



LESSON 19

SPIRIT VS SPIRITISM

Part 2

Introduction

We learned in the last lesson that spiritism (the belief in a mythical "spirit realm" inhabited by good and bad "spirit beings") is a product of pagan superstition and is based on the spurious "immortal soul doctrine." We discovered that this perverted concept is contrary to the truth of God's Word as recorded in the Old Scriptures. Yet, this destructive teaching has invaded the very walls of Christendom and has been used for centuries to control people through fear.

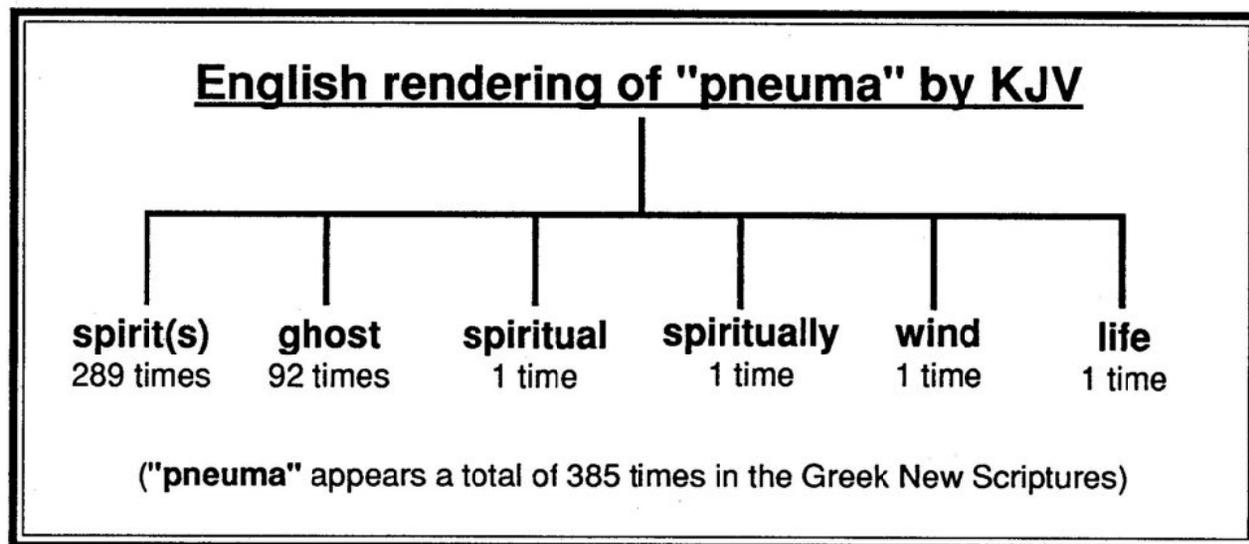
From part one of this study, we learned that the Hebrew word "ruwach" – the primary word from which "spirit" was translated in the Old Scriptures – refers to the power or force which animates (i.e., causes something to move). Thus, a "spirit" is a motivation, a disposition or an animating influence which produces action. The Old Scripture passages we examined were examples illustrating how individuals were moved to action by various dispositions or motives. In none of these examples did the Hebrew word "ruwach" mean "supernatural spirit beings."

In this second part of our study on "spirit," we will see what the New Scriptures say about this subject.

Pneuma

In the New Scriptures the English word "spirit(s)" is translated from the Greek word "pneuma" (# 4151 in *Strong's Concordance*). The chart below summarizes how the King James translators rendered this word.

Strong's defines "pneuma" literally as "a current of air, i.e. breath (blast) or a breeze" and figuratively as "vital principle, mental disposition." Unfortunately, *Strong's* adds the erroneous pagan idea of a "superhuman" being (angel, demon) to his definition, reflecting the traditional "church" myth not supported by Scripture.



Greek "Pneuma" Corresponds To Hebrew "Ruwach"

The Greek word "pneuma" shares a common meaning with the Hebrew word "ruwach." When quoting the Old Scriptures, the Greek writers of the New Scriptures used the Greek word "pneuma" to render the Hebrew word "ruwach."

FIND THE ANSWERS

1. In Isaiah 42:1 the word "spirit" is translated from what Hebrew word? _____
2. In Matthew 12:18 the word "spirit" is translated from what Greek word? _____
(Note: Matthew 12:18 is quoting Isaiah 42:1)
3. In Isaiah 61:1 the word "spirit" is translated from what Hebrew word? _____
4. In Luke 4:18 the word "spirit" is translated from what Greek word? _____
(Note: In Luke 4:18 Jesus is reading Isaiah 61:1)
5. In Joel 2:28 the Hebrew word "ruwach" is translated into what English word? _____
6. In Acts 2:17 the Greek word "pneuma" is translated into what English word? _____
(Note: Acts 2:17 is quoting Joel 2:28)

The above examples show that the Greek word "pneuma" is used for the Hebrew word "ruwach," indicating that the two words embrace a common meaning. Since "ruwach" refers to animating influence, motivation or disposition (i.e. that which produces action or thought), it follows that "pneuma" must include that same idea. It is important to note that none of the above verses use "ruwach" and "pneuma" to mean a mythological "spirit being."

"Pneuma" & "Ruwach = Wind

FIND THE ANSWERS

7. According to Genesis 8:1, God made a _____ to pass over the earth.
8. The above answer is translated from what Hebrew word? _____
9. Jesus states in John 3:8, "The _____ bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth: so is every one that is born of the _____."
10. The above two answers are translated from what Greek word? _____

Strong's Concordance defines both the Greek "pneuma" and the Hebrew "ruwach" as "wind" or "breeze". Both words share the same literal meaning: air in motion. The preceding passages illustrate this common meaning. Neither of these passages are referring to "spirit beings" (spirits are motivations – not "beings").

Notice that in John 3:8 the Greek word "pneuma" is translated into two different English words. The first, "wind," reflects the literal meaning while the second, "spirit," refers to the figurative meaning (godly motivation). Neither wind nor spirit can be seen, but their effects upon things are observable.

"Pneuma" & "Ruwach" = Breath

Strong's Concordance defines both the Greek "pneuma" and the Hebrew "ruwach" as "breath." The common literal meaning of "air in motion" applies again.

FIND THE ANSWERS

1. Concerning the vision of dry bones, Ezekiel 37:10 states, "So I prophesied as he commanded me, and the _____ came into them, and they **lived**..."
2. The above answer is translated from what Hebrew word? _____
3. Regarding the afflicted maiden, Luke 8:55 states, "And her _____ came again, and she arose straightway..."
4. The above answer is translated from what Greek word? _____
5. Genesis 6:17 states, "And, behold, I, even I, do bring a flood of waters upon the earth, to destroy all flesh, wherein is the _____ of life, from under heaven; and every thing that is in the earth shall die."
6. The above answer is translated from what Hebrew word? _____
7. Referring to Jesus' death, John 19:30 says, "...and he bowed his head, and gave up the _____."
8. The above answer is translated from what Greek word? _____

The passages above are referring to the "breath of life" which gives purpose and movement to a body. Breathing is essential to mortal life. The chest expands and contracts. The breath (air in motion) is moving in and out. This animation (i.e., movement) is the prime indication of "life." "Ruwach" and "pneuma" in these verses are not referring to mythological "supernatural spirit beings" entering and exiting human bodies. The unfortunate use of the word "ghost" in John 19:30 only adds confusion, since "ghost" congers up the pagan myth of "disembodied spirits of dead persons." Most other translations and versions use the correct term "spirit." The phrases "giving up the ghost (spirit)" and "losing the breath of life" refer to death and the loss of movement.

Some insist that "a spirit" is a supernatural creature because it is invisible and therefore must be part of some unseen "spirit realm." However, invisibility does not, in itself, indicate a "spirit world." Wind, breath, air, electricity, magnetic fields, sound waves, thoughts, feelings, and emotions are but a few examples of real things in the natural world. These natural things are invisible, but they cause visible reactions in things. Just as wind can move (motivate) a sail boat across the water, spirit can move (motivate) a person to do something.

Kinds of Spirits Mentioned in the New Scriptures

As was the case in the Old Scriptures, different types of spirits are mentioned in the New Scriptures. These "spirits" refer to mental dispositions, states of mind, or motives – as the following examples illustrate. Applying the concept of so-called "supernatural spirit beings" in these examples will show it to be nonsense.

FIND THE ANSWERS

For each reference below, identify the type of spirit mentioned.

1. Romans 8:15 spirit of _____ and _____
2. Romans 11:8 spirit of _____
3. 1 Corinthians 4:21 spirit of _____
4. Galatians 6:1 spirit of _____
5. 2 Corinthians 4:13 spirit of _____
6. 1 Peter 4:14 spirit of _____
7. 1 John 4:6 spirit of _____ and _____
8. Revelation 19:10 spirit of _____
9. Luke 13:11 spirit of _____
10. Acts 16:16 spirit of _____

Each of the above references refers to a particular mental disposition or frame of mind which influences the way people behave and think. Romans 8:15 contrasts those who are mentally bound with fear (slavery) with those who live in the freedom of sonship (liberty). Those with a "spirit of slumber" are individuals who lack understanding and the desire to seek out truth. Those with a "spirit of meekness" practice humility rather than being high and mighty. Those who have the "spirit of faith" act upon their belief in God and live according to His Word. 1 John 4:6 contrasts those who live according to what is true (spirit of truth) with those who live according to falsehood (spirit of error). A "spirit of prophesy" motivates one to discern God's word. A "spirit of infirmity" is the result of a person who is ill, while a "spirit of divination" indicates a person who seeks occult activities. None of these examples have anything to do with so-called "supernatural spirit beings" possessing people and controlling their behavior.

Spirits are not life forms. They are moods, attitudes, dispositions, motivations. Nonetheless, sometimes people are called "spirits." For example, in our own vernacular, a person who acts freely is called a "free spirit."

Spirit of Holiness

Another type of spirit mentioned in the New Scriptures is the "spirit of holiness."

FIND THE ANSWERS

1. Speaking of Jesus Christ, Romans 1:4 states, "And declared to be the Son of God with power, according to the _____ of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead."

This verse is not talking about some kind of so-called "supernatural spirit being" that possesses someone's body. It is referring to the disposition of holiness – i.e. holy motivation – that comes from God. A person who has the spirit of holiness is one who is oriented toward godly principles and is moved by God to live a godly life.

Holy Spirit = Spirit of Holiness

The phrase "spirit of holiness" and the term "holy spirit" are two ways of saying the same thing. A person who is moved by "holy spirit" is one who has been given the "spirit of holiness."

FIND THE ANSWERS

2. Jesus states in Luke 11:13, "If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children; how much more shall your heavenly Father give the _____ spirit [pneuma] to them that ask him?"
3. Peter states in Acts 15:8, "And God, which knoweth the hearts, bare them witness, giving them the holy _____ [pneuma], even as he did unto us."
4. Paul states in 1 Thessalonians 4:7-8, "For God hath not called us unto uncleanness, but unto _____. He therefore that despiseth, despiseth not man, but God, who hath also given unto us his _____ spirit [pneuma]."

These verses indicate that holy spirit (the spirit of holiness) is given to man, and that the source of that disposition or motivation is YAHWEH, God the Father. These passages are not suggesting that God puts some kind of so-called "supernatural spirit beings" in people. However, God does give some individuals a godly disposition – i.e., He motivates them to think and conduct themselves in a godly manner.

The use of the word "ghost" in Acts 15:8 is, again, an unfortunate rendering. Other translations and versions use the correct term: "spirit." The word "ghost" is derived from the old German word "geist." As already noted, the common usage of "ghost" means a so-called "spirit being." This may account for the reason some people think the term "holy ghost" refers to a "spirit being." However, even the German "geist" originally meant "air in motion" - as in "gust" of wind.

Individuals With Holy Spirit

FIND THE ANSWERS

1. Speaking of John the Baptist, Luke 1:15 declares, "...and he shall be filled with the holy _____, even from his mother's womb."
2. Luke 1:41 states, "... and _____ was filled with the holy spirit [not "ghost"]"
3. According to Luke 1:67, who was filled with holy spirit? _____
4. Luke 2:25 states that the holy spirit was upon _____
5. Who does Luke 4:1 say was full of holy spirit? _____
6. According to Acts 2:4, the disciples were all _____ with holy spirit.
7. Acts 4:8 says that _____ was filled with holy spirit.
8. In Acts 7:55, who was full of holy spirit? _____
9. According to Acts 10:44 who did holy spirit fall upon? _____
10. In Acts 11:24, who was a good man and full of holy spirit? _____
11. Who does Acts 13:9 say was filled with holy spirit? _____

The above verses obviously do not refer to people who were invaded by so-called "spirit beings." These individuals received holy motivation or disposition from God.

Holy Spirit Motivates People To Action

Let's now see the effects of holy spirit upon those who receive it.

FIND THE ANSWERS

Read Luke 1:67-79

12. According to Luke 1:67, what did Zechariah do after being filled with holy spirit? _____

FIND THE ANSWERS

Read Luke 2:25-35

1. What did Simeon do after holy spirit came upon him? _____

Read Luke 4:1-13

2. According to verse 1, what did the spirit lead Jesus to do? _____

Read Acts 2:1-4

3. According to verse 4, what did holy spirit cause the disciples to do? _____

Read Acts 4:1-12

4. What did the spirit move Peter to do (see verse 8)? _____

Read Acts 4:23-31

5. In verse 31, what happened to those who were filled with holy spirit? _____

Read Acts 10:44-46

6. What were those who received the gift of holy spirit doing, according to verse 46? _____

Read Acts 11:1-18

7. According to verse 12, what did the spirit cause Peter to do? _____

Read Acts 13:1-5

8. What does Acts 13:4 indicate that the spirit caused Barnabas and Saul to do? _____

Read Acts 16:5-10

9. According to verse 6, what did the spirit do to Paul and Timothy? _____

Read Acts 19:1-7

10. According to verse 6, what happened when holy spirit came to those upon whom Paul laid his hands? _____

All of the examples above illustrate the motivating power of holy spirit. God moved or caused these individuals to act according to His will. None of these people were controlled by invisible beings residing with them inside their bodies.

Holy Spirit = Influence from God and from Christ

The phrases "the holy spirit," "the spirit of God" and "the spirit of Christ" are used interchangeably in the New Scriptures to express the concept of motivation. Consider the following examples.

FIND THE ANSWERS

1. Romans 5:5 states, "...because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the **holy spirit** which is _____ unto us."
2. Romans 8:9 says, "But ye are not in the _____, but in the _____, if so be that **the spirit of God** dwell in you. Now if any man have not **the spirit of Christ**, he is none of his,"
3. Romans 8:14 declares, "For as many as are _____ by **the spirit of God**, they are the sons of God."

The above verses are referring to those who have been given good motives – i.e. holy spirit. These individuals do not have some kind of "spirit being" residing in their bodies. Rather, they have been given a godly or Christian disposition which moves them to think and act in a godly, Christian manner.

Holy Spirit Is Not A Person

Many in Christendom are under the delusion that the phrase "the Holy Spirit" refers to a "supernatural being," which they typically describe as "one of the persons of the Godhead." This erroneous concept is partly caused by the translators' use of capital letters for the words "holy" and "spirit." Since these words are capitalized in nearly all Bibles, and since capitalization denotes a proper noun representing a person's name, most readers automatically assume these words refer to a person or being. It must be remembered that this was not the grammatical rule in the Greek. In fact, most Greek manuscripts from which the Greek texts came were written in all capital letters without punctuation. As a result, the English translators supplied capitals where they believed they should be, following the official "church" position of the day. However, that does not make it correct.

FIND THE ANSWERS

4. Acts 2:4 states that the disciples were all _____ with "the Holy Ghost [spirit]."

Another reason the phrase "the holy spirit" is thought to represent a person or being is the translators' overuse of the article "the." An examination of a Greek interlinear will reveal that the article "the" in the above passage is not indicated in the Greek text. It was added by the translators. The same is true of many other verses containing the words "holy spirit." Actually, the above verse should be rendered, "they were all filled with holy spirit." In other words, they received godly motivation – i.e. God motivated them. Arbitrarily injecting the article "the," along with the capital letters, encourages the false notion of a person or being.

The false idea that the "holy spirit" refers to a living being is caused by still another factor: the use of personal pronouns along with the phrase "the holy spirit."

FIND THE ANSWERS

1. Jesus states in John 14:26, "But the comforter, which is the holy spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, _____ will teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you."

The word "he" in the above passage is translated from the Greek word "ekeinos" (# 1565 in *Strong's Concordance*). It could just as easily have been rendered "it," as it was in other verses. But again, the translators used their own discretion in deciding which pronoun to use. The pronoun "he" denotes a person, while the pronoun "it" is nonpersonal and matches with the idea of "motivation or insight from God."

The fact that the active verbs "teach" and "bring" are directly connected to holy spirit is also used by some as proof that a person or being is meant. Actually, the motivating power of God (holy spirit), working through a person's mental disposition, teaches (provides insight) and causes a person to remember things.

FIND THE ANSWERS

2. Jesus states in John 6:63, "It is the spirit [pneuma] that _____ ..."

The word "quickeneth" means "to vitalize, to make alive" (# 2227 in *Strong's*). This verse doesn't prove that spirit is a person. It simply states a basic truth: spirit (animating influence, motivation) causes a thing to live and move. In other words, God's motivating power causes one to react and to think and act correctly.

FIND THE ANSWERS

3. Acts 10:19 states, "While Peter thought on the vision, the spirit [pneuma] _____ unto him, Behold, three men seek thee."

Someone might argue that only a person could speak to Peter. However, this expression simply indicates that Peter's thoughts were influenced by God to reveal something to him.

FIND THE ANSWERS

4. Acts 16:6 states that Paul and Timothy were _____ of the holy spirit [pneuma] to preach the word in Asia.

Again, some might say that only a person or being could have told Paul and Timothy to not preach in Asia. In reality, the motivating power of God (holy spirit) influenced these men's thoughts (mental disposition).

In all of these examples, it is God's motivating influence doing these things. Some mystical type of so-called invisible "supernatural being" is not going from place to place doing them.

God Is Spirit

Many in Christendom view God as a "spirit being." They insist that John 4:24 says that He is. On this basis they claim "spirit beings" must exist because God is one of them. However, let's examine this passage and see what it really says.

FIND THE ANSWERS

Read John 4:23-24

1. Jesus states in verse 23, "But the hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshipers shall _____ the Father in **spirit** [pneuma] and in truth: for the Father seeketh such to worship him."
2. Jesus continues in verse 24, "_____ is a **spirit** [pneuma]: and they that worship him must worship him in **spirit** [pneuma] and in truth."

Concerning verse 24 above, an examination of a Greek interlinear will show that the article "a" in the phrase "God is a spirit" is not indicated in the Greek but was added by the translators. The phrase, properly translated, should read "God is spirit." Injecting the article "a" makes "spirit" sound like "a being" rather than "motivation," which is what the Greek word "pneuma" means. The phrase "God is spirit" simply means that God motivates.

The difficulty is compounded by the fact that the translators capitalized the word "spirit." As we have noted, capitalization denotes a proper noun. As a result, some insist the word "spirit" must refer to a person, ignoring the fact that the Greek manuscripts from which the Greek texts came did not differentiate between upper case and lower case letters. Therefore, the English translators were the ones who decided what should be capitalized. Just because they followed the accepted position of the "church" of their day does not make that position accurate.

Most Bible scholars and students will admit that the word "spirit" (pneuma) in John 4:23 refers to motivation rather than a so-called "invisible being." However, when it comes to the very next verse, they interpret the same word (pneuma) in the phrase "God is a spirit" as a "being." In other words, in one verse "spirit" is motivation while in the next it is an invisible being. This is inconsistent translating. Using this verse to prove that God is a "spirit being" (ghost) misses the true meaning of what is being said, and is an attempt, by man, to define God's essence within limited boundaries.

Attributes of God

Saying that God is spirit is merely identifying one of God's many attributes. Scripture also says that "God is light" (1 John 1:5), but that doesn't mean He is a beam of light. Hebrews 12:29 states that "God is a consuming fire," but that doesn't make Him a furnace. 1 John 4:8 declares "God is love." What, then, is He? Is He spirit? A light? A fire? Love? Well, He embraces all of these. They only describe individual facets or characteristics of God's essence.

Summary

So far in our study of "spirit" in the New Scriptures, we have found that it carries much the same meaning as it does in the Old Scriptures: motivation or disposition. We have not seen any evidence that "spirit" refers to so-called "spirit beings." But what about the mention of "unclean spirits" and "evil spirits," and what about the instances in which they were "cast out" of people who were possessed by them? This will be the subject of the next lesson.



LESSON 19

SPIRIT VS SPIRITISM Part 2

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1. ruwach (# 7307)
2. pneuma (# 4151)
3. ruwach (#7307)
4. pneuma (# 4151)
5. spirit
6. spirit
7. wind
8. ruwach (# 7307)
9. wind; spirit
10. pneuma (# 4151)

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1. breath
2. ruwach
3. spirit
4. pneuma
5. breath
6. ruwach
7. ghost
8. pneuma

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1. bondage; adoption
2. slumber
3. meekness
4. meekness
5. faith
6. glory
7. truth; error
8. prophesy
9. infirmity

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10. divination

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1. spirit
2. holy
3. spirit (mistranslated as "ghost")
4. holiness; holy

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1. spirit (mistranslated as "ghost")
2. Elisabeth
3. Zecharias
4. Simeon
5. Jesus
6. filled
7. Peter
8. Stephen
9. all those which heard the word
10. Barnabas
11. Paul (Saul)
12. He prophesied what God was going to do for His people through Jesus.

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1. He went to the temple to see Jesus and praised God.
2. The spirit led Him into the wilderness.
3. The spirit caused them to speak in other tongues (languages).
4. The spirit moved him to preach.

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5. They spoke the word of God with boldness.
6. They were speaking with tongues (languages) and glorifying God.
7. The spirit bade Peter to go with the men.
8. The spirit moved them to leave Antioch and go to Cyprus to preach the word.
9. The spirit prevented them from preaching the word in Asia.
10. They spoke with tongues (dialects) and prophesied.

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1. given
2. flesh; spirit
3. led
4. filled

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1. he
2. quickeneth
3. said
4. forbidden

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1. worship
2. God

For additional study we suggest the book:

Spirits On Trial, by Ben Williams

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

Notes: