

Th123 A Study of the Holy Spirit

Th123-6 The Prophetic Spirit

Do you know what a prophet is? A prophet is a man or woman used by God to speak forth His word. Sometimes the message is an exhortation. But often this word comes as a warning or has to do with future events.

Elijah and Elisha are good examples of how the Holy Spirit worked through the Old Testament prophets. By the Spirit's power, they declared the message of God and performed miracles. When Elijah's ministry was nearing its end, Elisha asked for a "double portion" of the Spirit that rested on his teacher. Elijah was then taken up to heaven in a whirlwind. As he went up, his mantle fell to the ground. This mantle symbolized the anointing of the Spirit that had been on the old prophet. Elisha picked up Elijah's mantle and walked to the bank of the Jordan River. With a loud voice, he cried out, "Where now is the Lord, the God of Elijah?" (2Kings 2:14). He then struck the water of the river with the mantle. At that, the waters divided, and Elisha walked over to the other side. This showed that the Spirit of the Lord who had rested so powerfully on Elijah was now upon Elisha.

In this lesson, we will look at how the Holy Spirit moved on the prophets. Many of them wrote down the messages God had given them. Their ancient scrolls became the books of our Bible. The prophets further spoke of a day when God would pour out His Spirit on all people. Let's look a bit closer at three ways the Holy Spirit used the Old Testament prophets.

First, the Holy Spirit sent and empowered the Old Testament prophets. Isaiah told how God had sent him, saying, "The Sovereign Lord has sent me, endowed with his Spirit" (Isa 48:16). The same thing could be said of all of the Hebrew prophets. They were sent by the Holy Spirit, and they ministered in the Spirit's power. Ezekiel testified, "[The Lord] said to me, 'Son of man, stand up on your feet and I will speak to you.' As he spoke, the Spirit came into me and raised me to my feet, and I heard him speaking to me. He said, 'Son of man, I am sending you to the Israelites...'" (Ezek 2:1-3). All of the true Old Testament prophets were sent and empowered by Spirit of God.

Second, not only did the Holy Spirit send and empower the prophets, He also spoke through them. King David—who was also a prophet—testified, "The Spirit of the Lord spoke through me; his word was on my tongue" (2Sam 23:2). Micah wrote, "But as for me, I am filled with power, with the Spirit of the Lord, and with justice and might, to declare to Jacob his transgression, to Israel his sin" (Micah 3:8). In other words, the prophets were filled with the Spirit to speak out against evil and to declare God's righteousness.

Sometimes, the Holy Spirit moved through the prophets inspiring them to write their messages down. Those writings are now found in our Bibles. Peter tells us how this came about. "Above all," he said, "you must understand that no prophecy of Scripture came about by the prophet's own interpretation. For prophecy never had its origin in the will of man, but men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit" (2Peter 1:20-21). In the New Testament, the Spirit spoke in the same way through the writings of the apostles. We therefore believe that "all Scripture is God-breathed" (2Tim 3:16), and that the entire Bible, both the Old

and New Testaments, is the inspired Word of God and the revelation of God to man. Paul wrote to the Christians in Thessalonica, saying, “We also thank God continually because, when you received the word of God, which you heard from us, you accepted it not as a human word, but as it actually is, the word of God, which is indeed at work in you who believe” (1Thess 2:13).

Third, the Old Testament prophets spoke of a day when God would pour out His Spirit on all people. This universal outpouring would begin with the Spirit’s coming upon the Messiah. Seven hundred years before the birth of Jesus, the prophet Isaiah wrote, “The Spirit of the Sovereign Lord is on me, because the Lord has anointed me to preach good news to the poor. He has sent me to...proclaim the year of the Lord’s favor” (Isa. 61:1-2). Jesus read from this very passage when He began His ministry. He sat down to teach, saying, “Today this scripture is fulfilled in your hearing” (Luke 4:18-19). He then went out and ministered in the power of the Holy Spirit. (We will talk more about this in future lessons.)

In the Old Testament, the Spirit was given only to certain prophets, priests, and leaders. And He was given only at certain times to enable these leaders to perform certain tasks. However, the prophets told of a day when God would pour out His Spirit on everyone. Speaking on God’s behalf, Joel prophesied, “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. Even on my servants, both men and women, I will pour out my Spirit in those days” (Joel 2:28-29).

That prophecy was first fulfilled on the Day of Pentecost when the ascended Lord poured out the Holy Spirit on the waiting believers. The Bible says, “When the day of Pentecost came, they were all together in one place. Suddenly a sound like the blowing of a violent wind came from heaven and filled the whole house where they were sitting. They saw what seemed to be tongues of fire that separated and came to rest on each of them. All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues as the Spirit enabled them” (Acts 2:1-4). Peter then stood and explained what had happened. He said, “This is what was spoken by the prophet Joel: ‘In the last days, God says, I will pour out my Spirit on all people’” (Acts 2:16-17).

This ancient prophecy is still being fulfilled today. God is still pouring out His Spirit on anyone who will commit themselves to His mission and humbly seek His face. Jesus promised, “Your Father in heaven [will] give the Holy Spirit to those who ask him!” (Luke 11:13). Will you claim the promise today?

This lesson is **important** because it teaches how the Holy Spirit moved through the Old Testament prophets empowering them to do exploits and inspiring them to write Scripture. You also learned how the prophets spoke of a day when God would pour out His Spirit on all people.

The **main truth** we learn from this lesson is that we can depend upon the Bible because we know it was inspired by the Holy Spirit. We further learned that we can expect the Holy Spirit to empower us just as He empowered the prophets of old.

Let’s **review** some important truths we have learned from this lesson.

1. What claim did the Old Testament prophets make concerning the Holy Spirit?

- A. [PAUSE] If you answered that the Old Testament prophets claimed to be sent and empowered by the Holy Spirit, you are right.
2. What was the Holy Spirit's role in the writing of the Bible?
A. [PAUSE] If you answered that the Holy Spirit inspired the Bible by moving on the prophets and apostles, showing them what to write, you answered correctly.
3. What great promise did the Old Testament prophets make concerning the Holy Spirit?
A. [PAUSE] If you answered, "The prophets spoke of a day when God would pour out His Spirit on all flesh," you answered correctly.
4. How does the Bible's promise of a universal outpouring of the Holy Spirit apply to Christians today?
A. [PAUSE] If you said that today any Christian can ask God for the empowering of the Holy Spirit and He will give the Spirit to them, you are correct.

Your **assignment** is to re-listen to this lesson several times until you understand it completely. Memorize and claim God's promise, "In the last days, God says, I will pour out my Spirit on all people" (Acts 2:17). Then, gather a group of believers together and teach these truths to them. If any of them have not yet been baptized in the Holy Spirit, lay hands on them and pray for the infilling of the Spirit.