

The Holy Spirit
The Holy Spirit Symbolized in Scripture

Lesson #2 for April 8, 2006

Scriptures: Genesis 1:26; 3:22; Isaiah 6:8; Matthew 28:19; 1 Cor. 12:4-11,28; 2 Cor. 13:13.

1. When we are trying to explain something that is hard to explain we often use similes metaphors or symbols. The Bible is full of different names symbols and metaphors for the Holy Spirit. To mention just a few: “He is a **light to illuminate, a friend to counsel, water to refresh, a comforter to cheer, a teacher to teach, a guide to direct, oil to make us shine, a fire to purge, a dove to sympathize, a seal to secure and identify, a witness to confirm, a strength to keep us, a power to pray for us, a source of fruit bearing, sap to make us grow, a remembrancer to remind us** that all the precious promises of God are yea and amen in Christ, and in us as **the earnest of the coming glory.**” F. E. Marsh, *Emblems of the Holy Spirit*, p. 246; *Adult Teacher’s SS Bible Study Guide*, p. 17
2. At the very beginning of Jesus’ ministry He was identified with the Holy Spirit at the time of His baptism. Why do you think this is important? Did Jesus need this to go to work?
3. Why do you think the Holy Spirit is symbolized by a dove? Doves could be used as sacrifices if you were very poor. They were regarded as being symbols of purity—being unmixed with evil—and in that sense harmless (Matthew 10:16).
4. What does this mean to you: “only the purifying, regenerating, and sanctifying power of the Spirit can enable us to reflect the purity and character of Jesus?” (*Ibid*, Sunday, April 2).
5. **How would you determine if the Holy Spirit is dwelling in your life?**
6. We have already mentioned some of the many ways in which the Spirit is symbolized. Some of the major ways include **water** (John 7:37-39); **oil** (Matthew 25:1-4), and **a seal or guarantee** (2 Corinthians 1:22). What does each of these symbols mean to you? Do they help you to understand His personality, His work, or His nature?
7. Why do you think there are so many different symbols for the Holy Spirit in Scripture? Wouldn’t it be better to have one good symbol instead of a lot of different ones? How did this situation come about?
8. Read John 7:37-39. How does the symbol of water specifically relate to the work of the Holy Spirit? Clearly water is essential to life. The Holy Spirit is necessary for our Christian growth. (Isaiah 44:3,4). His presence is like water to parched land. Just as a tree draws in water from the place that it lives in and thus is able to grow we should seek to ground our lives in the truths presented by the Holy Spirit.
9. What was the primary use of oil in Jesus’ day? From a spiritual perspective it was for lighting lamps. See Matthew 25:1-4.
10. **Read Zechariah 4:1-6 what does this passage say to us about the Holy Spirit? How have these verses traditionally been translated and understood by Christian groups?**
11. **Could we become channels through which the oil of the Holy Spirit flows in blessing to all around us? How could we accomplish this? What do we need to do?**
12. Why do you think the Bible uses such a wide variety of symbols for the Holy Spirit?
13. In light of the fact that many considered the Holy Spirit to be a force or a symbol of something large influencing our lives how can we be certain that the Holy Spirit is a

person? How does the Holy Spirit bring His influence to bear on us? Does He use force? What kind of force? What tools has the Holy Spirit provided for us to help us in our Christian growth? What should we learn about the Holy Spirit from Paul's use of symbols in Ephesians 1:13,14 and Ephesians 4:30-32?

14. In what way can the Holy Spirit be a seal or guarantee of something that's in our hearts? What would this mean?
15. On Wednesday, April 5 we're told "the assurance Paul talks about here, which is sealed with the Holy Spirit, comes because of what Jesus has done for us at the cross. It's only because of the cross that we have been given the Holy Spirit, the seal of our redemption." **In what sense is Holy Spirit a seal of our redemption? What is the relationship between the cross and the work of the Holy Spirit?**
16. We believe that the Holy Spirit is present everywhere and at all times. These are some of the characteristics we ascribe to Him. Does it help you in your struggle against sin to know that the Holy Spirit is with you at all times? In what way does it help?
17. **Is it possible to look at another person and determine whether they are working with or imbued with the Holy Spirit?**
18. "Wherever there is an impulse of love and sympathy, wherever the heart reaches out to bless and uplift others, there is revealed the working of God's Holy Spirit. In the depths of heathenism, men who have had no knowledge of the written law of God, who have never even heard the name of Christ, have been kind to His servants, protecting them at the risk of their own lives. Their acts show the working of a divine power. The Holy Spirit has implanted the grace of Christ in the heart of the savage, quickening his sympathies contrary to his nature, contrary to his education. The 'Light which lighteth every man that cometh into the world' (John 1:9), is shining in his soul; and this light, if heeded, will guide his feet to the kingdom of God." {COL 385.1}
19. **How do you understand the conflict between special and general revelation? How does the above quotation fit with your understanding of Acts 4:12?**
20. John suggested that Jesus would baptize his followers with the Holy Spirit and with fire! What do you think this means? Have you ever experienced a baptism by fire?
21. In John 3 Jesus uses the wind to describe the work and character of the Holy Spirit. What parallels can you think of? Is the wind a good example of the work of the Holy Spirit?
22. "The impartation of the Spirit is the impartation of the life of Christ. It imbues the receiver with the attributes of Christ." *The Desire of Ages*, p. 805. **Is it possible to "implant" Christ's characteristics in the mind and life of a human being? How does this work? Is this one of the main functions of the Holy Spirit?**
23. How would our spiritual existence be different if the work of the Holy Spirit were to cease? Will the Holy Spirit stop His work after the close of probation?

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Last modified: February 25, 2006

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