



Symbols of The Holy Spirit - Part 3

“In the last day, that great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried, saying, If any man thirst, let him come unto me, and drink. He that believeth on me, as the scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water. (But this spake he of the Spirit, which they that believe on him should receive: for the Holy Ghost was not yet given; because that Jesus was not yet glorified)” (John 7:37-39).

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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). To help our understanding 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. 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).

In this study we look at the symbols of cloud, rain, water and river - all of which have one thing in common, water, and points to the importance of the Holy Spirit, in the sense that:

- 1) There can be no life without water. In the same way, there can be no spiritual life without the Holy Spirit.
- 2) We cannot make water but totally depend on God for it. Similarly, we are also totally dependent on God for the Holy Spirit.

Cloud

Clouds provide life-giving water, and so does the Holy Spirit (John 4:14). In the Exodus 16:10, God appeared to His people in a cloud. He also led them with a pillar of cloud (Exodus 13:21).

Rain

Rain produces (1) *refreshing* where there has been dryness and barrenness (Joel 2:23-29); and (2) *restoration* where there has been loss (Isaiah 28:11-12). The “pouring out” Peter refers to at Pentecost (Acts 2:17) has to do with the promised “latter rain” that facilitated the harvest of fruitful crops. The Lord is saying that He

“Then will I sprinkle clean water upon you, and ye shall be clean: from all your filthiness, and from all your idols, will I cleanse you” (Ezekiel 36:25).

will send rain to fields (people) that are totally barren as a promise of hope. The need for refreshing does not necessarily imply that one had backslidden or sinned. When a lawn endures a hot day, it dries up and needs the refreshing of rain. The Holy Spirit, as rain, comes to bring refreshing and restoration.

Water

Water signifies birth and life, and spiritually represents the cleansing and life-giving action of the Holy Spirit. Sin makes us dirty but the Holy Spirit washes us clean. Speaking to Nicodemus, a Jewish teacher, Jesus said, I tell you the truth, no one can enter the kingdom of God unless he is born of water and the Spirit (John 3:5). By ‘water’, He is not referring to water baptism; but rather the cleansing activity of the Holy Spirit. Jesus’ words are rooted in Old Testament passages such as Psalms 51:7-11 and Ezekiel 36:25-27. At conversion, the Spirit leads us to Christ whose blood washes away our sins. He then gives us a new heart and comes to live within us. The Spirit of God through faith makes a new life in the soul. He continues to clean us through sanctification (Titus 3:5). As “by one Spirit we were all baptized,” so we are also “made to drink of one Spirit.” (1 Corinthians 12:13) Thus the Spirit is also personally the living water welling up from Christ crucified (John 19:34; 1 John 5:8) as its source and

welling up in us to eternal life. (Cf. John 4:10-14; 7:38; Exodus 17:1-6; Isaiah 55:1; Zechariah 14:8; 1 Corinthians 10:4; Revelations 21:6; 22:17)

Rivers

Rivers are channels to places where the refreshing of water is needed. Jesus described the work of the Holy Spirit as “rivers of living water” (John 7:37-39). The Holy Spirit is manifest in rivers in order that the rain not only be a refreshing upon you, but also that the Lord would make you an overflowing tributary of His Holy Spirit fullness, life, and love to others. The Lord wants people to get in touch with Him, through people who will let the rivers of living water be awakened in them and then gush out of their lives (John 7:38). This is an important truth that when believers receive something through the Spirit, it will flow from them to others and produce life and growth in Christ (Matthew 18:21-35).

In Isaiah 44:3-4, God through Isaiah spoke about the same truth **“For I will pour water upon him that is thirsty, and floods upon the dry ground: I will pour my spirit upon thy seed, and my blessing upon thine offspring: And they shall spring up as among the grass, as willows by the water courses”**. The word ‘offspring’ explains what ‘dry ground’ means. Verse 4 shows that growth will come from the pouring out of water upon dry land. In the same way, spiritual growth comes from the outpouring of God’s Spirit. Growth is proof of life. As dry land becomes green because of water, so also does the Holy Spirit change a “dry” soul into a person of Christian beauty.

God’s revelation recorded in Ezekiel 47:1-12 illustrates these truths very powerfully - “Afterward he brought me again unto the door of the house; and, behold, waters issued out from under the threshold of the house eastward: for the forefront of the house stood toward the east, and the waters came down from under from the right side of the house, at the south side of the altar. **2** Then brought he me out of the way of the gate northward, and led me about the way without unto the utter gate by the way that looketh eastward; and, behold, there ran out wa-

ters on the right side. **3** And when the man that had the line in his hand went forth eastward, he measured a thousand cubits, and he brought me through the waters; the waters were to the ankles. **4** Again he measured a thousand, and brought me through the waters; the waters were to the knees. Again he measured a thousand, and brought me through; the waters were to the loins. **5** Afterward he measured a thousand; and it was a river that I could not pass over: for the waters were risen, waters to swim in, a river that could not be passed over. **6** And he said unto me, **Son of man, hast thou seen this?** Then he brought me, and caused me to return to the brink of the river. **7** **Now when I had returned, behold, at the bank of the river were very many trees on the one side and on the other.** **8** Then said he unto me, These waters issue out toward the east country, and go down into the desert, and go into the sea: which being brought forth into the sea, the waters shall be healed. **9** **And it shall come to pass, that every thing that liveth, which moveth, whithersoever the rivers shall come, shall live: and there shall be a very great multitude of fish, because these waters shall come thither: for they shall be healed; and every thing shall live whither the river cometh.** **10** And it shall come to pass, that the fishers shall stand upon it from Engedi even unto Eneglaim; they shall be a place to spread forth nets; their fish shall be according to their kinds, as the fish of the great sea, exceeding many. **11** But the miry places thereof and the marishes thereof shall not be healed; they shall be given to salt. **12** **And by the river upon the bank thereof, on this side and on that side, shall grow all trees for meat, whose leaf shall not fade, neither shall the fruit thereof be consumed: it shall bring forth new fruit according to his months, because their waters they issued out of the sanctuary: and the fruit thereof shall be for meat, and the leaf thereof for medicine”**.

The life giving/healing power of the Holy Spirit deepens the farther we take it from the altar to the needy without! May God depend on you!