

1. The Spirit and the Hebrew Theocracy

The Jewish Dispensation began with the forming of the Hebrew theocracy under Moses, and terminated with the death of Christ on the Cross. By His death, that is, by the shedding of His blood, the Messiah at one and the same time abrogated the Old Covenant and ratified the New (Col. 2:13-15; Heb. 8:1-13, 9:1-28).

The covenant relationship established by God with Abraham "and his seed after him" was enlarged into a national covenant at Sinai, under Moses, with a national altar, sacrifice, and high priest. And in this manner, from the individual (Enoch, Noah, etc.) the Spirit's work passed over into the family, and thence into the nation. "Thus Israel," writes Kuyper, "receives his being. It was Israel, *i.e.*, not one of the nations, but a people newly created, added to the nations, received among their number, perpetually distinct from all other nations in origin and significance. And this people is also born of faith. . . . Thus the work of the Spirit passes through these three stages: Abel, Abraham, Moses: the individual, the family, the nation. In each of these three the work of the Holy Spirit is visible, inasmuch as everything is wrought by faith. Is not faith wrought by the Holy Spirit? Very well; by faith Abel obtained witness; by faith Abraham received the son of the promise; and by faith Israel passed through the Red sea."¹

Now the government of the Hebrew nation, formed under Moses, is best described as a theocracy; that is, a government recognizing the immediate sovereignty of God. This was the character of Israel's government especially from Moses to Solomon, although thereafter its theocratic character was often ignored or wholly lost sight of at intervals under apostate and dissolute kings. (Similarly, under the New Covenant, the Church is a theocracy, under the absolute rule of Christ its Divine Head, and subject to the Word of Christ, as revealed in the New Testament, as its all-sufficient Discipline or Rule of faith and practice.)

1. Abraham Kuyper, *The Work of the Holy Spirit*, trans. by Henri de Vries, 67.

To what extent did the Holy Spirit take part in the formation of the Hebrew theocracy? Various passages from the Old Testament indicate that He played an important part.

Moses was God's chosen leader for this stupendous task of delivering Israel out of Egyptian bondage, leading the procession on those perilous marches through the Wilderness, and organizing the rabble that crossed the Red Sea into a well-disciplined and well-governed nation.

[Some ten centuries after the Exodus, a group of Levites who had returned from the Captivity and had taken part in the rebuilding of Jerusalem's walls under the leadership of Nehemiah, in a public confession of the nation's sins couched in the form of a prayer to Jehovah, rehearsed the incidents of their forefathers' deliverance from Egyptian bondage. Among other things they said this]: And thou sawest the affliction of our fathers in Egypt, and hearest their cry by the Red Sea, and showedst signs and wonders upon Pharaoh, and on all his servants, and on all the people of his land. . . . And didst divide the sea before them, so that they went through the midst of the sea on dry land, and their pursuers thou didst cast into the depths, as a stone into the mighty waters. Moreover, in a pillar of cloud thou leddest them by day; and in a pillar of fire by night, to give them light in the way wherein they should go. Thou camest down also upon Mount Sinai, and spakest with them from heaven, and gavest them right ordinances and true laws, good statutes and commandments, and madest known unto them thy holy sabbath, and commandest them commandments, and statutes, and a law, by Moses thy servant. . . . *Thou gavest also thy good Spirit to instruct them, and withheldest not thy manna from their mouth, and gavest them water for their thirst. . . . Yet they dealt proudly, and hearkened not unto thy commandments, but sinned against thine ordinances. . . . Yet many years didst thou bear with them, and testifiedst against them by thy Spirit through the prophets: yet they would not give ear: therefore gavest thou them into the hand of the peoples of the lands* [Neh. 9:9-30]. [In this passage, the connection of the "good Spirit" of God with the laws, statutes and commandments handed down through Moses is made quite clear]. [In similar vein, Isaiah says retrospectively, speaking of the Spirit's dealings with the nation of Israel]: *But they rebelled, and grieved his holy Spirit: therefore he [i.e., Jehovah] was turned to be their enemy, and himself fought against them. Then he remembered the days of old, Moses and his people, saying, Where is he that brought them up out of the sea with the shepherds of his flock? where is he that put his holy Spirit in the midst of them? that caused his glorious arm to go at the right hand of Moses? that divided the waters before them, to make himself an everlasting name? that led them through the depths, as a horse in the wilderness, so that they stumbled not? As the cattle that go down into the valley, the Spirit of Jehovah caused them to rest: so didst thou lead thy people, to make thyself a glorious name* [Isa. 63:10-15]. [Here the prophet speaks in glowing terms of the leadership given the children of Israel by the 'holy Spirit' of Jehovah *in the midst of them* in early times, and with corresponding severity of the nation's unbelief and rebelliousness in later times.] [Cf. the words

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of Stephen to the infuriated mob about to stone him to death]; Ye stiffnecked and uncircumcised in heart and ears, ye do always resist the Holy Spirit; as your fathers did, so do ye. Which of the prophets did not your fathers persecute? and they killed them that showed before of the coming of the Righteous One; of whom ye have now become betrayers and murderers; ye who received the law as it was ordained by angels, and kept it not [Acts 7:51-53].

Moses was specifically qualified by the Spirit of God for what was probably the greatest task that ever confronted any leader in ancient times. And when Jehovah, in order to relieve Moses of some of the burdens imposed upon him by the duties of his office, associated seventy elders with him in an executive capacity, He said: "I will take of the Spirit which is upon thee, and will put it upon them; and they shall bear the burden of the people with thee, that thou bear it not thyself alone" (Num. 11:17). Moses then selected seventy men, gathered them together, and "set them round about the Tent." And Jehovah came down in the cloud, we are told, and "took of the Spirit that was upon him [Moses], and put it upon the seventy elders; and it came to pass that, when the Spirit rested upon them, they prophesied, but they did so no more" (Num. 11:25). Continuing, we read: "But there remained two men in the camp, the name of one was Eldad, and the name of the other Medad: and the Spirit rested upon them; and they were of them that were written, but had not gone out unto the Tent; and they prophesied in the camp" (Num. 11:26). When this was reported to Moses, Joshua, the son of Nun, asked him to forbid these two men to prophesy, but Moses replied: "Art thou jealous for my sake? would that all Jehovah's people were prophets, that Jehovah would put his Spirit upon them!" (Num. 11:26-30). These words of Moses reveal one important truth that we should constantly keep in mind in studying the Spirit's dealings with the Hebrew nation, namely, *that the Spirit did not dwell in the people generally, but only in their chosen leaders, and even in them only at times when some definite religious purpose was to be achieved by His presence.* (Cf. John 7:37-39.)

This "taking of the Spirit that was upon Moses" and "putting it upon" the seventy elders evidently describes a transfer of the Spirit's powers and influences. It means that the elders were endowed with certain extraordinary qualifications which Moses himself possessed. One of these "gifts" of course was that of prophecy. Moreover the visible symbol

or sign of the transfer of inward spiritual powers was the laying on of the hands of the person authorized to impart them. This was the manner in which the Spirit's powers were conferred upon Joshua later. Num. 27:18-23: "And Jehovah said unto Moses, Take thee Joshua the son of Nun, a man in whom is the Spirit, and lay thy hand upon him; and set him before Eleazar the priest, and before all the congregation; and give him a charge in their sight. . . . And Moses did as Jehovah commanded him; and he took Joshua, and set him before Eleazar the priest, and before all the congregation; and he laid his hands upon him, and gave him a charge, as Jehovah spake by Moses." Cf. Deut. 34:9—"And Joshua the son of Nun was full of the spirit of wisdom; for Moses had laid his hands upon him; and the children of Israel hearkened unto him, and did as Jehovah commanded Moses." As this was the manner in which the powers of the Spirit were officially conferred upon Joshua, we infer that the same procedure was followed in the qualifying of the seventy elders. This laying on of the hands of a Spirit-filled man was the outward indication of the inward transfer of the Spirit's powers, not only in primitive times but in apostolic times as well.

What part did the Holy Spirit take in the giving of the Law?

We read in Exodus 31:18 that Jehovah "gave unto Moses, when he had made an end of communing with him upon Mount Sinai, the two tables of the testimony, tables of stone, written with *the finger of God.*" In chapter 32, verse 16, we read that "the tables were the work of God, and the writing was the writing of God, graven upon the tables." In Deut. 9:10, Moses himself says that the words of the Decalogue were written upon the tables of stone "with the finger of God." Now the term, "finger of God," is used throughout the Scriptures to indicate the power, or an operation of the power, of God. Pharaoh's magicians, for instance, discerned the power of God in the miracles performed by Moses, and exclaimed, "This is the finger of God" (Exo. 8:19). Again, on one occasion Jesus said to the Pharisees, "But if I by the Spirit of God cast out demons, then is the kingdom of God come upon you" (Matt. 12:28). Luke, however, in giving this statement, uses the phrase, "finger of God," instead of "Spirit of God." He gives it: "But if I by the finger of God cast out demons, then

is the kingdom of God come upon you" (Luke 11:20). I conclude, therefore, that the expression "finger of God" is a metaphor used by the inspired writers to describe an operation of the Spirit of God. If this be true the entire Decalogue was revealed and transcribed through the power and inspiration of the Spirit; and, as an operation of this nature is wrought through the instrumentality of an inspired man, we must conclude that Moses, under the inspiration of the Spirit, actually carved the letters of the Decalogue on the tables of stone. This conclusion is in harmony with Exodus 34:27-28, which reads: "And Jehovah said unto Moses, Write thou these words: for after the tenor of these words I have made a covenant with thee and with Israel. And he was there with Jehovah forty days and forty nights; he did neither eat bread, nor drink water; and he wrote upon the tables the words of the covenant, the ten commandments." As inspiration is a divine work wrought only by the Spirit of God, it follows that the Spirit must have revealed to Moses the actual words of the Decalogue, who in turn inscribed them upon the tables of the testimony.

Again, we are told that Moses was enjoined to construct the Tabernacle according to the divine pattern that was given him in the holy mount (Exo. 25:9).

[In order to make certain, however, that the furnishings of the Tabernacle should be of the very best workmanship, Bezalel, the son of Uri, of the tribe of Judah, was filled with the Spirit of God and thus endowed with extraordinary artistic talent for this purpose.] [Exo. 31:1-5]: And Jehovah spake unto Moses, saying, See, I have called by name Bezalel the son of Uri, the son of Hur, of the tribe of Judah: and I have filled him with the Spirit of God, in wisdom, and in understanding, and in knowledge, and in all manner of workmanship, to devise skilful works, to work in gold, and in silver, and in brass, and in cutting of stones for setting, and in carving of wood, to work in all manner of workmanship. [Similar endowments were also conferred upon Oholiab of the tribe of Dan, and upon other unnamed persons, it would seem, who participated in the construction of the Tabernacle.] [Exo. 31:6ff.]: And I, behold, I have appointed with him [Bezalel] Oholiab, the son of Ahisamach, of the tribe of Dan: and in the hearts of all that are wise-hearted I have put wisdom, that they may make all that I have commanded thee: the tent of meeting, and the ark of the testimony, and the mercy-seat that is thereupon, and all the furniture of the tent, etc. [Exo. 35:30-35]: And Moses said unto the children of Israel, See, Jehovah hath called by name Bezalel the son of Uri, the son of Hur, of the tribe of Judah; and he hath filled him with the Spirit of God, in wisdom, in understanding, and in knowledge, and in all manner of workmanship. . . . And he hath put in his heart that he may teach, both he, and Oholiab, the son of

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Ahisamach, of the tribe of Dan. Them hath he filled with wisdom of heart, to work all manner of workmanship, of the engraver, and of the skilful workman, and of the embroiderer, in blue, and in purple, and in scarlet, and in fine linen, and of the weaver, even of them that do any workmanship, and of those that devise skilful works. [Thus did Jehovah make sure that His Sanctuary would be adorned with the most exquisite workmanship.] [Incidentally, the Tabernacle was intended to be typical, in many of its details, of the Church of Christ; therefore, in order that no error might enter into their design from human sources, both institutions were set up under the direct supervision of the Spirit of God.]

Again, we find that just before his death, Moses himself gave utterance to a remarkable prophecy, a prophecy that was clearly Messianic in character.

[Speaking to the assembled people, he said] Jehovah thy God will raise up unto thee a prophet from the midst of thee, of thy brethren, like unto me; unto him shall ye hearken. . . . And Jehovah said unto me, They have well said that which they have spoken. I will raise them up a prophet from among their brethren, like unto thee; and I will put my words in his mouth, and he shall speak unto them all that I shall command him, And it shall come to pass, that whosoever will not hearken unto my words which he shall speak in my name, I will require it of him [Deut. 18:15-19]. [In Acts 3:22-23, Peter quotes this prophecy as evidence to support his argument that Jesus is the long-awaited Messiah] whom the heaven must receive unto the times of restoration of all things, whereof God spake by the mouth of his holy prophets that have been from of old [v. 21]. This prophecy of Moses had become traditional among both Jews and Samaritans in the course of time. Hence the woman of Sychar, in conversation with Jesus at Jacob's well, said to him: "Sir, I perceive that thou art a prophet" (John 4:19); and in like manner many of those who heard Jesus are said to have exclaimed, "This is of a truth the prophet that cometh into the world" (John 6:14). What prophet? The Prophet whose coming was foretold by Moses just before the latter's death. Referring again to the words of Peter. "For no prophecy ever came by the will of man; but men spake from God, being moved by the Holy Spirit" (2 Pet. 1:21), it follows that Moses gave utterance to this prophecy by inspiration of the Spirit. Prophecy, in fact, in its double sense of *revelation* and *prediction*, is an unfailing evidence of the presence of the Spirit wherever it occurs in the Bible record.

From these various Scriptures we conclude that Moses, in performing mighty works and wonders and signs in Egypt, in the march from Egypt to the Land of Promise, in the receiving of the Law, in the ordination of the seventy elders, in the construction of the Tabernacle and in the setting up of the Levitical Priesthood—in fact in everything done by him in carrying out the commands of God, he was inspired and guided by the Spirit. The Holy Spirit of God was in the

midst of the children of Israel, giving them instruction, guidance and blessing, through Moses and the divinely-ordained leaders who were associated with him.

In like manner, as we have noted already, when Joshua was ordained as Moses' successor, the Spirit's powers and endowments were transferred to him, to qualify him for the task of leading the children of Israel across the Jordan into the Promised Land. "And Jehovah said unto Moses, Take thee Joshua the son of Nun, a man in whom is the Spirit, and lay thy hand upon him. . . . And Moses did as Jehovah commanded him; and he took Joshua, and set him before Eleazar the priest, and before all the congregation; and he laid his hands upon him, and gave him a charge, as Jehovah spake by Moses" (Num. 27:18-23). "And Joshua the son of Nun was full of the spirit of wisdom; for Moses had laid his hands upon him; and the children of Israel hearkened unto him, and did as Jehovah commanded Moses" (Deut. 34:9).

2. The Spirit and the Judges

We come now to the biographies of those men who figured as the leaders of Israel in the period following the conquest of Canaan under Joshua's leadership. They are commonly designated the Judges. In reality they were *dictators*, especially chosen and specially qualified, who acted both as civil magistrates and as military leaders. The Spirit of God is mentioned frequently in connection with their varied activities. He is said to have "come upon" some of them to endow them with *wisdom*, i.e., with legal acumen, with statesmanship, and with power to enthuse the people; upon others, to endow them with extraordinary *physical strength*; and upon still others to qualify them for *military leadership*. In various ways the Spirit of God qualified these men for their *official* functions and duties, and through them He preserved His testimony throughout the "Dark Ages" of Israel's history.

[Judg. 3:9, 10]: And when the children of Israel cried unto Jehovah, Jehovah raised up a savior to the children of Israel, who saved them, even Othniel the son of Kenaz, Caleb's younger brother. And the Spirit of Jehovah came upon him, and he judged Israel. [Judg. 6:34]: But the Spirit of Jehovah came upon Gideon; and he blew a trumpet and Abiezer was gathered together after him [Judg 11:29]: Then the Spirit of Jehovah came upon Jephthah, and he passed over Gilead and Manasseh, and from Mizpeh of Gilead he passed over unto the children of Ammon.