



### LESSON 18

## SPIRIT VS SPIRITISM Part 1

### Introduction

**C**losely aligned with the pagan doctrines of the "immortal soul" and "hell-fire" is the erroneous belief in the existence of wicked supernatural spirit-beings called "ghosts," "demons" and "devils" who supposedly have their abode in the fires of hell where they torment the souls of the wicked dead. According to this mythical superstitious theory, these invisible "spirit beings" can also possess people living on the earth, tormenting them and causing them to behave in sinful, wicked ways.

Just as the immortal soul and hell-fire doctrines are products of pagan mysticism, so is the doctrine of spiritism: the belief in a so-called "spirit world or realm" filled with diabolical immaterial "spirit beings." Communication with the "spirits" of departed souls is also part of this perverse concept. Such superstitious beliefs have been an integral part of all pagan religions. They have invaded the halls of Christendom as well. In fact, for centuries the churches have used the doctrine of "spiritism," along with their perverted "hell-fire," to control their members through fear and intimidation.

Spiritism has no place in God's Word and is totally contrary to what the Scriptures teach. Before we can deal with the use of the terms "ghosts," "demons" and "devils" in the Scriptures, we must first understand the meaning and use of the word "spirit" as found in the Bible and see how it differs from "spiritism." Beginning with this lesson, we will see how modern definitions and usage have corrupted the original intent of "spirit" by making it "a being" and calling it by various names: "ghost," "demon" and "devil." This corruption in meaning has misled millions of Christians into thinking that "spirits" are invisible supernatural "beings" (purely a pagan concept).

"The wicked flee  
when no man  
pursueth..."  
(Proverbs 28:1)



## SPIRIT – OLD TESTAMENT USAGE

In the King James version of the New Scriptures, the word "spirit(s)" is translated primarily from the Hebrew word "**ruwach**" (# 7307 in *Strong's Concordance*), which literally means "breath" (air in motion) and refers to power or force which animates (causes motion) – i.e. motivates a thing to action. Spirit, then, is that which compels action and generates movement; it gives life to otherwise inanimate objects.

Spirit is not the object itself. Rather, it is the reason (motive) which impels into action. Thus, spirit is not "a being." It is that which causes a being to act. Therefore, the term "spirit-being" is a misnomer. You will recall, from our study of "soul," that the animating force that gives life to a soul (a being) was called "spirit." (lesson 13).

### FIND THE ANSWERS

1. According to Genesis 1:2, the **spirit (ruwach)** of God \_\_\_\_\_ upon the face of the waters.

**Read Judges 13:24-25**

2. According to verse 25, the **spirit (ruwach)** of the LORD began to \_\_\_\_\_ Samson at times.

The passages above perfectly illustrate the principle of spirit motivating or causing action. God was motivated to create the universe and everything in it. God also moved or motivated Samson to act. Certainly no so-called invisible "spirit being" invaded Samson's body and took control of him.

## God Motivates Men

The examples below show how men are motivated or moved by God into action. When the "spirit of God" (the disposition to do something for God) comes upon a person, it causes that individual to act in a particular manner. It does **not** mean that God puts an "invisible being" inside the person that then takes control over him.

### FIND THE ANSWERS

**Read Judges 3:7-11**

3. According to verse 10, the **spirit (ruwach)** of the LORD came upon Othniel and he \_\_\_\_\_ Israel and went out to \_\_\_\_\_.

**Read 2 Chronicles 15:1-2**

4. Verse 1 states, "And the \_\_\_\_\_ of God came upon Azariah ..."
5. Verse 2 explains that Azariah then went out to \_\_\_\_\_ Asa and spoke to him.
6. 2 Chronicles 24:20 indicates that the **spirit (ruwach)** of God came upon \_\_\_\_\_ and caused him to \_\_\_\_\_ unto the people.

## Spirit = Disposition

Biblically speaking, "spirit" is animating influence. The terms "a spirit" or "the spirit" refer to a desire, feeling, attitude or disposition which compels a person to move – to act. Spirit is that which spurs one into action. It is thought, or one's mental disposition.

The examples below illustrate different kinds of spirits or mental dispositions. These are mental influences or attitudes that motivate people into action. They are **not** some so-called "immaterial beings" living inside people.

### **FIND THE ANSWERS**

1. In Exodus 28:3 God refers to those He had filled with the **spirit** of \_\_\_\_\_ .
2. Numbers 5:14 addresses the **spirit** of \_\_\_\_\_ that comes upon a husband.
3. Isaiah 11:2 speaks of the **spirit** of wisdom and \_\_\_\_\_ , the **spirit** of \_\_\_\_\_ and might, and the **spirit** of knowledge and of the \_\_\_\_\_ of the LORD.

## Spirit = Courage

### **FIND THE ANSWERS**

#### **Read Joshua 2:1-11**

4. In verse 11 Rahab tells the spies, "And as soon as we had heard these things, our hearts did melt, neither did there remain any more \_\_\_\_\_ in any man ..."
5. The above answer is translated from what Hebrew word? \_\_\_\_\_

Rahab was obviously not describing some so-called invisible "spirit beings" leaving men. She was simply explaining how men lost their disposition or inclination toward courage and were overcome with fear.

## Spirit = Anger

### **FIND THE ANSWERS**

#### **Read Judges 8:1-3**

6. After Gideon spoke to the men of Ephraim who were chiding him, verse 3 indicates that their \_\_\_\_\_ was abated toward him.

In the preceding example, the word "anger" is translated from the Hebrew word "ruwach" – spirit. These men were motivated with feelings of anger – i.e. they were influenced by a spirit of anger toward Gideon. Later, their angry disposition subsided.

### Spirit of Sadness

#### **FIND THE ANSWERS**

**Read 1 Kings 21:1-6**

1. After Naboth refused King Ahab's request, verse 4 indicates Ahab was heavy and \_\_\_\_\_.
2. In verse 5 Jezebel asked Ahab why his **spirit** was so \_\_\_\_\_.

The verses above describe Ahab's mental disposition or state of mind due to his not getting what he desired. He was **not** possessed by some so-called "spirit-being." He was merely experiencing sadness.

### Spirit of Anguish

#### **FIND THE ANSWERS**

**Read Job 7**

3. Job complains in verse 11, "Therefore I will not refrain my mouth; I will speak in the \_\_\_\_\_ of my **spirit**; I will complain in the \_\_\_\_\_ of my soul."

Here Job is describing his mental disposition (spirit of anguish and bitterness) which caused or motivated him to complain about his deplorable condition. He is **not** talking about some so-called invisible "beings" possessing his body.

### Godly Spirit

#### **FIND THE ANSWERS**

4. Psalms 32:2 states, "Blessed is the man unto whom the LORD imputeth not iniquity, and in whose **spirit** there is no \_\_\_\_\_."

## FIND THE ANSWERS

1. Psalms 34:18 declares, "The LORD is nigh unto them that are of a \_\_\_\_\_ heart; and saveth such as be of a \_\_\_\_\_ **spirit**."

### Read Psalms 51

2. In verse 10 the psalmist prays, "Create in me a \_\_\_\_\_ heart, O God; and renew a \_\_\_\_\_ **spirit** within me."
3. Verse 11 continues, "Cast me not away from thy presence; and take not thy \_\_\_\_\_ **spirit** from me."
4. Verse 12 asks to be upheld by God's \_\_\_\_\_ **spirit**.

These passages in Psalms are obviously a petition for godly disposition – i.e. a godly state of mind – that would lead one to live a Christian life of obedience and praise to God. They are **not** a request to be inhabited by so-called "spirit beings."

## Spirit of Faithfulness

## FIND THE ANSWERS

5. Proverbs 11:13 states, "A talebearer revealeth secrets: but he that is of a \_\_\_\_\_ **spirit** concealeth the matter."

This passage contrasts two opposing dispositions or attitudes: one of faithfulness and the other of betrayal. The one influence causes one to reveal what should not be disclosed while the other moves one to withhold disclosure. These are **not** two so-called "spirit beings."

## Spirit of Haughtiness vs Spirit of Humbleness

## FIND THE ANSWERS

### Read Proverbs 16:18-19

6. Verse 18 states, "\_\_\_\_\_ goeth before destruction, and a \_\_\_\_\_ **spirit** before a fall."
7. Verse 19 says, "Better it is to be of an \_\_\_\_\_ **spirit** with the lowly, than to divide the spoil with the \_\_\_\_\_."

In the preceding verses a prideful disposition or attitude is contrasted with one of humility. These opposite dispositions, or "spirits," produce different types of behavior. Again, so-called "spirit-entities" are not the subject of these verses.

### Spirit To Be Controlled

#### **FIND THE ANSWERS**

1. Proverbs 16:32 declares, "He that is slow to anger is better than the mighty; and he that \_\_\_\_\_ his spirit than he that taketh a city."

It is obvious from this verse that a spirit is a disposition – that which disposes one toward an action. If we can control our dispositions, then we can control ourselves. If we cannot control them, we are headed for trouble because we are going to be moved (motivated) to do destructive things.

### Spirit of Blindness

#### **FIND THE ANSWERS**

**Read Isaiah 29:9-14**

2. Speaking of spiritual blindness, verse 10 states that the LORD poured out upon Israel the spirit of deep \_\_\_\_\_ and had closed her \_\_\_\_\_.

The above passage accurately describes the state or disposition of the majority of Israel today. Most are blinded to the wisdom and truth of the Scriptures – they lack the motivation to search out the truth of God's Word and do not understand it. Such is the state of those who believe in "wicked supernatural spirit beings." They actually live in fear of these imagined mythical creatures.

### Holy Spirit

#### **FIND THE ANSWERS**

3. Psalms 51:11 is a prayer that God would not take away His \_\_\_\_\_ spirit.

Due to their misguided belief in spiritism, many Christians have an incorrect concept of the term "holy spirit." Many believe "the Holy Spirit" is a supernatural being – a part of what they call the "Godhead." (It is even capitalized as a proper name in most Bibles.) However, this idea is contrary to what we have seen concerning the meaning of spirit. Since spirit is disposition or motivation, the term "holy spirit" refers to a disposition or attitude of holiness – i.e. godly motivation. One who has holy spirit has godly motives and is disposed to act accordingly.

## Evil Spirit

To those oriented toward the pagan belief in wicked supernatural "spirit-beings," the term "evil spirit(s)" automatically conjures up images of various mythical creatures. However, the Biblical use of this term means something quite different.

### FIND THE ANSWERS

#### Read Judges 9:22-24

1. According to verse 23, God sent an \_\_\_\_\_ **spirit** between Abimelech and the men of Shechem which caused them to deal \_\_\_\_\_ with him.

From our understanding of the correct meaning of "spirit," we can conclude from the passage above that God caused the men of Shechem to have an evil, vindictive disposition toward Abimelech, which moved them toward treacherous behavior. Some so-called wicked supernatural "beings" did **not** invade these men. That pagan idea is erroneously read into passages like this. It is interesting that it was God who sent the evil spirit (motivation).

### FIND THE ANSWERS

#### Read 1 Samuel 16:14-23

2. Verse 14 states that the **spirit** of the LORD \_\_\_\_\_ from Saul, and an \_\_\_\_\_ **spirit** from the LORD troubled him.
3. Verse 23 indicates that when David played the harp, Saul was \_\_\_\_\_ and was \_\_\_\_\_ and the evil spirit departed from him.

Those who are prone toward a belief in wicked "spirit beings" may think this passage proves that Saul was possessed by such a creature and that David was able to cast it out. However, applying the correct meaning to the word "spirit" produces a different understanding. God replaced the peaceful, godly disposition in Saul with a troubled one that caused him to seek relief, which came in the form of David's music. David's soothing music refreshed Saul, bringing an end to his agitated state of mind. In this manner God brought Saul and David together. It is again interesting that the evil spirit was from God.

### FIND THE ANSWERS

#### Read 1 Samuel 18:6-16

4. Verse 8 indicates that Saul was very \_\_\_\_\_ and that what he heard \_\_\_\_\_ him.
5. According to verse 10, the next day the \_\_\_\_\_ spirit from God came upon Saul.
6. What does verse 11 say Saul tried to do to David? \_\_\_\_\_

In the preceding passage we see another example of the effect of spirit. Saul's evil disposition moved him to try to kill David. No so-called invisible wicked "being" came into Saul's body as some may like to think. Note again that the evil inclination came from God.

## Unclean Spirit

### FIND THE ANSWERS

#### Read Zechariah 13:1-5

1. Verse 1 states, "In that day there shall be a fountain opened to the house of David and to the inhabitants of Jerusalem for \_\_\_\_\_ and for \_\_\_\_\_."
2. According to verse 2, God will cut off the names of the \_\_\_\_\_ out of the land and will cause the \_\_\_\_\_ and the \_\_\_\_\_ **spirit** to pass out of the land.

Few serious Bible students would claim that this prophecy speaks of God chasing some kind of "wicked supernatural being" out of the land. Israel had an unclean spirit – i.e. a bad disposition of rebellion against God. By purging their unclean attitude, God was going to change Israel's spirit. He was going to cause them to reconsider His ways and prefer God's ways rather than their own.

## Familiar Spirits

The unfortunate term "familiar spirit(s)," used a number of times by the King James translators, has contributed to the misguided belief in spiritism.

### FIND THE ANSWERS

3. Leviticus 19:31 states, "Regard not them that have \_\_\_\_\_ spirits, neither seek after \_\_\_\_\_, to be defiled by them: I am the LORD your God."
4. Leviticus 20:6 states, "And the soul that turneth after such as have familiar spirits, and after wizards, to go a \_\_\_\_\_ after them, I will even set my face against that soul, and will \_\_\_\_\_ him off from among his people."
5. According to Leviticus 20:27, what is to happen to any person having a familiar spirit or who is a wizard? \_\_\_\_\_

"Familiar spirits" and "wizards" were associated with the heathen practice of magic and divination. The modern term for such individuals is "a medium." God forbade such evil practice because it was idolatrous and turned people away from Him. The seriousness of His warning is expressed by the required penalty for violation: death by stoning.

### Wizard

The word "wizard" is translated from a Hebrew word (# 3049 in *Strong's Concordance*) meaning "a knowing one; specifically a conjurer." A conjurer is one who practices magic. *Gesenius' Hebrew-Chaldee Lexicon* states that this Hebrew word is always used in a bad sense of false prophets. It also adds the following: "a spirit of divination, a spirit of python with which the soothsayer was believed to be in communication." In Greek mythology "Python" was a dragon or serpent that was the tutelary demon of the oracular cult at Delphi until killed and expropriated by Apollo.

### Familiar Spirit

The words "familiar spirit(s)" are translated from the single Hebrew word "owb" (# 178 in *Strong's Concordance*) which defines it as "a necromancer (ventriloquist)." *Gesenius' Hebrew-Chaldee Lexicon* defines this word as a "soothsayer, who evokes the manes [spirits] of the dead by the power of incantations and magical songs, to give answers as to future or doubtful things." Magic (trickery and deception) was the mark of their trade. Because the belief in "spirits of deceased persons" and the practice of calling them up were heathen, God specifically forbade Israel from associating with such pagan practices.

Wizards and those with "familiar spirits" were **not** possessed with so-called invisible "supernatural beings." Neither did they communicate with any such creatures. They were cunning individuals who used trickery and deception (magic) to delude superstitious people who believed in spiritism. This same thing still occurs today.

### **FIND THE ANSWERS**

#### **Read Deuteronomy 18:9-14**

1. In verse 9 God told Israel that He did not want her to learn to do after the \_\_\_\_\_ of the nations He gave her to possess.
2. Verse 11 includes a \_\_\_\_\_ with familiar spirits as one of these heathen abominations.

The passage above identifies heathen cultures as the source of belief in familiar spirits. Believing in a so-called "spirit realm," and so-called wicked "supernatural spirit beings," equates to the pagan belief in spiritism. God's people are **not** to be involved in such superstition, because it is **idolatry**.

### **FIND THE ANSWERS**

#### **Read 1 Samuel 28:3-25**

3. According to verse 7, Saul sought out a woman who supposedly had a \_\_\_\_\_ spirit.
4. Verse 8 indicates that Saul asked her to \_\_\_\_\_ unto him.

Obviously Saul was orientated toward a belief in spiritism as evidenced by his seeking out the woman for consultation. The word "divine" in verse 8 is translated from a Hebrew word (# 7080) which means to determine by magical means. That is exactly what the woman did; she used trickery and deception to convince Saul that she was actually talking to Samuel (refer back to lesson 12 for a detailed explanation of this account).

This woman was **not** possessed by some kind of "supernatural spirit being," nor did Samuel appear as a so-called "spirit being." These are ideas that superstitious people read into passages like this. They are duped just as much as Saul.

## Use of the Word "Ghost"

The use of the word "ghost" by the King James translators has also added to the delusion of "spiritism." Although the Hebrew word "ruwach" was never translated as "ghost," it does appear in the Old Scriptures as a translation from a different Hebrew word. When some Bible readers see or hear the word "ghost," they think of the classical definition as found in the dictionary: "...the disembodied spirit of a dead person imagined as wandering among, or haunting, living persons..."

In the Old Scriptures, the word "ghost" is rendered from the Hebrew word "gava" (# 1478 in *Strong's Concordance*) and is defined as "to breathe out, i.e. expire." In other words it means to die. When a person "gives up the ghost," they give up breath. In fact, the most common rendering of this Hebrew word is "die," "died" or "dead" (check the *Englishman's Hebrew Concordance* for specific references). "Giving up the ghost" has nothing to do with some so-called invisible "spirit-being" leaving a person's body. Yet, that is what followers of spiritism tend to believe and promote.

## CONCLUSION

In this lesson we have studied the use of the word "spirit(s)" as found in the King James version of the New Scriptures by examining the primary Hebrew word from which it was translated: "ruwach." In doing so we have found no evidence of the existence of so-called "wicked invisible spirit beings" who invade and possess people. We have seen that such superstition is the product of pagan cultures and is considered as an abomination and idolatry by God.

In the next lesson we will examine the use of the word "spirit(s)" in the Greek New Scriptures. May King Jesus help us to see the truth of God's Word and be free of pagan superstition and fear. *"And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free."* (John 8:32)



### LESSON 18

## SPIRIT VS SPIRITISM

### Part 1

#### Page 172

1. moved
2. move
3. judged; war
4. spirit
5. meet
6. Zechariah; speak

#### Page 173

1. wisdom
2. jealousy
3. understanding; counsel; fear
4. courage
5. ruwach (# 7307)
6. anger

#### Page 174

1. displeased
2. sad
3. anguish; bitterness
4. guile

#### Page 175

1. broken; contrite
2. clean; right
3. holy
4. free
5. faithful
6. Pride; haughty
7. humble; proud

#### Page 176

1. ruleth
2. sleep; eyes
3. holy

#### Page 177

1. evil; treacherously
2. departed; evil
3. refreshed; well
4. wrath; displeased
5. evil
6. kill him with a javelin

#### Page 178

1. sin; uncleanness
2. idols; prophets; unclean
3. familiar; wizards
4. whoring; cut
5. they should be put to death

#### Page 179

1. abominations
2. consulter
3. familiar
4. divine

For additional study we suggest:

**Spirits On Trial** - by Ben Williams

American Christian Ministries, PO Box 740, Grangeville, ID 83530.

**Notes:**