

Knowing The Holy Spirit Personally Week 1

Ruach

The Holy Spirit in The Old Testament

My desire is that from today's study of the Spirit you will clearly see the need you have for the Holy Spirit and have a stronger desire for Him. You need the Holy Spirit's power to open seas of impossibility that stand before you. You need his breath to blow the quail of his provision into your camp. You need the wind of God to blow upon the valley of dry bones in your life to bring dead hopes, dreams and situations to life. You need the water of the Spirit to quench your spiritual thirst. You need the water of the Spirit to bring cleansing, purity, life and flourishing. You need the fire of the Spirit to refine your heart like pure gold to attain true wealth. You need the Oil of the Spirit to feed you, light your lamp for direction and heal you that you may heal others. You need the Spirit to work creative miracles for you, to reveal God's will and truth to you, to equip you with skill, strength and give you all you need for leadership. Would you agree with me that you and I desperately need and depend upon the Holy Spirit? Hopefully after today will see that more clearly and desire it more strongly.

We are starting a 9 week series from a book by Colin Dye called "Knowing the Spirit". If you want to go deeper in your study you can purchase it on Amazon and other book sellers.

Ruach

In the Old Testament the Holy Spirit is referred to as the Spirit or the Spirit of God. The English word Spirit is always a translation of the Hebrew word 'ruach'. It was one of our favourite songs from Stoneleigh Bible week:

*Ruach, ruach,
Holy wind of God, blow on me.
Touch the fading embers, breathe on me.
Fan into a flame all that You've placed in me.
Let the fire burn more powerfully.
Ruach, Ruach,
Holy wind of God,
Holy wind of God, breathe on me.*

It was at the Vine Church and Stoneleigh Bible week that I learned to receive and be filled and develop a relationship with the Holy Spirit. One of the fruits of that was on my return a hunger to read and understand the Bible and to pray.

Ruach is a picture-word and gives the idea of breath been blown out – like when blowing up a balloon, blowing out a candle or exhaling deeply during a hard race. The idea behind ruach is powerful moving air, a release of energy and power and dynamic activity. In some places ruach describes a wind which is really powerful and even destructive. But it is always under God's control and carries out God's will. There are lots of verses about ruach but here's a few:

Exo 14:21 (KJV+) And Moses^{H4872} stretched out^{H5186 (H853)} his hand^{H3027} over^{H5921} the sea;^{H3220} and the LORD^{H3068} caused^(H853) the sea^{H3220} to go^{H1980} back by a strong^{H5794} east^{H6921} wind^{H7307} all^{H3605} that night,^{H3915} and made^{H7760 (H853)} the sea^{H3220} dry^{H2724} land, and the waters^{H4325} were divided.^{H1234}

H7307 (Strong)

רוּחַ

rûach

roo'-akh

From [H7306](#); *wind*; by resemblance *breath*, that is, a sensible (or even violent) exhalation;

'Then Moses stretched out his hand over the sea, and the Lord drove the sea back by a strong east wind all night and made the sea dry land, and the waters were divided. '

Exodus 14:21

'Then a wind from the Lord sprang up, and it brought quail from the sea and let them fall beside the camp, about a day's journey on this side and a day's journey on the other side, around the camp, and about two cubits above the ground. '

Numbers 11:31

'Then he said to me, "Prophecy to the breath; prophesy, son of man, and say to the breath, Thus says the Lord God : Come from the four winds, O breath, and breathe on these slain, that they may live." '

Ezekiel 37:9

In these 3 verses above the word translated as wind and breath and winds is the Hebrew word ruach. We can see here that ruach helps us understand some important points about the Holy Spirit. Ruach is powerful and dynamic and causes God's will to be carried out. In the examples above ruach causes seas to split, provision of quail blown into the camp and dead bones to become a powerful army. Remember, ruach, the Holy Spirit is powerful and causes the impossible to happen and carries out God's will.

Ruach verses suggest the Spirit is a powerful force who brings transformation wherever He blows. The picture is a breath or wind that blows mightily from God's mouth. Ruach is not a picture of a gentle breeze but a picture of someone taking a deep breath and blowing as hard as they can.

Ruach is not just an impersonal force however. Yes God's Spirit is mighty and powerful but it is not impersonal. There is not an English word that sufficiently communicates the power of God's Spirit and yet God's spirit is a person with intellect, emotions and individuality. Let's keep both in mind.

3 More Word-Pictures

The Old Testament gives us four more word-pictures to more fully understand God's Spirit.

1. Water

Water is used as a symbol of God's blessings and spiritual refreshment. Here's just a few Bible verses:

' "Come, everyone who thirsts, come to the waters; and he who has no money, come, buy and eat! Come, buy wine and milk without money and without price. '

Isaiah 55:1

"My people have committed two sins: They have forsaken me, the spring of living water, and have dug their own cisterns, broken cisterns that cannot hold water. '

Jeremiah 2:13

What is the Spring of living water? Jesus tells us and interprets it for us:

'On the last and greatest day of the festival, Jesus stood and said in a loud voice, "Let anyone who is thirsty come to me and drink. Whoever believes in me, as Scripture has said, rivers of living water will flow from within them." By this he meant the Spirit, whom those who believed in him were later to receive. Up to that time the Spirit had not been given, since Jesus had not yet been glorified. '

John 7:37-39

"In that day the mountains will drip new wine, and the hills will flow with milk; all the ravines of Judah will run with water. A fountain will flow out of the Lord's house and will water the valley of acacias. '

Joel 3:18

In Ezekiel 47:1–12, the prophet saw water flowing out from the heart of God's future temple. I spoke on that passage in a message called "The Transforming River"¹ This pure water represented the unrestricted flow of God's blessings to his people, and Ezekiel was ordered to go on immersing himself deeper and deeper in the water!

Water is essential for life and essential for cleaning. A key passage which talks about the new covenant Jesus will introduce is:

'I will sprinkle clean water on you, and you will be clean; I will cleanse you from all your impurities and from all your idols. I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit in you; I will remove from you your heart of stone and give you a heart of flesh. And I will put my Spirit in you and move you to follow my decrees and be careful to keep my laws. '

Ezekiel 36:25-27

The verses on water help us to understand more about the Holy Spirit.

¹ <https://soundcloud.com/vinechurch/the-transforming-river-pastor-aaron-dowds>

The Holy Spirit is God's blessing. He is God's water and He is essential to us for life and for cleansing.

"Brian Emmett was a career criminal in south London – a drug smuggler and gangster and contemporary of the notorious Kray twins, who he knew well.

Brian had a son called Michael, who joined 'the family business' at a young age. Father and son worked together as international drug smugglers. Their activities were very successful until, one night, they were arrested as part of a massive police operation involving twelve armed officers and sixty regulars in a small Devon fishing port, where a hoard of four metric tonnes of cannabis with a street value of £13 million was being landed.

At the time, it was the largest ever known importation of cannabis to the UK and they were each sentenced to twelve and a half years.

In 1994, Brian and Michael heard about Alpha while in Exeter Prison and decided to give it a try. They were filled with the Holy Spirit and their lives were completely transformed.

As father and son continued to serve their sentences, they were regularly transferred from prison to prison throughout England as is the normal practice. On arrival in each one, they introduced Alpha and more and more prisoners experienced the love of God for the first time." https://my.bible.com/reading-plans/17704/day/279?fbclid=IwAR2TG2OrU1B5UVN_6BjSjQzfQdz8a81RI-dLjJEa6O5iNnxYH0wNs-FBw&segment=0

Here's a very short part of his story from a 3 part series on YouTube:

<https://youtu.be/pGURpjeUDq8>

2. Fire

Fire is even more effective than water at cleaning and refining. In the Old Testament fire is used as a symbol of the way the Spirit refines human hearts and cleanses them, preparing them to serve God. We see this in Isaiah 6:6-9 Isaiah has a vision of God's holiness and realises he is a man of unclean lips. A seraphim takes a burning coal from the altar and touches his lips and he is cleansed and purified from guilt and sin.

At times when God revealed himself to his people he was surrounded by fire. God revealed himself to Moses in a burning bush (Ex.3:2). The Israelites were led by a pillar of fire at night to give them light for direction of travel (Ex.13:21). When Israel was camped at Mount Sinai God descended on it in fire (Ex.19:18). In Deut.4:24 God is described as a consuming fire.

Fire reveals God's presence, his holiness, his judgment and his anger against sin. Is. 4:2-6 reveals that the spirit of burning is a vital part of God's purifying work.

The fire word picture of the Spirit suggests we need cleansed by the Spirit – by God's fire – to make us holy and prepare us to serve God. In ancient times, refining gold with fire involved a craftsman sitting next to a hot fire with molten gold in a crucible being stirred and skimmed to remove the impurities or dross that rose to the top of the molten metal.

Isn't it interesting that Revelation mentions this: "I counsel you to buy from me gold refined in the fire, so you can become rich". The Holy Spirit, if we let him, like a refiner's fire wants

to remove the impurities from our lives and leave us pure gold. Pure gold is of greater value and we truly become rich as we allow the Holy Spirit to do His work.

3. Oil

Oil was used in the Old Testament to anoint priests and kings for service. The oil was used as a symbol of God's Spirit.

Saul (1 Sam.10:1) and later David was anointed with oil to be king:

'Then Samuel took the horn of oil and anointed him in the midst of his brothers. And the Spirit of the Lord rushed upon David from that day forward. And Samuel rose up and went to Ramah. '

1 Samuel 16:13

Oil was poured over priests and kings as a symbol of the Holy Spirit. In the Old Testament Oil had 3 main uses:

- i) In Cooking to prepare food
- ii) In the dark to provide light
- iii) In medicine to aid healing

These point to the work of the anointing of the Spirit upon people to feed them, enlighten them for direction and to heal them and heal through them.

The Work of the Spirit

The phrase 'the Spirit' or 'the Spirit of God' is mentioned over 100 times in Old Testament. Every time it is used it describes God at work, God bringing change and making a difference to his world and people. Revealing and enabling are the main activities of the Spirit. We see God's Spirit involved in a number of tasks.

1. He Shapes Creation

The Spirit hovered over the waters waiting to act out God's creation. God breathed life into the first man he created Adam and he became a living being.

'The earth was without form and void, and darkness was over the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God was hovering over the face of the waters. '

Genesis 1:2

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

Genesis 2:7

2. The Spirit Reveals God's Will and Truth

The Spirit is what reveals God's will and truth to God's messengers the prophets.

Moses wished all the Lord's people had God's Spirit and prophesied so we see here a connection between the Spirit and prophecy.

'But Moses replied, "Are you jealous for my sake? I wish that all the Lord's people were prophets and that the Lord would put his Spirit on them!"'

Numbers 11:29

Joel 2:28 shows again the connection between the Spirit and prophecy. It's a well-known passage quoted on the day of Pentecost to explain what was happening:

"And afterward, I will pour out my Spirit on all people. Your sons and daughters will prophesy, your old men will dream dreams, your young men will see visions. '

Joel 2:28

Isaiah 61:1-4 are key passages that Jesus in Luke 4, opened and read about himself. It talks about the anointing of the Spirit to good news the hurting needy and broken.

'The Spirit of the Sovereign Lord is on me, because the Lord has anointed me to proclaim good news to the poor. He has sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim freedom for the captives and release from darkness for the prisoners, '

Isaiah 61:1

So the Spirit reveals God's will and truth.

3. He Awakens People to God

The Spirit awakens people to God and convicts them of sin.

A key passage about the New Covenant that Jesus would introduce is:

'I will sprinkle clean water on you, and you will be clean; I will cleanse you from all your impurities and from all your idols. I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit in you; I will remove from you your heart of stone and give you a heart of flesh. And I will put my Spirit in you and move you to follow my decrees and be careful to keep my laws. '

Ezekiel 36:25-27

We see here the Spirit's role in awakening people's hearts to desire and be motivated to love God and obey him.

4. He Equips For Leadership

One of the Spirit's main activities in the Old Testament is preparing people for leadership.

Joseph was recognised by Pharaoh as one who had the Spirit of God and has wisdom and discernment:

'The plan seemed good to Pharaoh and to all his officials. Then Pharaoh said to Joseph, "Since God has made all this known to you, there is no one so discerning and wise as you. So Pharaoh asked them, "Can we find anyone like this man, one in whom is the spirit of God?"

Genesis 41:37-39

People could only function as prophets if they were called, inspired and empowered with the Spirit. Moses, his 70 elders, the judges, the kings Saul and David and other kings, Elijah, Elisha and God's other prophets were all equipped for leadership by the Spirit. The Spirit would give them the necessary qualities for leadership if they cooperated. A powerful passage that points to Jesus and the equipping of the Spirit is *Isaiah 11:1-5 MSG*

'A green Shoot will sprout from Jesse's stump, from his roots a budding Branch. The life-giving Spirit of God will hover over him, the Spirit that brings wisdom and understanding, The Spirit that gives direction and builds strength, the Spirit that instills knowledge and Fear-of- God . Fear-of- God will be all his joy and delight.

5. He Equips People With Skill and Strength

In Exodus we read how the Spirit gave Bezaleel and Oholiab all sorts of skills and abilities in craftwork to help them build the incredible Tabernacle:

"See, I have called by name Bezalel the son of Uri, son of Hur, of the tribe of Judah, and I have filled him with the Spirit of God, with ability and intelligence, with knowledge and all craftsmanship, The Lord said to Moses, to devise artistic designs, to work in gold, silver, and bronze, in cutting stones for setting, and in carving wood, to work in every craft. '

Exodus 31:1-5

See also Ex.35:30-35

' ' Then Moses said to the people of Israel, "See, the Lord has called by name Bezalel the son of Uri, son of Hur, of the tribe of Judah; and he has filled him with the Spirit of God, with skill, with intelligence, with knowledge, and with all craftsmanship...

He has filled them with skill to do every sort of work done by an engraver or by a designer or by an embroiderer in blue and purple and scarlet yarns and fine twined linen, or by a weaver—by any sort of workman or skilled designer.'

Exodus 35:30-31;35

We see from these verses that the Spirit can give extra ability, intelligence, knowledge, craftsmanship and artistic design skills to accomplish his will and bring beauty and flourishing to the earth.

So the Old Testament reveals the Spirit of God with word pictures. It's not until the New Testament is the revelation given that the Spirit is not just a power but a person. The word pictures may be rather impersonal but they are images of an immensely powerful being. The pictures point us towards a person who will be revealed more fully in the New Testament.

Summary

We have learned today about God's Spirit in the Old Testament.

Ruach verses suggest the Spirit is a powerful force who brings transformation wherever He blows. The picture is a breath or wind that blows mightily from God's mouth. Ruach is not a picture of a gentle breeze but a picture of someone taking a deep breath and blowing as hard as they can.

Water: The Holy Spirit is God's blessing. He is God's water and He is essential to us for life and for cleansing.

Fire: Fire is even more effective than water at cleaning and refining. In the Old Testament fire is used as a symbol of the way the Spirit refines human hearts and cleanses them, preparing them to serve God.

Oil: Oil points to the anointing of the Spirit upon people to feed them, enlighten them for direction and to heal them and heal through them. Oil was used to dedicate people to God and his service. Those anointed with oil were set apart from 'common use' and set apart for God's service.

We have also seen the work of the Spirit in various ways:

In shaping creation, revealing God's will and truth, awakening people to God, equipping people with skill and strength and for leadership.

I'm sure from this study alone of the Spirit you see the desire you should have and the need you have for the Holy Spirit. You need the Holy Spirit's power to open seas of impossibility that stand before you. You need his breath to blow the quail of his provision into your camp. You need the wind of God to blow upon the valley of dry bones in your life to bring dead hopes, dreams and situations to life. You need the water of the Spirit to quench your spiritual thirst. You need the water of the Spirit to bring cleansing, purity, life and flourishing. You need the fire of the Spirit to refine your heart like pure gold to attain true wealth. You need the Oil of the Spirit to feed you, light your lamp for direction and heal you that you may heal others. You need the Spirit to work creative miracles for you, to reveal God's will and truth to you, to equip you with skill, strength and give you all you need for leadership. Would you agree with me that you and I desperately need and depend upon the Holy Spirit?

Yonghi Cho has a Prayer Called Tabernacle Prayer. Here is a part of it I pray most days:

Candlesticks

I open the curtain and walk into the Holy Place. There I see the candlesticks, symbolic of the Holy Spirit, the sevenfold Spirit of God: wisdom, understanding, counsel, might, knowledge, fear of the Lord, holiness.

Holy Spirit, I welcome a deeper more intimate relationship with you today. Through your anointing give me your wisdom. Help me to solve all the problems I face through your wisdom.

Give me your understanding so that I may understand the deep truths of God, and I may live those truths and pass them on to my children.

Give me counsel so that I will follow your narrow path. If it pleases you, allow me to advise others how to solve their problems.

Give me tremendous might so that I might be used by you to heal the hearts and lives of others and defeat the devil. You are the same yesterday, today, and forever.

Holy Spirit, increase my knowledge of the Bible. Give me a keen fear of the Lord so that I walk very softly before you and not commit any sin. Give me holiness through your presence, O Lord!

Holy Spirit you are a person, not a genie. The Father worked in the forefront during the Old Testament and Jesus worked in the New; I live in the Age of the Holy Spirit.

I don't want to catch quail with my bare hands. I want your wind to blow the quail into my camp. I want to depend on you, Holy Spirit, not my own strength.

You are a Holy Person with a will and emotions. Forgive me for treating you impersonally. You should be welcomed, loved, caressed, adored, worshipped. You are my senior partner.

You are my Lord. I depend upon you. Let's go Holy Spirit. Thank you for your anointing. Let's work together. I will follow you."

<https://static1.squarespace.com/static/545bdf1de4b04f070d4f205c/t/5b6f9c7f352f5356c8d13a10/1534041215636/tabernacleprayer.pdf>