

PNEUMATOLOGY (23)

Although there are distinctions between the work of the Holy Spirit in the O.T. dispensation which will differ from His work in the N.T. dispensation, which do need to be carefully studied and understood, we must admit that these passages make it clear that the Holy Spirit was indeed a person who was at work in the Old Testament period.

Now for the purpose of this particular study, we will examine the work of the Spirit as it pertains to the entire Old Testament. Dr. Chafer systematizes His Old Testament work into two main divisions: 1) The Holy Spirit's work from Adam to Abraham ; and 2) The Holy Spirit's work from Abraham to Christ . In analyzing it this way, we may conclude that the Adam to Abraham section naturally discusses the Old Testament work as it initially relates to the world and the Gentile , and the Abraham to Christ section naturally discusses the Old Testament work as it continually relates to the world and Israel (Vol. 6, pp. 66-79).

Under this question, "How did the Holy Spirit work in the Old Testament?" our approach will be one of pointing out the various works as it relates to several subjects. Although we will not specifically use the accurate Adam to Abraham / Abraham to Christ approach, we will attempt to observe key matters as they become significant under these headings.

Work #1 - In the O.T. the Holy Spirit was involved in creation .

There is no doubt, upon examination of the O.T. record, that God wants man to clearly understand that His Spirit was involved in His creation :

- 1) Gen. 1:2 - God's Spirit created the heavens and the earth .
- 2) Job 26:7-13 - God's Spirit created the universe and world .
- 3) Job 33:4 - God's Spirit created humans . (cf. Job 27:3)
- 4) Psalm 33:6 - God's Spirit created the heavens and angels .

The word "host" can refer to many things: angels, men and animals. However, it seems that the stress of this text is specifically the "heavens," which we know from biblical study is the dwelling place of angels; therefore, we are certainly legitimate in concluding that "host" would include the angels, especially in this passage (cf. Gen. 2:1).

- 5) Psalm 104:30 - God's Spirit created several things: 1. heavens (v. 2); 2. water (v.3); 3. wind (v. 3); 4. angels (v. 4); 5. earth (v. 5); 6. animals (v. 11); 7. birds (v. 12); 8. trees (v. 16); 9. planets (v. 19); 10. darkness (v. 20); 11. light (v. 22); 12. fish (vs. 25-26).

When we examine a text like Isaiah 40:12-14 , in light of all of the above revelation, we conclude that the Spirit of God was not only involved in the planning of things that would glorify God, but also involved in the actual creating of these things.

A general principle that may be gleaned from this O.T. truth is that any thing or any person who glorifies and praises God is a creative work of God. Specifically such things are a creative work of the Spirit of God.

One contemporary point may also be stressed from this information. It is clear that according to the O.T., God specifically reveals that He is the God of creation. As we have just seen, He has created all things, including life. Therefore, to destroy innocent life, whether it is an animal or a human is, in all reality, to destroy a creative work of God, which His Spirit specifically created.

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To do such a thing does make one highly accountable to the living God. We must realize, however, that we come to this realization by carefully and prayerfully studying God's Word and God's doctrines. We cannot expect those without God's Spirit to honor God as those with His Spirit. As near as I can determine, our responsibility is to clearly and accurately set forth the truth of God.

When it comes to the subject of life, we need to set forth the true doctrine that life is from God and those who destroy innocent life will eventually face a ferocious judgment of God. We need also to present Jesus Christ as the only means of escaping the wrath of God and of having a relationship with God. Those who believe on Christ will receive God's Spirit, who will guide the person into God's truth. People, who support a movement such as abortion, do not fear God nor His creative work and unless they come to faith in Jesus Christ, they are destined to face God's wrath. When one does come to faith, one is a creative work of God and one does receive the Spirit of God and through a study of the Word of God, one will come to understand that life is a creative work of God. It would seem to me that our greatest responsibility in view of this revealed truth is not one of fighting, bombing or picketing clinics; it is rather that of setting forth the truth of God regarding life and Jesus Christ, so that God's Spirit may do His convicting work. Certainly we have a great privilege in this country of setting forth our views and beliefs. Our God-ordained government has given us this privilege. However, just saying "I am against abortion" or just protesting against a clinic or signing some petition is not consistent with our true biblical responsibility which is to "proclaim God's Word" (II Tim. 4:1-2). God's Word clearly teaches that life is from Him. His Word also teaches life is specifically a creative work of His Spirit. God's Word says that His creative work brings glory to Him. Therefore, to destroy something that brings glory to God is to make oneself highly accountable to God and eventually face the wrath of God. Unless those who are presently doing such things admit their sin and invite Jesus Christ into their lives, they will be damned. This is the message believers need to communicate.

When an abortionist is convicted by God's Spirit and comes to faith in Christ, through a study of God's Word, his position will dramatically change. This world does not need more confrontation, it needs more sound, biblical communication.

When it comes to the creative work of the Holy Spirit in the Old Testament, Dr. Ryrie summed it up well when he wrote: "Thus the range of His activity included all the basic facets of Creation" (*Basic Theology*, p. 347).

Work #2 - In the O.T., the Holy Spirit was involved in revelation and inspiration.

As we shall certainly see in our N.T. examination of the Spirit's work, the Spirit of God was intimately involved in the inspiration and production of God's written revelation. However, we must acknowledge that communication from God has not always been in the form of writing.

This is particularly true in the Old Testament. What we need to realize is that any and all communication from God to man, whether written or verbal, is the work of the Holy Spirit. Dr. Chafer writes: "The Spirit who produces and provides the written Word likewise produces and provides all communications from God to man" (Vol. 5, p. 69).

Perhaps the most famous passage of Scripture concerning the Holy Spirit's connection to revelation and inspiration, referring to the O.T., is II Peter 1:21. Dr. Ryrie calls this "the most inclusive statement on the subject" (p. 347).

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Dr. Chafer said that this one text clearly teaches that the “prophets spoke by divine power (contextually implied of the Holy Spirit) whether their message was recorded in written form or not” (Vol. 6, p. 75).

Although the word “prophecy,” especially in our day, has come to almost solely mean that which is futuristic, the primary sense of the word is that of “telling forth the divine counsels” (G. Abbott-Smith, *Greek Lexicon*, pp. 390-391). A prophet was one who communicated God’s Word to man, which would include the revelation of God’s counsel, will, purposes and future.

When it comes to O.T. communication given from God to man, there were basically two types: 1) Revelation that was given to an individual for the purpose of proclamation and publication ; 2) Revelation that was given to an individual for personal instruction , not public communication . Both types show up in the O.T. and this is the key factor that determines whether or not one in the O.T. may be classified as a prophet . Not all people who received revelation from God in the O.T. may be classified as a prophet. The establishing factor is the responsibility he has to communicate that revelation to someone else. Dr. Chafer observes: “To receive a revelation or a vision does not make one a prophet, unless it be accompanied by the command to communicate the revelation to others” (*Ibid.*, p. 69).

For example, when we come to the account of Cain and Abel in Genesis 4, it is very clear that there was great knowledge regarding the type of sacrifice which God found pleasing in His sight. It is also evident that Abel obediently responded to this information and Cain didn’t. What we conclude is that both men had obviously received revelation from God pertaining to sacrifices that were acceptable to Him. We know that Adam received many communications from God, but what we don’t know is whether his sons got their theological information indirectly from Adam or directly from God. What we do know is that they received information from God which we do not receive. We don’t know how God specifically revealed this information to them and we don’t know what the information specifically was. What this means is that even though Cain and Abel received revelation from God, by virtue of the fact that they did not record it for others, they cannot be classified as prophets and the revelation cannot be classified as prophetic. On the other hand, a man like Enoch, who was the seventh from Adam, can be classified as a prophet because he obviously was responsible to communicate and publish God’s revelation to others (Jude 14-15).

There are many passages that establish that the Holy Spirit was involved in revealing God’s truth to man in the O.T.: 1) II Peter 1:21 ; 2) II Sam. 23:2 ; 3) Micah 3:8 ; 4) Matt. 22:43 ; 5) Acts 1:16 ; 6) Acts 4:25 ; 7) Acts 28:25 ; 8) Heb. 3:7 ; 9) Heb. 10:15-16 .

These are just a few texts which teach us, as Dr. Ryrie said, “that the Spirit acted in giving God’s truth in Old Testament times” (*Ryrie*, p. 347). Any person who reads the Old Testament cannot help but be impressed with the various types of literature which show up. Attempting to resolve how the Spirit worked in each case of inspired revelation is no easy matter.

However, the wise student of Scriptures will always do his or her best to “study to rightly divide” as much as possible.

Dr. John Walvoord observed that there are at least seven types of inspired writings that the Holy Spirit directed in the Old Testament:

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(Type #1) - The Spirit inspired the unknown past .

From the opening chapters of Genesis, there are things written that man, apart from a supernatural work of God's Spirit, could not possibly have known. For example, Genesis 1 contains the Words of God and the works of God prior to man's creation. Therefore, when God deemed that this information should be recorded in His revelation to man, His Spirit revealed to man truth from the unknown past. This truth was known by God , but was unknown by man .

Another example would be Isaiah 14:12-14. Man would have had no ability whatsoever to write matters pertaining to the fall of Lucifer. Obviously, God's Spirit revealed to men things from the unknown past. When God chooses to reveal this type of information, we may assume: 1) All information is precisely what God wanted revealed; 2) All information is factual; 3) All information is to be known; 4) All information is to be believed. We may also assume that in "unknown past" information, the method of the Spirit's inspiring work would be direct revelation. There would be no other way one could know these matters.

(Type #2) - The Spirit inspired history .

One cannot read the O.T. without immediately realizing that a large portion of it concerns history. In this type of writing, the author, directed by the Spirit of God, put in writing historical events which those who were contemporaries would have known. It is quite evident from reading the Bible that God did not reveal all historical activity; however, He did select those things He deemed significant. When it comes to the matter of inspiration, this is the critical point. All history is important to God, but history that ends up in His Word is that which is necessary for man to understand in order to have a sound doctrine about God and His work. In other words, the Holy Spirit guided writers to record those historical events which God deemed as necessary to understanding things about Him. God is in all of history, but all history is not in the Bible.

Historical events which do show up in the Bible must be recognized as those events which are important to the mind of God. Therefore, those who are wise will very carefully study and explore such events in order to determine their inspired, revealed significance. When the Spirit prompted the men to record these events, we must assume that He directed them to the precise events He wanted them to record and that every detail which was recorded is true and factual. These are events which should be accepted and believed.

(Type #3) - The Spirit inspired the Law .

Laws in the Bible were given by God to govern various phases of individual and national life. There are: 1) commandments which govern the moral life of Israel (Ex. 20); 2) ordinances which govern the religious life of Israel (Ex. 25); 3) judgments which govern the social life of Israel.

Since we learn from Galatians 3:24 that the Law was designed to bring people to Christ, we must assume that these laws were carefully and accurately recorded as directed by the Holy Spirit for a profound purpose.

We may also observe that the laws were given progressively. In other words, the laws as they were originally written, perfectly expressed the mind of God to the people at that time. Even though people would not have had all information, each bit of it was precisely what God wanted them to have at that moment. God's Spirit saw to that.

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(Type #4) – The Spirit inspired dictation.

There are some portions of the O.T. which contain direct quotes from God in which He, Himself, gives a command. In such cases, we must assume that the Holy Spirit is pretty much dictating precisely what must be recorded. A key difference between this type of inspired revelation and other types is that in this type the writer's grammatical peculiarities and style are not evidenced. Such writing is precise and to the point and could almost be considered as having been dictated to the writer by God's Spirit (i.e. Gen. 12:1-3).

Dr. Walvoord brings out a very important point when writing on the matter of dictation by accurately observing: "Dictation, however, should not be regarded as more authoritative than other portions of Scripture. Inspiration extends freely and equally to all portions of Scripture" (Vol. 6, p. 77).

(Type #5) – The Spirit inspired devotional literature.

There are several writings, such as many of the psalms, in which the writer is guided by God's Spirit to record what is personally going on in his own heart. Sometimes the things going on in the heart are true and sometimes they are false. God has obviously included many of these things in His Word in order that we might be "complete, thoroughly furnished unto all good works." Such devotional literature is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction and for instruction in righteousness. One purpose of such literature is to demonstrate the emotion of true-versus-false faith.

For example, in Ecclesiastes 1:2 we get a glimpse of the king's heart which cannot find any happiness or meaning or fulfillment in life. His recorded statement is that "all is empty." This is obviously the precise statement the Spirit of God wants recorded in God's Word. The heart of the king, at that point in time, was miserable (1:12-18; 2:11). In this case, we would say the devotional information being given is that from a heart and perspective that is not right with God. In other words, sometimes the Spirit of God wanted to record the negative side of things, namely, in this instance, a heart without God at the center of it is an empty heart. There is a lack of meaning and fulfillment to life when out of step with God.

On the other hand, in the aftermath of God entering into a covenant with David, his heart soared in a great praise unto God (II Sam. 7:18-29). This kind of passage expresses the wonderful working of God in the hearts of His people.

The key feature of devotional literature is that it is the inspired revelation of God as filtered through the hearts of humans. Such revelation is just as accurate and just as necessary and just as inspired as the dictated commands of God.

(Type #6) – The Spirit inspired contemporary prophecy.

Contemporary prophecy is that form of revelation which God gave to the contemporary generation in some immediate situation. Such prophetic revelation demanded immediate attention. A good example is Jonah 3:4. Ninevah had 40 days left in existence. Such a revelation demanded immediate response.

