

# The Holy Spirit in the Old Testament?

## Did anyone have God's spirit before Acts 2 Pentecost?



Philip Shields

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*Did men and women of God in the Old Testament have the Holy Spirit IN them the same way we have God's spirit today? What are the theological consequences of saying "yes" or "no" to that question? Can God take away the gift of the Spirit if we don't carefully guard it's holy presence and function in our lives? This message also conveys what a JOY it is to have God's spirit and how we are to value and guard God's holy presence in us. You'll find more nuance and feeling in the audio version.*

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We're coming up to Pentecost pretty soon, and probably by the time many of you see or hear this sermon, Pentecost could be past.

**Did people in the Old Covenant, Old Testament times have the Holy Spirit inside them, as we do in the New Covenant?** Or did the Holy Spirit not come until Christ died and then ascended to heaven after his resurrection – culminating in the giving of the Spirit in Acts 2?

Our wonderful Abba, our dear Father in heaven, who happens to be the ultimate ruler of the universe, the God Most High – loves to give gifts. In fact Scripture says that ALL good gifts ultimately come from the Father above (**James 1:17; Luke 11:13**). Of course my favorite gift is perhaps the gift of his SON for me, who lived and died for me, that my past could be erased and I could have the door to the Kingdom of God opened to me. To me. And to you.

**That's wonderful. Another great, great gift from our God is the gift of the Holy Spirit.** With Pentecost now here, I thought I'd start talking about different aspects of God's spirit.

*What a joy this is. What an astonishing gift, that the Supreme Being in the universe even knows I'm around, but he does!* If he knows every sparrow, he surely knows you, by name, and every hair on your head and every thought you have, and every feeling you feel, and every word you're about to say (**Psalms 139:1-7**). And in the greatest of love stories, He chose YOU and chose me too, yep even me -- to be one of the firstfruits of his children – and He begat us by putting a bit of himself into you and me – a part of Him – His very own Spirit, the **Holy Spirit**. Peter calls it **the divine SEED** – that we are born again, or begotten again (same word in the Greek) by his incorruptible seed (**1 Peter 1:23**).

Those who believe on Yeshua, the Son of God – are being given the right to be his children, born from above, born of GOD, as John 1 says. (**John 1:12-13; John 3:3**).

**The Spirit of God interfaces with the Spirit in mankind allowing us to see and understand spiritual things (1 Cor. 2:9-13).** I gave a sermon a while back that I might re-record afresh – **22 things The Holy Spirit does for us** – and those are some of the points: the Holy Spirit in us begets us into the family of God, opens the eyes of our understanding of things spiritual, empowers us by the very power of God himself – and so much more.

Now the question comes up from time to time, and this is the topic of this shorter message, “Did any of the servants of God in the Old Testament actually have the Holy Spirit the way we do?” With PENTECOST so close, it’s timely to be speaking of God’s Spirit, which came in a BIG way on Pentecost, Shavuot in Hebrew – in Acts 2.

**People wonder this for a couple reasons:**

1. There seem to be verses that say the Holy Spirit was never given until Christ was resurrected
2. It does seem that the Holy Spirit was put temporarily upon many people here and there in the Old Testament, but was not placed inside them for the rest of their lives. We’ll explore that too. In other words, there are verses that seem to show the Holy Spirit was given for a specific purpose, but not in the way we get it today. So some feel that nobody in the Old Testament had the HOLY SPIRIT like people in the new covenant have the Spirit.

**So we’ll explore – was the Holy Spirit given to people, to have inside of them, in the Old Testament?**

**So welcome, everyone to Light on the Rock. This is Philip Shields** giving you my right hand of fellowship and a warm welcome -- to all of you from Poland, I’ll welcome you in Malaysia, in England, Scotland, USA, France, Russia, the Ukraine, and easily 60 her countries. Welcome. It’s amazing that there are animosities between some peoples and races and countries, but I see those same countries visiting our website – TOGETHER.

Here we come as one to our Light and our Rock – Yeshua of Nazareth, the son of God Most High. *Abba, our Father, and Yeshua – please flow your Holy Spirit on me and on all who will hear about your wonderful gift of YOUR Holy Spirit, the Ruach HaKodesh. Let your anointing be on all those who come with hearts and minds like good fertile soil prepared and ready to receive your word. In Yeshua’s name, Amen.*

**So that’s my topic today – did those in the Old Testament have God’s spirit** as we do today – assuming you’ve repented of your sins, accepted Yeshua as your Saviour, and have been immersed into water (baptism), then an ordained minister of God laid his hands on you, and you received the wonderful gift of - God’s Holy Spirit.

You may want to hear my sermon on water baptism too:

Yes, there are clear verses that seem to tell us that before Pentecost nobody had the Holy Spirit. I’m aware of these verses. But *can* these verses really mean that NOBODY had God’s spirit IN them until Pentecost? Let’s examine this closely today.

**John 7:37-39**

On the last day, that great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried out, saying, "If anyone thirsts, let him come to Me and drink. 38 He who believes in Me, as the Scripture has said, out of his heart will flow rivers of living water." 39 But this He spoke concerning the Spirit, whom those believing in Him **would receive; for the Holy Spirit was not yet given, because Jesus was not yet glorified**"

**John 16:7**

**"Nevertheless I tell you the truth. It is to your advantage that I go away; for if I do not go away, the Helper will not come to you; but if I depart, I will send Him to you."**

**The Helper, or Comforter, or paraklete – was of course the Holy Spirit (John 14:26).**

I think you'll find - after reviewing other scriptures – that Christ was speaking of giving the Holy Spirit in the new covenant time period, when thousands received God's spirit. That dispensation or time period when the spirit would be poured out to thousands, all at once, as happened on Pentecost, could not happen until Christ himself returned to heaven.

So could this really be saying that Enoch, Noah, King David, Abraham, Daniel, Deborah, Sarah, Huldah the prophetess, John the Baptist, etc. – did not have the Holy Spirit IN them, as we hope we do today? I think they DID have the Holy Spirit and let's explain.

Let's read Ephesians 2:19-22 and see what we're told:

**Ephesians 2:19-22**

**"Now, therefore, you are no longer strangers and foreigners, but fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God, 20 having been built on **the foundation of the apostles and prophets**, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief cornerstone, 21 IN whom the whole building, being fitted together, grows into a holy temple in the Lord, 22 IN whom you ALSO are being built together for a dwelling place of God in the Spirit."**

IF the foundation of the ekklesia, the called-out ones, the "church" of God, the household of God, includes the prophets of old, is it really possible that they ALSO – like us – would not have had the fullness of God's spirit IN them? Keep listening, as it will get even clearer as we go along, that they DID have God's spirit fully in them.

I think we'd all agree, wouldn't we, that the family and household of God is made up ONLY of those who have his indwelling presence, would we not? Romans 8 is clear, that without God's spirit, we are not considered his people or his children. Let's read it:

**Romans 8:9**

**"But you are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if indeed the Spirit of God dwells in you. Now if **anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he is not His.**"**

Do you see why I am using this verse? There are dozens and dozens of scriptures that refer to some Old Testament heroes as a "man of God" or "servant OF God" and so on.

"Of God" means they were HIS; belonged to him. We just read that without the spirit of God, they couldn't be called "servant of God" and so on.

Being a part of the BODY of Christ, is the same thing: you must have his spirit, which is the same as "the Spirit of God."

**Romans 8:14** "For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, these are sons of God."

Was Moses led by God's spirit? Was Daniel? Was Deborah?

Now we know that many in the Old Testament who were called "a servant of God" (Moses, especially) or "man of God" or the "friend of God" (Abraham, Moses was spoken to as a man does to his friend). Are those terms possible without the indwelling HOLY SPIRIT?

**Revelation 15:3** – the 144,000 will even sing the Song of Moses, "the servant of God". Is it possible that we'll be in heaven singing that song, but n Moses?

That's what some would have us believe. The typical teaching from that camp is that these great men and women of the Old Testament had God's spirit WITH them, from time to time, but not IN them, and that was reserved only post-Acts 2. Well ... if you think that, keep listening.

There are 79 references in the Old Testament to the phrase "man of God". God's man. But we are n his without His Spirit. Hmm.

We also know that the scriptures we read today – in what is usually called the Old Testament – were INSPIRED by God's Spirit.

**2 Timothy 3:16** says all scripture that we read today "is given by inspiration of God". The word "inspiration" is literally "God-breathed, is the actual Greek here.

**2 Peter 1:21**

**"For prophecy never came by the will of man, but holy men of God [God's men] spoke as they were moved by the Holy Spirit."**

Remember the church is built on the foundation of apostles AND PROPHETS, so it's inconceivable that they were not begotten into the family of God as well, well before we were born.

Look at what David says:

**2 Samuel 23:1-2**

Now these are the last words of David.

Thus says David the son of Jesse; Thus says the man raised up on high,

**The anointed of the God of Jacob**, and the sweet psalmist of Israel:

**"The Spirit of YHVH (the Lord) spoke by me, and His word was on my tongue".**

**When GOD'S SPIRIT would COME UPON someone...**

I believe there certainly were some who did not receive the Holy Spirit in quite the same way we do today -- but there were also some who DID receive it inside them. Let's look at the first category first: those upon whom the Spirit worked with or came upon for a specific purpose, job or task.

There's another possibility too. Some, like Samson and Gideon, I believe had God's spirit just like we do, but there were times in their lives when the Spirit "came upon" them, and moved mightily in them, stirred them up, made them courageous, and in Samson's case – gave him seemingly impossible strength. I say this because they are mentioned in the Faith Hall of Fame of Hebrews 11. I find it hard to contemplate they'd be listed there without having the fullness of God's Holy Spirit.

*I also believe ONLY those given the Spirit will be in the first resurrection. And those great men and women of the Old Testament will be there. They had to have God's spirit to be in the household of God and in the first resurrection. Only those who are "his" will be there! And to be "his" – one had to have the Holy spirit (Romans 8:9, 14 again).*

Having said that, there are numerous verses which say--- "the Holy Spirit came upon so-and-so and then..."

Othniel, Caleb's younger brother, was one such man – Judges 3:7. Let's find more.

**Judges 6:34**

"But the Spirit of YHVH came upon **Gideon**; then he blew the trumpet, and the Abiezrites gathered behind him."

**Judges 11:29**

"Then the Spirit of YHVH came upon **Jephthah**, and he passed through Gilead and Manasseh...."

**Judges 14:5-6** – tells us of how **Samson** was surprised by a young lion - "**And the Spirit of YHVH came mightily upon him, and he tore the lion apart...**"

**There are more, but let's keep moving.**

Again, in some of these instances these men also had God's spirit already inside them, and in these instances the Spirit moved them to say or do something extraordinary ... or in other cases, it may simply be saying that some of these were given the Holy Spirit as an assist for a temporary time. But I am convinced, as I'll show in a couple minutes, that the big names in scripture – the prophets, David, Moses, Elijah, Huldah, Deborah etc – were filled with the holy spirit beyond any doubt.

There are numerous verses that describe the Spirit moving Samson, strengthening him. (Judges 14:19; 15:14; 16:13). While creating and fashioning the gold pieces in the Tabernacle, God gave divine abilities to two artisans and their assistants. I'm not sure or clear if these artisans continued to have God's spirit inside them in the way we do today, after their task was completed, and the ark or other golden objects were finished.

**Exodus 36:1**

“And **Bezalel and Aholiab**, and every gifted artisan **IN** whom YHVH has put **wisdom** and understanding, to know how to do all manner of work for the service of the sanctuary, shall do according to all that the Lord has commanded.”

I think WE should be praying for our God to give us special insights, wisdom, skills and abilities – by His Spirit -- for special moments and needs in our lives today. Maybe you're going to have a critical conversation with a son or daughter, or need extraordinary help on a task... God can provide that like he did Bezalel.

**When God's Spirit was PUT INTO the men and women of God in the Old Testament**

**Now let's look at scriptures of people before Acts 2**, when God's spirit was poured out to 120 people and later on, to 3,000 more, men and women. Remember Peter QUOTED Joel 2 which prophesied of men AND women receiving the spirit. On that day, they spoke in languages that people from other parts of the world recognized as their own tongue – all of them, it says were speaking that way, both men and women (Acts 2).

**But what about people before Acts 2? What about God's servants in the Old Testament?**

I believe that in the Old Testament, God's spirit was given, but given very selectively, to just a few men and women – and not to hundreds and thousands all at once, as in Acts 2. But the Holy Spirit was given to be INSIDE these selected people in Old Testament times as we shall see.

**Genesis 41:38 JOSEPH**

And Pharaoh said to his servants, "Can we find such a one as this, a man **IN** whom is the Spirit of God?"

**Numbers 27:18-** God himself said **Joshua** had his Spirit.

And YHVH said to Moses: "Take **Joshua the son of Nun with you, a man IN whom is the Spirit**, and lay your hand on him"

**Caleb probably did also:**

**Numbers 14:24**

"But My servant **Caleb**, **because he has a different spirit in him** and has followed Me fully, I will bring into the land where he went, and his descendants shall inherit it."

Joshua and Caleb were types of us who will enter the Promised Land (a TYPE of Heavenly Jerusalem and the kingdom of God).

**Numbers 32:10-14**

So YHVH's anger was aroused on that day, and He swore an oath, saying, 11 'Surely none of the men who came up from Egypt, from twenty years old and above, shall see the land of which I swore to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, because they have not wholly followed Me, **12 except Caleb the son of Jephunneh, the Kenizzite, and Joshua the son of Nun, for they have wholly followed YHVH.**' 13 So YHVH's anger was aroused against Israel, and He made them wander in the

wilderness forty years, until all the generation that had done evil in the sight of YHVH was gone.

**David certainly had God's spirit – it wasn't just a passing thing**

**1 Samuel 16:13** “Then Samuel took the horn of oil and anointed him in the midst of his brothers; **and the Spirit of YHVH came upon David from that day forward.** So Samuel arose and went to Ramah. [he had like a laying on of hands with that anointing.]

**1 Chronicles 28:12**

**“and the plans for all that he had by the Spirit, of the courts of the house of YHVH, of all the chambers all around,**

Peter acknowledged **David** spoke from the Spirit

**Acts 1:16**

"Men and brethren, this Scripture had to be fulfilled, **which *the Holy Spirit spoke before by the mouth of David*** concerning Judas, who became a guide to those who arrested Jesus...

**Daniel** is mentioned several times as having God's Spirit IN him, not just with him or on him.

**Daniel 4:8**

But at last Daniel came before me (his name is Belteshazzar, according to the name of my god; ***in him is the Spirit of the Holy God***), and I told the dream before him, saying...

**Daniel 4:18**

"This dream I, King Nebuchadnezzar, have seen. Now you, Belteshazzar [Daniel], declare its interpretation, since all the wise men of my kingdom are n able to make known to me the interpretation; but you are able, **for the Spirit of the Holy God is in you.**"

**Daniel 5:11--Daniel certainly had God's spirit IN him.**

**“There is a man in your kingdom IN whom is the Spirit of the Holy God.”**

**As we get into the New Testament, but still under the old covenant until Christ – we see that**

- **John the Baptist** would be FILLED with the Holy Spirit, **even from his mother's womb (Luke 1:15).**
- His mother – **Elizabeth** –was also “FILLED with the Holy Spirit” (Luke 1:41),
- as was her husband, John's father – **Zacharias** (Luke 1:67).

**ALL of this was before Acts 2. Before Christ. Now that language – “FILLED with the Holy Spirit” is the same description given to Yeshua's life in Luke 4:1 – “Then Jesus, filled with the Holy Spirit....”**

So I hope you're seeing, God's servants DID have God's spirit working IN them in the Old Testament, or Old Covenant. NOT the masses of people, not thousands, but those who were genuinely Yah's prophets and servants did have God's spirit INSIDE them.

But to segway back to John 7:37-39 and John 16:7 – which seem to imply nobody had the Holy Spirit until Acts 2 – CAN'T mean that, with all these other scriptures we've reviewed. It has to mean that the Spirit would not come en masse, to the masses and to thousands, until the Christ returned to heaven.

### **Can we LOSE the Holy Spirit of God?**

Can we lose God's spirit? I think so, but not usually quickly.

When David murdered Uriah and committed adultery with Uriah's wife, several years probably went by from that episode to the time that he repented, when confronted by Nathan the prophet in 1 Samuel 12. By this time, the "baby" was actually a toddler or older. Notice what David says in his prayer of repentance. He's taking nothing for granted!

**Psalms 51:11**

*"Do not cast me away from Your presence,  
And do not take Your Holy Spirit from me."*

**We also know what happened to King Saul.** Originally God gave His Holy Spirit as well -- but when Saul rejected God, and went on a life plan away from God, then YHVH took away his spirit.

Here's what Samuel told Saul – as he was anointing him commander of the nation.

**1 Samuel 10:6**

**"Then the Spirit of YHVH will come upon you, and you will prophesy with them and be turned into another man."**

**1 Samuel 10:9-10**

**"So it was, when he (Saul) had turned his back to go from Samuel, that God gave him another heart; and all those signs came to pass that day. 10 When they came there to the hill, there was a group of prophets to meet him; then the Spirit of God came upon him, and he **prophesied** among them."**

But Saul was not faithful to God and he turned permanently from God. So...

**1 Samuel 16:14**

**"But the Spirit of YHVH departed from Saul, and a distressing spirit from YHVH troubled him."**



The first 2 verses here in 1 Samuel make me feel he did not receive it permanently inside him, but the verse in 1 Samuel 15 – when the Spirit of YHWH departed from Saul...” -gives me pause.

It's a very, very serious thing to knowingly reject God's spirit, permanently reject God's spirit, once we have it.

**Hebrews 6:4-6**

“For it is impossible for those who were once **enlightened**, and have **tasted the heavenly gift, and have become partakers of the Holy Spirit**, 5 and have tasted the good word of God and the powers of the age to come, 6 if they fall away, to renew them again to repentance, since they crucify again for themselves the Son of God, and put Him to an open shame.”

**You can also read something similar in Hebrews 10:26-29, where it speaks of insulting the Spirit of grace.**

**(Please hear the audio of this section for more about this)**

I'll end with that. I hope we see what a wonderful gift it is to receive God's PRESENCE in our lives, his SPIRIT, a part of what HE is, inside US!

I wanted you to also feel good about Abraham, Noah, Sarah, Isaac, Daniel, David, Deborah and so many others who were begotten into God's family, long before Acts 2; men and women who lived by spirit, spoke by the spirit, were LED by God's presence and had a **closeness** and even INTIMACY with God like Abraham and Moses certainly had, that we would LOVE to have today.

All of these are also your brothers and sisters in the Messiah. Amen, amen.

And the way King David wrote so many songs of his LOVE for his Messiah. How wonderful, and all of that was inspired by the Spirit of God working IN him.

Now in the NEW covenant, thousands are being given His presence, but there were quite a few even in the Old covenant who were begotten and led by God's spirit.

God speed the day when the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we who have the Holy Spirit will be changed, in a twinkling of the eye – as fast as an eye blink – into incorruptible spirit and immortality,

along WITH Sarah, Deborah, Ezekiel, Samuel, David, Moses, Elijah and so many others we read about today.

Yes, Come our Beloved Master, come.