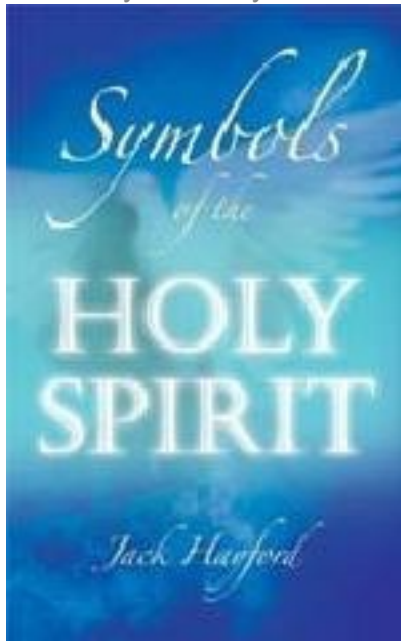


Symbols of the Holy Spirit

Written by Jack Hayford



And immediately, coming up from the water, He saw the heavens parting and the Spirit descending upon Him like a dove. (Mark 1:10)

The Holy Spirit doesn't seek to be mysterious, but He is the most mysterious of the Godhead. We can read in the Word about the Father, and we can read about the Son who came and walked among us. But Jesus tells us that when the Spirit comes, He will not speak of Himself; that "whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak: and he will shew you things to come" (John 16:13 KJV).

The workings of the Holy Spirit are invisible, glorious, and gentle, and within them, He never tells us about Himself. He comes to glorify Jesus—helping us to see Jesus more, to understand Jesus better, to respond to Jesus more obediently, and to love Jesus with a deeper heart of commitment.

So the symbols of the Holy Spirit become essential to our gaining an understanding of what He's like, not only in an objective way of analyzing truth, but also in the subjective way that He comes to penetrate our lives—ways in which the reality of the invisible penetrate the visible. When we talk about the Holy Spirit as rain, for example, the purpose isn't to think, "Oh, the Holy Spirit is like rain." The purpose is to get wet.

In each of the following seven ways, the Lord desires to move into our realm. Just as the Holy Spirit manifested for a moment in a dove and

lighted upon Jesus, He wants to penetrate you and me with the glory of the invisible God that becomes visible in us—to flood His life into ours that we might then overflow it to others.

The Holy Spirit Comes as Rain

Rain has a dual implication. First as refreshing where there has been dryness and barrenness (Joel 2:23-29). Second, as restoration where there has been loss (Isa. 28:11-12).

The “pouring out” Peter refers to at Pentecost (Acts 2:17) is not an abstract use of the word; it has to do with “latter rain” that brought about the hastening of the harvest and fruitful crops. The Lord is saying that He will send rain to fields [people] that are totally barren as a promise of hope. Needing to be refreshed doesn’t mean that I’ve backslid or sinned. When the lawn endures a hot day, it dries up and needs the refreshing of rain. The Holy Spirit, coming as rain, comes to bring refreshing and restoration.

The Holy Spirit Comes as Rivers

Rivers are channels or conduits to places where the refreshing of water is needed. John pinpoints that the work of the Spirit as “rivers of living water” was to become available after Jesus’ ascension (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 who He is, and that takes people who will let the rivers of living water be awakened in them and then gush out of their lives. So the Holy Spirit is manifest in rivers.

The Holy Spirit Comes as Wind

The Holy Spirit, coming as wind, depicts 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 all of us can attest to times when God has come and dealt with us, and no human being knew how it happened.

At Pentecost (Acts 2:3), 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. The Holy Spirit as sovereign God is dynamic, irresistible, and unstoppable.

The Holy Spirit Comes as Oil

The anointing—the oil of Scripture—is directly related to the Holy Spirit’s work in our life (2 Cor. 1:21-22). The Holy Spirit’s anointing makes us sensitive (1 John 2:20). How many times have you sensed something was wrong, or something was right, but you didn’t know why or how you knew? The Holy Spirit, by His anointing and presence, confirms what He is—the Spirit of Truth, of Holiness, of Wisdom. Obeying the Holy Spirit means that He will give us wisdom when we need it in the practicals of our everyday life.

All the primary offices of Scripture—prophets, priests, and kings—involve anointing. And all of these are offices to which all of us are called. As prophets, we are called to speak the Word of the Lord. There are times when the Holy Spirit will give you words of comfort, exhortation, or sensitive counsel to say to other people. As priests, the Lord wants to anoint us for worship to renew us, so that our worship doesn’t become stale, habitual, or formal. And as kings, we don’t just get anointed once for all. It takes fresh anointing from the Holy Spirit for the dominion of His Kingdom and the authority of His life to happen through us. When it does, we can move in confidence about how to rule our homes and our businesses, and how to deal with our kids and our relationships. God’s not going to anoint us with the ability to rule when we try to manage things our own way.

The Lord also wants to anoint those who have been overcome by the spirit of mourning with the oil of rejoicing. That anointing brings the lifting of our heads with the refreshing of seeing beyond today—not with superficial optimism, but with a deep abiding of hope that has been begotten in us by God.

The Holy Spirit Comes as Wine

Ephesians 5:8 draws an analogy for the symbolism of the Holy Spirit as wine. In the Gospels, Jesus describes the new work of God, conveyed by the ministry of the Spirit, as new wine coming into old vessels. So it’s a perfectly appropriate symbol in light of the Word. Still, let me ask you, what does it take to excite your life? The issue isn’t just alcohol; the issue is, how much of what the world offers does it take to get you going?

The Bible doesn’t say we are disallowed from enjoying a number of the things that come with life, but you can find out how much a person is living

the Jesus life by how much they need the stimulants of the world. The separated, holy Christian life is not a call to isolation but to insulation. You live in the world, but His Spirit in you keeps out the world's pollution.

The Holy Spirit Comes as Fire

At Pentecost, the Bible says that tongues as of fire appeared over the heads of each of those who gathered together (Acts 2:3). The Holy Spirit comes as fire 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. As fire, He 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. The purifying fire 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" (Isa. 4:4). Judgment has to do with deliverance, in the way the judges of Israel led people out of bondage. The Holy Spirit, coming like fire, burns away any binding grip that the Enemy has imposed on us.

The Holy Spirit Comes as a Dove

The Holy Spirit, coming as a dove, is gentle and a symbol of peace. What the dove did is important as well—the dove came and rested on Jesus (Matt. 3:16). The Holy Spirit wants to come and rest upon you and me. Not sweeping throughout the world as a tidal wave of revival, but to come to each of us personally.

Today, I want to ask you to invite Him by saying, "Holy Spirit, come upon me." In fact, for the next week, take one symbol of the Holy Spirit each day and invite Him to do that freshly in your life. Let Jesus minister the richness of the Holy Spirit to you.

The Bible says it is Jesus who baptizes with the Holy Spirit (Mark 1:8), and He will:

- Pour rain on you
- Open rivers in you
- Breathe wind into your life
- Anoint you with oil

Fill you with holy wine
Refine and temper you with fire
Send the Holy Spirit to come to you