

## **Gifts of the Spirit - Old Testament Survey Summary**

We considered the question: what events, or prophecies, in the Old Testament either foreshadow or foretell God giving his Spirit, and spiritual gifts, to his people?

Old Testament texts considered:

Num 11:29; Deut 13:1-5; 18:20-22; 1 Sam 19:18-24; 2 Kings 2; 2 Kings 4:38-41; Prov 1:23; Is 11:1-2; Is 28:11; Is 32:15; Is 44:3; Ezek 36:25-27; Joel 2:28-29

1. The Bible begins with God in the garden with Adam and Eve. Sin disrupts that relationship. From then on, one of the great story-lines running through the Bible is that God will once again dwell with his people. This takes form first in the tabernacle and temple, then in the New Testament with Christ, and it culminates with the New Jerusalem and new heavens and new earth - when the dwelling place of God will be with men.

But within that great flow of Scripture, the Old Testament prophets repeatedly state God's promise (Is 32:15, 44:3; Ezek 36:25-27; Joel 2:28-29) that God will pour out his Spirit on all flesh.

At Pentecost Peter specifically quotes Joel 2, saying 'this is that' (Acts 2:16). His use of 'last days' (Acts 2:17) in place of 'after this' (Joel 2:28) suggests that, while Pentecost is a unique event, the last days (from Jesus' resurrection to his return) will be marked by the Spirit being poured out on all flesh.

2. The gift of the Spirit will bring about new hearts (Ezek 36:25-27), and enable God's people to understand and obey God's word (Prov 1:23; Ezek 36:27).

3. There is limited mention in the OT of 'spiritual' gifts associated with the giving of the Spirit. However, the gift we do see clearly hoped for (Moses: Num 11:29), experienced (1 Sam 19:18-24; 2 Kings 2; 2 Kings 4:38-41), and prophesied (Joel 2:28), is prophesying.

It is not clear what the content of the prophesying in the time of Moses and the elders or the school of the prophets was. However, prophets and prophecy were to be judged (Deut 18:20-22; Deut 13:1-5). This tells us that someone can claim to be speaking for God, and they are not. It also tells us that there appears to be a category of 'prophecy' that's not written down as Scripture, and that does not have the authority of Scripture.

Of interest, when we get to the New Testament this emphasis on prophecy is maintained:

- we are warned repeatedly against false prophets;
- we are called to weigh and test prophecy and prophets
- In 1 Cor 14:1 Paul writes, 'Pursue love, and earnestly desire the spiritual gifts, especially that you may prophesy.' Whatever else Paul has in mind, it's likely he says this because he's soaked in Old Testament texts - not least Moses' desire that all the Lord's people would prophesy.

4. The Old Testament links wisdom to the giving of the Spirit (Prov 1:23; and shown supremely in the Greater Son of David - Is 11:1-2). In the New Testament, Christ is revealed as the fulfilment of wisdom (1 Cor 1:24, 30), the Holy Spirit is his Spirit (Rom 8:11; 1 Pet 1:11) and wisdom is a gift of the Spirit (1 Cor 12:8).