

THE HOLY SPIRIT AND CREATIVITY

The Holy Spirit was given temporarily in the Old Testament and there was always some functional reason to empower certain people. All had a specific task to accomplish or assignments to complete. However, there were only four groups that Scripture records as being empowered by the Holy Spirit in the Old Testament:

- Civil leaders
- Judges
- Prophets
- Craftsmen

I find it really interesting that one these four categories was for creative endeavours. If you are a creative person, one of the greatest challenges you will find is involving God through out the entire creative process. Being the Creator, it's important to involve God with your creativity. You don't want your skills, abilities and competencies to ever cause you to forget who it was who gave you them in the first place. What's more, it is by His grace that you were empowered anyway! If you are an artistic person, don't you just love the moments when the creative flow is going at full speed, and things are coming together effortlessly?

I love the quote from Eric Liddell (the Scottish runner who was depicted in the film Chariots of Fire); he said that when he ran he felt God's pleasure. Eric Liddell was doing what God had gifted him to do. We all have moments when we feel the pleasure of God. There are times when it is obvious that the Holy Spirit is working in us to solve a problem or provide a strategy, and this often involves a creative process. In those moments it is the Holy Spirit perfecting God's will for us and bringing glorify Christ. Therefore, we have been plugged in to His creativity.

In the Bible, artists were the first people to be filled with the Holy Spirit. In the Old Testament, we often find quotes saying that the Spirit of God came on someone, such as we see in 2 Chronicles 15:1, **"Now the Spirit of God came on Azariah the son of Oded,"** or in 2 Chronicles 24:20, **"Then the Spirit of God came on Zechariah the son of Jehoiada the priest..."** However, it was Bezalel who was the first person in the Bible about whom it was said that he was "filled with the Spirit," which we find in Exodus 31:1-5:

Now the Lord spoke to Moses, saying, **"See, I have called by name Bezalel, the son of Uri, the son of Hur, of the tribe of Judah. And I have filled him with the Spirit of God in wisdom, in understanding, in knowledge, and in all kinds of craftsmanship, to make artistic designs for work in gold, in silver, and in bronze, and in the cutting of stones for settings, and in the carving of wood, that he may work in all kinds of craftsmanship."**

Bezalel means "under the shadow or protection of God." Isn't it interesting that the first person in the Bible about whom it was said that they were "filled with the Spirit" was an artisan, and not a priest, a king or a prophet? The fact that the Lord gave such a prominent place to art in His dwelling place, the tabernacle, should encourage all of us. I believe this was the prophetic model for His church, **"The tabernacle not made with hands"** (Hebrews 9:11). This should declare loudly the importance that He gives to creativity in His church, His present dwelling place. In Exodus 28:3, we see that the artists working with Bezalel were also filled with the Holy Spirit, **"So you shall speak to all who are gifted artisans, whom I have filled with the spirit of wisdom, that they may make Aaron's garments, to consecrate him, that he may minister to Me as priest."**

Here we also see that the Lord wanted an artist to make the priest's garments. How would this apply to us? It seems that there is a special revelation of the Lord that can come through art which touches His basic nature as the Creator. This is why those who know Him, and are changed into His image by seeing Him, should also be creative. Creativity is His basic nature. Therefore, Christians should be the most creative people on the earth, and art that is inspired by the Holy Spirit should be worn by the priests of the Lord like a garment.

We should also consider that artists, who are inspired by the Holy Spirit, and who will earnestly follow Him as Bezalel, do have a similar role, like prophets and priests, to reveal Him to the people. To reveal the Lord is the most basic purpose for all art forms, and not only is it the highest form of art, but it is the only true fulfilment that an artist will ever have. Anything else will only lead to a perversion of the gift. The church was the great custodian of art throughout much of the church age, and most of the great works of art were commissioned by the church. As the church drifted from her pure devotion to the Lord, the art commissioned by the church also drifted. But that is about to change!

God is raising up gifted people who will be able to reveal Him to the masses through their art form. I also believe that all forms of "art" will be restored in the church as a pure devotion to the Lord. In Isaiah 42:14 the Lord speaks concerning a "new thing" that is about to spring forth... ***"I have held My peace a long time, I have been still and restrained Myself. Now I cry out like a woman in labour, I will pant and gasp at once."*** The Lord desires to birth something new in churches today. He wants the church to reflect His creative attributes. He wants people to see Him revealed in the artistic expression of His people. And, He wants people to come to church for that reason. The Church must embrace its former glory so that the very same glory may be restored.

Let's shun mediocrity and welcome the excellence that the Holy Spirit brings to our creativity. Let us stop worshipping in empty shells that serve our purposes but do not reflect the majesty of God. For surely, God's house is more precious than functionality. If God has called us to do something, He will obviously give us the talent and means to do it. So we must desire to do all that we do with excellence, and excellence of character is the foundation of excellence in our work. The greatest excellence of character is the love of God. Out of loving God, all true nobility flows, as well as all true creativity.

Soon there will be a movement in the Church to recover true creativity in worship, and it is going to take place chiefly among those baptised in the Holy Spirit. Then, those who are truly filled with His Spirit will not be able to contain the creativity that God is going to release through them. It will pour out of them like rivers of living water. Again, those who truly know the Creator will be the most creative people on the planet. We will soon see artists create paintings that will come straight from the throne room of God. By looking at them, people will receive an impartation of deep prophetic vision and a heavenly perspective. In the same way, people with other creative gifts, such as music or writing, will receive this greater anointing, and through their creative gifts the whole church will be drawn to the throne room of God from which it came. There will be songs that call the righteous to the righteous cause, and help set their lives on fire for God. There will be films and TV programs that simply grip the souls of those who see them so that they give their lives to the service of our King. Mark my words, these things are about to take place.

The Lord obviously wants to share His creativity with His people. It is the basic nature of the New Covenant that we do not have to be perfect to come into the Lord's presence, but that we get perfected by coming into His presence. The closer we are to Him, the more clean and pure we shall be, and so too will our creativity. Let's draw near...