



The Ministry of the Holy Spirit

"that he may abide with you for ever" (John 14:16)



God has always been interested in establishing close friendship with us. From the very beginning it has been His heart's desire to dwell with and to communicate with His people. He desires relationship!

We need to realize that God does not change, "For I am the LORD, I change not" (Mal 3:6); the Book of Hebrews adds that He is "the same yesterday, and to day, and for ever" (Heb 13:8).

Some people think that during the entire age of the Old Testament that God was harsh and demanding and that He only acted to bring judgment upon the people. Further, they think that beginning with the New Testament that God somehow changed His nature and is now kind, compassionate, and gracious!

We have already observed that He does not change, "For I am the LORD, I change not" (Mal 3:6). So why does it seem as if God is somehow different now than he was during the Old Testament period? This is a good question and discerning the ministry of the Holy Spirit will help us to come to an understandable answer.

The New Testament teaches that at present there are three different aspects regarding the ministry of the Holy Spirit: (1) we first experience the Holy Spirit during the born-again experience, "Jesus answered, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, ***Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit***, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God" (John 3:5); (2) we experience the Holy Spirit in a greater dimension when we become baptized with the spirit, "I indeed baptize you with water unto repentance: but he that cometh after me is mightier than I, whose shoes I am not worthy to bear: ***he shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost***, and with fire" (Matt 3:11); (3) finally, as a result of the natural growth subsequent to the baptism of the Holy Spirit we learn to operate in the power of the Holy Spirit, "my speech and my preaching was not with enticing words of man's wisdom, but ***in demonstration of the Spirit and of power***" (1 Cor 2:4). However, before we can fully appreciate these current three aspects of the ministry of the Holy Spirit today, we need to hearken back to the Old Testament.

In order to really get a concept the way that the Holy Spirit operated during the Old Testament period we must first realize that God uses "word pictures." Let me give you an example of a word picture established by God. The whole story of the Exodus is a word picture for the plan of redemption. The literal story involves the release of the children of Israel from their bondage in Egypt; it continues with their wandering in the desert and finally concludes with their entry into the Promised Land. Remember, this story is a word picture designed to convey to us the whole plan of redemption.



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God's word picture of the Exodus features the following images:

- Egypt is a type of the world;
- Pharaoh is a type of satan;
- Bondage is a type of sin;
- Passover (*blood*) is a type of Jesus' salvation;
- Red Sea is a type of water baptism;
- Wilderness is a type of separation from the world and separation unto God;
- Crossing the Jordan is a type of the Baptism in the Holy Spirit;
- Canaan is a type of living in Christian victory and experiencing power over enemies!

Notice just one vivid New Testament Scriptural reference regarding the word picture concept, "for even **Christ our passover** is sacrificed for us" (1 Cor 5:7). The point is that today, by faith we apply the blood of the lamb in order to get free from sin and bondage.

With the concept that God uses word pictures as a background, let's notice one passage from the Old Testament which paints a word picture regarding the Holy Spirit, "And it came to pass at the end of forty days, that Noah opened the window of the ark which he had made: 7 And he sent forth a raven, which went forth to and fro, until the waters were dried up from off the earth. 8 Also he sent forth a dove from him, to see if the waters were abated from off the face of the ground; 9 **But the dove found no rest for the sole of her foot, and she returned unto him into the ark**, for the waters were on the face of the whole earth: then he put forth his hand, and took her, and pulled her in unto him into the ark. 10 And he stayed yet other seven days; and again he sent forth the dove out of the ark; 11 **And the dove came in to him in the evening; and, lo, in her mouth was an olive leaf pluckt off**: so Noah knew that the waters were abated from off the earth. 12 And he stayed yet other seven days; and **sent forth the dove; which returned not again unto him any more**" (Gen 8:6-12). In view of the fact that that Noah introduced the dove motif as the initial event during the new beginning for humanity, we can conclude that Noah's story relates to the ministry of the Holy Spirit. Notice the baptism of Jesus in the Jordan, "And Jesus, when he was baptized, went up straightway out of the water: and, lo, the heavens were opened unto him, and **he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove**, and lighting upon him: 17 And lo a voice from heaven, saying, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased" (Matt 3:16-17). Throughout Scripture the dove is used as a type and shadow of the Holy Spirit.

In the Genesis passage we observe Noah sending out a dove on three separate occasions; and, after the third event the dove did not return to the Ark. What we soon begin to realize is that we can correlate three specific and distinct operational aspects of the Holy Spirit especially as He has chosen to work with mankind throughout history since the time of Noah. Let us look into this concept more directly especially in view of word pictures:

- The first sending out of the dove represents the Old Testament period from Genesis to Malachi;



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- The second sending out of the dove represents the short transition period of time recorded by the four Gospels; essentially, this period lasts from John the Baptist until the Crucifixion of Jesus Christ;
- The third sending out of the dove represents the extended period from the day of Pentecost until today.

Since we obviously want to become skilled at cooperating with the ministry of the Holy Spirit, we are going to examine each of those three periods and the major differences between those periods (*dispensations, if you will*).

Notice how the Holy Spirit chose to work with various renowned individuals during the Old Testament period:

- “And **the Spirit of the LORD will come upon thee**, and thou shalt prophesy with them, and shalt be turned into another man. 7 And let it be, when these signs are come unto thee, that thou do as occasion serve thee; for God is with thee . . . 10 And when they came thither to the hill, behold, a company of prophets met him; and **the Spirit of God came upon him**, and he prophesied among them” (1 Sam 10:6-10);
- “And the Spirit of God came upon Saul when he heard those tidings, and his anger was kindled greatly” (1 Sam 11:6);
- “Then Samuel took the horn of oil, and anointed him in the midst of his brethren: and **the Spirit of the LORD came upon David** from that day forward. So Samuel rose up, and went to Ramah. 14 **But the Spirit of the LORD departed from Saul**” (1 Sam 16:13-14);
- “the woman bare a son, and called his name Samson: and the child grew, and the LORD blessed him. 25 And **the Spirit of the LORD began to move him at times** in the camp of Dan between Zorah and Eshtaol” (Judg 13:24-25);
- “behold, a young lion roared against him. 6 And **the Spirit of the LORD came mightily upon him**, and he rent him as he would have rent a kid” (Judg 14:5-6);
- “And when he came unto Lehi, the Philistines shouted against him: and **the Spirit of the LORD came mightily upon him**, and the cords that were upon his arms became as flax that was burnt with fire, and his bands loosed from off his hands. 15 And he found a new jawbone of an ass, and put forth his hand, and took it, and slew a thousand men therewith” (Judg 15:14-15);

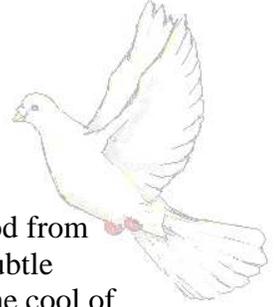
Essentially, the Holy Spirit would come upon someone in order that they would be able to complete a specific task; afterward, the Holy Spirit would leave them. The Holy Spirit could not stay with them because of the sin nature that they naturally received from Adam. The point is these people were not spiritually alive. Let’s prove this concept.

We must remember that God said, “for **in the day** that thou eatest thereof **thou shalt surely die**” (Gen 2:17). Did Adam die the day that he sinned? It is clear that Adam did not fall over dead at sunset! Well then either God lied or Adam must have died in some way of which we are completely unaware. Did Adam die that day? Sure, however, he must have died through his separation from God! Therefore, “separation from God” could be considered “spiritual death,” “for to be carnally minded is death” (Rom 8:6).



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This may seem like splitting hairs, but religion usually teaches that sin separates God from man. However, that is not entirely true, sin separated man from God! Notice the subtle difference: "And they heard the voice of the LORD God walking in the garden in the cool of the day: and **Adam and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the LORD God** amongst the trees of the garden. 9 And the LORD God called unto Adam, and said unto him, Where art thou? 10 And he said, I heard thy voice in the garden, and **I was afraid, because I was naked; and I hid myself**" (Gen 3:8-10).

Let's take note of the most important facts from that passage:

- Because of Adam's sin, God's spirit became separated from Adam;
- Nevertheless, it was God that went looking for Adam (*This means that it was Adam who had moved*);
- Adam hid and God was looking (*God is still looking for us*).

Since Adam did not die physically and God's word claims that he would indeed die; it follows that, he must have died spiritually. God's spirit was no longer present in his life. In other words, separation from God's spirit is death, "**the law of the Spirit of life** in Christ Jesus hath made me free from **the law of sin and death**" (Rom 8:2). The point is that when God's Spirit departed humanity died in the spiritual realm. Nevertheless, God still desired to live with his people!

From the fall, humanity received a new spirit from the devil, "**the spirit that now worketh** in the children of disobedience" (Eph 2:2). The point is that from that point on, humanity could not rid themselves of their unholiness! Therefore, we find God saying, "And let them make me a sanctuary; **that I may dwell among them**" (Ex 25:8). And, where did God specifically dwell? Paul teaches us, "The Holy Ghost this signifying, that the way into **the holiest of all** was not yet made manifest, while as the first tabernacle was yet standing" (Heb 9:8). During the Old Testament, God dwelt in the Holy of Holies as long as he remained in the tabernacle or temple. God is Holy therefore he can only live in a holy place!

Okay, we have observed how the Old Testament period represents the first sending forth of the dove. After the Old Testament period we come to the second sending forth of the dove, "11 **And the dove came in to him in the evening; and, lo, in her mouth was an olive leaf pluckt off**: so Noah knew that the waters were abated from off the earth" (Gen 8:11). In this period we find an olive leaf in the mouth of the dove, (*The olive leaf suggests olive oil or specifically the anointing – Christ means the anointed one.*) Secondly, we see that Noah knew that the waters of judgment had completed their God given task. In other words, the judgment was finished, "When Jesus therefore had received the vinegar, he said, **It is finished**: and he bowed his head, and gave up the ghost" (John 19:30).

During this unique period the Holy Spirit worked in a totally different way than he had earlier during the Old Testament period. Notice the difference in John the Baptist, "he shall **be filled with the Holy Ghost**, even from his mother's womb" (Luke 1:15). This had



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obviously never been done before. Notice Simeon's experience, "there was a man in Jerusalem, whose name was Simeon; and the same man was just and devout, waiting for the consolation of Israel: and the Holy Ghost was upon him. 26 And **it was revealed unto him by the Holy Ghost**, that he should not see death, before he had seen the Lord's Christ" (Luke 2:25-26). Now we are beginning to see revelation come through the Holy Ghost! By the way, Simeon means "hearing;" Leah said, "Because the LORD hath **heard** . . . and **she called his name Simeon**" (Gen 29:33). In this new period hearing through the Holy Ghost will become a normal occurrence.

During this new period, the Holy Spirit which had been lost by Adam, needed to be restored by the second Adam, "For as in Adam all die, even so **in Christ shall all be made alive**" (1 Cor 15:22). Jesus lived as a normal human being; however he was filled with the Holy Ghost, "we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; **but was in all points tempted like as we are**, yet without sin" (Heb 4:15).

This brings us to the third dispensation of time (*the age of grace*). Since Jesus finished the work, the Holy Spirit now lives within and quickens each one of us, "if Christ be in you, the body is dead because of sin; but the Spirit is life because of righteousness" (Rom 8:10)!

The seed of the word has been planted in us, the Holy Spirit then activated that seed and we were Born of God! The Holy Spirit never does leave us today because we are holy (*righteous*) "he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; **that we might be made the righteousness of God in him**" (2 Cor 5:21). Therefore, the Holy Spirit will never depart from us, "I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, **that he may abide with you for ever**" (John 14:16). The dove (*Holy Spirit*) never did return to Noah because it found a new home in the earth!