

The Presence and Power of God

The Universe as we know it consists of four realities: matter, space, energy, and time. **Matter** is the mass that consists of particles and waves that constitute the solid stuff of our world. Each of us are made up of around a billion atoms. Of course these atoms have to have some place to be so there's **space**. Before the last century physicists were convinced that space was made up of something called ether. With all the discovery going on in the aftermath of Einstein's general and special theories of relativity, two scientists, Abraham Michelson and Edward Morley, decided to conduct an empirical research project that would prove the existence of ether, using light, mirrors, and a beamsplitter. They did verify that light did travel at the speed Einstein said it did (186,282 miles per second or 671 million miles per hour). But, they didn't verify the existence of any ether. Space proved to be just that, space. Its the place where everything is!

Then there's **energy** (from the Greek - *energeia*), which in physics is the cause of motion or movement, from *energōs* - to be set in motion, movement rather than dormancy a physical quantity that describes the amount of work that can be performed by a force, a dynamic attribute, or or power. In physics there are four major forces: gravity, electromagnetic forces, strong nuclear and weak nuclear forces. Practically speaking we recognize thermodynamic forces, electromagnetic forces, nuclear energy, chemical forces as in chemical reactions in inflammables, and, then there's the forces of nature or meteorological forces as wind, storms, floods, hurricanes, tornadoes. All these are forces of energy.

What would you call the power, energy, force, the *energeia* or *energōs* of God? The forces of energy we've mentioned are "natural" forces; what about forces greater than that? Super-natural forces. Something other than these forces mentioned? Can you describe that? Do you know anyone who can? Maybe that's why those who study physics don't want to believe there is such a thing as supernatural power or energy. They have no idea what to do with it or how to even talk about it. Its something beyond their comprehension, and that's scary!

The Question!

If God as is transcendent being, he transcends the space-time-matter-energy realm of existence we call the universe, how does he become involved in the events of our world? How is his presence made manifest, actualized, or realized in this dimension of existence? How is his power expressed in our world? Is there any evidence that he has ever made his presence known or that he has ever demonstrated his power? His power is present in the creation, "the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters," (Gen. 1:2). He effected the great miracles or wonders of the OT and NT Scriptures. The men of God, the prophets of old, their messages and their miracles were all wrought by the Spirit of God, "Whither shall I go from thy Spirit? or whither shall I flee from thy presence?" (Psalms 139:7).

His "Presence" in the OT Scriptures:

First, a preliminary question: Why take seriously a collection of ancient Hebrew writings? Why take seriously anything written on any issue? Credibility of source! What % of what we accept as true in this world, past, present events, do we take on testimony? Would you say 50%? 75%? What about 90%? Can you tell me anything you accept as true (that isn't a present observable event), that isn't accepted on the basis of testimony; data acquired from sources? There are criteria of credibility of sources: (1) empirical experience, (2) eyewitness testimony, (3) verification or trustworthiness of the source or testimony, and (4) unimpeachability of the character of the witness or testimony.

His "Presence" in Creation

*In the beginning **God created** the heavens and the earth. **2**The earth was formless and void, and darkness was over the surface of the deep, and **the Spirit of God was moving** over the surface of the waters. (Gen. 1:1-2).*

This text simply assumes the existence of God. It is not presented for apologetic purposes, nor is it presented a scientific description of how God did what he did; rather, it is simply an affirmation that God created the heavens and the earth. Whether some of the terminology is to be understood as poetic metaphor in the tradition of an ancient cosmology of

how the world was made is beside the point. This text simply affirms that in the beginning (an assumption of time) God created (an assumption of divine causation), the heaven and the universe (the universe as we know it, a space-time dimension of existence, wherein is located the planet Earth as the habitation of the human race). These are the realities that are assumed to be extant to the ancient reader of this creation account. The modern physicists can identify the universe as consisting of the realities of space, matter, energy, and time; whether the language here is to be taken as poetic metaphor or not it does acknowledge the realities of time (in the beginning), matter (there is a planet called earth that was formless and void and there was a surface of water), there is a something of a reference to space (darkness was over the surface of the deep), and there was time (in the beginning). But of greatest significance of this text is the reference to the causative force underlying the creativity activity (and the Spirit of God - *Ruach Elohim* - was moving). The word for "was moving" is *rachaph* - a word which is no doubt a poetic metaphor in that it is the word used for a hen hovering over her unhatched eggs - brooding. Perhaps, the imagery here is that of the *Ruach Elohim* surrounding or encompassing the planet earth to energize the forces necessary to fulfill the "let there be" utterances.

Job 26:13, tells us, "By his Spirit the heavens are garnished," (*shiphrah* - set in beautiful array)." In speaking of creation the psalmist wrote, "You send forth your Spirit, they are created," (Psalms 104:30). This applies to the creation of man as well, in Job 33:4, we read, "The Spirit of God has made me, and the breath of the Almighty gives me life." Who believes all this? Paul, an apostle of Christ did: Romans 1:18-23.

His "Presence" in the Miracles of the OT

In the miracles and mighty wonders of the ancient men of God: the fathers, Moses, the judges (e.g. Samson, as in repeated phrase in Judges, "The Spirit of the LORD came upon him mightily," (Judges 14:6; 15:14). So also in all the mighty works of the ancient prophets: Elijah, Elisha .

In revelation and in the inspiration of Scripture. God had spoken to man through the patriarchs, Moses, and the prophets. In Num. 12:6-8, we read:

Hear now My words: If there is a prophet among you, I, the LORD, shall make Myself known to him in a vision I shall speak with him in a dream. 7 Not so, with My servant Moses, He is faithful in all My household 8 With him I speak mouth to mouth, even openly, and not in dark sayings.

He spoke through David, "The Spirit of *Yahweh* spoke by me, and his word was upon my tongue," (2 Sam. 23:2). He spoke through Isaiah: "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me," (Isa. 61: 1). So also Ezekiel, "And the Spirit of *Yahweh* fell upon me, and he said to me, Speak, 'Thus says the Lord'," (Ezek 11:5).

That the writers of the OT Scriptures were speaking by the Spirit of God is clearly the claim of Scripture. In Exodus alone, out of forty-four chapters, the expression "God spoke these words," is found one hundred sixty-one times. In 2 Peter 1: 21 we are told that, "no prophecy ever came by the will of man; but men spoke from God, being moved by the Holy Spirit."

But he was also present in the lives of the Hebrew people in ways other than demonstrations of supernatural power. The traditions preserved were primarily those of the exploits of the God of Israel for polemic purposes with the nations around them, but there are other traditions preserved of God's presence in the lives of these people, which were more of a personal nature. The creedal statement of the Jewish people, the *Shema*, would be an example of this (Deut 6:4-6). In the Psalms one can see a record of the personal presence of God in the lives of the Jewish people. It was through communication with them and through his providential care (which is another study). Psalms 17:1-2; 33:18-22; 51:10-17; 90:1-4; 139:7-18; 143:10-11; and in Psalms 119 (*passim*). But was this presence manifested by the presence the *Ruach Elohim*? These are "words of wisdom;" are they the presence of the Spirit of God? In what sense would you say this was so?

His "Presence" in the NT Scriptures:

The word "incarnate" means to clothe or cover with flesh; a divine being entered into a human being, became one with humanity, and dwelt there. Such a thing as this took a miracle and the one effecting it was the

Spirit of God (John 1:1-5, 14-18). But what has this to do with the presence of God through the *Ruach Elohim*? See as follows . . .

In his miraculous conception, when Mary asked the angel how she could become pregnant not knowing a man (Luke 1:31-35), "The angel answered and said to her, "**The Holy Spirit** will come upon you, and **the power of the Most High** will overshadow you; and for that reason the holy Child shall be called the Son of God." Matt. 1:18-20; (v 20) "But when he (Joseph) had considered this [the fact that Mary was pregnant], behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream, saying, "Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary as your wife; for the Child who has been conceived in her **is of the Holy Spirit.**"

At the Baptism of Jesus there is a presence of the Ruach Elohim (Matt 3:13-17),

*After being baptized, Jesus came up immediately from the water; and behold, the heavens were opened, and he saw **the Spirit of God** descending as a dove and lighting on Him (a messianic anointing in keeping with Isaiah 11:2; 42:1; 61:1;), 17 and behold, a voice out of the heavens said, "This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well-pleased, (vv 16-17).*

John testified saying, " I have seen **the Spirit** descending as a dove out of heaven, and He remained upon Him," (John 1:32); "I did not recognize Him, but He who sent me to baptize in water said to me, He upon whom you see **the Spirit** descending and remaining upon Him, this is the One who baptizes **in the Holy Spirit,**" (John 1:33).

Following the Temptation: Jesus was filled with the power of the Spirit, Luke 4:1-15,

*When the devil had finished every temptation, he left Him until an opportune time. 14 And Jesus returned to Galilee **in the power of the Spirit**, and news about Him spread through all the surrounding district. 15 And He began teaching in their synagogues and was praised by all (vv 13-15).*

The Spirit's presence can be seen in the miraculous manifestations in

the life of Jesus. Jesus says to the Pharisees, "But if I cast out demons **by the Spirit of God**, then the kingdom (reign/rule) of God has come upon you," (Matt 12:28). He had the ability to know what people were thinking, which was a power attribute to his empowered spirit, "Immediately Jesus, **aware in his spirit** that they were reasoning that way within themselves, said to them, "Why are you reasoning about these things in your hearts? (Mark 2:8). To the people in the synagogue in Nazareth, he reads from Isaiah 61:1 (a prophecy believed to be applicable to a prophet or the Messiah), "**The Spirit of the Lord is upon me**, because he anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor, he has sent me to proclaim release to the captives, and recovery of sight to the blind, to set free those who are oppressed," (Luke 4:18 / Isaiah 61:1). He closed the scroll and said to them, "Today this Scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing," (v 21).

When the seventy disciples he sent out to proclaim the coming of the kingdom of God, declaring that the demons were in subjection to them in his name, we read,

*At that very time **He rejoiced greatly in the Holy Spirit**, and said, "I praise You, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that You have hidden these things from the wise and intelligent and have revealed them to infants. Yes, Father, for this way was well-pleasing in Your sight (Luke 10:21).*

So also in the lives of the apostles of Christ. Jesus informed the eleven disciples left of the twelve that they were to receive power from God:

*. . . for John baptized with water, but you will be **baptized with the Holy Spirit** not many days from now."⁶So when they had come together, they were asking Him, saying, "Lord, is it at this time You are restoring the kingdom to Israel?"⁷He said to them, "It is not for you to know times or epochs which the Father has fixed by His own authority; ⁸but **you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you**; and you shall be My witnesses both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and even to the remotest part of the earth, (Acts 1:5-8).*

So also in the first century church of Christ. To the church in Corinth, Paul give instruction on how the presence and power of God was intended by God to work among the first century Christians:

Now there are varieties of gifts, but the same Spirit.5And there are varieties of ministries, and the same Lord. 6There are varieties of effects, but the same God who works all things in all persons. 7But to each one is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good. 8For to one is given the word of wisdom through the Spirit, and to another the word of knowledge according to the same Spirit; 9to another faith by the same Spirit, and to another gifts of healing by the one Spirit,10and to another the effecting of miracles, and to another prophecy, and to another the distinguishing of spirits, to another various kinds of tongues, and to another the interpretation of tongues. 11But one and the same Spirit works all these things, distributing to each one individually just as He wills (1 Cor 12:4-11).

Following these specifics, by way of further explanation, he reasons with his readers as to why different believer possessed different abilities. It was as God determined, and all were to accept the responsibility of the gift given them:

And God has appointed in the church, first apostles, second prophets, third teachers, then miracles, then gifts of healing, helps, administrations, various kinds of tongues.29All are not apostles, are they? All are not prophets, are they? All are not teachers, are they? All are not workers of miracles, are they?30All do not have gifts of healings, do they? All do not speak with tongues, do they? All do not interpret, do they?31But earnestly desire the greater gifts. And I show you a still more excellent way (Vv 28-31).

His presence is seen in revelation and in the inspiration of the NT Scriptures; especially so in the teachings and writings of the apostles of Christ and other biblical writers:

But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My name, He will teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all that I said to you (John 14:26).

*When the Helper comes, whom I will send to you from the Father, that is the **Spirit** of truth who proceeds from the Father, He will testify about Me, (John 15:26)*

*But when He, the **Spirit** of truth, comes, He will guide you into all the truth; for He will not speak on His own initiative, but whatever He hears, He will speak; and He will disclose to you what is to come (John 16:13).*

*But just as it is written, "Things which eye has not seen and ear has not heard (Isa 64:4) which have not entered the heart of man, all that God has prepared for those who love him." **10** For to us God revealed them through the Spirit; for **the Spirit searches all things, even the depths of God. 11** For who among men knows the thoughts of a man except the spirit of the man which is in him? Even so the thoughts of God no one knows except the **Spirit of God. 12** Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but **the Spirit who is from God**, so that we may know the things freely given to us by God **13** which things we also speak, not in words taught by human wisdom, but in those taught by **the Spirit, combining spiritual thoughts with spiritual words. 14** But a natural man does not accept the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him; and he cannot understand them, because they are spiritually appraised. **15** But he who is spiritual appraises all things, yet he himself is appraised by no one. **16** For who has known the mind of the Lord that he will instruct him? But we have the mind of Christ (1 Cor 2:9-16).*

*For our gospel did not come to you in word only, but also **in power and in the Holy Spirit** and with full conviction; just as you know what kind of men we proved to be among you for your sake, **6** You also became imitators of us and of the Lord, having received the word in much tribulation with the joy of the Holy Spirit, (1 Thess 1:5-6).*

*For this reason we also constantly thank God that when **you received the word of God which you heard from us**, you accepted it not as the word of men, but for what it really is, **the word of God**, which also performs its work in you who believe **13**; (1 Thess 2:13).*

*But **the Spirit explicitly** says that in later times some will fall away from the faith, paying attention to deceitful spirits and doctrines of demons, **2** by*

means of the hypocrisy of liars seared in their own conscience as with a branding iron, (1 Tim 4:1-2)

*And that from childhood you have known the sacred writings which are able to give you the wisdom that leads to salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus. **16All Scripture is inspired by God** and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness; **17**so that the man of God may be adequate, equipped for every good work (2 Tim 3:15-17).*

*So we have the prophetic word made more sure, to which you do well to pay attention as to a lamp shining in a dark place, until the day dawns and the morning star arises in your hearts. **20**But know this first of all, that no prophecy of Scripture is a matter of one's own interpretation, **21**for no prophecy was ever made by an act of human will, **but men moved** (*pheromenoi* - a nautical term for the wind filling the sails of a ship and carrying it along on the sea) **by the Holy Spirit spoke from God** (2 Peter 1:19-21).*

His Presence in the Power of the Spirit

When identifying the presence of God in his activity in this world of space and time, it is also the case that his power is seen at the same time. God's presence and power are manifested in our world by means of the *Ruach Elohim* or *Pneuma Theou* - Spirit of God - entering into the space-time dimension we know as the universe. This is how he can be both here and there at one and the same time. Jesus identifies God as spirit to the woman at the well in Samaria (John 4:24). A spirit is limited to space, thus a spirit can be both here and there without violation of any physical laws, especially since a spirit is not a physical entity. As mentioned above, the four realities of nature to which we can relate as finite beings are matter, space, energy, and time. Of these, only one can be identified with the concept of spirit; that would be energy. Curiously, energy, in different forms can be in different places at the same time. This is especially so with electrons, which exists in parallel states hovering between existence and nonexistence; the fact that electrons can simultaneously be in so many places at the same time that they can form an electron cloud which binds atoms together keeps the universe together. If these forms of energy can

exist in multiplicity, what prevents a being identified as spirit from doing so? It would be the closest thing to energy in the universe, and the atom, which is encircled by the electron contains enough power to blow up an entire city, a very large city. But the many forms of energy have much in common with the concept of spirit as we see portrayed in Scripture. It is a source of presence and it is a source of power; or, perhaps it would be correct to say, it is the a presence of power, in many forms or realities.

In the revelation of God in Scripture, his presence as *ruach* is often manifested in the physical phenomena of nature; as in the wind, as may be seen in God's presence in the garden when detected by Adam (Gen 3:8) moving in the "cool" (*ruach* - breeze) of the day, or in Exodus 14:21, where where the Lord kept the sea back by the east wind (*ruach*). So also the displays of fire on the mountain (Exodus 19:18).

In biblical literature it may be observed that in ancient times the presence of the Spirit of God was often associated with demonstrations of power or supernatural activity of God. This may be seen in the in creation, in the many miracles of the sages and prophets, and in the inspiration of the writers of Scripture. So also in the NT, as mentioned above, we see the presence of the Spirit of God associated with supernatural activity of God: in the incarnation of Jesus, in the miracles of the holy men of God, and in the inspiration of the preachers, teachers, and writers of Scriptures. In all of this it is very important to note that the demonstrations of power were also associated with the presence of God. There are very few instances in which the presence of God is not accompanied by a manifestation of the power of God. When this does occur, these are occasions of the providence of God at work off stage rather than as a main player in the drama being played out on stage.

The Concept of Power

The concept of power plays a very significant role in the discussion the work of the Holy Spirit. There are three different Greek words translated as "power" in the Standard English translations. They are (1) *dunamis* - power in the generic sense; (2) *exousia* - authority; and (3) *kratos* - might, mightiness, dominion, strength. The word with which we are most concerned is *dunamis*, used in the NT for the presence of a supernatural

force or influence of God imparted to certain individuals for the purpose of enabling them to speak or write by inspiration or to perform miracles. This is the case in over half of its one-hundred-twenty occurrences in the NT. It is the word from which we get our English words, "dynamite, dynamic, dynamo, etc."

The Power of Jesus

The supernatural activity of God fell silent during the four-hundred year period between the captivity and the appearance of the angel Gabriel to a priest named Zacharias (Luke 1:5-25) to inform him the fulfillment of the prophecy of the Malachi 4:5, "Behold, I am going to send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and terrible day of the LORD," A Jewish tradition had developed that the return of Elijah would be a sign of the arrival of the Messiah. The fulfillment of this prophecy occurred in the birth of John, who in his adulthood became known as John the Baptist.

In Luke 1:26, this same angel appeared to a young Jewess named Mary, informing her that the time had come for the arrival of the Messiah and she had been chosen to give him birth and his conception would result as the work of the Spirit of God, "the Holy Spirit shall come upon you, and the power (*dunamis*) of the Most High shall overshadow you: wherefore also the holy thing which is begotten shall be called the Son of God." It was supernatural power that wrought the miraculous conception in the womb of Mary and the Spirit of the Holy One (*Ruach Qadosh*) would be the causative agent.

The father of John had been told, "He shall go before his face (the one to follow him) in the spirit and power (*dunamis*) of Elijah," (Luke 1:17). John indeed came preaching in the spirit of the ancient prophet Elijah. Soon afterwards came Jesus who, upon being baptized of John, was "full of the Holy Spirit" and "led by the Spirit," (Luke 4: 1). But, what is meant by this? Was Jesus not already full of God, in that he was one with him? He had been begotten as a human being but was, non-the-less, who he was before the incarnation, being the only begotten God (John 1:18)?

The meaning is revealed in the context, which tells us that Jesus returned to Galilee "in the power (*dunamis*) of the Spirit" (Luke 4:14). He

did not need the personal indwelling of deity to begin his messianic mission, he was deity. A passage essential to an adequate understanding of this is Phil. 2:5-11 where the pre-existence of Jesus as deity is clearly stated, He existing in the form (*morphe* - nature, characteristics) of God, counted not the being on an equality (*isos* - equal, the same) with God a thing to be grasped (*harpagmon* - to hold on to, clutch), but emptied himself (*kenoo* - to deprive of power, give up or lay aside what one possesses, Newman, *Greek-English Dictionary.*, p. 99), taking the form of a servant (*doulos* - bondservant, slave; in contrast to a Lord), being made in the likeness of man."

It was not his deity Jesus emptied himself of but rather the full expression or manifestation of his deity, i.e., his Lordship. As a human being he became submissive to the authority and teaching of the *Torah*, the Law of Moses as contained in the Hebrew Scriptures. As a human being he became submissive to the authority of his parents, his Hebrew teachers and religious leaders, as well as the civil authorities. As the Messiah he became submissive to the abuse and cruelty of men, and ultimately, in his adamic existence he became submissive to human death; however, God raised him up, and highly exalting him and restored him to his original state of lordship. He was no longer "a servant," but was again, "Lord."

The question concerning the descent of the Holy Spirit in the form of a dove at the baptism of Jesus is a curiosity. What was this all about? It was most likely a sign to John (see John 1 :29-34) and to Jesus (Matt. 3: 16-17); and it was also the messianic anointing which signaled the beginning of Jesus' messianic activity (i.e., those manifestations of power and authority which were an essential part of his role as the Messiah (cf. Isaiah 11:2; 42:1; 61:1-2 and Luke 4: 14-21).

After this event we see him, ". . .with authority (*exousia*) and power (*dunamis*) commanding unclean spirits. . ." (Luke 4:36). According to Luke 5: 17, the power (*dunamis*) of the Lord was with him to heal. Peter, in Acts 2:22 declared that Jesus was approved of God by mighty works (*dunamis*) and wonders and signs; and in Romans 1:4, Paul wrote that Jesus was declared to be the Son of God with power (*dunamis*) according to the Spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead. The evidence indicates that what Jesus received at his baptism was the messianic anointing that

signaled the beginning of his messianic ministry and, at that time, the activation of his powers as a divine being, which are identified with the presence and power of the Spirit of God.

The Power of the Apostles

In Luke 24:49, Jesus said to the twelve, ". . . behold, I send forth the promise of my Father upon you: but tarry in the city, until you are clothed with power (*dunamis*) from on high." In Acts 1:7, he told them, "you will receive power (*dunamis*) when the Holy Spirit has come upon you and you shall be my witnesses both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea, and Samaria, and even to the remotest part of the earth;" a promise that was fulfilled on the Day of Pentecost recorded in Acts 2 with the coming of the *Ruach Elohim* in a manifestation of a great wind (*ruach*) and the presence of fire above the heads of the apostles.

The presence of this power became a sign of the authority of the apostles of Christ. In 2 Cor. 6:6-7, Paul defended his apostleship by arguing that he was a minister of God and had manifested himself to them as such "in the Holy Spirit, in love unfeigned, in the word of truth, and in the power (*dunamis*) of God." In 2 Cor. 12: 12 he writes, "Truly the signs of an apostle were wrought among you in all patience, by signs and wonders and in mighty works (*dunamis*)." In Eph. 3:7, he says, "Whereof I was made a minister according to the gift of that power (*dunamis*)." Again in Col 1:29, which reads, literally, from the Greek text, "for which also I labor, striving according to the working of him, working in me with power (*dunamis*)." In 1 Thess. 1:5, he reminds the church there, "Our gospel came to you, not in word only, but also in power (*dunamis*), and in the Holy Spirit."

In Hebrews 2:4, the writer speaks of the great salvation which was spoken first through the Lord and was confirmed to us (*of whom the writer of Hebrews is included-mwl*) by them that heard (*those that heard him speak - the apostles-mwl*): God also bearing witness with them (*those who heard him speak-mwl*), both by signs (semion) and wonders (terasim - amazement), and by various powers (*dunamis*), and by gifts (distributions) of the Holy Spirit (which only the apostles could do, according to Acts 8:14-19)."

In every case it is power that is clearly evidenced as present in the

apostles; there is not indication that they were filled with the presence of deity, Spirit of God, which implied the presence of God, but not in an indwelling presence within the apostles; and this special power was only present at the moment of the miracle, which was evoked through the faith of the miracle worker to confirm his message has having been given him by God.

Other First Century Christians

Not only do we read of supernatural power in the apostles, but in other first century Christians as well. In Acts 6:5, we read of a Hellenistic Jew named Stephen being full of faith and of the Holy Spirit. In verse 8, the text states that he was full of grace and power (*dunamis*) and worked great wonders and signs among the people. From the context it should be clear that it was that which enabled him to work great wonders and signs. It was not necessary that Stephen be filled with a literal divine presence of God in order to do what he did; rather, what was necessary was the ability or power imparted to him and others of the first century by the laying on of the hands of the apostles of Christ (cf. Acts 8:14-19).

In Acts 8:13, we read of Philip working signs and great miracles (*dunamis*). In Rom 15:13, Paul prays that the Christians at Rome be filled with joy, and peace, and abound in hope, in the power (*dunamis*) of the Holy Spirit. In 1 Cor 12:10, 28,29, the word *dunamis* is translated "miracles" in each verse, and were manifestations of power attributed to first century Christians. In Eph 3:16, Paul prays that the Ephesian Christians be strengthened with power (*dunamis*) through his Spirit in the inward man. The need for the impartation of the ability to do what would confirm the message of the spokesman is what Paul prays for. It was power that would fill the inward man through the Holy Spirit who imparts this power. Again in verse 20 he declares that God is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that they could ask or think, according to the power (*dunamis*) that was working in them. All of these verses indicate that there was an indwelling of "power" in certain first century Christians, as was the case with the prophets of God in the OT.

The purpose of this indwelling power is very important to a full understanding of the place of supernatural power in NT Christianity. The

coming of the Holy Spirit and the manifestations of his power in the lives of the apostles and first century Christians was for the purpose of giving man the message of God through revelation and/or inspiration, and establishing that message as the word of God through miraculous manifestations of power.

In 2 Peter 1:2 Peter wrote that the divine power (*dunamis*) had granted unto them all things that pertained to life and godliness through the knowledge of him that called them. This he had done through the impartation of revelation and the confirmation of it through supernatural manifestations, both of which were the effects of the supernatural power (*dunamis*) imparted to the apostles and the first century Christians by the Spirit of God. In fact, when Mark wrote his Gospel this is what was happening, as he says in Mark 16:20, "And they went out and preached everywhere, while the Lord worked with them, and confirmed the word by the signs that followed."

Concluding Thoughts

The presence of God is implied by the power of God; it is a simple matter of cause and effect. But, it is important that realize the the effect is not one-and-the-same with the cause. The NT, more so than the OT, develops the presence of God in the lives of believers, but it is important to read the texts carefully to see how this is effected. As presented above, the presence of God in the life of the Hebrews is suggested by the way the believe embraced God's communication to him. This communication was by means of special spokesmen as the patriarchs, Moses, and the prophets who appear in the OT Scriptures.

But, from what one sees in the Psalms, the words of some of these psalms seem to have been intended to be sung by gatherings, and were not only the expressions or sentiments of David and other authors of the Psalms. They were the prayers, the praise, and the indications of the relationships that existed between God and the Hebrew people. In the synagogues of the Jews, in Israel and throughout the Diaspora, the songs the assemblies sang were the Psalms, which are found today in synagogue collections called, *Ha Tehillim*.

God's presence is suggested in the giving of revelation to those who believe in him, and in the godliness that develops in the lives of those who incorporate who and what he is into their lives. God's power is present before us every time we open our eyes. We see what we see because of his creative power and his sustaining power. All is "there" because we wills it to be there, and here we are not talking about we simply wishes that it be as it is; rather, it is his will, his supernatural consciousness, that holds everything in place. All is of God, and all has been done by God as *Ha Ruach Elohim* - the Spirit of God or God as Spirit, or *Ha Ruach Ha Qadosh*, the Spirit of the Holy One" - the "face" or "presence" through which he enters into our world.

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