̄luma, pnyoo'-mah - from 4154: a *current* of air, i.e. *breath* (blast) or a *breeze* by ana. or fig. a *spirit* i.e. (human) the rational *soul*, (by imp.) *vital principal*, mental *disposition*, etc. or (superhuman) an *angel*, *demon*, or (divine) God, Christ's *spirit*, the Holy *Spirit*:-ghost, life, spirit (-ual, -ually), mind. comp. 5590 {*breath*}, **252 of 254 total occurrences**.

5326 phantasma, fan'-tas-mah - from 5324; *to make apparent*, *to appear*, specter, 2.

The dominant Greek word **pn̄luma**, means: a *current of air - breath or breeze*.

The principal Greek word translated 'Holy' and 'Spirit' in the New Testament essentially mean: a *sacred movement of air - breath or breeze*.

**SUMMARY:** The principal Hebrew and Greek words translated 'Holy' and 'Spirit' in Strong's describe an inanimate, sometimes sensible, *sacred or holy, force or power* . It isn't *male* or a *person*, and has no attributes of personality, persona, or a personal name.

The phrase 'Holy Spirit'[Holy Power] in Hebrew is: rûwach qôdesh, and in Greek: pnlluma hagi4s. The phrase is spoken and read as shown, in reverse word order to English.

### **Examining verses with the phrase 'the Holy Spirit'**

Using PC Study Bible V3.1 or equivalent software, one can find the eighteen books which contain a total of *ninety four* verses in the KJV with the phrase 'Holy Spirit.' Each verse must be examined in context. This is best done with several bible versions which are commonly available in most libraries. Verses can be examined relatively quickly using bible software. Such software usually has eight bible versions, a lexicon, an interlinear, bible dictionaries, commentaries, etc.

In the two lists which follow, the definite article 'the' precedes all occurrences of 'Holy Spirit' except where a parenthesis contains another word. A masculine pronoun in a parenthesis preceding or following the phrase is there because of Semitic language grammar convention which will be explained later.

The phrase 'the Holy Spirit' begs the question: "of whom?" The answer is in *The Sacred Scriptures (Bethel Ed.)*: Eph. 4:30 "the Holy Spirit of *Yahweh*...." and in Titus 3:5 "renewing of the Holy Spirit, 6., which *he* [*Yahweh*] poured out on us richly *through Yahshua the Messiah* ..."

The Holy Spirit is clearly "*of Yahweh*." The definition of 'the Holy Spirit' in the OT and NT show it to be more correctly *the Holy Power* which emanates from *Yahweh* continually. It causes all things to occur. Understanding a verse is easier if, when encountering 'the Holy Spirit,' the reader mentally substitutes 'the Holy Power [of *Yahweh*]' This is especially so in the NT.

In all OT verses which follow, 'Holy Spirit' is Strong's 6944 qôdesh and 7307 rûwach:

Ps. (*your*)51:11, Isa. (*his*)63:10 and (*his*)11.

In all NT verses which follow, 'Holy Spirit' is Strong's 40 hagi4s. and 4151 pnūma:

Matt.1:18, 20, 3:11, 12:32, 28:19; Mark 1:8, 3:29, 12:36, 13:11; Luke 1:15, 35, 41, 67, 2:25, 26, 3:16, 22, 4:1, 10:21, 11:13, 12:10, 12; John 1:33, 14:26, 20:29; Acts 1:2, 5, 8, 16, 2:4, 33, 38, 4:8, 25, 31, 5:3, 32, 6:3, 5, 7:51, 55, 8:15, 16, 17, 19, 9:17, 31, 10:38, 44, 45, 47, 11:15, 16, 24, 13:2, 4, 9, 52, 15:8, 28, 16:6, 19:2, (a)19:2, 20:28, 21:11, 28:25; Rom 5:5, 9:1, 14:17, 15:13, 16; 1 Cor 6:19, 12:3; 2 Cor 6:6, 13:14; Eph.1:13, 4:30; 1 Thess.1:5, 6, (his)4:8; 2 Tim. 1:14 (who); Titus.3:5; Heb.2:4, 3:7, 6:4, 9:8, 10:14; 1 Peter 1:12; 2 Peter 1:21; Jude 20.

### **Personification of the Holy Spirit causes muddled thinking**

The number of above verses with personal pronouns in parenthesis, which some erroneously think prove that the Holy Spirit is male and a person, are comparatively few. They vary in number from one bible version to another. The situation is different for 'Spirit' which many *assume* always means the same as 'the Holy Spirit.'

There are many verses which have masculine pronouns that refer only to 'spirit' (Jn 14:26, 15:26, 16:8, 16, 14, Rom. 6:6, 7:17, 8:9, 16, 29, 16:7, 1 Tim. 4:1, 2 Tim.1:14, etc.). These verses are commonly quoted by those who teach 'the Holy Spirit' is *male* and the Third *Person* of a Trinity.

When the occurrences of the word 'spirit' in verses are examined, it is soon apparent that this one word is used for a wide range of meanings (i.e., mind, attitude, conscious, heart, inner being, etc.), words themselves which would seem to have been a better translation.

### **Figures of Speech and Metaphors**

There are bible verses which contain figures of speech, metaphors, etc., containing human personifications that are attributed to inanimate things: Ps. 96:11, 12 (heavens rejoice... earth be glad... field be joyful), Isa. 55:12 (hills shall sing... trees shall clap...), 1 Cor12:15, (foot shall say...16. ear shall say...) etc.

The same type of personification (vexing, grieving, groaning, etc.) occur in verses with contain the word 'Spirit.' Trinitarians quote such verses to support the theory that this 'Spirit,' is *male* and the third *Person* of the Trinity.

(a) Typical verses which infer 'the Holy Spirit' was intentionally given personification are:

Matt.1:18 "...she was found with the child *of* the Holy Spirit," and Matt.1:20 "...that which is conceived in her is *of* the Holy Spirit."

If the 'Holy Spirit' is a person, same would be the father of Yahshua. Clearly, the inanimate *Holy Power* from the father Yahweh caused the conception of the son Yahshua. Only this is supported by scripture.

Matt. 29:19 "...baptize in the *name of* [by the authority of] the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

The scriptures show the Holy Spirit is: inanimate, not male, not a person, and unnamed; is not accorded worship and does not have a throne as mentioned in the book of Revelation for the other 'co-equal persons' of the 'Trinity.' In spite of the scriptural facts, many continue to teach the doctrine of the Trinity, itself a word not in the scriptures. Since advocates cannot prove the Trinity doctrine from scripture, they teach that it is a '*mystery*' which is *impossible* to understand.

The various Creeds in use today were contrived *solely* to force belief in the Trinity, a manmade doctrine with roots in pagan philosophy. Many people were martyred because they refused to accept this unscriptural doctrine.

(b) Blasphemy against the Holy Spirit has caused a lot of confusion and trepidation:

Matt. 12:31 - 32, Mark 3:29 "but whomever *blasphemes* against the Holy Spirit will..." and Luke 12:10 "but anyone who *blasphemes* the Holy Spirit...".

The blasphemy is not against a 'person.' It is clearly *not believing in the Holy Power of Yahweh* who has infinite wisdom and is all powerful. An example of this unbelief is mentioned by Yahshua in Matthew 12:24-28 where the Pharisees disbelieved his forgiving of sin by the Holy Power of Yahweh. It is the ungrateful, incredibly condescending attitude of insignificant created mortals who disbelieve the infinite power of their Creator! This is the unpardonable sin mentioned in scripture.

### **Where did the English word translated 'Spirit' originate?**

As seen above, one of the common meanings of 'spirit' in Hebrew and Greek is 'breath.' Jerome translated Hebrew and Greek manuscripts into Latin for the Vulgate bible. The equivalent word for 'breath' in Latin is 'spirita' which became 'spirit' in English. Early English translations such as the KJV use 'Holy Ghost' which is interchangeable with 'Holy Spirit.'

### **Why do Bibles refer to 'the Holy Spirit' and the 'Spirit' with masculine pronouns?**

The rules of grammar determine the gender of words in a language. Some languages have two genders, others have three.

The Old Testament was written in Aramaic and in Hebrew, which have two genders - Masculine and Feminine. All words fall into either category. This includes sensible inanimate objects such as: 'breath,' 'wind,' etc., translated as 'spirit' in the KJV. These objects are assigned masculine pronouns (he, etc.). Non-sensible objects such as wisdom, are assigned feminine pronouns.

The gender of words from an original language like Aramaic and Hebrew are generally, but not always, carried over when translated into English. The definite article 'the' is commonly inserted in English bible translations (i.e., *the* Holy Spirit) as it is expected English grammatical convention.

The New Testament, ostensibly written in Greek, has three genders: Masculine, Feminine, and Neuter. If Greek were the original language of the New Testament, 'Holy Spirit' would be neuter gender. Being inanimate, 'Holy Spirit' would be referred to as 'it.' There is an example of this in the New Testament in Rom. 8:16 (itself).

Masculine pronouns are used in the New Testament to refer to inanimate objects. This indicates that the New Testament was originally written in Aramaic and Hebrew and afterward translated into Greek. Respected scholars have advocated this point for many years.

One of the best sources about the original languages of the NT is the booklet: *Exploding the Inspired Greek New Testament Myth* by Jacob O. Meyer, Assemblies of Yahweh, Bethel, PA. 1976, 16 pages. The author discusses *thirty-one* references which support this premise.

The explanation of why personal pronouns are used in the NT may simply be that the manuscript copyist faithfully translated the Aramaic and Hebrew of the New Testament into Greek, carrying over the masculine pronouns assigned to 'Holy Spirit' by the original languages. Or, it may be that the translators of the KJV were simply biased by their belief in the doctrine of the Trinity.

Apparently the practice continued into Latin and English translations, where the definite article 'the' is assigned so words and phrases (i.e., *the* Holy Spirit) will sound proper. Other practices are a proclivity to capitalize masculine pronouns (*He*) and words (Word), when referring to deity. This has misled many to believe 'the Holy Spirit' and 'Spirit' is *male*, and is the *Third Person* in the Trinity doctrine. The *scriptural evidence* shows that an inanimate 'Holy Spirit,' and 'Spirit,' isn't male or a person.

Holy Power emanates from, and is part of Father Yahweh. It is directed by his Son Yahshua to accomplish his father's will. Examples are: formation and sustaining of the universe, creating life on Earth, parting of the Red Sea, etc. But the scriptures show it was the Father Yahweh who begot and resurrected his son Yahshua, who in turn will resurrect the elect at his second coming, into the Kingdom of Yahweh.

### Conclusion

How or why a 'sacred or holy movement of air- breath or wind' from Aramaic, Hebrew, and Greek, became translated into the English word 'ghost' or 'spirit,' is unknown. It is unfortunate that grammar convention has been used to mislead many to believe that the Holy Spirit/the Spirit, is male, and the third person of the Trinity. If the facts presented herein had been known, perhaps they would have believed differently. Regardless, the scriptures clearly show 'the Holy Power'[of Yahweh] would have been a more accurate and understandable translation.

Panama City, FL August 25, 2001

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Read-Error

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## The Gender of the Holy Spirit (No. 155)

(Edition 2.0 19960310-19991008)

One of the most controversial topics of Christianity is the Holy Spirit. All agree he/it exists but there are many ideas of what he/it is. Some use Greek Scriptures which they claim refer to the Holy Spirit as "he" and conclude that the Holy Spirit must be a person. In this paper, these Scriptures are analysed and conclusions on the gender of the Holy Spirit are drawn.

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## **The Gender of the Holy Spirit**

Recently a letter was received by the Church which addressed the question of the gender of the Holy Spirit. That letter was important because it was based on a false premise which seems to have currency in the English speaking world, and is actively encouraged by Trinitarians because it supports their error. The letter is reproduced in part to assist others in identifying the problem.

I have been told that your church teaches that the Holy Spirit is not a person in the Godhead, but is merely the power of God working in true Christians. I believed this for many years, but a few weeks ago I discovered that the Holy Spirit mentioned as the Spirit of Truth in John 16:13 is referred to as *he*.

I realise that there are many places in the New Testament where the Holy Spirit is referred to as *he*, but in all instances except three the Greek word for *he* is not actually in the Greek. Commonly Greek leaves out the subject pronoun and, in these references to the Holy Spirit, implies by the verbal ending that the subject is *he*, *she*, or *it*. All of the translations that I have seen use *he*. *She* or *it* could have been used instead.

In Greek, as in Latin, Slavic, and most Germanic languages, every noun is given a gender by virtue of its ending. This is called grammatical gender and cannot be changed. This may not correspond to its natural gender. The word for man is grammatically masculine which is good because a man is masculine, but the word for sun is also masculine and this is in contrast with its neuter meaning. Greek grammar demands that when a word is referred back to by a pronoun, the pronoun must have the same grammatical gender as the noun it refers to. An exception is made by a writer only when he is emphasising natural gender. Spirit is grammatically neuter, so *he* refers to the Spirit because the Spirit is a living being.

In three verses ie. John 14:26, 15:26 & 16:13, the Greek word for *he* (ie [ekeinos]) is actually used. In these first two instances, if the grammar is greatly and absurdly stretched, one perhaps could say that [ekeinos] refers to the comforter (*ho parakletos*) or father (*patros*) both of which are masculine and therefore demand *he* and not *it*. However, in John 16:13

- there is not any other word in the sentence that *he* (*ekeinos*) could refer to except the word Spirit (*pneuma*) in the phrase the Spirit of Truth.

The Greek word for Spirit [*pneuma*] is grammatically neuter and demands the pronoun *it* [*ekeino*], but John has purposely chosen to use *he* [*ekeinos*], therefore the Holy Spirit must be a person in the Godhead. Furthermore, The Greek word for comforter [*parakletos*] is a verbal adjective used as a noun. This word is essentially an adjective which can be used in common (ie. masculine or feminine) gender (*parakletos*) or in neuter gender [*parakleton*]. Comforter is used in the New Testament in the common gender, ie, [*parakletos*].

If the Holy Spirit is only the power of God how can you account for these two points?

The answer to the problem lies in the most basic of false assumptions, in this case, that *ekeinos* means *he*. It does not mean, nor has it been translated as, *he*. This seems to have been stated by someone as if to demonstrate a point and then remained unchallenged. The word *he* in John 16:13 is deduced from the grammar and inserted in the English, as it has been elsewhere.

In English the problem of sex and gender is complicated because, in this language, gender implies sex. In many languages, gender is inherent in the grammar. It is not directly linked to sex as it is in English. The mistake is trying to make deductions from foreign languages by using an English thought process. It might be pointed out that it is dangerous, indeed, to construct a theology from the presence or absence of the Greek letter *sigma* in John 16:13 (translated *That one*; see also 16:14), given the acknowledged forgeries in 1Timothy 3:16, in Codex Aleph, involving also the letter *sigma* and *theta* constructing *Theos* where none existed. This resulted in the false text in the KJV. Also 1John 5:7 was a forgery inserted in the Receptus, again affecting the KJV. Be that as it may, we will accept *ekeinos* as accurate because it is not critical to the point.

*Ekeinos* is rendered *That one* and not *He* on each occasion it is used in relation to the Holy Spirit in these texts. The *New Thayer's Greek English Lexicon* (p. 194) shows that *ekeinos* does not mean *he*. It is derived from the proposition *the one there*. It is a pronoun meaning *That man, women or thing*. It is used for stress. Hence, it is given the suffix *os* to reflect the grammatical structure in which it occurs. The endings can also denote case, *os* denoting the nominative case, *n* or *on* denoting the accusative (hence *theos* (our *theos* or *elohim*) and *ton theon* (the God) in Jn. 1:1). The word *he* in John 16:13 is rendered from words which do not convey that meaning except abstractly from their construction. Marshall's Interlinear shows that The Spirit receives literally *the of*

*me* and announces or conveys it to the brethren.

This Spirit is of the Father, because Christ says in the next verse that *All things which has the Father, mine is (are)* (see Marshall's Jn. 16:13-15). The Interlinear text supports the concept that the Spirit is the power of God. The grammatical structure is used because it speaks of the Father and His attributes or powers.

Marshall's Interlinear shows how the problem is asserted from the translation. The Greek is Romanised for ease of reading.

*otan de elthe ekeinos, to pneuma tes aletheias*

but when comes that one the Spirit of truth,

*odegesei umas eis ten aletheian pasan*

he will guide you into the truth all;

*ou gar lalesei aph eautou, all osa*

for not will he speak from himself but what things

*akouei lalesei, kai ta erchomena*

he hears he will speak and the coming things

*anaggelei umin*

he will announce to you.

Note that the word *he* is attributed from the word structure. The word *he* can also be attributed in the following circumstance as Marshall notes in the Introduction.

The definite article must sometimes be rendered by a pronoun or a possessive adjective. This is particularly so where parts of the body are indicated; e.g., Matthew *ch.* 8, v. 3. Sometimes it is used 'pronominally' - that is, it must be rendered 'he' (or otherwise according to the gender) or 'they'; see Mark *ch.* 10, v. 4.

Marshall goes on to deal with the question of gender on page xi.

In Greek, gender belongs to the word and not necessarily to what is indicated by the word; whereas of course in English we keep the ideas of masculine, feminine, and neuter to men, women, and inanimate things respectively. (English, by the way, is the only great modern language to do so.) Allowance must be made for this in translating: sometimes it is possible to transfer the idea from one language to another, but not always. The note to Revelation *ch.* 13, v. 1, may be consulted.

The note to Revelation 13:1 is useful because it also deals with the notion of gender from grammar and bears on John 16:13 and the translation of the word rendered *himself*.

[autou], of course may be neuter or masculine - "of it" or "of him". [*drakon*] being masculine (= Satan), we have kept to the masculine. But [*therion*] is neuter. Yet if it stands for a person, as [*arnion*] certainly does, it too should be treated, as to the pronoun, as a masculine.

Thus *himself* is a rendering of a word which can either be neuter or masculine. The rendering of *himself* is in accord with the association with the attributes of God. The translations are compounded by the fact that it is convenient to render the texts in such manner.

Marshall also makes note of the use of a participle with the definite article (Intro., p. xiv).

A participle may be used, with the definite article, with, say, "one" understood, where we should use a noun or a relative phrase; e.g., frequently, [*ho pisteuon*] = the [one] believing = the believer *or* he who believes. Here the participle is continuous; in Luke *ch.* 1, v. 45, it is momentary (and, naturally, feminine in gender as referring to Mary's one act of faith at the Annunciation). If two participles are used but with one definite article, as in John *ch.* 5, v. 24, the meaning is that one person is doubly described, not two persons doing two things. This feature has been preserved in our translation.

John was a Hebrew using Aramaic as his native language relating Aramaic and Hebrew concepts and Hebrew theology. There is even some doubt as to whether the gospels were written originally in Greek. To examine the aspects of the Holy Spirit we should go back to the context in which the Holy Spirit is revealed and prophesied. That is the Old Testament.

There should be harmony between the Old and New Testaments. The Bible does not contradict itself on spiritual matters. The Holy Spirit is referred to in the Old Testament on many occasions. The Spirit is linked with God as the Spirit of the Lord. The word is *Ruach* (see SHD 7307). It is a spirit but only of a rational being (see Strong's). The term does not possess the same problems because the grammatical structure of Hebrew is not value laden in the same way as it is in Greek. English merely compounds this linguistic problem.

The Brown-Driver-Briggs-Gesenius *Hebrew English Lexicon* on pages 924-925 shows the spirit in man to be the gift and creation of God (referring to Zech. 12:1; Job. 27:3 cf. Isa. 42:6). God preserves it (Job 10:12; cf. 12:10;

Num. 16:22; 27:16; Prov. 16:2). The Lexicon concludes that it is therefore God's Spirit (Gen. 6:3) departing at death (Isa. 38:16; Job 17:1; 34:14; Isa. 57:16; Eccl. 8:8).

The Lexicon then deals with the Spirit of God in the various references in the neuter. It is referred to as the inspiration of prophecy and the force that impels the prophets to utter instruction or warning. This was so of ancient prophets (Zech. 7:12; Neh. 9:30).

Zechariah 7:12 12 Yea, they made their hearts as an adamant stone, lest they should hear the law, and the words which the LORD of hosts hath sent in his spirit by the former prophets: therefore came a great wrath from the LORD of hosts. (KJV)

Nehemiah 9:30 30 Yet many years didst thou forbear them, and testifiedst against them by thy spirit in thy prophets: yet would they not give ear: therefore gavest thou them into the hand of the people of the lands. (KJV)

These verses make it quite clear that the Holy Spirit is the possession of the God of Hosts who sends His Spirit to the prophets. Isaiah 11:2 shows that this Spirit rests on Messiah.

The Spirit of God was held to impart warlike energy and executive and administrative power to ancient Israel (Judg. 3:10; 11:29; cf. 6:34; 13:25; 14:6,19; 15:14; 1Sam. 11:6; 16:13,14 and also Isa. 32:15). It was seen as resting upon the Messianic king (Isa. 11:2). It was seen as endowing men with various gifts, e.g. technical skill (Ex. 31:3; 35:31), understanding (Job 32:8), as poured out by divine wisdom (Prov. 1:23). It was seen as the energy of life (Gen. 1:2), and as a vital power (Isa. 31:3) (and in a cherubic chariot from Ezek. 1:12 cf. vv. 20-21).

The Lexicon groups the Spirit in the last category as being the ancient Angel of the Presence and later Shekina (Isa. 63:10-11; cf. also the concepts in Neh. 9:20). Thus the Spirit was made manifest to Israel first in the Angel of the Presence, who later became Messiah. Messiah thus is embodied with the Spirit as the power of God. Later it became evident as the Shekina. The Lexicon holds that the prophecies of restoration conceive of the divine Spirit as standing in the midst of Israel and about to fulfil all divine promises (Hag. 2:5; Zech. 4:6). This concept culminates in the divine presence and as such [God is] omnipresent (see p. 926).

The Spirit is thus the Power of God. It is not *merely* or *only* the Power of God. No concept of the Holy Spirit as the third person of a closed Trinity could grasp the omnipresent all embracing extension of the nature and personality of God

that will ensue from this process of God becoming all in all (1Cor. 12:6; 15:28 KJV; Eph. 4:6). The power of the elect will thus be as the power of God in the Holy Spirit and they will be as Elohim (Zech. 12:8) as the Angel of Jehovah at their head, who is Messiah. They will be Israel and they shall rule as God.

Historically, it is useful to understand the development of the doctrine of the Trinity. It was not suggested that the Holy Spirit was a person nor was it considered as such until the Council of Constantinople in 381 CE.

The Holy Spirit was not fixed in the doctrine at all in the Council of Nicea (325). It failed to gain formulation at Constantinople (381). Only at the Council of Chalcedon in 451 was the doctrine formulated. There is no evidence that the apostles or the early apologists saw Christ as other than created and the Spirit as other than the power of God until the end of the third century, except with the Modalists and the Gnostics. It was these groups that finally emerged as the Trinitarian faction under Theodosius in 381 and by force of arms introduced their heresy.

The Trinity must reduce the activities of the Holy Spirit in order to deny the destiny of Israel and the elect. Greek ethics and philosophy are totally reliant on this epistemology in order to remove the logical requirements of biblical law as given at Sinai. The assertion of *He* and masculine gender is but part of the process in the assertion of personality to an attribute of God by which the elect are empowered.

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## **Holy spirit - and translations using the pronouns "he" and "him"**

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**Questions** - You believe that the Holy Spirit is not the third person of a Holy Trinity. Why then do Bibles use the personal pronoun 'He' and 'Him' when referring to the Holy Spirit?

**Answer** - This is a good question. Yes, some (but not all) translations use personal pronouns when referring to the spirit. But these that do are all translations. The question to really ask is are these pronouns

also found in the language of the Greek or the Hebrew manuscripts? In order to answer this question we must get into the language of the manuscripts. If the holy spirit is not a 'third person' of a Trinity addressed as a 'He' or a 'Him' then the Christian concept of a three-in-one God is also an error and the Christian Trinity concept must be discarded.

Following are two translations of the same Scripture passage which take completely opposite positions in their translation of several verses addressing the holy spirit. Such extreme an opposite in translation is a strong indication that one or the other is in error. In these examples we are using the King James Version (KJV) which uses the personal pronoun 'he,' and the Concordant Literal Version (CLV) which uses the neutral pronoun 'it.' We will quote the applicable part of the sentence of them both, then we will check to see what the Greek actually says.

John 14:16 is a good starting place of such a passage referring to the holy spirit

KJV ".... that he may abide with you forever..."

CLV "...that it, indeed may be with you for the eon..."

Greek "...that [it] may remain with you into the age." (it is added for proper English)

Note: the pronoun 'he' is absent from the Greek in the majority of the manuscripts. In a few manuscripts where a pronoun does exist, the pronoun is relative, meaning 'which'. In those few cases, the Greek would read as follows:

Greek alternate "...that which may remain with you into the age."

Conclusion, the passage in the Greek does not contain the pronoun 'he.' The CLV is the more accurate translation here, using the neutral 'it' added for proper English.

John 14:17

KJV ".... because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him: but ye know him; for he dwelleth with you, and shall be in you."

**CLV "... for it is not beholding it, neither is knowing it. Yet you know it, for it is remaining with you and will be in you."**

**Greek "... because it does not see it, nor know it, but you know it, for beside you [it] abides, and in you shall be."**

Note: This is a very good example of deceptive translation in the KJV. In the above passage, the word translated "him" from the Greek, in the KJV is the Greek pronoun "auto." This pronoun is not a first person masculine pronoun "him." This pronoun in the Greek is 3rd person neuter and must be translated 'it.'

Conclusion, this is absolute proof of deceptive translation in the KJV, and very easy to verify from the Greek with a basic knowledge of the Greek. The KJV is in error, but the CLV is correct and corresponds completely with the language of the Greek manuscripts.

If we took the time to analyze all the other passages dealing with the spirit the same or similar defective translation of Scripture will be found. In the above passages, as in most of the other passages referring to holy spirit, the pronoun is absent, or if present, it is a relative pronoun like who, which, that, and the neutral, were the word 'it' is required.

There are many other cases in the KJV and other deceptive translations, where the definite article 'the' has been inserted in the English translation where the passage is referring to holy spirit, when the article 'the' does not appear in the Greek text. Inserting the article 'the' in the text when it does not exist in the Greek, can change the entire meaning of the passage; for example,

Luke 1:35

**KJV "... And the angel answered and said unto her, The Holy Spirit shall come upon thee,"**

**CLV "... And, answering, the messenger said to her, "Holy spirit shall be coming on you,..."**

**Greek "...And answering, the messenger said to her, "holy spirit shall be coming upon you,..."**

In the above KJV example, the definite article is absent from the Greek text, and added by the translators, also added was the capitalization (indicating a specific person, specific place, or specific thing). The CLV is correct and corresponds with the Greek text, by not adding anything in translation. The incorrect use of the 'definite article' preceding 'holy' by the KJV is an attempt to make 'holy spirit' a definite person, when 'holy spirit' is actually indefinite and not 'specific' in the Greek.

There are also some examples where the definite article 'the' is used in the Greek when referring to holy spirit, as in 'the holy spirit,' indicating a specific spirit, or Holy spirit. But, without exception, when 'the' is used it is always 'in the neutral' inferring that 'the' spirit is properly considered 'it,' (without specific gender). In some cases, the article 'the' in the Greek is not distinguished, and can be either masc. or neut. In the majority of passages, holy spirit is an 'it,' and does not have masculine gender, nor can gender be properly applied. Gender is added by translators to give personality to the power and influence of holy spirit, but this cannot be supported by the manuscripts and must be discarded as error, or deception.

Finally,

The word 'Holy' in our English Bibles translates 'set-apart' in the Greek. The word 'spirit' in our English translations, is from the Latin 'wind, breath' and translates the Greek 'pne-u'-ma' which literally means 'blow effect, wind, breath, to breath.' It is the Greek word from which we get the English word 'pneumatic(s) having to do with air. By Scriptural implication like air, 'pne-u'-ma' or spirit, is the invisible intangible power of action, intelligence, and life. When used with, and/or referring to Yahweh (God) who IS spirit (John 4:24) it is His celestial power and influence as manifested in His invisible, intangible operations. When referring to the terrestrial, the word spirit must be considered in strict context of its use. The word can be used in many diverse applications in Scripture, as spirit of truth, spirit of error, deceptive spirit, gentle spirit etc., etc.

When referring to 'holy spirit' as proceeding from or of the Father, 'it' is His (Yahweh's) celestial Almighty Supreme Power Authority and influence over His Creation, as manifested in His continual invisible, and intangible operations, and His complete control. A correct Scriptural understanding of holy spirit will confirm that there is only

'one' Set-Apart Spirit, and that Spirit is the Almighty Yahweh. There is no such entity in the Scriptures as a separate Holy Spirit person apart from the Father Yahweh, or such an entity as 'the Holy Spirit, the third person of a Trinity.' The Scripture is very clear, the Father Himself is the Only Holy Spirit!

This is just an example, without going through each and every case, but the same will apply in many if not most of the other uses of spirit and in reference to holy spirit in the Scriptures.

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