

Study 1. Symbols of the Holy Spirit (A)

READ: Matthew 3: 13-17 and Acts 2: 1-4



KEY VERSE: Luke 3: 22

“The Holy Spirit descended in bodily form like a dove upon Him . . .”

Symbols are very commonplace in such subjects as Math and Science. The Bible, too, frequently uses symbols. This is especially true with reference to the Holy Spirit. Common objects are used as pictorial representations of the invisible, eternal Spirit of God.

In this Study, we shall concentrate upon two such symbols.

1. THE DOVE

At the start of the public life of the Lord Jesus, He was baptized by John. When that took place, we read, **“The heavens were opened to Him, and He saw the Spirit of God descending LIKE A DOVE . . .”**. Then came a voice from Heaven saying, **“This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased”**. (Matthew 3: 16 & 17) It is of special significance that here the three Persons of the Godhead - Father, Son and Holy Spirit (in dove-like form) are together in perfect harmony. They are united in the working out of God’s wonderful plan for our salvation!

The nature and habits of the dove make it a good symbol of the Holy Spirit:-

a. The dove is ‘clean’. (See Genesis 15: 9 & Leviticus 12: 6) In Old Testament times, doves (or turtle-doves) were acceptable as sacrifices to God; this confirms the idea of their purity, for only ‘clean’ birds could be offered to God.

The presence of the Holy Spirit within us should **have a purifying effect upon us**. (Read 1 Corinthians 6: 18-20) Noah’s dove, released from the ark at the end of the flood, could not rest in the unclean conditions all around. (Genesis 8: 8 & 9) The lesson for a Christian is clear - he must keep himself **“unspotted from the world”**. (James 1: 27)

b. The dove is gentle. The Lord Jesus taught His followers to be **“harmless as doves”**. (Matthew 10: 16) The dove is a non-aggressive bird; when in danger, its safety lies in flying away! (See Psalm 55: 6) Our Lord Himself did not retaliate when He was insulted and badly treated. During His trials, He **“committed Himself to Him who judges**

righteously”. (1 Peter 2: 23) In this, He is the Example for us. The Holy Spirit can help us to show dove-like gentleness of spirit, even when we are wrongly accused.

c. The dove is faithful. Ornithologists have observed how faithful in love a dove is to its partner. Indeed, it may mourn and die over the loss of its mate! The lesson for us is that the Holy Spirit always longs to maintain within us a deep love for our Saviour. If we permit the Spirit to have His way, our love for the Lord Jesus will never diminish. **“The love of God has been poured out in our hearts BY THE HOLY SPIRIT...”** (Romans 5: 5)

2. FIRE

You may wonder in what ways fire could be a symbol of the Holy Spirit. Think about these points:-

a. Fire creates energy. For example, steam engines have great power, the source of which is fire! On the Day of Pentecost, the Holy Spirit came upon the waiting company. It was ‘the birthday of the church’ and ‘the baptism in the Spirit’, as we have already explained. One of the evidences of the Spirit that day was **“forked tongues, as of fire...”**. (Acts 2: 3) After His resurrection, the Lord Jesus told His apostles to **“tarry in the city of Jerusalem until you are endued with power from on high”**. (Luke 24: 49) Now, just ten days later, His promise came true! The Holy Spirit was the ‘energy’ behind the fearless witnessing of those first Christians. For us, today, the same power is available - if we really want it!

b. Fire refines and purifies. Valuable metals, like silver and gold, are subjected to intense heat, in order to remove impurities. **“Our God is a consuming fire.”** (Hebrews 12: 29) Our sins have all been forgiven, but there is the ever present need for our characters to be made more Christlike. To bring this about, the Holy Spirit, like a purifying fire, works in each of us. How important, then, that we submit to His guidance and instruction! In this way, worthless and sinful things in our lives are consumed!

c. Fire creates warmth. To be warm-hearted Christians, we need the ‘fire’ of the Holy Spirit. If we fail to yield to Him, we become spiritually cold! He wants us to enjoy the ‘warmth’ of His presence and power in our lives, every day!

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Study 1. Symbols of the Holy Spirit (A)

1 READ MATTHEW 3: 13-17, THEN ANSWER THESE QUESTIONS:-

a. Why did John try to stop the Lord Jesus from being baptized?

b. IN YOUR OWN WORDS, describe what happened as soon as Jesus was baptized.

c. Read **John 1: 32-34**, and suggest what significance there is in **“the Spirit . . . like a dove . . . remained upon Him”**? _____

4

2 THE DOVE DOES NOT FEED ON DECAYING FLESH, AS SOME OTHER BIRDS DO. SINCE THE DOVE SYMBOLIZES THE HOLY SPIRIT WITHIN US, WHAT WOULD THIS TEACH US ABOUT OUR ATTITUDE TO THE UNCLEAN, SINFUL WORLD IN WHICH WE LIVE? SUPPORT YOUR ANSWER BY BIBLE VERSES, IF YOU CAN.

4

3 THE HOLY SPIRIT HELPS US TO REACT AS THE LORD JESUS HIMSELF REACTED WHEN HE WAS WRONGFULLY ACCUSED.

a. According to **1 Peter 2: 23**, how did He react to persecution?

b. In what way has He left us **“an example”**? (**1 Peter 2: 21**)

4

4 TRUE CHRISTIANS ALWAYS WANT TO BE FAITHFUL TO THE LORD JESUS. WHAT CAN WE DO TO ENSURE THAT WE REMAIN TRUE TO HIM?

3

5 A) WRITE DOWN THE THREE POINTS WHICH THE STUDY MAKES ABOUT FIRE.

B) CHOOSE ONE OF THESE, AND EXPLAIN IN YOUR OWN WORDS HOW THIS IDEA ILLUSTRATES THE WORK OF THE HOLY SPIRIT.

4

6 READ AGAIN ACTS 2: 1-4, THEN COMPLETE THESE SENTENCES:-

a. This event is often described as _____ .

b. They were all _____ .

c. The sound was like _____ .

d. The forked tongues were _____ .

e. The fire is a _____ of the Holy Spirit.

f. They all began to speak _____ .

6

Study 2. Symbols of the Holy Spirit (B)

READ: Ezekiel 37: 1-14; John 3: 7 & 8
and John 7: 37-39



KEY VERSES: John 7: 38 & 39

“He who believes in Me, as the Scripture has said, out of his heart will flow rivers of living water. But this He spoke concerning the Spirit”

In this Study, we are going to consider two more symbols of the Spirit of God.

1. THE WIND

It is interesting to know that in both the Hebrew and Greek languages (in which the Old and New Testaments, respectively, were originally written) the same word may be translated as either ‘wind’ or ‘spirit’. This makes wind a very suitable symbol for the Holy Spirit. Just as wind is invisible, and yet has great power, so the Spirit of God, although unseen, works very powerfully. Though we cannot see the wind, we can certainly see its effects! So it is with the Holy Spirit!

- a. **Ezekiel 37** records the prophet’s experience in ‘The Valley of Dry Bones’. The breath, or wind, which came into the dead bodies symbolizes the Holy Spirit, as **verse 14** shows clearly. Only the Spirit can bring new spiritual life to scattered, ‘dead’ Israel, represented by the dry bones, when the right moment comes in God’s programme of future events. Only the same Spirit of God can impart life to ‘dead’ sinners, such as we are.
- b. In **John 3: 7** Jesus told Nicodemus that he **“must be born again”**. He then explained that this new birth (or, ‘birth from above’) can only come about through the Holy Spirit. Just as the wind comes and goes, so the Holy Spirit has free choice in His movements. As one of the Godhead, He is unrestricted in His movements, as we learned in Unit A. Read **John 3: 8** again, and think carefully about how wonderfully the wind symbolizes the Holy Spirit!
- c. In earlier Studies, we have seen how the coming of the Spirit, in **Acts 2**, was symbolized by both ‘fire’ and ‘wind’. On that great day, there was

something to see - **“tongues, as of fire”** appeared... and something to hear - **“a sound ... as of a rushing mighty wind”**. It is clear that these well-known things are being used as symbols of God’s Spirit.

2. WATER

There are places in the Bible where ‘water’ is a symbol of the Word of God. (See Unit B Study 1) But in other places, the reference is to the Spirit of God. Here are two such references, one from the Old Testament and the other from the New:-

- a. **Isaiah 44: 3** **“I will pour water on him who is thirsty, and floods on dry ground; I will pour My Spirit on your descendants, and My blessing on your offspring.”** In these words, God is promising His people, Israel, a great outpouring of blessings, in a time yet to come. Clearly, ‘water’ is used as a figure, or symbol, of His Spirit. (**See also Zechariah 12: 10**)
- b. **John 7: 37-39** Read, in full, this section, from which the **Key Verses** are taken, and note these points:-
 1. Not until Jesus returned to Heaven (**“glorified”**) would the Spirit come. The fulfilment of this is found in **Acts 2** - the events of the Day of Pentecost.
 2. ALL believers in the Lord Jesus, from that point onwards, would then receive the Holy Spirit.
 3. The Holy Spirit would be like **“rivers of living water”** flowing out from them. In so saying, the Lord Jesus is instructing us that from each believer there should be an OUTFLOW! The Holy Spirit WITHIN wants to fill us, so that we may have something to share with thirsty souls WITHOUT! We are not to be like the Dead Sea into which rivers flow, but none flow out! We must also ensure that the **“rivers of living water”** do not become polluted or dried up, as a result of any sinful practice on our part!

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Study 2. Symbols of the Holy Spirit (B)

1 SUPPLY THE MISSING WORDS IN THESE SENTENCES:-

- i) Greek was the original language of the _____.
- ii) The Old Testament was written mainly in _____.
- iii) In both of these languages, the same word can mean either '_____' or '_____':

3

2 SUGGEST THREE WAYS IN WHICH 'WIND' IS A SUITABLE SYMBOL FOR THE HOLY SPIRIT.

(You will find two ways given in the Study!)

- 1. _____
- 2. _____
- 3. _____

3

3 READ JOHN 3: 8, AND WRITE IN YOUR OWN WORDS THE MAIN POINT OF THE VERSE.

4

4 WHAT TWO NATURAL THINGS ARE USED IN ACTS 2 TO REPRESENT THE SPIRIT OF GOD?

- 1. _____
- 2. _____

2

5 READ EZEKIEL 37: 1-14 AGAIN, THEN ANSWER THESE QUESTIONS:-

- i) Apart from 'bones', what parts of the human body are mentioned in these verses?

- ii) What had to happen before the bodies stood up?

- iii) What is 'breath' a symbol of?

- iv) What is the main point of Ezekiel's vision of 'The Valley of Dry Bones'?

6

6 READ JOHN 7: 37-39, THEN PUT THESE SENTENCES IN THE CORRECT ORDER, BY NUMBERING THE BOXES:-

- The Holy Spirit is given.
- All believers receive the Holy Spirit.
- The Lord Jesus is glorified in Heaven.

3

7 IN JOHN 7: 37 & 38 THE LORD JESUS IS TEACHING THAT ONCE WE HAVE 'COME' TO HIM, AND HAVE 'DRUNK OF THE LIVING WATER', THEN THE HOLY SPIRIT WANTS US TO LET "RIVERS OF LIVING WATER" FLOW TO OTHERS.

EXPLAIN AS CLEARLY AS YOU CAN WHAT THIS MEANS, IN PRACTICAL TERMS, FOR US TODAY.

4

This study sheet belongs to:

Study 3. The Fruit of the Spirit

READ: Galatians 5: 16-26



KEY VERSES: Galatians 5: 22 & 23

“But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, long-suffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control.”

In our orchards and gardens, fruit is the end product of a cycle of life and growth. This helps us to understand that when we speak about **“the fruit of the Spirit”**, we are thinking about what the Holy Spirit can produce in our lives.

Note that Paul writes about ‘the fruit’, not ‘the fruits’. **“The fruit of the Spirit”** is from one common Source, which is the Spirit of God. We may think of it not as nine separate pieces of fruit, but as a single cluster, made up of nine different pieces! There is oneness and harmony in the life of a Christian where God’s Spirit has His way in producing fruit!

What, then, are the nine components of the cluster? They are

LOVE,
JOY,
PEACE,
LONG-SUFFERING,
KINDNESS,
GOODNESS,
FAITHFULNESS,
GENTLENESS and
SELF-CONTROL.

God has given us His Spirit to make these lovely qualities grow in our lives. He wants us to develop into Christians whose words and actions show these characteristics.

We know that fruit on an apple tree does not appear overnight! It takes a lot of time. So it is in our lives, spiritually. The development of **“the fruit of the Spirit”** is a lifelong process. If we yield our lives to God and obey Him, we can rely upon the Holy Spirit to continue His fruit producing work in us, and this brings glory to God. (See **John 15: 8**)

As Christians, we are not to be like Christmas trees on which are hung colourful little decorations! These have no living link with the tree. They could never be called ‘fruit’, for it is impossible for them to show the nature of the tree. With true Christians, however, there is a living link, for the Spirit of God, who has imparted eternal life to us, now lives within us. The result is that Godlike qualities, such as love, joy, peace, gentleness and goodness begin to show themselves in our character. It is **“the fruit of the Spirit”!**

All these lovely virtues can be seen perfectly in the Lord Jesus, as He lived His earthly life. No one loved as He did! (See **John 11: 36**) He found complete joy in His Father’s will. (Read **Luke 10: 21 & Hebrews 12: 2**) His peace remained unruffled, even when His enemies were plotting against Him. (See **John 14: 27 & 1 Peter 2: 23**) We could continue, noting examples of His long-suffering, His goodness, His faithfulness, His gentleness and self-control. In every respect, He is the ideal, perfect Personality. We can understand, then, that when this cluster of fruit is being developed in us, the Holy Spirit is really making us more Christlike! There can be no higher spiritual goal than this - to be reflectors of the beautiful qualities so perfectly seen in our Saviour and Lord!

In **Galatians 5**, the **“fruit of the Spirit”** is set in very sharp contrast to the **“works of the flesh”**. (Read vs. **19-21 again**) The ‘flesh’ is our sinful, fallen nature which, even though we are now Christians and have a new nature, is still very much with us! An unending conflict goes on! (See v. **17**, **“The flesh lusts against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh...”**) If we allow the flesh to take control, we can quite easily become guilty of the horrible things listed in **verses 19-21**. We can, however, have victory over the flesh through the Holy Spirit who is in us. Our responsibility is to open up our lives more and more to Him, through faith and obedience. This is what **Galatians 5: 16** means, **“I say then: Walk in the Spirit, and you shall not fulfill the lust of the flesh”**.

Study 4. The Holy Spirit's Power

**READ: Galatians 5: 24 & 25;
Ephesians 4: 25-32
1 Thessalonians 5: 14-22**



KEY VERSE: Romans 15: 13

“Now may the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that you may abound in hope by the power of the Holy Spirit.”

“By the power of the Holy Spirit”! As we come to the final Study in this series, our main concern should be: How can His power be seen in my life? How can I live victoriously over temptation and sin?

In looking for answers to these questions, let us understand that it is possible for us to hinder the Spirit's working in us. We have proved from Scripture that He is omnipotent (i.e. all-powerful), but He does not compel us, against our own will, to yield to Him.

I. We can GRIEVE THE HOLY SPIRIT.

If this is impossible, Paul would not have written, **“Do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God ...”**. (**Ephesians 4: 30**) It is not possible for us to grieve an enemy; only someone who truly loves us can be pained by what we say or do. Because He is the HOLY Spirit, this wonderful ‘Helper’ and ‘Comforter’ is grieved when we do the kinds of things which are mentioned in **Ephesians 4**. For example, lying (**v. 25**), outbursts of anger (**v. 26**), theft (**v. 28**), ‘dirty’ talk (**v. 29**), an unforgiving attitude to others (**v. 32**) - all these **“grieve the Holy Spirit”**. How very important, then, that we guard our thoughts, speech, and actions!

We also grieve the Holy Spirit, if we do not allow Him to do for us His special task. What, you may ask, is that? Think again about the promises Jesus gave concerning the Holy Spirit:-

- i) **“He will teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all things that I said to you.”** (**John 14: 26**)
- ii) **“He will testify of Me.”** (**John 15: 26**)
- iii) **“He will guide you into all truth ... He will take of what is Mine and declare it to you.”** (**John 16: 13 & 14**)

These verses show that the special task of the Holy Spirit is to show us the unlimited riches and greatness of our Lord and Saviour. He does this mainly through the Word of God, the Bible. So, if we neglect our Bibles, we are robbing the Holy Spirit of the opportunity of doing this for us! The Holy Spirit is grieved, and we are spiritually poorer and weaker.

2. We can QUENCH THE HOLY SPIRIT.

“Do not quench the Spirit.” (**1 Thessalonians 5: 19**) We have seen in Study 1, that ‘fire’ is one of the symbols of the Holy Spirit, so this verse means that we are not to repress, or smother, the ‘fire’ of the Holy Spirit.

This is something which can happen in a body of believers, a church. Each of us is to be ready, and willing, to play the part for which the Holy Spirit has fitted us. If we fail to do this, we may be quenching the Spirit!

3. We can WALK IN (or ‘BY’) THE SPIRIT.

“Walk in the Spirit, and you shall not fulfill the lust of the flesh.” (**Galatians 5: 16**) To walk by the Spirit is to allow Him to have His way, each day. It is not a matter of attending some big meetings with a highly charged atmosphere of emotional fervour! It is, rather, a day by day fellowship with our Lord, making every decision in the light of His holiness, and always keeping our minds fixed on pleasing Him. When we live our lives in this way, ‘the flesh’ is treated as ‘dead’. (**See Galatians 5: 24**)

If, then, we desire the Holy Spirit's power, we must ensure that we neither GRIEVE Him, nor QUENCH Him. Positively, we must WALK BY THE SPIRIT, yielding every department of life to His control, and being obedient to whatever God says to us, through His Word.

*“Have Thine own way, Lord, have Thine own way,
Hold o’er my being absolute sway,
Fill with Thy Spirit, till all shall see,
Christ only, always, living in me.”*

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Study 4. The Holy Spirit's Power

1 A. WRITE OUT THE VERSE WHICH TELLS US THAT WE ARE NOT TO GRIEVE THE HOLY SPIRIT.

B. READ EPHESIANS 4: 25-32 AGAIN, AND THEN WRITE A SENTENCE FOR EACH OF I. AND II. BELOW, GIVING A DEFINITE EXAMPLE OF EACH.

i. We may grieve Him by doing WHAT WE SHOULD NOT DO.

ii. We may grieve Him by failing to do WHAT WE SHOULD DO.

6

2 "HE WILL TEACH YOU ..." (JOHN 14: 26); "HE WILL TESTIFY OF ME..." (JOHN 15: 26); "HE WILL GUIDE YOU..." (JOHN 16: 13)

a. Who said these words? _____

b. About whom was He speaking? _____

c. How are these promises fulfilled in the experience of Christians today?

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

5

3 "QUENCH NOT THE SPIRIT."

a. In this verse what does "quench" mean? _____

b. How could a member of a Christian church "quench the Spirit"?

4

4 'WALKING' IN THE BIBLE OFTEN REFERS TO EVERYDAY BEHAVIOUR OR CONDUCT.

a. What is meant by walking "in" or "by" the Spirit? _____

b. If we do so, what will be our attitude to our sinful nature, according to **Galatians 5: 24**?

4

5 DO YOU THINK A CHRISTIAN CAN "WALK IN THE SPIRIT" AND ALLOW SINFUL THINGS TO HAVE A HOLD UPON HIS LIFE, AT THE SAME TIME? GIVE REASONS FOR YOUR ANSWER.

3

6 SUM UP BRIEFLY IN YOUR OWN WORDS HOW YOU CAN HAVE THE POWER OF THE HOLY SPIRIT IN YOUR LIFE.

3

100

Total marks for this Unit

Return your study sheets to:
PBS Centre or to:

25

Total marks for this study

Grand Total

(office use only)