

Mike Bickle of International House of Prayer in Kansas City emphasizes that stewarding the ministry of the Holy Spirit means not exaggerating it or drawing attention to ourselves. Stewarding the ministry of the Holy Spirit means leading with genuine humility and love by not quenching the Spirit's works of glorifying Jesus above all else. Bickle says, "A powerful outpouring of the Spirit is coming in the days ahead. The Spirit is zealous to magnify Jesus, and He will surely express His unprecedented power through His people before Jesus returns (Acts 2:17-21)....The good news is that the Spirit will succeed in raising up humble young ministry leaders across the earth who will be anointed with great power while refusing to exhibit spiritual showmanship because of their love for Jesus.

From IHOP Kansas City

## **LESSON SEVEN**

### **SYMBOLS OF THE HOLY SPIRIT**

As a young teacher, I spent many hours trying to get my students at Rumble Junior High to understand what a symbol is and to read literature and recognize the symbols behind the literal language. Without some understanding of symbols, we could never fully appreciate literature and would even have a hard time living in the day-by-day real world.

A symbol is something which is itself and yet stands for or represents something else. One of the most recognized symbols in the world today is the flag of the United States of America. The flag is itself-a cloth with different colors usually on a stick-, but it stands for or represents a whole country.

The Bible is full of symbols. Proverbs 25:2 tells us: *It is the glory of God to conceal a matter, but the glory of kings is to search out a matter.* To conceal a matter so that we will have to search it out and prayerfully seek revelation from the Holy Spirit, the Lord conceals meanings through things like symbols, types, and parables. A type is a prophetic symbol that foreshadows something in the future. Thus, while symbols may represent a thing in the past, present, or future, types always represent something in the future. Isaac, for example, was a type of Christ. Jezebel was a type of the harlot church at the end of the age. The twelve sons of Jacob type the twelve apostles.

In this lesson we will only look extensively at traditional symbols, not types. In determining what a symbol in scripture represents, we are helped in the process by the Word of God itself. Sometimes the Lord just plainly tells us what things symbolize, a good example being the Parable of the Seed and Sower in Matthew 13, Mark 4, and Luke 8, where Jesus explains what each part symbolizes- the seed, for example, being the Word of God. Other times a symbol is used over and over and from the context we understand what is being referenced. And again sometimes a symbol has characteristics closely related to what it represents. The characteristics of a dove, for example, mirror the characteristics of the Holy Spirit We will look more extensively at this later in this lesson. Dirty, nasty, irritating flies symbolize dirty, nasty demons and uncleanness. Satan himself is referred to as *the Lord of the Flies*.

Let us look at Exodus 17, as an example of symbolic scripture. In the interest of time, I will not read this long passage but will briefly tell the story: The first battle the Israelites ever fought was with Amalek. Amalek was a sensuous, brutal, people descended out of Esau who sold his birthright for a bowl of soup.

The Amalekites came and fought Israel in Rephidim. Joshua was the military commander Moses chose. Moses took the rod of God and stood on top of the hill, with Aaron and Hur with him. As long as Moses held up his hands, the Israelites prevailed, but, when he put his hands down, Amalek prevailed. Moses' hands became heavy and weary. Moses sat down on a rock or stone, and Aaron and Hur supported his hands, one on each side of Moses, and his hands were steady until the going down of the sun. So Joshua defeated the Amalekites with the sword in the first battle Israel ever fought.

This is an interesting story, but it comes alive when we look at the symbolism here and as we understand this symbolism, we can apply this passage to our own lives today. *Amalek* represents the flesh nature. *Rephidim* means support. *Joshua* represents Jesus, our commander-in-chief and his name means *God is salvation* or *God is deliverer*. The *rod* represents our authority in God or judgment. The *upraised hands* represent praise, surrender to God, prayer. The *rock* represents Jesus, the rock of our salvation, or the *stone* which the builders rejected. *Aaron and Hur* represent the priestly intercessors. The *sword* represents the Word of God.

It is interesting that the first battle the Israelites fought in the wilderness was with the flesh nature, which is the first battle most Christians have to face. They overcame the enemy by relying on the rod or authority of God and by praise (the uplifted hands) and by sitting on the rock or foundation of Christ the Lord as Aaron and Hur, the priestly intercessors, prayed, and Joshua, symbolizing Jesus, defeated the enemy with the sword or Word of God.

To further illustrate the power of knowing the symbols, let's look at Judges 7 briefly. Gideon's army, the three hundred men, symbolize the Remnant of the Last Days. Judges 7:20 reads: *Then the three companies blew the trumpets and broke the pitchers-they held the torches in their left hands and the trumpets in their right hands for blowing-and they cried, The sword of the LORD and of Gideon!*" The *three companies* represent the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. The *trumpets* symbolize prophetic utterance. The *broken pitchers* represent the flesh nature (2<sup>nd</sup> Corinthians 4:7: *But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellence of the power may be of God and not of us.*) The *torch* that is exposed after the flesh nature is broken represents the Holy Spirit. The *left hand* is the hand of judgment. The *right hand* is the hand of blessing. Thus, the whole scripture becomes not only alive but very applicable to us individually in this present age.

Another example of symbols is hornets. Hornets sting. When God promised to send hornets to battle the Canaanites, most likely He was not talking about literal hornets but using hornets as a symbol. Did they symbolize demons or disease or something else?

A few common symbols in the Bible include armies of locust (demon spirits), Babylon (religious confusion), baptism (burial of old life), brass (judgment), candle (spirit of man lighted), cloud (Shekinah glory), corn (Word of God), deafness (inability to hear God), Egypt (world and bondage), feet (our walk with God), Fig tree (Israel), five (grace), flies (evil spirits), goat (sinner), harvest (reaping of saints), Lamb (Christ), Manna (Jesus Christ, the Bread of Life), Midnight (end of the present age), pearl (formation of the church by suffering), purple (royalty), robe (office), scapegoat (Christ our sin bearer), serpent (satan), six (number of unregenerate man), two-edged sword (Word of God), tares (apostates), trumpet (voice of prophetic utterance), well (eternal life, salvation), wind (spiritual power), and wolf (satan).

## Now we will look at a teaching by Brother Don Van Hoozier on the Biblical symbols of the Holy Spirit:

These symbols reveal the scope and HIS NATURE AND MINISTRY, and the character He wants to work in us.

1. **Wind:** Since the word means *spirit* or *breath*, let us begin with this symbol. Jesus said of the New Birth in John 3:8, ***"The wind blows where it wishes, and you hear the sound of it, but cannot tell where it comes from and where it goes. So is everyone who is born of the Spirit."*** The New Birth is mysterious, for an unseeking sinner spiritual dead in sins is suddenly responding to an unseen Power and is made a new creation with the capacity of knowing the Living God. And concerning the Pentecostal experience of the Holy Spirit coming upon the Disciples we read, ***"And suddenly there came a sound from Heaven, as of a rushing mighty wind....and they were all filled with the Holy Spirit"*** (Acts 2:2,4). Who can control the wind? Where does it go? Where did it come from? What power is in the wind? No wonder Jesus said, ***"But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you..."*** Acts 1:8a.

2. **Dove:** Generally regarded as a symbol of peace, love, and faithfulness, the dove is thought of as a timid bird. The dove mates only once in its life-time, and when one of the pair dies, it is said that the other flies to it for a farewell, and then it flies off to a higher place and sings itself to death. This reminds us that the Holy Spirit in a believer's life is easily grieved, though the Bible does not say He is grieved away for He is the Abiding Comforter whom Jesus said would abide with us forever. When John baptized Jesus, the Holy Spirit came on Jesus alighting like a dove. *When He had been baptized, Jesus came up immediately from the water; and behold, the heavens were opened to Him, and He saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and alighting upon Him. And suddenly a voice came from heaven saying, "This is My Beloved Son, in whom I am well-pleased"* (Matthew 3:16-17). Here we find the Pattern Son, conceived by the Spirit of God in the virgin's womb, having the Spirit come upon Him in the form of a dove.
3. **Oil:** Anointing with oil in the times of the Old Covenant was always a symbol of the gift of the Holy Spirit. In the tabernacle pure oil was used in the lamp just outside the veil in the holy place to symbolize the presence of God, who was present by His Spirit. God commanded the people through Moses to bring "oil for light." Oil was used for anointing kings and for setting apart sacred things. The word *anoint* comes from the word translated *Christ*. H. Ockenga says that the individual anointed or *Christed*. The Old Testament kings were anointed with oil and called "*the Lord's anointed*." For this reason, David refused to hunt Saul, *the Lord's anointed*, even though Saul was trying to kill him and David had opportunities to kill Saul. Oil was used for healing in Old and New Testament times. In the book of James, the Church was told to anoint the sick with oil as they prayed for them. The good Samaritan poured oil on the wounded man.
4. **Fire:** John, comparing water baptism and the Holy Spirit baptism, said, "*I indeed baptize you with water unto repentance, but He who is coming after me is mightier than I, whose sandals I am not worthy to carry. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire* (Matthew 3:11). At Pentecost *there appeared to them divided tongues, as of fire, and one sat upon each of them* (Acts 2:3). Fire consumes, purifies, gives light and heat, attracts attention, and produces power in steam when applied to water.
5. **Wine:** At Pentecost onlookers mocked those newly baptized in the Holy Spirit as being drunk on wine. Wine intoxicates, leaving people with no inhibitions and easy communication. It brings joy and boldness. In Ephesians 5:18, Paul encouraged the believers, "*And do not get drunk with wine for that is dissipation, but be filled with the Spirit.*"
6. **Water and Rain:** The absence of rain means famine, thirst, and ruin. Jesus said, "***If anyone thirsts, let him come to Me and drink. He who believes in Me, as the Scripture has said, 'out of his heart will flow rivers of living water'***" (John 7:37b-38). Isaiah wrote in Isaiah 44:3, *For I will pour water on him who is thirsty and floods on the dry ground; I will pour My Spirit on your descendants and My blessing on your offspring*. Joel speaks of when the Spirit is poured out for both planting seeds of evangelism and harvesting souls in Joel 2:23: *Be glad then, you children of Zion, and rejoice in the LORD, your God; for He has given you the former rain faithfully, and He will cause the rain to come down for you—the former rain and the latter rain in the first month*.
7. **Salt:** Salt preserves, purifies, gives taste, irritates (convicts), and creates a thirst. Jesus warned us in Matthew 5:13, "***You are the salt of the earth, but if the salt loses its flavor, how shall it be seasoned? It is then good for nothing but to be thrown out and trampled underfoot by men.***"
8. **Seal:** A seal on something denotes ownership, authentication, and authority. *In Him, you also trusted, after you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation; in whom also, having believed, you were sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise* (Ephesians 1:13).

9. **Covering:** A covering provides clothing, protection, and beauty. The Greek word for *endued* in Luke 24:40 is *clothed upon*. ***“Behold, I send the Promise of My Father upon you, but tarry in the city of Jerusalem until you are endued with power from on high”*** (Luke 24:49).
10. **Porter:** A porter opens the doors (of the heart and ministry) and is a watchman and a guard. ***“Most assuredly, I say to you, he who does not enter the sheepfold by the door, but climbs up some other way, the same is a thief and a robber. But he who enters by the door is the shepherd of the sheep. To him the doorkeeper opens and the sheep hear his voice, and he calls his own sheep by name and leads them out”*** (John 10:1-2). *Set a guard, O LORD, over my mouth; keep watch over the door of my lips* (Psalm 141:3).
11. **Finger:** A finger points in conviction, writes (inspiration, writing the Word on the heart and writing prophecy). ***“But if I cast out demons with the finger of God, surely the kingdom of God has come upon you*** (Luke 11:20).
12. **Witness:** A witness gives assurance and confirms things. *The Spirit Himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God* (Romans 8:16).