



Symbols of the Holy Spirit - Part 2 (Fire and Wind)

“And suddenly there came a sound from heaven as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting. And there appeared unto them cloven tongues like as of fire, and it sat upon each of them. And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost” (Acts 2:2-4).

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“The wind bloweth where it

listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth: so is every one that is born of the Spirit” (John 3:8).

God uses familiar earthly pictures (symbols) to teach us about Spiritual things (John 3:12). Jesus used parables to unravel to our understanding “... **things which have been kept secret from the foundation of the world**” (Matthew 13:34-35). Some find it easier to understand Jesus than God or the Holy Spirit because Jesus came in a human body. To help us God uses many symbols to reveal the person and ministry of the Holy Spirit, such as: Dove, Fire, Water, Wind, Oil, Seal (Guarantee), Rain, Rivers, Wine, Cloud and Light. This study concentrates on the message conveyed from the symbols of Wind and Fire. As we consider these symbols, remember that the Holy Spirit is a real person - the third Person of the divine Trinity along with the Father and the Son (Matthew 28:18-20, 2 Corinthians 13:14, Ephesians 2:18).

The Holy Spirit as Fire

The Holy Spirit came at Pentecost, not only like rushing mighty wind, but also as tongues of fire resting on the heads of each believer (Acts 2:3). Just like the dove rested on Jesus, the fire rested on the believers - another salient reminder that the Holy Spirit wants to come and dwell with believers personally and permanently. God is interested in the 'long haul' not in a transient one time 'high' feeling.

Fire is another popular representation of the Holy Spirit:

- 1) His appearance in the form of fire on Pentecost was reminiscent of the burning bush on Mount Sinai (Exodus 3:2).
- 2) In the wilderness, God led Israel by a pillar of fire at night (Exodus 13:21) - signifying the strength and force of the Holy Spirit.
- 3) Anticipating Pentecost, John the Baptist

spoke about Christ who would baptise with the Holy Spirit and fire (John 3:11).

Fire speaks of purity and power. Therefore the Holy Spirit:

- 1) convicts of sin; he burns the rubbish of sin to make us more like Christ. Revival begins with a deep sense of sin among believers. The Spirit-anointed preaching of the apostles turned the world upside down; similar things have happened, through preaching, in times of revival (Acts 17:6).
- 2) Comes to work something deep into the substance of our lives that will shape things around us, rather than us taking on the shape of the world.
- 3) works in a dual way: to probe the inner recesses of our life and to refine us as gold or silver is refined in the fire; and to temper our personalities by causing there to be the penetration of fire into our system.
- 4) Burns out the Adversary. When the three Hebrew children were thrown into the furnace, not only were their lives spared, but also their clothes didn't burn. But the ropes holding them in bondage burned. The Bible speaks of the Holy Spirit being “a spirit of judgment and burning” (Isaiah 4:4). Judgment has to do with deliverance, in the way Israel was led out of bondage. The Holy Spirit, coming like fire, burns away any binding grip that the Enemy has imposed on us. **Snakes, lion, etc can comfortably**

hide in a bush till that bush is on fire, driving them away. So also with demons!

A poignant question is sometimes asked “What does an arctic river has in common with many Christians?” The and the answer is “a frozen mouth”! Maybe it is for this reason that Jesus said, He had “come to send fire on the earth” (Luke 12:49) – to unfreeze the frozen. When the Holy Spirit came on the previously fearful disciples they became fearless and unstoppable in their witness for Jesus! (Jer 20:9).

The Holy Spirit as Wind

The Holy Spirit is also represented by wind. In fact, the original Hebrew and Greek words for “Spirit” can be translated as “wind.” Wind call attention to the Holy Spirit breathing life into the Church:

- 1) The wind that appeared on Pentecost (Acts 2:2) was reminiscent of the wind that blew over the waters at the beginning of Creation (Genesis 1:2).
- 2) At creation God breathed into the man He created before he became a living soul (Genesis 2:7).
- 3) Ezekiel prophesying to the wind turned the reconstituted lifeless humans into a lively mighty army of the Lord (Ezekiel 37:8-10).
- 4) Jesus breathed on the disciples “and saith unto them, Receive ye the Holy Ghost” (John 20:22).

Therefore, every believer without the Holy Spirit is like Adam before God breathed on Him, or like the reconstituted bodies before Ezekiel prophesied for the wind to come upon them - i.e. human beings are no better than ‘vegetables’ till the Holy Spirit comes upon them.

The Holy Spirit, coming as wind, depicts:

- 1) His power and His guidance. When Jesus tells Nicodemus about the new birth experience (John 3:8), He tells him that it is not like a tangible birth where you can see the baby is born and check the clock for its time of arrival. The work of the Spirit breathes into a life, and something transpires that people cannot recognize. There’s a dynamism but also a gentleness, like the wisp of a breeze. You can’t

necessarily see where it came from or where it goes, but leaves behind irrefutable evidence of His actions. **“The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth: so is every one that is born of the Spirit”** (John 3:8).

- 2) The fact that the Spirit’s work is both mysterious and powerful. He breaks the sinner’s stubborn will. He changes sinners into saints. At Pentecost (Acts 2:1-3), it wasn’t a wind that blew in; it was the *sound* of a rushing wind—like a hurricane. That sound, not the sound of the people speaking in tongues, is what drew the crowd in.
- 3) That the Holy Spirit as sovereign God is dynamic, irresistible, and unstoppable. **“Now when they saw the boldness of Peter and John, and perceived that they were unlearned and ignorant men, they marvelled; and they took knowledge of them, that they had been with Jesus”** (Acts 4:13).
- 4) His power to separate the chaff from the wheat (Ruth 3:2) as well as cleans the feed from dirt and contamination - “The oxen likewise and the young asses that ear the ground shall eat clean provender, which hath been winnowed with the shovel and with the fan” (Isaiah 30:24).

Conclusion:

It is significant that at Pentecost the Holy Spirit revealed His coming through the dual symbol of fire and wind.

- 1) The fire burns away the chaff and the wind blows the dust away
- 2) The fire refines and purifies the believers, and the wind empowers them for service.
- 3) The cloven nature of the tongues of fire speaks of the perfection of the Holy Spirit.

It is time to “arise from the dead” and begin to shine forth with the light of Christ! (Ephesians 5:14). The Holy Spirit is for believers today, Let’s receive Him now for our refinement and empowerment (Zechariah 4:6).