

Scriptural Portraits of the Holy Spirit

The Holy Spirit is like a seal or imprint.

A seal demonstrates ownership. We are owned by God and so, He has a vested interest in our well-being. The Holy Spirit seals us, and there is no force in the universe that can break that seal. He will see us safely and securely to our final rendezvous with the Father on the day of redemption. We are protected, we are secure, because of the indwelling of God's Spirit (2 Corinthians 1:22, Ephesians 1:13, 4:30).



The Holy Spirit is like a pledge or earnest money.

He is the pledge, the down payment of our inheritance (2 Corinthians 1:22). The presence of the Holy Spirit in the believer's heart is God's guarantee that he will receive all the promised blessings of salvation, including those yet future. In human affairs, once a down payment has been made, the purchaser is pledged to go through with the transaction. The deal is closed. The presence of the Spirit is a sure guarantee that God will never fail in any of His promises connected with our salvation.

The Holy Spirit is like a Friend.

Before His ascension to heaven, Yeshua said that He would send us another Comforter ('Paraklete' see John 16:7), the same kind of Comforter that He was. Comforter corresponds to the Hebrew word 'Menachem' – in fact, a name given by the rabbis as one of the names of the Messiah. The Spirit is a comforter of the very same sort as Yeshua. The Greek word 'Paraklete' includes the concepts of One who is called alongside, an Adviser, Corrector, Lawyer, Counsel for the Defence, Legal Assistant, Helper, Strengthener, Encourager. Why was it to the disciples' advantage that Yeshua left? It is because the Holy Spirit continues Yeshua's ministry to us, but brings His life and ministry to us in a deeper way; one that is able to transform us from within. We can be even closer to Yeshua now than the disciples were who walked with Him. In one sense, Yeshua's ministry to the disciples was incomplete. There was more that He wanted to teach them, but they weren't able to understand it at that point. But the Spirit is like Yeshua, the Master Teacher, the chief Rabbi, the Guide, who illumines us and enables us to understand and apply Yeshua's teachings, His miracles, His unique birth, death and resurrection to our lives. The Spirit guides us, leads us and teaches us all things. He brings to remembrance all the things that Yeshua taught, and guides us into all the truth. Further, He even transforms us into the image of Yeshua. He convicts us when we sin. He corrects us when we err. The Spirit also has a prophetic teaching ministry. He can and will reveal the future to God's people. He does this through the Scriptures and through New Testament prophets and revelation.

The Holy Spirit is like clothing.

'I am sending forth the promise of My Father upon you; you are to stay in the city until you are clothed with power from on high' (Luke 24:49). The Holy Spirit covers and protects us. He clothes us with God's divine power and wisdom from on high.

The Holy Spirit is like a dove.

The dove is a symbol of purity, it flies in the heavens, and is a symbol of peace. God's Spirit is pure and holy. He comes from heaven and is the source of peace. Doves were used as sacrifices for the very poorest people. God's Spirit is gracious and sacrificial. Consider that the Holiest Spirit is willing to come to the unholy, to the weakest, to the most unseemly, to the most poverty-stricken among mankind, and especially to those who are poor in spirit.

The Holy Spirit is like fire.

Fire is an indicator of the presence of God. It is symbolic of both judgment and purification. Our God is a consuming fire. The Lord was in the burning bush. The Lord was in the pillar of fire that protected Israel from the Egyptians and lead us through the wilderness. Tongues of fire appeared above the disciples' heads in the upper room on the day of Shavuot. Fire, when applied to metal, separates dross from ore, the impure from the pure. Fire, when applied to

anything organic, separates the organic from the inorganic during combustion. Fire purifies and cleanses. The Holy Spirit cleanses and makes holy. The Holy Spirit will not abide with unholiness. The Spirit will not abide with lies. If your life is unholy or if you are given to lying you cannot legitimately claim to be operating in the Spirit. Fire can melt the hardest material on earth, even solid rock. The Holy Spirit can melt and mould the toughest human heart. Fire makes it possible for man to live in the coldest regions on earth. It cooks our food and heats our homes. Without fire man would be reduced to a near animal existence. With fire man becomes a little more like God, no longer forced to concentrate all his energies on mere survival, but able to contemplate the deeper issues of life. Fire sometimes indicated the approval of the Lord, like fire being sent from heaven to consume a sacrifice, as in the account of the 'showdown' of Elijah and the prophets of Baal (1 Kings 18). When we have the Spirit we have God's blessing and approval.

The Holy Spirit is like oil.

Oil was used for anointing. The prophet Samuel anointed young David with oil, announcing that he would one day be king of Israel. Yeshua was anointed with the Spirit. That is what makes Him the Messiah. We need to be anointed with the Spirit if we are to be Messianic; 'little anointed ones' as it were. Oil was burned and gave light. The Spirit of truth enlightens us, gives us knowledge. Oil was also used to cleanse, heal and sanctify. The Holy Spirit brings cleansing, healing and holiness.

The Holy Spirit is like water.

Water holds fascination for man. People will travel hundreds of miles to view great downpours of water, like the Niagara Falls. Water is relatively simple yet mysterious. It is tasteless, odourless, colourless, transparent, and buoyant. It holds up heavy objects like a metal ship or a tree. The Holy Spirit holds us up. Water enables us to transport things, such as shipments brought on barges. The Holy Spirit transports us, His precious cargo, through life and ultimately all the way to the world to come. Water makes life possible, and many a human being has died for want of it. The most fertile land without water is a desert, just as the most talented or gifted people without God's Spirit ultimately miss out on life. Where there is water there is life, growth, and fruitfulness. Without God's Spirit your life will be a spiritual desert. With water it will be a flourishing garden. The Spirit makes life more abundant. We use water to cleanse our bodies, to our clothes, our homes. God's Spirit cleanses us. Water is also refreshing. There is nothing like a cool glass of water on a hot day. The Spirit gives refreshment, as Yeshua said, *'He who believes in Me, from his innermost being shall flow rivers of living water'* (John 7:38).

The Holy Spirit is like wine.

On the day of Shavuot (Acts 2) when the Spirit was poured out on the disciples, some mocked and said, 'They are full of sweet wine' (perhaps because of their obvious joy and zeal). Peter stood up and said that the men were not drunk, but that it was what had been spoken of through the prophet Joel, *'I will pour forth of My Spirit on all mankind'*. Wine is a symbol of joy. God's Spirit brings joy into our innermost being. You will never find true joy and happiness without receiving the Spirit – the source of all joy.

The Holy Spirit is like wind.

The Hebrew word for Spirit, Ruach, can be translated as wind (John 3:8, Acts 2:1-2). On the day of Shavuot the coming of the Spirit was accompanied by the sound of a violent rushing wind. Like wind His work may be not be visible, but the results certainly are. We can't see the Spirit, but we can easily see the effect of His transforming work in people's lives. And the Spirit's work is Sovereign. He touches whom He will and gives gifts as He sees fit. You can no more govern the moving of the Spirit than you can control the wind. Wind can be powerful, like a tornado or hurricane. It can carve exquisite structures out of solid rock. Arches National Monument is a good example of what wind can do. It will destroy those structures that oppose

it, but not destroy those things that bend and yield to it. Allow the Spirit to have His way in your life, and He will make something beautiful of it. Wind can also be a cool, refreshing breeze. The Holy Spirit is like a cool breeze that comforts and refreshes; and just as the wind is from the heavens, so the new birth is from above.

The Holy Spirit is like breath.

Ruach is also translated breath. Without breath we die. God's Spirit, His 'Breath' gives us life. We have life and tremendous intimacy with God due to His indwelling Spirit. Our breath is close to us. God's Ruach is as close to us as our own breath.

