

The Ruach HaKodesh Part I

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My message today is an historical one. It is about the *Ruach HaKodesh* – the Holy Spirit – and His ministry to mankind prior to the time of Yeshua. It is Part 1 of a two part series; Part 2 will be about the Spirit's work among men in the New Covenant. This message will contain relatively few words of my own and, instead, I propose to let Scripture tell its own the story.

In Christian vernacular, the Holy Spirit is often referred to as the third person of the Godhead – "the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit." Listing the Holy Spirit third is probably because the book of Acts records His powerful arrival in Jerusalem, after having been sent there by Yeshua. So, God the Father is justifiably first in order, Yeshua second, and the poor Holy Spirit has to settle for last. It is ironic, inasmuch as the Holy Spirit makes His appearance in Scripture as early as in Genesis 1:1-2:

"In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. The earth was unformed and void, darkness was on the face of the deep, and the Spirit of God hovered over the surface of the water."

The translated verse I just read is from the Complete Jewish Bible, where the *Ruach HaKodesh* is referred to as the "*Ruach Elohim*, or " the "Spirit of God." For the scholars among us, I will point out that "*Ruach HaKodesh*" in its variant forms appears only three times in the *Tanakh*; "*Ruach Elohim*" appears fourteen times,¹ and "*shekhinah*," a term that we often hear associated with "the abiding presence of God," doesn't appear in the Bible at all. These statistics are interesting but largely inconsequential. What is important is that the Holy Spirit is the entity of God with which men interface, and it is He, the Holy Spirit, who can be at more than one place at the same time. We say that God is omnipresent. Well, without the Holy Spirit, God would not be omnipresent, because it is the Holy Spirit that connects God the Father and God the son to wherever on earth God wants to be or needs to be.

Lest we think that the Holy Spirit coming to live within the bodies of men is strictly a New Covenant phenomenon, consider these Scriptures from the *Tanakh*:

Genesis 41:38: *"Pharaoh said to his officials, 'Can we find anyone else like him [Yosef]? The Spirit of God lives in him!'"*

Ezekiel 36:27: *"I will put My Spirit within you and cause you to walk in My statutes, and you will keep My judgments and do them."*

Now in the age of the Mosaic Covenant, the Holy Spirit did not live within the average Israelite. He lived within prophets (that is what made prophets prophets), He lived within priests (or at least within some of them), and he lived within certain kings. We sometimes hear talk of men

¹¹ In Daniel 5:14, the Aramaic for "Spirit of God" is "*Ruach Elahin*."

and women today being "filled with the Spirit." Well, men could be filled with God's Spirit even before Yeshua:

Exodus 31:1-3 (see also, Exodus 35:30-31): *"ADONAI said to Moshe, I have singled out B'tzal'el the son of Uri the son of Hur, of the tribe of Y'hudah. I have filled him with the Spirit of God- with wisdom, understanding and knowledge concerning every kind of artisanry."*

Deuteronomy 34:9: *"Y'hoshua the son of Nun was full of the Spirit of wisdom, for Moshe had laid his hands on him, and the people of Isra'el heeded him and did what ADONAI had ordered Moshe."*

As early as the exodus from Egypt, we read of a cloud that provided the Israelites with guidance and protection, and enabled them to converse with God. The cloud is associated in Scripture with God's Glory, and I cannot help but think that the Spirit and God's Glory were either manifestations of the Holy Spirit, or the Holy Spirit Himself. Consider these Scriptures:

Exodus 13:21-22 (see also, Exodus 14:20): *"ADONAI went ahead of them [i.e. the Israelites] in a column of cloud during the daytime to lead them on their way, and at night in a column of fire to give them light; thus they could travel both by day and by night. Neither the column of cloud by day nor the column of fire at night went away from in front of the people."*

Exodus 33:9-11a: *"Whenever Moshe went out to the tent [i.e. the tent of meeting], all the people would get up and stand, each man at his tent door, and look at Moshe until he had gone into the tent. Whenever Moshe entered the tent, the column of cloud would descend and station itself at the entrance to the tent; and ADONAI would speak with Moshe. When all the people saw the column of cloud stationed at the entrance to the tent, they would get up and prostrate themselves, each man at his tent door. ADONAI would speak to Moshe face to face, as a man speaks to his friend. Then he would return to the camp."*

Exodus 40:34-38: *"Then the cloud covered the tent of meeting, and the glory of ADONAI filled the tabernacle. Moshe was unable to enter the tent of meeting, because the cloud remained on it, and the glory of ADONAI filled the tabernacle."*

Numbers 11:27-29: *"A young man ran and told Moshe, 'Eldad and Medad are prophesying in the camp!' Y'hoshua, the son of Nun, who from his youth up had been Moshe's assistant, answered, 'My lord, Moshe, stop them!' But Moshe replied, 'Are you so zealous to protect me? I wish all of ADONAI's people were prophets! I wish ADONAI would put his Spirit on all of them!'"*

Numbers 17: 7 (16:42): *"However, as the community was assembling against Moshe and Aharon, they looked in the direction of the tent of meeting and saw the cloud cover it and the glory of ADONAI appear."*

So, the Holy Spirit was present and active among men from the very beginning – sometimes being in their midst, sometimes coming upon them, and sometimes dwelling within them. And any time the Holy Spirit came anywhere near, He brought power, wisdom, prophecy, and the ability to minister. Consider these six Scriptures:

1 Samuel 10:6

Then the Spirit of ADONAI will fall on you; you will prophesy with them and be turned into another man!

1 Samuel 16:13

Sh'mu'el took the horn of oil and anointed him there in his brothers' presence. From that day on, the Spirit of ADONAI would fall upon David with power. So Sh'mu'el set out and went to Ramah

2 Samuel 23:2

The Spirit of ADONAI spoke through me, his word was on my tongue.

Isaiah 61:1

The Spirit of Adonai ELOHIM is upon me, because ADONAI has anointed me to announce good news to the poor. He has sent me to heal the brokenhearted; to proclaim freedom to the captives, to let out into light those bound in the dark; to proclaim the year of the favor of ADONAI and the day of vengeance of our God; to comfort all who mourn,

Ezekiel 37:1-4

With the hand of ADONAI upon me, ADONAI carried me out by his Spirit and set me down in the middle of the valley, and it was full of bones. He had me pass by all around them- there were so many bones lying in the valley, and they were so dry! He asked me, "Human being, can these bones live?" I answered, "Adonai ELOHIM! Only you know that!" Then he said to me, Prophesy over these bones! Say to them, 'Dry bones! Hear what ADONAI has to say!

Micah 3:8

On the other hand, I am full of power by the Spirit of ADONAI, full of justice and full of might, to declare to Ya'akov his crime, to Isra'el his sin.

All of this occurred during the time of the Mosaic Covenant and, even way back then, the Holy Spirit could be transferred from one person to another, sometimes by the laying on of hands:

Deuteronomy 34:9: *"Y'hoshua the son of Nun was full of the Spirit of wisdom, for Moshe had laid his hands on him, and the people of Isra'el heeded him and did what ADONAI had ordered Moshe."*

Numbers 11:16-17: *"ADONAI said to Moshe, "Bring me seventy of the leaders of Isra'el, people you recognize as leaders of the people and officers of theirs. Bring them to the tent of meeting, and have them stand there with you. I will come down and speak with you there,*

and I will take some of the Spirit which rests on you and put it on them. Then they will carry the burden of the people along with you, so that you won't carry it yourself alone."

And of course there is the famous transference of God's Spirit from Elijah to Elisha:

2 Kings 2:9-15: "After they had crossed, Eliyahu said to Elisha, Tell me what I can do for you before I am taken away from you.' Elisha said, 'Please! Let a double share of your spirit be on me!' He replied, 'You have requested a hard thing. Nevertheless, if you see me when I am taken from you, you will get what you asked for; but if not, you won't.' Suddenly, as they were walking on and talking, there appeared a fiery chariot with horses of fire; and as it separated the two of them from each other, Eliyahu went up into heaven in a whirlwind. Elisha saw it and cried out, 'My father! My father! The chariots and horsemen of Isra'el!' Then he lost sight of him. Seizing his clothes, he tore them in half. Then he picked up Eliyahu's cloak, which had fallen off him. Standing on the bank of the Yarden, he took the cloak that had fallen off Eliyahu, struck the water and said, 'Where is ADONAI, the God of Eliyahu?' But when he actually did strike the water, it divided itself to the left and to the right; then Elisha crossed over. When the guild prophets of Yericho saw him in the distance, they said, 'The spirit of Eliyahu does rest on Elisha.'"

Now there came a time when God decided that He would make a New Covenant with Israel to replace the one that He made through Moses – a New Covenant that would enable the Holy Spirit to impact men in a greater way than ever before. And not only selected men as previously, but every man who would receive Him through the Messiah whom it was also prophesied would come:

Isaiah 11:1-2: "But a branch will emerge from the trunk of Yishai, a shoot will grow from his roots. The Spirit of ADONAI will rest on him, the Spirit of wisdom and understanding, the Spirit of counsel and power, the Spirit of knowledge and fearing ADONAI- "

Jeremiah 31:30(31)-33(34): "'Here, the days are coming,' says ADONAI, 'when I will make a new covenant with the house of Isra'el and with the house of Y'hudah. It will not be like the covenant I made with their fathers on the day I took them by their hand and brought them out of the land of Egypt; because they, for their part, violated my covenant, even though I, for my part, was a husband to them,' says ADONAI. 'For this is the covenant I will make with the house of Isra'el after those days,' says ADONAI: 'I will put my Torah within them and write it on their hearts; I will be their God, and they will be my people. No longer will any of them teach his fellow community member or his brother, [saying] "Know ADONAI"; for all will know me, from the least of them to the greatest; because I will forgive their wickednesses and remember their sins no more.'"

When God told the Israelites (through Jeremiah) that He would put His *Torah* within them and that they would then all know God intimately, how else but through the Holy Spirit entering and dwelling within them could that have been done? But let's continue:

Ezekiel 36:26-27: *"I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit inside you; I will take the stony heart out of your flesh and give you a heart of flesh. I will put my Spirit inside you and cause you to live by my laws, respect my rulings and obey them."*

Ezekiel 37:14: *"I will put my Spirit in you; and you will be alive. Then I will place you in your own land; and you will know that I, ADONAI, have spoken, and that I have done it," says ADONAI."*

Joel 3:1-5 (2:28-32): *"After this, I will pour out my Spirit on all humanity. Your sons and daughters will prophesy, your old men will dream dreams, your young men will see visions; and also on male and female slaves in those days I will pour out my Spirit. I will show wonders in the sky and on earth- blood, fire and columns of smoke. The sun will be turned into darkness and the moon into blood before the coming of the great and terrible Day of ADONAI. At that time, whoever calls on the name of ADONAI will be saved. For in Mount Tziyon and Yerushalayim there will be those who escape, as ADONAI has promised; among the survivors will be those whom ADONAI has called."*

Everything I have shown you (or rather that Scripture has shown you) about the Holy Spirit thus far, happened before and up to the time of Yeshua. And, since Part 1 of this message that I have given today intended to show just that, I guess I'm finished. But before I close, let's get a foretaste of Part 2, and read of when, the Holy Spirit made His grand appearance and fell upon everyone assembled on the *Shavuot* following Yeshua's resurrection:

Acts 1:4-8: *"At one of these gatherings, he [Yeshua] instructed them [His followers] not to leave Yerushalayim but to wait for 'what the Father promised, which you heard about from me. For Yochanan used to immerse people in water; but in a few days, you will be immersed in the Ruach HaKodesh!' When they were together, they asked him, 'Lord, are you at this time going to restore self-rule to Isra'el?' He answered, 'You don't need to know the dates or the times; the Father has kept these under his own authority. But you will receive power when the Ruach HaKodesh comes upon you; you will be my witnesses both in Yerushalayim and in all Y'hudah and Shomron, indeed to the ends of the earth!'"*

Acts 2:1-4: *"The festival of Shavu'ot arrived, and the believers all gathered together in one place. Suddenly there came a sound from the sky like the roar of a violent wind, and it filled the whole house where they were sitting. Then they saw what looked like tongues of fire, which separated and came to rest on each one of them. They were all filled with the Ruach HaKodesh and began to talk in different languages, as the Spirit enabled them to speak."*

So, now, having shared about the Holy Spirit's work among men in the distant past, we can look forward to Part 2 of this message, when we will learn about His ministry among us here today.