

Holy Spirit P2

God's Ruakh

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Jon: This is The Bible Project podcast. In this episode, we're going to continue a conversation I'm having with Tim Mackie about the Holy Spirit. If you haven't listened to the previous episode, I highly recommend it. We're going to pick up where we left off.

In the last episode, we talked about ruakh being wind, breath, and spirit - a word to used for all three of those concepts. In this episode, we're going to pick up and talk about a fourth meaning of the word ruakh, which is man's spirit. What does it mean for humans to have a spirit and how is that different from the breath of life?

Then we talk about the three main activities of the Holy Spirit in the Old Testament. Last episode, we talked at length about the first one, which is the spirit involved in creating and sustaining all of life. We'll talk about the second activity, which is God empowering people for specific tasks.

Tim: Spirit is something that keeps you alive. You live by the Spirit. But then he says, you can also get out of step with the Spirit. So the spirit never leaves any living creature in the sense that I'm alive. But you can be filled with the spirit of life, but not be in tune with the Spirit of God.

Jon: Then we talk about the third activity, which is God's Spirit recreating the world and humanity itself.

Tim: What's going to have to happen to humanity so that we become people who truly love God and love others.

Jon: Thanks for listening in. Here we go.

Let me do the blitz - recap. This is for my benefit. Creation. Creation is this way to describe when the wilderness, the *tohu wa bohu*, just the waste, and wild creation becomes ordered and meaningful and full of life. In order to do that, God's Spirit, His ruakh is hovering and actively participating in how that was done. So it's the ruakh of God that brought forth creation in the first place. And by creation, we mean that ordered life full place that we know.

Not only that. In Genesis 2 humans were given the ruakh of God so that they weren't just dirt, but we're also now animated. In the worldview, as you look around at yourself and you're breathing in ruakh and you are breathing out ruakh, and you see the wind blowing, and you see things just coming out of the ground, that you can eat, and then other animals eat, and you see all this order in the sky. All of that in your psychology is must be powered by the ruakh of God. It's coming into your lungs, but it's also all around you.

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And so, while everyone alive has the breath of life has God's energizing Spirit keeping them alive, there's another biblical concept that man has his own spirit, his own ruakh. And that's where we're going to pick up right now.

Tim: The last main nuance of the word spirit is a use of spirit to talk about a human mindset, or intellectual consciousness or purpose. Psalm 33:2, "Blessed is the one whose sin the Lord does not count against them, and in whose spirit is no deceit." Deceit or treachery isn't something that I breathe.

Jon: Or is in your breath.

Tim: Yeah. Now, the animating life energy, which is already a metaphor for breath, has another layer of metaphor to it, that we're talking about the invisible mindset or frame of mind that I have here that are consciousness or purpose of treachery or deceit. So you can just say, "There's no deceit."

Jon: So he's just talking about consciousness in a way?

Tim: Yeah. I've used here the phrase "frame of mind," or you could say conscious purpose. Where is deceit? Can I touch deceit? No, it's invisible. It's a series of thoughts and ideas in my mind. But in the Old Testament, there's no word for brain. And so, really mind is probably the best English translation of this use of ruakh.

Jon: Okay. So this idea of breath that animates when the ancient thinker wants to explain how I have purposefully decided to try to deceive, I'm thinking, "Well, this intent is in no way physical, but it belongs to me. It's my intent. It's within me." What is it? Well, it must be that breath. It must be that animated force, which again, it's my life.

Tim: It's your ruakh.

Jon: My ruakh. And we would use the word mind.

Tim: Yeah. In whose mind is no deceit. That's why this is different than heart. In the Old Testament, heart is where is your will and desire and affection. But these uses of spirit have to do more with what we call mind or consciousness.

Jon: Oh interesting.

Tim: In Ecclesiastes, he says, "Don't be quickly provoked in your ruakh, for anger resides in the lap of fools.

Jon: Wouldn't that happen in your heart then if it's about emotion?

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- Tim: So, affection, love, feelings. There's some overlap, but here, in both cases, it's something to do with a purpose. So you get angry in your mind.
- Jon: An intent. There's an intent.
- Tim: Yes. The Psalm 51 is the last example, that David praise after messing up with Bathsheba. And its creation language. He says, "Create in me a pure heart and renew a steadfast ruakh in me."
- Jon: So, create in me new affections and new love and desire—
- Tim: Your will and desire and renew a steadfast.
- Jon: Let me look it up real quick.
- Tim: "A pure heart to create for me, and a spirit that is upright, renew within me. Don't cast me away from you. Don't take your holy ruakh from me."
- Jon: "Create in me a pure heart." When you say "heart," it to means will?
- Tim: Will and feeling and emotion.
- Jon: Will is different than feeling and emotion.
- Tim: It isn't English. I'm just saying, the kinds of things "love the Lord your God with all your heart."
- Jon: So love is the affection.
- Tim: Love is both affection, but it's also about a will and a choice and a devotion too. But spirit in this is about a mindset up or purpose.
- Jon: What's the difference between will and mindset, or will and intention?
- Tim: It might be that they overlap in some way.
- Jon: One begins with an affection and one begins with—
- Tim: Nowhere in the Hebrew Bible do you feel something in your spirit. You feel things in your heart and in your guts. Your spirit is about ideas, purpose, mind. My mind is the perfect word for it.
- Jon: Interesting.

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Tim: Ruakh. It's the animating life principles. It's invisible. But then that invisible animation itself becomes a way of talking about your thoughts and thinking up purposes and ideas, things you want to do.

Jon: It becomes your thoughts.

Tim: Yeah, you're right. I haven't thought about this before, but yeah, intent, conscious intent, mind, purpose, that can be called a person's ruakh. Your ruakh. This is where the idea of God's ruakh and the human ruakh begin to realize late to each other because there's going to flow out of this a whole what flows out, is that God's ruakh can enter into humans and influence them and empower them.

Jon: So even though I'm already being empowered by God's ruakh, I have my own ruakh, and then God can influence my ruakh with his ruakh.

Tim: Yeah, I have my life breath that it's borrowed and gift and animates me. I didn't ask for it. He's just given it to me. I'll have to thank God for it. But then there's my mind.

Jon: My own ruakh.

Tim: My own ruakh.

Jon: That's different than the life breath.

Tim: Correct. Because it's my thoughts and my purposes. But they exist on the level of ruakh because they're invisible. You can't see my thought.

Jon: It's different than my emotions and my affections and my heart.

Tim: Yeah. Even you can't see this podcast, listeners, but I'm pointing into my brain.

Jon: That's your ruakh.

Tim: They don't have any concept of brain. And it's not your heart, it's your ruakh. Where do your thoughts come from?

Jon: Your ruakh.

Tim: It's the invisible ideas and things that occur to you.

Jon: And that's yours.

Tim: It's hard for us not to point to our heads. And that's yours. And so, you have here then this overlapping concept of that God's ruakh, His own personal life presence

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that already animates you anyway, but that can interact with your mind ruakh and influence you.

Who is the first person full of the Spirit in the Bible? This is another good Bible trivia.

Jon: Let me now look. I saw the word "Joseph."

Tim: Oh, well, there you go.

Jon: Really? That's the first person, Joseph?

Tim: Yes. When Pharaoh has those weird dreams in the book of Genesis chapters 40, 41 and 42, and nobody can interpret his dream, then there's this slave in prison, Pharaoh. He interprets the dreams and Pharaoh says, "Oh, my gosh, you are a man in whom is the ruakh of the gods."

Jon: So this is being empowered differently than being created?

Tim: Correct.

Jon: Everyone's been created with God's ruakh.

Tim: He's not saying, "Oh, you're alive."

Jon: He's saying that you have been influenced by thoughts outside of yourself.

Tim: Correct. You've been privy to ideas and thoughts that there's no way you could know them unless they were given to you by a divine source.

Jon: The ruakh of God. So not only this ruakh give life, it gives ideas.

Tim: Yeah. Here, I have to influence or empower or enhance human abilities with divine enablement.

Jon: We call that the Muse.

Tim: Yes, yeah, it's what the Greeks call it. The Muse, which was a god, a deity. There's the deities of music and poetry and so on - the divine Muses.

Jon: We get these ideas that feel like are coming from outside of ourselves.

Tim: Yeah, totally. Isn't a genius? The word genius.

Jon: Oh, really? Let's look it up.

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Tim: Yeah, look it up. The word genie.

Jon: Comes from that?

Tim: Yeah. It's a spirit being that comes into your mind and gives you ideas.

Jon: It says, "Moral spirit who guides and governs an individual through life, from Latin genius "guardian deity or spirit which watches over each person from birth; but it's also a prophetic skill." So these are kind of overlapping ideas - the Muse, to the genius. This is God's ruakh empowering you. That's how we would think about it biblically, is being empowered for a special task given divine skill.

Tim: Let's keep going. This all overlaps. The second ruakh filled person in the Bible is in the next book of the Bible, Exodus. This one's a little more well known.

Exodus chapter 31, God says, "Look, I have chosen Bezalel son of Uri, the son of Hur from the tribe of Judah, and I have filled him with the ruakh of God and with chokmah. I have filled him with the ruakh of God and chokmah and understanding and knowledge, and all kinds of skills to make the artistic designs of wood and stone and gold.

Jon: So this is a second time someone's given the ruakh?

Tim: Yes. First time Joseph is given ideas to interpret a dream and information he couldn't have otherwise known. Here, it's an artist who can—

Jon: Given the Muse.

Tim: The Muse. He's given a divine ruakh, which is equated with wisdom, chokmah as applied knowledge and skill to understand and work with these raw materials and to bring out of them beauty and order that just blows people's minds. This is cool. There are some things transcendent when humans—

Jon: He was Michelangelo of that day.

Tim: Yeah, totally. That's exactly right. There's something transcendent that we're encountering in beautiful art because it's the product of a human. But within the biblical worldview, it's the product of the divine ruakh expressing itself in and through a human. This is beautiful art. Once again, it's not biological life we're talking about.

Jon: We're talking about ability to perceive things that are hard to perceive, and then to be able to apply that. The perceiving of it seems to be the ruakh, and then the

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application seems to be the chokmah. Give and taking it and doing something with it.

Tim: Correct.

Jon: So the ability to see what a dream means, or to see how this connects to that, or where poetry comes from, or to be able to perceive a melody that no one has ever perceived before, all these things that we think of as artistic, that comes from the ruakh of God.

Tim: Ruakh. You were right back at the first page of the Bible - the ruakh of God.

Jon: The creative force.

Jon: The creator bringing light and life and beauty in a garden out of *tohu wa bohu*. It's exactly the same, except it's not biological life, it's order and beauty and meaning. Intent, purpose. Again, intent. It's applying conscious purpose to these raw materials. There's that.

God's ruakh can also influence rulers. It's a big theme in the Old Testament. So there are individuals who are given positions of leadership, and if they do a good job, they are said to be filled with God's ruakh. Joshua, when he's commissioned at the end of the Pentateuch to lead Israel in Moses' place, he's filled with the ruakh of chokmah - the spirit of wisdom. So he's going to need some kind of divine enhancement of his skills.

Jon: Because what we know from the wisdom literature that wisdom is attributed to God. In that sense, then it can have a ruakh.

Tim: We're blending Proverbs Lady Wisdom as a divine attribute of God with spirit and wisdom. They overlap here. Just like wisdom in Proverbs, it's this invisible cause-effect pattern woven into the universe. It's an order, which is exactly what the rule of God is creating. And so, you can say, "The ruakh of chokmah."

This is a really common theme when Israel is on the verge of chaos. When God's people need a leader who will help bring order and justice and why is guidance, you see the ruakh appearing.

Joshua, in the book of Judges, when Israel's getting taken over and beaten by their enemies, there's all these guys: Othniel, Gideon, Jephthah, Sampson. And all of them are great moral characters. But God gives the ruakh to them to enable them to rescue or something like that.

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This is also the role that the prophets play too. God sends his ruakh to influence the biblical prophets. Micah, in chapter 3 says, "I am filled with power and with the ruakh of the Lord, and with justice, and courage to make known to Jacob, his rebellion, and to Israel his sin."

Here is the prophet being given a divine perspective on Israel state. It's kind of like the Joseph image. He's privy to the divine perspective on Israel's history and on the meaning of current events. And then he will call out on God's behalf, how they're breaking the covenant and so on.

This is a whole theme through the Old Testament that God influences humans by his ruakh by connecting himself to their ruakh, their mind.

Jon: Yeah, giving you a perspective that you wouldn't normally have, ideas and insight that you wouldn't normally have.

Tim: Yeah, that's right. All of this is the seedbed then for the work of the Spirit in the ministry of Jesus, and then the way Paul and the other apostles talk about the Spirit renewing your minds," Paul will say. Paul says, "If you live by the Spirit, keep in step with the Spirit to produce the fruit of the Spirit."

So the Spirit is something that keeps you alive. You live by the Spirit. But then he says, "You can also get out of step with the spirit." The spirit never leaves any living creature in the sense that he keeps them alive. But you can be filled with the spirit of life, but not be in tune with the Spirit of God.

Jon: Right. So you could be alive with the breath of God, but the ruakh of God won't be influencing your ruakh.

Tim: Yeah, shaping your mind and your thoughts and your purposes.

[00:18:56]

Jon: Now we're talking about four words that we have that's one word.

Tim: Yeah, that's right because there's no word from mind or brain in Hebrew.

Jon: We've got wind, breath, spirit, and mind. In Hebrew, it's all ruakh. In Greek, we have a word for mind.

Tim: Greek has a separate word for mind to separate it from pneuma, but Paul will often use the word pneuma of a human.

Jon: Paul intentions?

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Tim: To talk about the aspect of humanity that is capable of relating to deep, close connection with God. He'll talk about his spirit being united with God's Spirit or that kind of thing. So yeah, this is true that—

Jon: Did we get all of them? There's not a fifth word? I'm worried now there's a fifth word.

Tim: Those are the four main ones. If you look through the main dictionary entries—

Jon: That's how it's translated?

Tim: Yeah. Wind, breath, mind, spirit.

Jon: And I'm always really fascinated at how language develops. This is a great example. You have a very simple concept that we all understand" breathing and wind. Both of those are very rudimentary, and they would have been some of the first words that we understand as humans because it's like, oh, "That guy's breathing. I have breath. The leaves are moving. What is that?"

But what's cool about that word, let's say it's a ruakh — and that's how I'm learning that word is I'm breathing, that's ruakh. The wind is ruakh — what's cool about that word is it's identifying something that's invisible. Unlike saying, "Hey, what's that?" "That's a table." It's like, "Okay, cool. That's table or that's a rock," it's something that I can't see, but it's something that's very significant. It keeps me alive.

Tim: And very clearly real.

Jon: And very clearly real.

[crosstalk 00:20:53]

Tim: ...my imagination goes.

Jon: It's out there.

Tim: Yes, yes.

Jon: No one's debating about whether or not ruakh is real. People debate whether or not spirit is real or ghosts are real, but no one's debating about the wind.

Tim: That's right. That's a good point. Keep going. It's a good train of thought.

Jon: So, what's significant about that word is it's invisible but it's super important. I know that it's real. It keeps me alive. Also, it influences everything around me. And so, as

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I'm wrestling through a more abstract concept, such as God's divine nature, and how it interacts with me in the world, I need language to start to think about that.

I can create a new word, but that's weird because now I have this blank canvas, and people are going to look at me, and they're like, "That word is gibberish," and I have to explain that what that word is. So instead, I use a word that they already know, that I'm intimately familiar with, they are intimately familiar with. And we can start there because it's a great metaphor to begin to talk about something very significant.

Tim: Correct.

Jon: Now, all of a sudden, we have the same word, and it means wind, breath, and spirit. And so, when I say in Genesis 1:1, "The Spirit of God, the ruakh of God is hovering over the waters," you have this image, you have handles to this thing, and it makes sense, and you're thinking about God in that way, but you know I'm not talking about literal breath. But it's a good place to start.

Then I'm going along in life, and I realize there's this weird thing, it's like consciousness. I have this ability in my own self to decide something, and then make it happen.

Tim: To think up, we call them concepts or ideas.

Jon: To think of a concept, to have an idea, and then turn that idea into a reality. What is that? Where is that coming from?

Tim: I don't see it. Like I don't see breath.

Jon: Right. I can't see your ideas. You could be sitting there right now coming up with an idea, and I would have no idea.

Tim: Is that pun intended?

Jon: No, it just came up. I would have no clue that you are ideating because it's invisible. So I go, "Okay, what's that? What's that thing that I have? It's super powerful."

Tim: And it produces a visible result in that I go do something.

Jon: I can decide, I'm going to go deceive someone, and that deception is very significant. It's going to change the course of their life, and it happens within my owns something — I was about to use a word — in me. It's invisible, it's effective. It belongs to me, and I'm like, "What is that? How do we talk about that? Let's use the word ruakh."

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Tim: It's your ruakh.

Jon: It's my ruakh. Now, I should step back because as soon as I say that, you'd go, "Yeah, you have breath. You have ruakh." And there's already a very significant spiritual understanding of that, which is that breath comes from God. God gave you that breath. God gave you life.

And you're like, "Yeah. Your breath and God gave it to you, it's your life, and it will be taken from you one day, and it'll go back to God." "No, no, no, that's not the ruakh. I'm talking about. I'm talking about the ruakh that I have that I'm using, and it's a different ruakh." And people go, "Oh, I get that because God has a ruakh. And it's His intention and His creative ability to do things. So yeah, you have a ruakh too."

Tim: That was really enjoyable to watch you process through that. The way you just phrased all of that is what was in my head, but I've never even connected it all that way. But that's exactly right. It's that there's a unity to all those ideas in that word. That in English we have separated into different words altogether. And that's the challenge.

Jon: And that's just to start the conversation. Right?

Tim: Right. This is just the ways the word gets used. The second layer to this is to then go look at all of the things that God—

Jon: God's Spirit does?

Tim: Now we've got the range of meaning of the word, let's look at all the places where God's ruakh is doing things. That fits into three buckets.

Jon: That we talked about two of them already.

Tim: We talked of them, yeah.

Jon: One in much detail.

Tim: About God's ruakh as a creator - the creator and sustainer of all life. We talked about that.

Jon: Then we talked about the second one, which is—

Tim: Of God's ruakh that can interact with and influence your human ruakh.

Jon: Then we talked about Joseph there.

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Tim: Joseph, we talked about Bezalel the artist. Here, we're in the category, you could call it God's anointing. That a biblical image for anointing spirit.

Jon: That's a Bible word though.

Tim: Yeah, it is. But it's so cool because it's where the image of the Spirit as a liquid begins.

Jon: I've never thought of the spirit as a liquid. Am I supposed to?

Tim: Well, if you're going to be filled up with the Spirit, or the Spirit is poured out, those are liquid metaphor.

Jon: Those are liquid metaphors, but I've never realized that.

Tim: Yes, yeah. Those are both liquid. Those both depend on a handful of passages in the Old Testament, where the Spirit is described as liquid. Saul and David, when they are appointed as kings, they get oil. Samuel the prophet comes and pours oil over their heads as a symbol of commissioning and anointing.

Then on both of those occasions, marks a moment where God's ruakh fills them or comes upon them to commission them to rule and lead to people. So that's the anointing.

Also, the high priests were anointed with oil. They're not connected with ruakh, but they are anointed with oil. That's where that image comes from. To be anointed means to be appointed and commissioned to do something on God behalf.

Jon: And you're always some spot on you.

Tim: Yeah. But it's with Israel's kings, the kings, specifically David that the anointing oil then gets connected to the Spirit coming upon him. That's why he can say at the poem, he says at the end of his life...In Second Samuel 23, he writes this poem, and he says, "The ruakh of God speaks by means of me." And he writes this poem.

So David had this awareness of this special empowering presence of God's ruakh as he was king. And that's why in Psalm 51, he's afraid that his sin with Bathsheba is going to forfeit. He's so compromised, he's afraid that he's forfeited the special empowering presence of God's ruakh on him. So he begs God to "create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew an upright ruakh in me. Don't cast me away, please don't take your holy ruakh from me."

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- Jon: And he's talking about God's ruakh, not his ruakh.
- Tim: That's right. Give me a new ruakh, and he uses—
- Jon: So, give a new mind, a new sense of self.
- Tim: That's right. A whole new value system and a whole new way of thinking about myself and other people. He uses the word create from Genesis 1. It's going to have to be so radical.
- Jon: It's like, you're going to have to recreate it.
- Tim: Yes. It's like brand new creation of my value system of my mind. The parallel to that is—
- Jon: That's like true repentance.
- Tim: Yes, yeah. And then, renew a ruakh of integrity in my mind. So give me a new heart, give me a new ruakh that's full of integrity, and don't take your holy ruakh from me.
- Jon: So your personal presence?
- Tim: The anointing presence that commissioned me and empowers me to be the king of Israel.
- Jon: And that only happens with kings?
- Tim: No, no. It happens with Bezalel to be an artist. It happens with Joseph. It happens with a number of really morally questionable figures in the book of Judges.
- Jon: They get God's ruakh?
- Tim: Yeah. So there's both Othniel - he's the first one, Ehud, Gideon. You know, they're mixed bag. Gideon is pretty a good guy. He's kind of a coward. He lacks faith.
- But Samson, he's just a horrible, horrible man. I don't know how on earth he's been whitewashed to the Christian children's books. Because the real story, he is a sex addict. He can't get enough sex. He is full of himself. He doesn't care about the laws of the Torah at all. And he's totally violent, super violent.
- Jon: And then God's ruakh appoints him and anoints him.
- Tim: But God's ruakh can influence his ruakh to do what needs to be done at moments of crisis. The whole book of Judges there's another example of God working with Israel

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as he fights with them. The fact that God's Ruakh can influence someone doesn't mean that he endorses them of all their behavior.

Jon: And it doesn't mean that he has recreated them.

Tim: It doesn't mean that his heart has been recreated like...

[crosstalk 00:31:00]

Jon: It just means that he's come and said, "I'm going to influence you right now. I'm going to help you understand this dream, Joseph. I'm going to empower you, Samson, to—

Tim: "To kill a bunch of Philistines to rescue the Israelites."

Jon: "And I'm going to give you David, the ability to lead as a king." And so, it's God's ruakh interacting in an anointed way with our ruakh.

Tim: That's leaders. The other main type of person who gets that anointing ruakh of empowerment are the prophets. Here, it's God's ruakh influencing the ruakh of these prophets so that what they say out loud, what they go preach on the street corner is what God wants his people to hear, usually to expose their injustice or rebellion or idolatry, to warn them about the consequences and to give them hope about the future.

Jon: So could we say that Balaam...was God's ruakh annoying Balaam? You know, you don't use the word, but interacting with using Balaam?

Tim: Yeah, Spirit comes upon Balaam.

Jon: God's ruakh comes upon Balaam.

Tim: God's ruakh comes upon Balaam.

Jon: And so that would be in that same category of God?

Tim: Yeah, there you go.

Jon: What's the word we're using?

Tim: I don't know. Let's have a debate. We could do "anointing." That's very biblical, I agree with you. Some people use empowering - God's empowering presence or God's empowering ruakh. The word appoints or commission I think kind of gets an

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English the idea across because it's about a task or a purpose, whereas empowering is like, "Makes me strong." Anointing is I don't know. Whatever.

Jon: It's going to do something. It's going to give me something.

Tim: Yeah. But appointing or commissioning gets an important part of that.

Jon: It's related to a task.

Tim: A task.

Jon: And it is always related to a specific task that needs to get done that God's like, "Look, I know you're screwed up and I haven't made you a new human — which we'll get to — but I need to use you for this task." God's Spirit does that.

Tim: The biblical authors would say, "God's Spirit came upon that person." To talk about the Spirit coming on someone in modern English, in the American context, that means so many things depending on what church tradition you grew up in. But in the Bible, Balaam, it's not as if his eyes rolled back in his head. He's just doing his deal as a pagan sorcerer. But what he says is in fact what God wanted Balaam to say.

If you saw Samson out there knocking down the pillars of that temple, killing all those people, you would see a man full of vengeance.

Jon: But Balaam was aware of what was happening.

Tim: That's true. Balaam is aware that he is—

Jon: Was Samson aware of what was happening?

Tim: He calls upon God and says, "God, this one last time, Give me some strength."

Jon: David's aware that he had this. The prophets are aware.

Tim: That's a good point.

Jon: So there's always a sense of being aware that it's happening, but it's not a parent.

Tim: Yeah, it's a good point.

Jon: An outside observer wouldn't go, "Oh, that guy has God's appointed ruakh."

Tim: An outside observer may not know. Right. The point is, they're not depicted as having some glowing aura around them. A cloud doesn't descend on Balaam.

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Jon: They're not having a Holy Spirit seizure or something.

Tim: Correct. Just to remind our listeners, we haven't even talked about the New Testament yet. This is all just Old Testament usage. So that's second bucket, God's empowering, commissioning, appointing Spirit covers a whole bunch of things that God's ruakh does. Our vocabulary for artistic or creative inspiration is it's a breath word inspirit.

Jon: Oh, inspiration.

Tim: We have our vocabulary for ideas occurring to us uses the image of it being breathed into me from the outside. It inspirited.

Jon: Well, that's what it feels like. It feels like the Muse. It feels like something gave me this thought.

Tim: Totally.

Jon: Something gave me this ability to see this way, and I'm just an instrument making it happen.

Tim: Yeah. Many cultures have a concept of the oracle of a person who's in touch with the gods and therefore, can be given revelations and so on. Not just today. And the Bible just is like that, too. But the Bible is working with a related idea that humans can be influenced by God's ruakh.

What's important there, and in the Old Testament this is key, one, it's the seedbed of the whole concept of spiritual gifts in the New Testament is that where the spirit empowers people for the mission of Jesus in the world and in the church comes out of this concept of the appointing Spirit in the Old Testament.

Jon: Then why doesn't Paul ever talk about like the spiritual gift of arts and crafts?

Tim: I don't know. I don't know. I don't think his list of the gifts are comprehensive. They're just examples. But also a very important idea is that, a human fully alive to God is a human empowered, connected to an influenced by God's ruakh. And we're very close to the concept of the incarnation of God entering humanity through the work of the pneuma in the New Testament, that God wants to be so closely bound to humans.

We have this concept of spirituality, that if I am truly a spiritual person, I somehow have to divorce myself from human life for existence.

Jon: Cardinal existence?

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Tim: Yeah. Or even the word spirit in English is in contrast to what is physical. And so, the most spiritual people in many religious traditions are people who are called aesthetes. They withdraw from everything that's physical. They eat simple foods. They don't engage in the physical world. and that's a foreign idea to the Jewish Christian tradition.

In the Bible to be influenced by God's Spirit means I'm more human. If there's more of God at work in me, it doesn't mean I'm less human. I'm more human.

Jon: I'm doing these human things in the way they were really meant to be done.

Tim: Correct, yeah.

Jon: I'm not ignoring them.

Tim: There are so many popular expressions of this in Christian spirituality of like, 'More of God and less of me.' Well, okay, less of my like selfishness, sure, but not less of me.

Jon: But more of your creative.

Tim: Yeah, more of God and more of me. I'm capable of so much more if all of me was more.

Jon: More of my love, more of my compassion, more of my creativity and imagination, less of my selfishness.

Tim: Selfishness, physical appetites that make me do selfish things. I don't want less of that, but more of me as a human made in God's image.

Jon: But wouldn't aesthetes say that? "More of me, more of my joy, more of my love."

Tim: Sure.

Jon: "Less sure worrying about food and chasing down fashion."

Tim: Yeah, you're right. I think the best of the monastic tradition in Christian history has that sense of withdraw and then engagement for service and love and ministry. But the extremes of the Christian monastic, like Simeon Stylites...You know about Simeon Stylites?

Jon: No.

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Tim: He crawled up on top of a pole and lived on top of a pole for years. His legs atrophied, got gangrene. He died up there.

Jon: That's interesting.

Tim: He was up there for years. It was just purely—

Jon: How would eat?

Tim: People would bring food up to him. He was basically just "I'm on this top of this pole for Jesus." He wrote all this poetry that's really disturbing. Simeon Stylites. He was definitely more of God and less of me as a human because my body is...

[crosstalk 00:39:32]

Jon: I don't need this half of my humanity in my legs.

Tim: He was skeptical. He was a Syrian Christian monk who lived I think in the fourth century or something. Anyway. That's an example of the idea of if I'm truly spiritual and in touch with God's Spirit I have to divorce myself from the physical.

Jon: But when David was more in touch with the Spirit, he was a better King.

Tim: Correct.

Jon: And when Samson was a better fighter, Joseph was better at interpreted dreams, and Bezalel was better...what kind of art did he do?

Tim: He designed the tabernacle. He designed the Ark of the Covenant.

Jon: Which I've heard it's pretty cool. I've never seen it.

Tim: Or Paul would say, "You're a better pastor, you're a better administrator, you're a better servant to the poor because of God's Spirit in you." So that's all the appointing spirit. That's God's ruakh interacting.

Jon: Activity number two of the spirit.

Tim: Huge category.

[00:41:19]

Tim: Third thing that God's ruakh does in the Old Testament is once Israel and all humanity has rebelled and made a mess of God's world and made a mess of Israel, then the prophets who are appointed by God's Spirit to accuse Israel, warn them of

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the consequences, but then give them promises of hope, that a future ruler would come and bring a future hope to creation and that God's people would one day actually not rebel, but be truly faithful. All of those things are connected to God's ruakh. It's parallel to God's creating ruakh, but then it's God's ruakh bringing about new acts of creation.

An example is Isaiah 11:1-11. It's one of the coolest Messianic prophecies in the whole of the Old Testament. You have a king coming from the line of David. We're told that four times God's ruakh will influence him. So the ruakh of the Lord will rest on this future king: the ruakh of wisdom and understanding, the ruakh of counsel and strength, the ruakh of the knowledge and fear of the Lord.

Jon: What's the difference between all of these? They're just different ways of talking about God?

Tim: Yeah. God's ruakh rests on this person and permeates their wisdom and understanding. It permeates their counsel. It's like Solomon. This king will have wisdom understanding, strategy, power, he'll fear the Lord - we're back in the wisdom literature here. Every aspect of these kings' leadership will be influenced enhanced empowered by God's ruakh.

Then the lines that follow are he's going to bring justice to the poor. Everybody who takes advantage of the poor, he's going to pronounce guilty. Then this is the lion and the lamb passage. The lion will lay down with the ox and the child will play near the Cobras nest and earth will be permeated with the knowledge of God. Isaiah 11. So this king will bring about a new creation.

Jon: He'll bring about something so radically new, the only way we can describe it right now is something as absurd as a lion and the lamb chilling together.

Tim: Yeah. And the bear becoming a total vegetarian.

Jon: And kids playing with Cobras.

Tim: That's right.

Jon: It's just happening in India, probably right now.

Tim: And at the core of it all, it's brought about and led by a human king who is hyper influenced and empowered and permeated by God's ruakh. Four times over God's ruakh is —

Jon: And so, this is a picture of what you would call new creation because it's a creative act to do this that's going to fundamentally change the way creation is. Right?

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Tim: How it operates.

Jon: How it operates.

Tim: Yeah, and at its helm. Here, the point is the king at the helm of the new creation is described as being wholly permeated by God's ruakh.

Jon: Is it the prophets who first start talking about things changing in the creative order is dramatically?

Tim: Yeah, it's the poetic imagination of the prophets.

Jon: So King David in any of his poems, or anything, he was never thinking about...I guess in that one verse we talked about, he said, "Create in me a new—

Tim: "Create a new heart in me." Yeah, that's in the second part.

Jon: And that's the same kind of idea.

Tim: Yeah.

Jon: It's like, "I have a heart, it needs to be fundamentally different, recreate it."

Tim: Yeah, that's right. That's the second part. If creation itself is going to be overhauled by a king who's empowered and permeated by God's Spirit, God's own people who inhabit, who are led by that King and inhabit that, how are any new humans not going to be like Israel or humanity?

Tim: What's going to have to happen to humanity so that we become people who truly love God and love others?

Jon: We have to be recreated.

Tim: The prophets use the vocabulary of new creation and spirit together. So Ezekiel is the most important prophet here in Ezekiel chapters 36 and 37. God says he's going to give a new heart and a new spirit to his new covenant people. "I'll remove your heart of stone and give you a heart of flesh. I will put my ruakh within you and it will come cause you to obey my statutes and observed my laws."

So, Ezekiel envisions that the only way that a human is ever going to be fully alive to God and love God and love neighbor is if God's ruakh recreate them. Specifically, their heart. And that's exactly what David prays for after the Bathsheba incident in Psalm 51. "Creates a pure heart and renew a ruakh of integrity within me."

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- Jon: He wants his heart and his ruakh to be renewed.
- Tim: And that's exactly what Ezekiel says. "I'll put a new ruakh in you — it's my ruakh — and that will transform your heart, your value system."
- Jon: Your ruakh is not recreated; you're given a new ruakh.
- Tim: Yeah. For Ezekiel, he's so pessimistic of the human condition. He's like, "Scrap the old. You need brand new humans."
- Jon: And that's what Paul's essentially says too.
- Tim: Well, yes. But let's not get to Paul yet. The next prophecy in Ezekiel 37 is the Valley of dry bones. Right after that is the valley of dry bones. He has this strange dream vision, where he's looking out this Mojave Desert of skeletons. Then God says, "Start yelling to the ruakh."
- Jon: To the wind? He's referring to the wind there?
- Tim: Ezekiel 37 is brilliant because it's melding together all three meanings or nuances of ruakh. "God brought me out by his ruakh into this valley." Then God says—
- Jon: By the way, what does that mean? This is like a prophetic—
- Tim: It's like a dream vision he's had. He has tons of these.
- Jon: It's like, "God gave me a dream."
- Tim: It's a symbolic dream vision. He's in a dream.
- Jon: A way to say, "God gave me a dream," it says, "His ruakh brought me to this place."
- Tim: Correct. That's right.
- Jon: Got it.
- Tim: And "shout to the ruakh and say to the bones, I'm going to make ruakh enter you all." So there, it's God's ruakh led me here. Shout to the ruakh. God says, "I'm going to enter the bones." And then God says, "I'm going to make ruakh enter the bones." Which there we think creative life energy.
- "I'm going to put sinews and flesh and cover you with skin and put ruakh in you all so that you come alive, and then you'll know that I'm the Lord. So I started prophesying as I was commanded, and as I did so, there was a noise, behold rattling,

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and the bones started coming together. Then I looked, there's sinews growing on them, and flesh grew and skin covering them." He's watching—

Jon: It's the opposite of them decaying.

Tim: Yes, the opposite of decomposition. Recomposition. "But once they're all put together, there's no ruakh in them. Then God said to me, "Prophecy to the ruakh. Just start talking to the ruakh." And you're like, "Wait, the wind, or the breath?

"Prophecy son of man. Say to the ruakh "thus says the Lord God, come from the four ruchot."

Jon: Plural of ruakh?

Tim: Yes. "Oh, ruakh, breathe; bring ruakh to these bodies that they may come to life." It's playing on the ambiguity of ruakh that it can mean wind, it can mean breath, it can mean God's personal presence. It's uniting all of them.

"I prophesied and as I did, so the ruakh came into them, and they all came to life." This is all a symbolic visionary metaphor he goes on to apply to the exiles. Because the exiles are saying, "God's forgotten about us, in Babylon, we're dead." And he says, "Well, you are actually dead."

Jon: "You're like this heap of skeleton."

Tim: This is what you're like. And if you are ever going to love God and love your neighbor, something like this is going to have to happen to you." The brand new recreation of humans.

Jon: This would be so cool to animate.

Tim: Oh, dude, it would be incredible. So, Ezekiel 37 is something of a high point in the Old Testament conception of God's ruakh, because it unites breath, God's creative life. It's Ezekiel appointed as the prophet by God's ruakh and the only hope for creation and humanity is for God to recreate humans in our hearts. And through a metaphor of "to create," "to make new humans" just like Genesis 2. And that's as good as summary of the Old Testament of vision of ruakh as you could ask for.

Jon: Thanks for listening in. That's the end of this episode. We're going to continue and I think finish off the conversational on Holy Spirit in the next episode, where we break ground into the New Testament and talk about Jesus and how the apostles build on this rich Hebrew concept of God's ruakh.

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