

MAT221 THE HOLY SPIRIT IN THE OLD TESTAMENT

INTRODUCTION

This course will cover the work of the Holy Spirit in the Old Testament. The class is taught in 8 lessons. This course is not a definitive end to the study of the Holy Spirit. It is impossible to know the full efforts of the Holy Spirit in this life. The only time we will be able to know the complete work of the Holy Spirit is after Jesus comes back again. Until then, the Spirit continues to work and reveal God's will to us.

The purpose of this course is to define the work of the Holy Spirit in the Old Testament. A sub point would be the question, "Are there any differences between the work of the Holy Spirit in the Old and New Testaments? If there are differences, to what degree?" When we talk or think about the differences of the work of the Holy Spirit in the Old and New Testaments, I feel some hesitancy to actually voice such ideas because in my mind there is the idea that people will think I am teaching a different Holy Spirit in the Old Testament. Perhaps they think that "I believe that the Holy Spirit" is not as powerful or interested in human events as the Holy Spirit in the New Testament. Since we believe that the Holy Spirit is the third person of the godhead, I do not believe that there is any difference between the Spirit of the Old Testament and the Spirit of the New Testament. The differences seem more to be in the manner and in the frequency of his work.

People have avoided serious study of the Holy Spirit in the Old Testament. It is understandable that often the work of the Holy Spirit in the Old Testament has not been stated very clearly. Unfortunately, people have thought that the work of the Holy Spirit is unimportant or at least not worthy to be scarcely mentioned. Many people may agree with Welker who says, "The Holy Spirit has traditionally been the "shy" or "silent" member of the Trinity and therefore more or less absent or marginalized in the history of Christian thought is also applicable to the theology and science dialogue that has occurred over the last few generations." With this so-called silence, it would seem that the Old Testament people would have difficulty understanding the work of the Holy Spirit in forming the character of a person, restraining sin, regeneration, sealing and sanctification. This is not an entirely correct perception, and we will understand more of this as we study.

As it was mentioned in the preface, it has been my experience that people have looked upon the work of the Holy Spirit in the Old Testament as not as important as his work in the New Testament. This idea is more of an unspoken impression or thought rather than outright statements. If this idea were spoken or written about directly, I am sure there would be immediate repercussions from the conservative realm.

From the start we need to understand that the frequency or infrequency of references to the Holy Spirit in the Old Testament does not make the doctrine of the Holy Spirit any less important. For example, the Spirit is mentioned in Numbers but not in Leviticus, in Judges not in Joshua, Nehemiah not in Ezra or half of the Minor Prophets. We need to understand that the presence or absence of the Holy Spirit mentioned in a book does not affect its inspiration.

As opposed to some who think contrarily, the Holy Spirit worked in the Old Testament, and he is a real person. There is a lot of information about the Holy Spirit in the New Testament, and we cannot avoid all references to the Holy Spirit in the New Testament. In the normal course of human events when we meet a person, we want to know who he is, where he came from, his relationships with known entities, and with other people. It is not proper to walk unannounced into a court room when the court is in session. Serious consequences will occur if a person thinks he can run into a presidential palace without first being introduced in the proper way. It is the same way with the Holy Spirit. Before we can talk about him, we need to tell you who he is. We need to describe to you his person and work in the world so you can appreciate him a lot more. You need to understand his authoritative role so that you will listen to what he says and understand the consequences of disobedience.

We need to state that this course is not a definitive end to the study of the Holy Spirit. Walvoord states, "The doctrine of the Holy Spirit is not complete until viewed as a whole from eternity to eternity." and "It is fundamental to any doctrine that it be related to the sovereign purpose of God." It is impossible to know the full efforts of the Holy Spirit in this life. The only time we will be able to know the complete work of the Holy Spirit is after Jesus comes back again. Until then the Spirit continues to work and reveal God's will to us. Walvoord's statement brings up several ideas that are not within the purpose of this course but would be interesting topics to pursue. John says, "Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is" (3:2). John says, "We shall be like him" but at the same time we are not God. Eternity has no end and so the question is, "Will we ever know the full work of the Holy Spirit?" Does, "We shall be like him," mean that we will have the same knowledge as Jesus?

Learn more by purchasing the entire course that covers the following topics:

Lesson One – The use of the word "Spirit"

Lesson Two – The General Work of the Holy Spirit

Lesson Three – The Holy Spirit as a Person

Lesson Four – Deity of the Holy Spirit

Lesson Five – Inspiration of Scripture in the Old Testament

Lesson Six – The Holy Spirit's use of Non-Prophets

Lesson Seven – The Holy Spirit and the Prophets

Lesson Eight – The Longevity of the Holy Spirit working in People Biography

Appendix A: Suggested Additional Topics

Appendix B: word spirit in the Old Testament