

Last week we looked at the work of the Holy Spirit in the Old Testament through the book of Judges. This week I would like to continue that theme through the rest of the historical books and the poetic sections of the New Testament. We will talk about the Holy Spirit and the work of the prophet next time.

The Historical Books

In 1 Samuel 10, after Saul is anointed King, Samuel tells him that the Spirit of the Lord will “rush” upon him and he will be able to prophesy and that is exactly what happens in chapter 11. After God determined to place another king on the throne in Saul’s place, Samuel went to anoint David in 1 Samuel 16. Verse 13 tells us that after anointing David, the Spirit of the Lord rushed upon David “from that day forward. The very next verse informs us that the Spirit of the Lord left Saul and a “harmful spirit from the Lord tormented him. When Saul forsook the Lord, the Lord forsook Saul. In chapter 19, as Saul was trying to hunt down and kill David, he sent some men after David. They came upon a group of prophets and they began to prophesy as well. This happened two more times until Saul goes himself and he begins to prophesy too. In this humorous scene, the Holy Spirit acts as a deterrent or a distraction.

In 2 Samuel 23, David gives his final advice to Solomon. This is often referred to as the “Last words of David” and in verse 2 he claims to be speaking by the Spirit of the Lord.

One of my favorite stories in the Old Testament is found in 1 Kings 22 and is about the prophet Micaiah ben Imlah. He is a true prophet of God and has news that the King does not want to hear. Meanwhile, the false prophet, Zedekiah, *claims* to have the Spirit of God and says what the king wants to hear – it ultimately gets the king killed!

In Nehemiah 9, the people are confessing their sins and praying to God for forgiveness. Verse 20 talks about the instructions given to the people by the Spirit. Verse 30 talks about the warnings given by the Prophets through the spirit. The point is that the people had no excuse – the Spirit of the Lord had tried to help, but the people refused.

The Poetic Books

In Job 33:4, Elihu references the work of the spirit in the creation of man. No doubt he had Genesis 2 in mind as he spoke these words. In 34:14, Elihu again references the work of the Spirit in the creation and ongoing sustaining of the world.

In Psalm 51, as David pours his heart out to God after his sin with Bathsheba, he asked that God not take His Holy Spirit away from him. Psalm 104:30 mentions the role of the Spirit in creation. Psalm 106:33 has a tricky reference to spirit. Is it the spirit of Moses or is it the Spirit of God? Both readings make sense. In my opinion, it is probably a reference to Moses’ spirit. Psalm 139:7 is the main passage to reference the omnipresence of God and/or the Holy Spirit. And Psalm 143:10 refers to the Holy Spirit’s work of leading the people of God.

What we see in these references to the Holy Spirit are a number of different things the Holy Spirit did with or for God's people in the Old Testament – creation, striving with man, guidance, instruction, warning, enhancement of one's ability, wisdom, physical strength, knowledge, courage, and the ability to interpret dreams. Let us never think the work of the Holy Spirit is limited to the New Testament.