

How do figures of speech help you visualize the Holy Spirit?

1. What description does Luke use in Luke 24:49 to describe the Holy Spirit? Examine the meaning of the Greek term and explain what this term tells us about the Holy Spirit.

And behold, I am sending forth the promise of My Father upon you; but you are to stay in the city until you are clothed (**Greek: endyō**) with power from on high. (Luke 24:49)

Just prior to the Ascension, Jesus tells the apostles that they will receive the power of the Holy Spirit (Acts 1:8), and Luke records Jesus as describing this process with a verb (*endyō*) as in “to put on clothing”. With this verb, Jesus depicts the invisible Holy Spirit as clothing or as something that encompasses them.

Jesus uses the Greek verb “*endyō*” in another instance to depict a similar concept. In His Parable of the Wedding Banquet (Matt 22:1-14) while rebuking Jewish religious authorities (see the article: The Parable of the Wedding Banquet at www.Helpmewithbiblestudy.org/2JesusChrist/ParableKOGrejectWeddingBanquet.aspx), Jesus uses “*endyō*” to mean “dressed,” and in this case, dressed in wedding clothes (Matt 22:11).

Clothing serves the purpose of identifying people. For the apostles, the Holy Spirit identified them as Jesus’ witnesses to the world (Acts 1:8). Just as in the apostles, the Holy Spirit identifies Believers.

2. What imagery is portrayed in 2 Corinthians 1:21-22 and 5:5? What does this imagery tell us about God and how the Holy Spirit is related to His covenant?

Now He who establishes us with you in Christ and anointed us is God, who also sealed us and gave us the Spirit in our hearts as a pledge (**Greek: arrabōn**). (2 Cor 1:21-22)

Now He who prepared us for this very purpose is God, who gave to us the Spirit as a pledge (**Greek: arrabōn**). (2 Cor 5:5)

To understand the above two passages, one needs to consult Ephesians 1:13-14, because it interprets the passages:

In Him, you also, after listening to the message of truth, the gospel of your salvation—having also believed, you were sealed in Him with the Holy Spirit of promise, who is given as a pledge (**Greek: arrabōn**) of our inheritance, with a view to the redemption of God’s own possession, to the praise of His glory. (Eph 1:13-14)

The Greek term “*arrabōn*” is used for business and trade and signifies an installment or advance payment by which contract becomes valid. Ephesians 1:13-14 reveals that the Holy Spirit was given as a pledge of a Believer’s inheritance – a redemption that was the consummation of salvation where the Believer’s earthly body was replaced with a holy incorruptible immortal body.

For Jewish Believers, the sons of Abraham (Rom 9:3-9), the indwelling of the Holy Spirit was proof that the Abrahamic Covenant would be completely fulfilled. In like manner for Gentile Believers, the adopted sons of Abraham (Gal 4:28-29; Rom 9:7-9), the Holy Spirit was proof that they too were beneficiaries of the Abrahamic Covenant. Indwelling in the Believer’s heart, the Holy Spirit is the guarantee that God will be faithful to His covenant.

As an aside, the New Covenant speaks of the Holy Spirit and provides Gentiles an unconditional means for salvation (see the article: Divine Covenants... the New Covenant at www.Helpmewithbiblestudy.org/1God/CovenantNew.aspx). Because the New Covenant was an elaboration of the universal blessings of the Abrahamic Covenant, Gentile Believers could experience the spiritual blessings of the Abrahamic Covenant.

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How do figures of speech help you visualize the Holy Spirit? (page 2)

3. What is the symbolism of Matthew 3:16-17, Mark 1:10, Luke 3:22 and John 1:32-34?

Because this account of Jesus was reported in all four gospels, it is important to know and understand this symbolism. John's account is listed here as representative:

John testified saying, "I have seen the Spirit descending as a dove out of heaven, and He remained upon Him. I did not recognize Him, but He who sent me to baptize in water said to me, 'He upon whom you see the Spirit descending and remaining upon Him, this is the One who baptizes in the Holy Spirit.' I myself have seen, and have testified that this is the Son of God." (John 1:32-34)

The gospel authors report a remarkable ability, they see a supernatural event; they see the Holy Spirit as a dove. For Jews, the dove is significant. Turtle doves and pigeons were the only birds that God deemed as clean and suitable for sacrifice (Gen 15:9; Lev 5:7; 12:6-8; Luke 2:24). The dove provides a physical image of purity and holiness of the Holy Spirit.

4. Examine Acts 2:2-3 and explain the imagery of fire and wind.

And suddenly there came from heaven a noise like a violent rushing wind, and it filled the whole house where they were sitting. And there appeared to them tongues as of fire distributing themselves, and they rested on each one of them. (Acts 2:2-3)

From a theological perspective, fire has many metaphorical images and expressions. In the context of Acts 2, it appears to be a sign of divine glory heralding the heavenly origin of the Holy Spirit; it is an appearance of God. In another example where fire accompanied the appearance of God, Stephen recounts Moses' experience with the burning bush which was not consumed by fire (Ex 3:2):

"After forty years had passed, an angel appeared to him in the wilderness of Mount Sinai, in the flame of a burning thorn bush. When Moses saw it, he marveled at the sight; and as he approached to look more closely, there came the voice of the Lord: 'I am the God of your fathers, the God of Abraham and Isaac and Jacob.' Moses shook with fear and would not venture to look. But the Lord said to him, 'Take off the sandals from your feet, for the place on which you are standing is holy ground. I have certainly seen the oppression of My people in Egypt and have heard their groans, and I have come down to rescue them; come now, and I will send you to Egypt.'" (Acts 7:30-34)

Another image associated with Acts 2:2-3 is the wind. It is associated with the coming of the Holy Spirit and in similar fashion as the Old Testament example where the Spirit of God is moving over the waters of Creation (Gen 1:2). In His conversation with Nicodemus, Jesus also associates this wind with life:

The wind blows where it wishes and you hear the sound of it, but do not know where it comes from and where it is going; so is everyone who is born of the Spirit." (John 3:8)

The manifestation of the Holy Spirit in Acts 2:2-3 serves as the basis for Peter's proclamation that the prophet Joel's prophecy was being fulfilled (Joel 2:28-32). Jesus, Messiah and mediator of the New Covenant, has come (Acts 2:14-36); faith in Him means life.

How do figures of speech help you visualize the Holy Spirit? (page 3)

5. What does the image of sealing tell us about the Holy Spirit in Ephesians 1:13?

In Him, you also, after listening to the message of truth, the gospel of your salvation—having also believed, you were sealed in Him with the Holy Spirit of promise, who is given as a pledge of our inheritance, with a view to the redemption of God's own possession, to the praise of His glory. (Eph 1:13-14)

In ancient times, clay was used to seal a scroll to preserve the authenticity of its contents. The author of the scroll would impress upon the clay the design of his signet ring. This would confirm and attest to the authenticity of the message.

In announcing the coming of the Messiah, John the Baptist indicates that Jesus will use His authority to set His seal that God is true (John 3:33).

Within the context of the gospel accounts of the Holy Spirit descending as a dove upon Jesus (Matt 3:16-17, Mark 1:10, Luke 3:22 and John 1:32-34), Jesus speaks of His own sealing (John 6:27).

The sealing of Believers appears to be a validation of a genuine Believer. It attests to the authenticity of the Believer, because the "Lord knows who is His" (2 Tim 2:19).

6. What does the image of fruit reveal about the Holy Spirit in Galatians 5:22-23?

But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law. (Gal 5:22-23)

True discipleship, as Paul speaks to the Galatian Christians, means that their faith shows itself alive in their love for one another. Faith enables Believers the benefit of the Holy Spirit working through them in what they say and do.

The imagery with fruit places an emphasis on the life giving power of the Holy Spirit that results in good deeds as the fruit of faith; good deeds that appear naturally for all who cooperate with the Holy Spirit for the glory of God.

7. Take a moment to understand the Feast of Tabernacles and the significance of water. With that context, what is Jesus revealing about the Holy Spirit with His imagery of living water in John 7:37-39?

Now on the last day, the great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried out, saying, "If anyone is thirsty, let him come to Me and drink. He who believes in Me, as the Scripture said, 'From his innermost being will flow rivers of living water.'" But this He spoke of the Spirit, whom those who believed in Him were to receive; for the Spirit was not yet given, because Jesus was not yet glorified. (John 7:37-39)

During the Feast of Tabernacles, Jewish priests marched from the Pool of Siloam to the Temple and poured out its water at the base of the altar. This ritual represented a Jewish belief that rivers of living water flowed forth from the temple and to the Jew (Zech 14:8-9; Ezek 47:1-12).

Jesus' imagery portrays Jesus, instead of the Jewish belief of the temple, as pouring out the living water to all who believe (John 4:10-14) through the Holy Spirit after He is glorified.

References:

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