



The Holy Spirit is mostly known about from the Scriptures of the New Testament. The Holy Spirit was also present in the world in the time of the Old Testament however. He has always been there, as the third person of the Divine Trinity.

The Holy Spirit was present at creation.

The Bible begins with the words:

- ***In the beginning** God created the heavens and the earth. Now the earth was formless and empty, darkness was over the surface of the deep, and the **Spirit of God** was hovering over the waters. (Genesis 1:1-2)*

The Spirit of God, the Holy Spirit, has been present in the world from the beginning. He was involved in the creation of heaven and earth.

The Holy Spirit is the link between heaven and earth.

The prophet Hanani told king Asa of Juda:

- *Were not the Cushites and Libyans a mighty army with great numbers of chariots and horsemen? Yet **when you relied on the LORD**, he delivered them into your hand. For **the eyes of the LORD** range throughout the earth **to strengthen** those whose hearts are fully committed to him. (2 Chronicles 16:8-9)*

The Holy Spirit can be discerned in 'the eyes of the Lord'.

He hovered over the waters from the beginning of creation and has been regarded since then as God's scout, who surveys the whole earth, right up to today.

It is important to realise that the Spirit of God strongly assists those who trust in God and whose hearts are fully focussed on Him.

Some people received the special operation of the Holy Spirit.

The Holy Spirit did not only support people strongly.

He also works in a special way in people whom God uses as instruments to transmit His Words to the people, or to fulfil a special task in this world.

Peter writes of the Old Testament prophets:

- *Above all, you must understand that no prophecy of Scripture came about by the prophet's own interpretation of things. For prophecy never had its origin in the human will, but prophets, though human, spoke from God as they were **carried along by the Holy Spirit**. (2 Peter 1:20-21)*

The people of Israel were often unfaithful to God because of their worship of foreign gods.

As a result they often came under the rule of foreign kings.

This is how they came to live under the rule of Cushan-Rishathaim, the king of Mesopotamia for a while.



- *But when they cried out to the LORD, he raised up for them a deliverer, Othniel son of Kenaz, Caleb's younger brother, who saved them. **The Spirit of the LORD** came on him, so that he became Israel's judge[j] and went to war. (Judges 3:9-10)*

A similar thing happened in Gideon's time:

- *Now all the Midianites, Amalekites and other eastern peoples joined forces and crossed over the Jordan and camped in the Valley of Jezreel. Then **the Spirit of the LORD came on Gideon**, and he blew a trumpet, summoning the Abiezrites to follow him. (Judges 6:33-34)*

Later:

- *... **the Spirit of the LORD came on Jephthah** ... (Judges 11:29)*

It is said of Samson:

- *He grew and the LORD blessed him, and **the Spirit of the LORD** began to stir him ... (Judges 13:24-25)*

We are told several times that the Holy Spirit came upon Samson powerfully. (Judges 14:6 - 14:19 - 15:14)

The prophet Samuel was to anoint Saul to be the king of Israel. He foretold a number of events that would confirm that his kingship was ordained by God Himself. Among other things, Samuel told Saul that he would meet a group of prophets:

- **The Spirit of the LORD** will come powerfully upon you ... and you will be changed into a **different person**. (1 Samuel 10:6)
- *When he and his servant arrived at Gibeah, a procession of prophets met him; **the Spirit of God came powerfully upon him**, and he joined in their prophesying. (1 Samuel 10:10)*

Something similar took place in the life of David, when Samuel anointed him to be the king of Israel:

- *... from that day on **the Spirit of the LORD came powerfully upon David**. (1 Samuel 16:13)*

King Josaphat was afraid to enter into battle and decided to consult the Lord.

He called a meeting of the people together:

- *Then **the Spirit of the LORD** came on Jahaziel ... He said: "Listen, King Jehoshaphat and all who live in Judah and Jerusalem! This is what the LORD says to you ... (2 Chronicles 20:14-15)*

Jahaziel was not a prophet, not even a priest, but a Levite who carried out humble tasks in the temple. He was used by God however, and God put the words in his mouth, through the operation of the Holy Spirit.

Jesus said in Luke 16:16¹ that John the Baptist was the last Old Testament prophet.

When the angel Gabriel announced John's birth to his father, he said of him:

¹ Luke 16:16 - The Law and the Prophets (this refers to the Old Testament in the Bible) were proclaimed until John. Since that time, the good news of the kingdom of God is being preached.



- *He will be great in the sight of the Lord. He is never to take wine or other fermented drink, and he will be filled with the Holy Spirit even before he is born. (Luke 1:15)*

The condition upon which the Holy Spirit is active.

This condition is stated in the text already referred to:

- *For the eyes of the LORD range throughout the earth to strengthen those **whose hearts (the seat of the soul) are fully committed to him.** (2 Chronicles 16:9)*

Man has a free will, which is always respected by God. God does not break into anyone's life. The Holy Spirit will also only be active in the life of a person whose heart is fully committed to God.

This is extremely important, for when someone's heart is not, or no longer, committed to God, the Holy Spirit will be unable to be active. He will then take a step backwards.

An example is king Saul, who went his own way at a certain point in time, and no longer trusted in God.

At that moment the prophet Samuel had to tell Saul on God's behalf:

- *Rebellion is like the sin of divination, and arrogance like the evil of idolatry. Because you have rejected the word of the LORD, he has rejected you as king. (1 Samuel 15:23)*

It is then stated in the following chapter:

- *Now the Spirit of the LORD had **departed** from Saul, ... (1 Samuel 16:14)*

The working of the Holy Spirit now.

The Holy Spirit was present in the world from the beginning of creation and He will be always there.

His presence in the Old Testament has been described in this study.

How the Holy Spirit was also present in the time of the New Testament is described in a separate study².

² Study: The Holy Spirit in the New Testament (1).