**Word Study for Lesson on “Spirit”**

**Spirit** in Hebrew: 7307: *ru’ach or ruwach*

Wind; air

Breath

Mind

Spirit

Animation or movement

Prophetic spirit

Spirit of God: the Holy Spirit

The Hebrew word *ruwach* lies behind the Greek word *pneuma* in the New Testament. It is used for divine forces (along with spirit and wind). The OT view involves the creative action of the one God. “In Judaism the spirit of God is especially the spirit of prophecy.” (*Theological Dictionary of the New Testament)* This wind blows through the Old Testament, that prophetic spirit is what is moving and inspiring us. If we would remove prophecy and healing from the Bible, would there be anything worthy left? “Where there are no prophets, there is obviously no holy spirit. In fact, there are a few instances in the rabbinical writings where the holy spirit appears before God as an advocate. The holy spirit departed from Israel after the last prophets – Haggai, Zechariah, and Malachi. There is a 400-year gap between the Old Testament and the New Testament. No prophets or prophecy. As ritual increases, prophecy declines. (rabbinical writings) At Jesus’ baptism, there is a dramatic return of the spirit.

**Spirit** in Greek: 4151: *pneuma*

Spirit of God: the Holy Spirit (*spiritus sanctum* in Latin)

Breath (breath of life)

air

Ghost as in “Holy Ghost”

Vital principle

Wind

There is Movement in all of these definitions

Rational spirit by which a being feels, thinks, wills, decides, the soul

God’s power and agency

*Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*

“*Pneuma* the elemental natural and vital force which acts as a stream of air in the blowing of the wind and the inhaling and exhaling of breath and hence transferred as the breath of the spirit that may be detected outwardly and inwardly. It fills with inspiration and grips with enthusiasm. What is true without is no less true within. Breath may be discerned with movement and it is also a sign, condition and agent of life. It also suggests soul or spirit or experiences of mental or spiritual reality.

Any kind of breath or spirit which blows in the invisible world of the divine. The word spirit originally means wind or breath. There is no concept of the ‘holy spirit’ in secular Greek. (It is a unique term in the Bible.)”

**Inspiration**: in Greek is *theopneustos*:

God-breathed, inspired by God, relating directly to God’s Spirit (pneuma). The word occurs nowhere else in the N.T., only in II Tim 3:16

“*Theopneustos* is also used more generally of the divine influence which enabled the human instruments of revelation – prophets, psalmists, apostles – to speak as well as to write God’s word” (*The Origin of the Bible*, page 30).

**Inspiration**: 1820 Webster’s Dictionary:

* The act of breathing or drawing air into the lungs; inhaling
* The infusion of ideas into the mind by the Holy Spirit
* The act or power of exercising an elevating or stimulating influence upon the intellect or emotions
* A sudden brilliant, creative, timely idea (Oxford Dictionary)
* The divine influence believed to have led to the writing of the Bible (Oxford Dictionary)

**Inspire**: 1828 Webster’s Dictionary

* To draw in; to inhale; to take in breath
* To infuse into the mind
* To suggest ideas or communicate divine instructions to the mind.