

“...and the Spirit of God was moving over the face of the waters.”

The very first verse of the Bible starts at the beginning of the work of God in creating the heavens and the earth. The second verse focuses on the earth and God's power and presence in his creative work in shaping the world that we live in:

In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. The earth was without form and void, and darkness was upon the face of the deep; and the Spirit of God was moving over the face of the waters. - Genesis 1:1-2 RSV

The inspired word of God in Genesis chapter one continues with the announcement of the work of God through His Spirit. The Psalmist also gives some insights into this work of God's Spirit:

He lays the beams of His upper chambers in the waters,
Who makes the clouds His chariot,
Who walks on the wings of the wind,
Who makes His angels spirits,
His ministers a flame of fire.
You who laid the foundations of the earth,
So that it should not be moved forever, ... O LORD,
how manifold are Your works!
In wisdom You have made them all.
The earth is full of Your possessions--
... You send forth Your Spirit,
they are created;
And You renew the face of the earth.
May the glory of the LORD endure forever;
May the LORD rejoice in His works. - Psalm 104:3-5, 24, 30-31 NKJV

As the Psalmist sings this song of praise, he tells us that God sends forth his Spirit to create and make us. In fact, everything is upheld by God's powerful Spirit. What is this Spirit that the Bible talks about? Can we understand

it? Can we define it? As human beings we try to make our world understandable by describing or defining the things we see and experience but God is so infinite in every way. He is beyond our understanding, our descriptions, our definitions. A definition, by definition limits our perception of something. Yet God is beyond our understanding and so our definitions are inadequate. How then do we understand this Spirit of God? We can go back to the original Hebrew and Greek words that are translated as "spirit". Perhaps that will help.

The Hebrew word in the Old Testament that is translated many times "spirit" is "*ruwach*". It is also translated as "wind" and "breath". In fact, in the Psalm quoted above in verse 3, the phrase "Who walks on the wings of the **wind**" could be translated "Who walks on the wings of the **spirit**". In verse 29 of this same Psalm 104, the phrase "You take away their **breath**, they die and return to their dust" could be translated "You take away their **spirit**, they die and return to their dust."

The Greek word in the New Testament that many times is translated "spirit" is "*pneuma*". In addition to being translated as "spirit" it is also translated as wind and breath. In John 3 Jesus describes the Spirit as the wind:

"That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. "Do not marvel that I said to you, 'You must be born again.' "The wind blows where it wishes, and you hear the sound of it, but cannot tell where it comes from and where it goes. So is everyone who is born of the Spirit." -

John 3:6-8 NKJV

The actual Greek word for "wind" is "*pneuma*" so instead of being translated as "wind" it could be translated as "spirit": "The **spirit** blows where it wishes, and you heard the sound of it, but cannot tell where it comes from..."

So after looking at these words, does this help us to understand the Spirit of God? Perhaps we can conclude that as with breath and wind, it is powerful, life-giving, and unseen. That helps a little but perhaps the best way of coming to a greater understanding and appreciation of the Spirit of God is to listen to Jesus. He tells us that we can see the work or results of the Spirit as with the wind. The Bible is full of descriptions of accomplishments and work of God's Spirit. We can see what God has done through his Spirit. Although this is just a beginning, there are four areas that we will briefly consider in this Newsletter that will perhaps help us to have a greater understanding and appreciation of God's Spirit:

God's Creative Power and Sustaining Presence.

The Inspiration of the Written Word

The Manifestation of God in his Son

The Abiding of God and His Son in his Church.

Now the Lord is the Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom. And we all, with unveiled face, beholding the glory of the Lord, are being changed into his likeness from one degree of glory to another; for this comes from the Lord who is the Spirit.

2 Corinthians 3:17-18 RSV

“The Spirit of God has made me, And the breath of the Almighty gives me life.”

Jesus told us that *"God is Spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth."* Paul wrote to Timothy that God is *"eternal, immortal, invisible, and who alone is wise."* Jeremiah, in chapter 32, reminds us of God's mighty power: *'Ah, Lord GOD! It is you who have made the heavens and the earth by your great power and by your outstretched arm! Nothing is too hard for you.*

From these verses we start to see a picture of the invisible God. He is not flesh but spirit. He is not limited by time or space. His power is unending. As we continue to read we find that through the limitless power of his Spirit he has created all things and he continues to sustain all life. If God withheld his power and his spirit, then all creatures would perish.

Thus says God, the LORD, who created the heavens and stretched them out, who spread out the earth and what comes from it, who gives breath to the people on it and spirit to those who walk in it: "I am the LORD; I have called you in righteousness..."- Isaiah 42:5-6 ESV

If he should set his heart to it and gather to himself his spirit and his breath, all flesh would perish together, and man would return to dust. - Job 34:14-15 ESV

O LORD, how manifold are your works! In wisdom have you made them all; the earth is full of your creatures. ... When you hide your face, they are dismayed; when you take away their breath, they die and return to their dust. When you send forth your Spirit, they are

created, and you renew the face of the ground. - Psalm 104:24, 29-30 ESV

All life is continually dependent on the powerful Spirit of God. But God through his Spirit is not just the source and energizing power of life, he is also intimately involved with his creation. By his Spirit he is present everywhere and He knows and cares about each one.

You have searched me, LORD, and you know me. You know when I sit and when I rise; you perceive my thoughts from afar. You discern my going out and my lying down; you are familiar with all my ways.... Such knowledge is too wonderful for me, too lofty for me to attain. Where can I go from your Spirit? Where can I flee from your presence? If I go up to the heavens, you are there; if I make my bed in the depths, you are there. - Psalm 139:1-3, 6-8 NIV

The Spirit of God is not just power and the life that emanates from God. He is more than just present and knowing about us. God is a being, a spiritual being, who has character and personality and wisdom. He is just and good and righteous and loving and He shares with the beings of his creation, who are willing, his character and wisdom.

"See, I have chosen Bezalel son of Uri, the son of Hur, of the tribe of Judah, and I have filled him with the Spirit of God, with wisdom, with understanding, with knowledge and with all kinds of skills-- - Exodus 31:2-3 NIV

But there is a spirit in man,

And the breath of the Almighty gives him understanding. - Job 32:8 NKJV

Create in me a pure heart, O God, and renew a steadfast spirit within me. Do not cast me from your presence or take your Holy Spirit from me. Restore to me the joy of your salvation and grant me a willing spirit, to sustain me. - Psalm 51:10-12 NIV

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 NIV

By God's Spirit the world came into existence and by that same Spirit He gives life to all creatures. By his Spirit he is present everywhere and knows everyone. By his Spirit he gives knowledge and wisdom and shares his righteousness and love with those who believe.

Therefore, since we are justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ. Through him we have obtained access to this grace in which we stand, and we rejoice in our hope of sharing the glory of God. ... and hope does not disappoint us, because God's love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit which has been given to us. - Romans 5:1-2, 5 RSV

“...but men moved by the Holy Spirit spoke from God.”

As the Spirit of God moved over the face of the waters in the work of creation, the Holy Spirit moved men to speak the words of God:

First of all you must understand this, that no prophecy of scripture is a matter of one's own interpretation, because no prophecy ever came by the impulse of man, **but men moved by the Holy Spirit spoke from God.** - 2 Peter 1:20-21 RSV

The Apostle Peter declares that without a doubt the writings that we know as the Old Testament were not written by men's wisdom or impulse. The writings are a product of the power, that is the Spirit, of God that moved men to speak. This is a claim that the Bible makes over and over. All the prophets declared that the things they said and wrote were not their words but God speaking through them. Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Elijah, Micah, Moses, and Daniel are among the prophets that heard the Word of the Lord. Samuel recorded David's words concerning the Spirit of the LORD that spoke to him:

Now these are the last words of David: The oracle of David, the son of Jesse, the oracle of the man who was raised on high, the anointed of the God of Jacob, the sweet psalmist of Israel: "The Spirit of the LORD speaks by me, his word is upon my tongue. The God of Israel has spoken, the Rock of Israel has said to me: When one rules justly over men, ruling in the fear of God..." - 2 Samuel 23:1-3 RSV

Although Peter spoke of the Old Testament when he referred to the scriptures since the New Testament had not yet been written, evidence is given in the writings of the apostles that it was by the Ho-

ly Spirit of God that the apostles spoke the word of God.

And when they had prayed, the place in which they were gathered together was shaken; and they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and spoke the word of God with boldness. - Acts 4:31 RSV

There is a connection in the Bible between God speaking and the work of the Spirit. In Genesis 1 the Spirit of God moved over the waters of the earth and when God spoke the waters moved:

The earth was without form and void, and darkness was upon the face of the deep; and the Spirit of God was moving over the face of the waters. ... And God said, "Let there be a firmament in the midst of the waters, and let it separate the waters from the waters." And God made the firmament and separated the waters which were under the firmament from the waters which were above the firmament. And it was so. - Genesis 1:2, 6-7 RSV

The Psalmist makes this same connection between the work of the Spirit and God speaking:

By the word of the LORD the heavens were made, and all their host by the breath of his mouth. He gathered the waters of the sea as in a bottle; he put the deeps in storehouses. Let all the earth fear the LORD, let all the inhabitants of the world stand in awe of him! For he spoke, and it came to be; he commanded, and it stood forth. - Psalm 33:6-9 RSV

You don't see the word "Spirit" in these verses from Psalm 33 but it's there in the original Hebrew. This could be translated as: "By the

word of the LORD the heavens were made, and all their host by the **Spirit** of his mouth." In another place, David wrote concerning this connection between the LORD speaking and the creative work of the Spirit. Again, note, that "**breath**" is the same Hebrew word as "**spirit**".

The LORD thundered from heaven, and the Most High uttered his voice. And he sent out arrows, and scattered them; lightning, and routed them. Then the channels of the sea were seen, the foundations of the world were laid bare, at the rebuke of the LORD, **at the blast of the breath (spirit) of his nostrils.** - 2 Samuel 22:14-16 RSV

So we have this connection between God "breathing" and the Spirit of God. The word, the speaking of God, the breathing out of God's Spirit, created the world and also caused his will and purpose and character to be known through the words of the prophets. As Timothy writes all scripture is "God breathed".

But as for you, continue in what you have learned and have become convinced of, because you know those from whom you learned it, and how from infancy you have known the Holy Scriptures, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus. **All Scripture is God-breathed** and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that the servant of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work. - 2 Timothy 3:14-17 NIV

The breathed-out word of God, the Spirit-of-God inspired scriptures,
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“...but men moved by the Holy Spirit spoke from God.”

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the Bible that we hold in our hand is the precious gift of God to us that reveals who he is, who he wants us to be, and what his plans are.

Surely the Lord GOD does nothing, Unless He reveals His

secret to His servants the prophets. A lion has roared! Who will not fear? The Lord GOD has spoken! Who can but prophesy? - Amos 3:7-8 NKJV

As Paul wrote to Timothy, the Holy Scriptures, because they are the expression of God through his Spirit working through his servants, do not just reveal God to us

but are also able to make us wise unto salvation in Jesus. Such a great gift he has given us!

And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God. - Ephesians 6:17 RSV

“The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you...”

About 1,000 years before the birth of Jesus, David, the King of Israel was promised a special son. This son of David would inherit his throne and rule for ever. But more than that, this son of David would also be the Son of God. When the angel came to Mary to announce the birth of Jesus, he reminded her of this promise.

And the angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God. And behold, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus. He will be great, and will be called the Son of the Most High; and the Lord God will give to him the throne of his father David, and he will reign over the house of Jacob forever; and of his kingdom there will be no end." - Luke 1:30-33 RSV

Mary believed the angel but didn't understand how she could, as a virgin, conceive a child. It was only through the power of the Holy Spirit, the Spirit of God, that Mary conceived.

And the angel said to her, "The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; therefore the child to be born will be called holy, the Son of God. - Luke 1:35 RSV

But as he considered this, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream, saying, "Joseph, son of David, do not fear to take Mary your wife, for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Spirit; - Matthew 1:20 RSV

Jesus was conceived by the power of God's Holy Spirit. During his life, God gave him the power of the Spirit without measure to accomplish His purpose. From the time of his baptism Jesus taught the people and performed many miracles and signs that attested to his Messiahship.

Jesus returned to Galilee in the power of the Spirit, and news about him spread through the whole countryside. He was teaching in their synagogues, and everyone praised him. ... and the scroll of the prophet Isaiah was handed to him. Unrolling it, he found the place where it is written: "The Spirit of the Lord is on me, because he has anointed me to proclaim good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners and recovery of sight for the blind, to set the oppressed free, - Luke 4:14-15, 17-18 NIV

Through the Spirit, Jesus, the very Son of God, manifested and revealed God to us through many signs and miracles, through his

teachings and words, and through the life that he lived. His character was the perfect reflection of his Father.

The Spirit gives life; the flesh counts for nothing. The words I have spoken to you--they are full of the Spirit and life. - John 6:63 NIV

Long ago God spoke many times and in many ways to our ancestors through the prophets. And now in these final days, he has spoken to us through his Son. God promised everything to the Son as an inheritance, and through the Son he created the universe. The Son radiates God's own glory and expresses the very character of God, and he sustains everything by the mighty power of his command. When he had cleansed us from our sins, he sat down in the place of honor at the right hand of the majestic God in heaven. This shows that the Son is far greater than the angels, just as the name God gave him is greater than their names. - Hebrews 1:1-4 NLT

Through the power of His Spirit, God brought his Son into the world and by His Spirit working in his Son he revealed his power and glory. Jesus prevailed over temptation and sin and death. He was raised to everlasting life and

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“The Holy Spirit will come upon you and the power of the Most High will Overshadow you...”

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given all power and authority.

The Good News is about his Son. In his earthly life he was born into King David's family line, and he was shown to be the Son of God when he was raised from the dead

by the power of the Holy Spirit. He is Jesus Christ our Lord. - Romans 1:3-4 NLT

“ But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you will be my witnesses ... ”

As the articles in this Newsletter have discussed, the Spirit of God that emanates from God always acts with purpose. After Jesus was raised from the dead by the power of God's Spirit, he promised that the Holy Spirit would come upon his disciples so that they could be witnesses that he is alive. Just as Jesus performed many miracles and signs before his death, he continued to perform miracles and signs through his disciples after his resurrection. The purpose of the Holy Spirit being given to the disciples, who became known as “apostles” because they were “ones sent with a message”, was to give affirmation and witness that Jesus is alive.

But 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 end of the earth." - Acts 1:8 ESV

On the Day of Pentecost when many in Israel heard the disciples speaking in different languages, Peter explained to them how this was possible.

This Jesus God raised up, and of that we all are witnesses. Being therefore exalted at the right

hand of God, and having received from the Father the promise of the Holy Spirit, he has poured out this that you yourselves are seeing and hearing. - Acts 2:6, 32-33 ESV

Jesus is alive and one of the promises that he gave to all his disciples, not just those who were witnesses of his resurrection, was that he would be with them through the Spirit. The purpose of Jesus' presence through the Spirit of God is to lead and to guide us in becoming children of God.

You, however, are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if in fact the Spirit of God dwells in you. Anyone who does not have the Spirit of Christ does not belong to him. ... If the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, he who raised Christ Jesus from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through his Spirit who dwells in you. ... For if you live according to the flesh you will die, but if by the Spirit you put to death the deeds of the body, you will live. For all who are led by the Spirit of God are sons of God. - Romans 8:9, 11, 13-14 ESV

May the God of hope fill you

with all joy and peace in believing, so that by the power of the Holy Spirit you may abound in hope. - Romans 15:13 RSV

No one has ever seen God; if we love one another, God abides in us and his love is perfected in us. By this we know that we abide in him and he in us, because he has given us of his Spirit. - 1 John 4:12-13 ESV

For this reason I bow my knees before the Father, from whom every family in heaven and on earth is named, that according to the riches of his glory he may grant you to be strengthened with power through his Spirit in your inner being, so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith--that you, being rooted and grounded in love, may have strength to comprehend with all the saints what is the breadth and length and height and depth, and to know the love of Christ that surpasses knowledge, that you may be filled with all the fullness of God. Now to him who is able to do far more abundantly than all that we ask or think, according to the power at work within us, to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, forever and ever. Amen. - Ephesians 3:14-21 ESV

Spirit of God and Holy Spirit

In the Bible these two designations can be used interchangeably as this example shows. In Matthew the Spirit of God descended like a dove on Jesus but Luke says the “Holy Spirit” descended like a dove.

- ...he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and coming to rest on him; - Matthew 3:16 ESV
- ...and the Holy Spirit descended on him in bodily form, like a dove...- Luke 3:22 ESV

The Holy Spirit is the Spirit of God. The phrase “Holy Spirit” is used mostly in the New Testament although it appears three times in the Old Testament. The word “holy” indicates something special or dedicated and perhaps indicates, in this case, the special purpose of God in the birth and work of his Son.



Daily Bible Readings for October, November, December
Read the Entire Bible in One Year

Day	October		November		December	
	Old Test	New Test/Psa	Old Test	New Test/Psa	Old Test	New Test/Psa
1	Hosea 11,12	Titus 1	Jerm 19-21	James 3	Eze 12-14	Psalm 139
2	Hosea 13,14	Titus 2	Jerm 22,23	James 4	Eze 15, 16	Rev 1
3	II Chron 1,2	Titus 3	Jerm 24-26	James 5	Eze 17, 18	Rev 2
4	II Chron 3,4	Philemon	Jerm 27-29	I Peter 1	Eze 19,20	Rev 3
5	II Chron 5,6	Psalm 110, 111	Jerm 30, 31	I Peter 2	Eze 21, 22	Rev 4
6	II Chron 7, 8	Psalm 112, 113	Jerm 32, 33	I Peter 3	Eze 23, 24	Rev 5
7	II Chron 9,10	Hebrews 1	Jerm 34-36	I Peter 4	Eze 25, 26	Psalm 140
8	II Chron 11,12	Hebrews 2	Jerm 37,38	I Peter 5	Eze 27, 28	Psalm 141
9	II Chron 13,14	Hebrews 3	Jerm 39-41	Psalm 120, 121	Eze 29-31	Rev 6
10	II Chron 15,16	Psalm 114, 115	Jerm 42,43	Psalm 122, 123	Eze 32, 33	Psalm 142- 143
11	II Chron 17,18	Hebrews 4	Jerm 44-46	Psalm 124, 125	Eze 34, 35	Rev 7
12	II Chron 19,20	Hebrews 5	Jerm 47,48	II Peter 1	Eze 36, 37	Rev 8
13	II Chron 21,22	Psalm 116, 117	Jerm 49,50	II Peter 2	Eze 38, 39	Rev 9
14	II Chron 23,24	Hebrews 6	Jerm 51, 52	II Peter 3	Eze 40, 41	Psalm 144
15	II Chron 25,26	Hebrews 7	Ezr 1, 2, 3	Psalm 126, 127	Eze 42-44	Rev 10
16	II Chron 27,28	Hebrews 8	Ezr 4, 5, 6	Psalm 128, 129	Eze 45, 46	Rev 11
17	II Chron 29,30	Psalm 118	Ezr 7, 8, 9	I John 1	Eze 47, 48	Psalm 145
18	II Chron 31,32	Hebrews 9	Ezr 10 Neh 1	I John 2	Dan 1,2	Rev 12
19	II Chron 33,34	Hebrews 10	Neh 2,3,4	I John 3	Dan 3,4,5	Rev 13
20	II Chron 35,36	Psa 119: 1-24	Neh 5,6, 7	I John 4	Dan 6,7,8	Rev 14
21	Lam 1,2	Hebrews 11	Neh 8,9	I John 5	Dan 9,10	Psalm 146
22	Lam 3,4,5	Hebrews 12	Neh 10,11	Psalm 130, 131	Dan 11,12	Rev 15
23	Jerm 1,2	Hebrews 13	Neh 12,13	Psalm 132, 133	Habakkuk 1-3	Rev 16
24	Jerm 3,4	Psa 119: 25-48	Esth 1,2,3	Psalm 134, 135	Zephaniah 1-3	Psalm 147
25	Jerm 5,6	Psa 119: 49-74	Esth 4, 5, 6	II John	Haggai 1, 2	Rev 17
26	Jerm 7,8	Psa 119: 75-96	Esth 7-10	III John	Zechariah 1-3	Rev 18
27	Jerm 9,10	Ps 119: 97- 120	Eze 1, 2, 3	Psalm 136	Zechariah 4-6	Rev 19
28	Jerm 11, 12	Ps 119: 121-144	Eze 4, 5, 6	Psalm 137	Zechariah 7-9	Psalm 148
29	Jerm 13, 14	Ps 119: 145-176	Eze 7,8,9	Psalm 138	Zechar 10-12	Psalm 149, 150
30	Jerm 15, 16	James 1	Eze 10,11	Jude	Zechar 13,14	Rev 20, 21
31	Jerm 17, 18	James 2			Malachi 1-4	Rev 22