

## THE SPIRIT OF GOD

**ISAIAH 11:2:** וְנָחָה עָלָיו רוּחַ יְהוָה רוּחַ חָכְמָה וּבִינָה רוּחַ עֲצָה וּגְבוּרָה רוּחַ דַּעַת וְיִרְאַת יְהוָה  
“And the spirit of YHVH shall rest on him: A spirit of wisdom and understanding (insight), a spirit of advice (counsel) and valour (strength, might), a spirit of knowledge and reverence for (fear/awe of) YHVH.”

---

**GENESIS 41:38:** וַיֹּאמֶר פַּרְעֹה אֶל-עַבְדָּיו הֲנִמְצָא כָזֶה אִישׁ אֲשֶׁר רוּחַ אֱלֹהִים בּוֹ  
“And Pharaoh said to his servants, ‘Who could we find like this, a man in whom is the Spirit of God?’”

**Etz Hayim commentary:** This is the first mention of an individual so endowed. Possession of the “spirit of God” impels one to undertake a mission (Num. 27:18 – Joshua), imparts extraordinary energy and drive (Judg. 3:10 – Othniel and 11:29 – Jephthah), and produces uncommon intelligence and practical wisdom.

---

**Robert G. Boling – The Judges, Anchor Bible series:**

In the book, the Spirit of God stands for an impersonal power or force which can be absorbed or can so envelop a man that he becomes capable of extraordinary deeds.

The prime symbol of YHVH’s participation in the raising up of the judge is “the Spirit of YHVH.” This spirit “comes on” Othniel and Jephthah, begins “to prod” Samson and regularly strengthens him in the nick of time, thus saving him for the office of judge. On one occasion, this spirit so completely takes charge of Gideon that the latter mobilises far more fighting men than are really needed, a rare achievement in the period. **A spirit clothed is a most significant conception of inspiration and revelation.**

The Spirit of YHVH is an abstraction referring to a quality of force which can infiltrate or be absorbed into human beings and exert great power. The presence of the Spirit of YHVH does not make the man an automaton; the Spirit of YHVH is one of many components in the personality.

---

**Victor H. Matthews – Judges and Ruth, New Cambridge Bible Commentary:**

There is an interesting similarity between Gideon’s experience and that described in the Babylonian account of creation, the Enuma Elish. In that epic story, the god Marduk is recruited by the other gods to be their champion in a cosmic struggle against the Tiamat, the watery goddess of chaos. In preparation for his battle against her and her monstrous hordes, Marduk is given divine weapons and then **covers his body** “with raging fire,” symbolic of his enhanced powers.

Investiture ceremonies depicted in Egyptian art also evoke an aspect of Gideon’s receipt of divine power, e.g., the scenes in the El Amarna tomb paintings of Meryra portray the divine pharaoh placing the robes and insignia of office upon his favoured official. This bears a striking resemblance to the investiture scenes described in the Joseph narrative and in the Assyrian Annals of Kings Sargon II and Ashurbanipal.

---

**Job 29: 14:** “I **donned** righteousness and it **clothed** me; like a robe and turban was my judgement.”

**Rashi:** I pursued righteousness; it is present with me as a robe and turban, which are beautiful ornaments; so was my judgment beautiful and pure.

**E. John Hamlin: Judges: At Risk in the Promised Land, International Theological Commentary:**

The Spirit of YHVH that dwelt within Gideon brought not extraordinary physical power but wisdom to deliver his people by clever strategy.

---

**Ruach Elohim:** i) in Joseph; ii) **filled** Bezalel (x2); iii) **rested on** Bilaam, **will rest on** Jesse’s stock; iv) **on** Othniel, Jephthah, Saul’s messengers, Saul, Azariah (Asa’s reign); + v) **clothed Zechariah** (son of Jehoiada the Priest in Joash’s reign – 2 Chr. 24:20).

**Ruach Adonai:** i) **clothed Gideon**; ii) **began to impel** Samson; iii) **rushed on** Samson (x4), Saul (x3); iv) **rushed to** David; v) **spoke in** David; vi) Micah - full of strength **with** Ruach Adonai, and justice and might; vii) **fell on** Ezekiel; and viii) **on** Jahaziel (Jehoshaphat’s reign).