

## B12 - God the Holy Spirit

### Study 1 - Symbols of the Holy Spirit (A)

#### BIBLE READING:

**Matthew 3: 13-17 and Acts 2: 1-4**

#### KEY VERSE:

**“The Holy Spirit descended on Him in bodily form, like a dove.”**

Luke 3: 22

In this Study, we shall look at two symbols – both familiar objects which are used as pictorial representations of the invisible, eternal Spirit of God.



### 1. THE DOVE

When the Lord Jesus was baptised by John at the start of His public life we read, **“The heavens were opened to Him, and He saw the Spirit of God descending LIKE A DOVE... a voice from Heaven said, “This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased”.** (Matthew 3: 16, 17) It is of special significance that here the three Persons of the Godhead - Father, Son and Holy Spirit (in dove-like form) are together in perfect harmony, united in the working out of God’s wonderful plan for our salvation!

The nature and habits of the dove make it a good symbol of the Holy Spirit:

a) The dove is ‘clean’. (See **Genesis 15: 9 and Leviticus 12: 6**) In Old Testament times, doves (or turtle-doves) were acceptable as sacrifices to God; this confirms the idea of their purity, for only ‘clean’ birds could be offered to God.

The presence of the Holy Spirit within us should have a purifying effect – a Christian’s body is a temple of the Holy Spirit. (1 **Corinthians 6: 18-20**) The dove which Noah released from the ark at the end of the flood, could not rest in the unclean conditions all around. (**Genesis 8: 8, 9**) The lesson for a Christian is clear - he must keep himself **“unstained from the world”.** (James 1: 27)

b) The dove is gentle. The Lord Jesus taught His followers to be **“innocent as doves”.** (Matthew 10: 16) Doves are non-aggressive; when in danger, their safety lies in flying away! (See **Psalm 55: 6**) Jesus did not retaliate when He was insulted and badly treated. During His trials, He **“continued entrusting Himself to Him who judges justly”.** (1 Peter 2: 23) In this, He is the Example for us. The Holy Spirit can help us to show dove-like gentleness of spirit, even when we are wrongly accused.

c) The dove is faithful. Ornithologists have observed how faithful in love a dove is to its partner. Indeed, it may mourn and die over the loss of its mate! The lesson for us is that the Holy Spirit always longs to maintain within us a deep love for our Saviour. If we permit the Spirit to have His way, our love for the Lord Jesus will never diminish. **“God’s love has been poured into our hearts THROUGH THE HOLY SPIRIT...”** (Romans 5: 5)

### 2. FIRE



Here are three ways in which fire is a symbol of the Holy Spirit:

a) Fire creates energy. On the Day of Pentecost, the Holy Spirit came upon the waiting company. One of the evidences of the Spirit that day was **“divided tongues, as of fire...”.** (Acts 2: 3) After His resurrection, the Lord Jesus told His apostles to **“stay in the city until you are clothed with power from on high”.** (Luke 24: 49) Just ten days later, His promise came true! The Holy Spirit was the ‘energy’ behind the fearless witnessing of those first Christians. For us, today, the same power is available.

b) Fire refines and purifies. Valuable metals, like silver and gold, are subjected to intense heat, in order to remove impurities. **“Our God is a consuming fire.”** (Hebrews 12: 29) Our sins have all been forgiven, but there is the ever-present need for our characters to be made more Christ-like. This happens when the Holy Spirit, like a purifying fire, works in each of us. How important, then, that we submit to His guidance and instruction. In this way, worthless and sinful things in our lives are consumed.

c) Fire creates warmth. To be warm-hearted Christians, we need the ‘fire’ of the Holy Spirit. If we fail to yield to Him we can be distanced from the Lord and become spiritually cold. He wants us to enjoy the ‘warmth’ of His presence and power in our lives, every day!

## B12 - God the Holy Spirit

### Study 2 - Symbols of the Holy Spirit (B)

#### BIBLE READING:

**Ezekiel 37: 1-14; John 3: 7-8  
and John 7: 37-39**

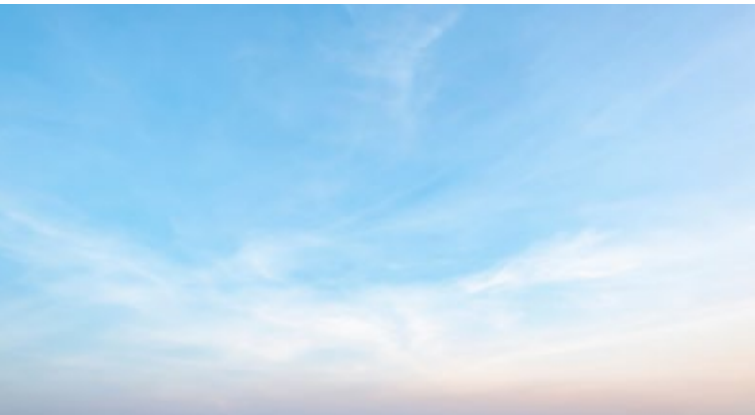
#### KEY VERSES:

**“Whoever believes in Me, as the  
Scripture has said, out of his heart  
will flow rivers of living water. Now  
this He said about the Spirit...”**

John 7: 38, 39

In this Study, we are going to consider two more symbols of the Spirit of God.

### 1. THE WIND



It is interesting to know that in both the Hebrew and Greek languages (in which the Old and New Testaments, respectively, were originally written) the same word may be translated as either ‘wind’ or ‘spirit’. This makes wind a very suitable symbol for the Holy Spirit. Just as wind is invisible, and yet has great power, so the Spirit of God, although unseen, works very powerfully. Though we cannot see the wind, we can certainly see its effects! So it is with the Holy Spirit!

a) **Ezekiel 37** records the prophet Ezekiel’s experience in ‘The Valley of Dry Bones’. The breath, or wind, which came into the dead bodies symbolises the Holy Spirit, as **verse 14** shows clearly. Only the Spirit can bring new spiritual life to scattered, ‘dead’ Israel, represented by the dry bones, when the right moment comes in God’s programme of future events. Only the same Spirit of God can give life to ‘dead’ sinners, such as we are.

b) In **John 3: 7** Jesus told Nicodemus that he **“must be born again”**. He then explained that this new birth (or, ‘birth from above’) can only come about through the Holy Spirit.

Just as the wind comes and goes, so the Holy Spirit has free choice in His movements. As one of the Godhead, He is unrestricted in His movements, as we learned in B10. Read **John 3: 8** again, and think carefully about how wonderfully the wind symbolises the Holy Spirit!

c) In earlier Studies, we have seen how the coming of the Spirit, in **Acts 2**, was symbolised by both fire and wind. On that great day, there was something to see - **“tongues, as of fire”** appeared... and something to hear - **“a sound like a mighty rushing wind”**. It is clear that these well-known things are being used as symbols of God’s Spirit.

### 2. WATER



There are places in the Bible where ‘water’ is a symbol of the Word of God. (See A2 Study 3) But in other places, the reference is to the Spirit of God. Here are two such references, one from the Old Testament and the other from the New Testament:

a) **Isaiah 44: 3** **“I will pour water on the thirsty land, and streams on the dry ground; I will pour My Spirit upon your offspring, and My blessing on your descendants.”** In these words, God is promising His people, Israel, a great outpouring of blessings, in a time yet to come. Clearly, ‘water’ is used as a figure, or symbol, of His Spirit. (**See also Zechariah 12: 10**)

b) Read **John 7: 37-39** again and note these points.:

i) Not until Jesus returned to Heaven (**“glorified”**) would the Spirit come. The fulfilment of this is found in **Acts 2** - the events of the Day of Pentecost.

ii) ALL believers in the Lord Jesus, from that point onwards, would then receive the Holy Spirit.

c) The Holy Spirit would be like **“rivers of living water”** flowing out from them. Here the Lord Jesus is instructing us that from each believer there should be an OUTFLOW! The Holy Spirit WITHIN wants to fill us, so that we will have something to share with those around us who need to hear about God’s salvation. We are not to be like the Dead Sea into which rivers flow, but none flow out! We must also ensure that the **“rivers of living water”** do not become polluted or dried up, as a result of sin in our lives.

# Answer Sheet

## B12 - God the Holy Spirit

### Study 1 - Symbols of the Holy Spirit (A)

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Return address on back of answer sheet

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

#### 1. Read *Matthew 3: 13-17*, then answer these questions:

a) Why did John try to stop the Lord Jesus from being baptised? \_\_\_\_\_

b) Describe what John saw and heard as soon as Jesus was baptised. \_\_\_\_\_

c) Read *John 1: 32-34*. What significance did this event have for John? \_\_\_\_\_

d) What can we learn from the fact that the three persons of the Godhead were present on this occasion? \_\_\_\_\_

□ /5

#### 2. The dove symbolises the purifying effect of the Holy Spirit. What would this teach us about our attitude to the unclean, sinful world in which we live? (See *1 Corinthians 6: 18-20*; *2 Corinthians 7: 1*; *James 1: 27*.)

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□ /3

#### 3. The Holy Spirit helps us to react as the Lord Jesus Himself reacted when He was wrongfully accused.

a) According to *1 Peter 2: 23*, how did He react to persecution (being reviled)? \_\_\_\_\_

b) In what way has He left us "an example"? (*1 Peter 2: 21*) \_\_\_\_\_

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□ /4

#### 4. Christians should always want to be faithful to the Lord Jesus. What can we do to ensure that we remain true to Him?

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\_\_\_\_\_

□ /3

#### 5. Answer the following:

a) Summarise the three points which the study makes about fire.

1) \_\_\_\_\_ 2) \_\_\_\_\_ 3) \_\_\_\_\_

b) Explain in your own words how one of these ideas illustrates the work of the Holy Spirit.

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

□ /4

#### 6. Read again *Acts 2: 1 - 4*, then complete these sentences:

a) This event took place on the \_\_\_\_\_ .

b) They were all \_\_\_\_\_ .

c) The sound was like \_\_\_\_\_ .

d) The divided tongues were \_\_\_\_\_ .

e) The fire is a \_\_\_\_\_ of the Holy Spirit.

f) They all began to speak \_\_\_\_\_ .

□ /6

**THINK:** How has this study helped you be more aware of the activity of the Holy Spirit in your life?

TOTAL = □ /25

# Answer Sheet

## B12 - God the Holy Spirit

### Study 2 - Symbols of the Holy Spirit (B)

#### 1. Supply the missing words in these sentences:

- a) Greek was the original language of the \_\_\_\_\_ .
- b) The Old Testament was written mainly in \_\_\_\_\_ .
- c) In both of these languages, the same word can mean either ' \_\_\_\_\_ ' or ' \_\_\_\_\_ ' .

 /3

#### 2. Suggest three ways in which 'wind' is a suitable symbol for the Holy Spirit. (You will find two ways given in the Study!)

- a) \_\_\_\_\_
- b) \_\_\_\_\_
- c) \_\_\_\_\_

 /3

#### 3. Read *John 3: 8*, and write in your own words the main point of the verse.

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

 /3

#### 4. What two natural things are used in *Acts 2* to represent the Spirit of God?

- a) \_\_\_\_\_
- b) \_\_\_\_\_

 /2

#### 5. Read *Ezekiel 37: 1-14* again, then answer these questions:

- a) Apart from 'bones', what parts of the human body are mentioned in these verses? \_\_\_\_\_
- b) What had to happen before the bodies stood up? \_\_\_\_\_
- c) What does the breath symbolise? \_\_\_\_\_
- d) What is the main point of Ezekiel's vision of 'The Valley of Dry Bones'? \_\_\_\_\_

 /6

#### 6. Read *John 7: 37-39*, then put these sentences in the correct order, by numbering them:

- The Holy Spirit is given. \_\_\_\_\_
- All believers from that point onwards receive the Holy Spirit. \_\_\_\_\_
- The Lord Jesus is glorified in Heaven. \_\_\_\_\_
- Jesus offers living water. \_\_\_\_\_

 /4

#### 7. In *John 7: 37, 38* the Lord Jesus is teaching that once we have come to Him and have drunk of the living water, the Holy Spirit then wants us to let "rivers of living water" flow to others. Explain what this means in practical terms for us as Christians.

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

 /4

**THINK:** Are there effective rivers of living water flowing from you as you live daily by the power of the Holy Spirit and impact others with the good news about Jesus?

 TOTAL =  /25



# Answer Sheet

## B12 - God the Holy Spirit

### Study 3 - The Fruit of the Spirit (A)

1. Explain, as clearly as you can, what is meant by *“the fruit of the Spirit”*.

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2. The first mentioned *“fruit of the Spirit”* is love.

a) Write a sentence to show how this quality was shown in the life of the Lord Jesus, giving Bible references, if possible.

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b) In what ways could love, as *“fruit of the Spirit”*, be seen in the life of a Christian today? \_\_\_\_\_

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c) Choose another characteristic of the *“fruit of the Spirit”* and show how it was seen in the life of the Lord Jesus.

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3. Read *Galatians 5: 16-21* again.

a) Describe the conflict which Christians face. \_\_\_\_\_

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b) In what ways are the *“works of the flesh”* so different from *“the fruit of the Spirit”*? \_\_\_\_\_

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c) How can Christians avoid giving in to their evil nature? \_\_\_\_\_

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4. Read what the Lord Jesus said about trees and fruit in *Luke 6: 43, 44*.

a) What can a *“good tree”* not do? \_\_\_\_\_

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b) What can a *“bad tree”* not do? \_\_\_\_\_

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c) In what way can the type, or nature, of a tree be known? \_\_\_\_\_

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d) What do you think is the main point of the Lord Jesus' teaching in these verses? \_\_\_\_\_

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5. Read *1 John 3: 2, 3*.

a) What will happen when the Lord Jesus appears? (*verse 2*) \_\_\_\_\_

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b) How can we prepare for the coming of the Lord Jesus? (*verse 3*) \_\_\_\_\_

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**THINK:** Am I allowing the Holy Spirit to grow the fruit of the Spirit in my life?

TOTAL =  /25

# Answer Sheet

## B12 - God the Holy Spirit

### Study 4 - The Fruit of the Spirit (B)

1. Read *John 15: 1-5* again and give short answers to these questions.

- a) Who is the vine? \_\_\_\_\_
- b) Who is the gardener (vinedresser)? \_\_\_\_\_
- c) Who are the branches? \_\_\_\_\_
- d) How can we bear fruit? \_\_\_\_\_

□ /4

2. Read *Matthew 22: 37-39* and write briefly summarise what the Lord Jesus said about loving God and loving others?

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

□ /4

3. Explain in your own words why a Christian can know lasting joy.

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

□ /3

4. According to these verses, how can we know peace in our lives?

- a) *Isaiah 26: 3* \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- b) *Philippians 4: 6, 7* \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_

□ /2

5. Complete the grid below on the qualities of the fruit of the Spirit. The first one has been done for you.

	Explain in your own words how God displays this quality toward us.	Give a practical example of how we could display this quality.
Patience	God does not treat us as our sins deserve.	Being patient and forgiving to those who upset me.
Kindness		
Goodness		
Gentleness		
Faithfulness		

□ /12

**THINK:** What aspects of your Christian life need more self-control? Ask God to help you develop self-control in this area through the power of the Holy Spirit.

Return your completed answer sheet to:

TOTAL = □ /25      UNIT TOTAL = □ /100

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## B12 - God the Holy Spirit

### Study 3 - The Fruit of the Spirit (A)

**BIBLE READING:**  
**Galatians 5: 16-26**

**KEY VERSES:**  
**“But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control.”**

Galatians 5: 22-23

In orchards and gardens, fruit is the end product of a cycle of life and growth. This helps us to understand that when we speak about **“the fruit of the Spirit”**, we are thinking about what the Holy Spirit can produce in our lives.

Note that Paul writes about ‘the fruit’, not ‘the fruits’. **“The fruit of the Spirit”** is from one common Source, which is the Spirit of God. We may think of it not as nine separate pieces of fruit, but as a single cluster, made up of nine different pieces! There is oneness and harmony in the life of a Christian where God’s Spirit has His way in producing fruit!

What, then, are the nine components of the cluster? They are:

Goodness  
Joy  
Faithfulness  
**Love**  
Self-control  
Gentleness  
Kindness  
Peace  
Patience

God has given us His Spirit to make these fine qualities grow in our lives. He wants us to develop into Christians whose words and actions show these characteristics.

We know that fruit on an apple tree does not appear overnight! It takes a lot of time. So it is in our lives, spiritually. The development of **“the fruit of the Spirit”** is a lifelong process. If we yield our lives to God, and obey Him, we can rely upon the Holy Spirit to continue His fruit producing work in us, and this brings glory to God. (See **John 15: 8**)

As Christians, we are not to be like Christmas trees on which are hung colourful decorations! These have no living link with the tree. They could never be called ‘fruit’, for it is impossible for them to show the nature of the tree.

With Christians, however, there is a living link, for the Spirit of God, who has imparted eternal life to us, now lives within us. The result is that God-like qualities, such as love, joy, peace, gentleness and goodness begin to show themselves in our character. It is **“the fruit of the Spirit”**!

All these virtues can be seen perfectly in the Lord Jesus, as He lived His earthly life. No one loved as He did! (See **John 11: 36**) He found complete joy in His Father’s will. (**Luke 10: 21 and Hebrews 12: 2**) His peace remained unruffled, even when His enemies were plotting against Him. (See **John 14: 27 and 1 Peter 2: 23**) We could continue, noting examples of His patience, His goodness, His faithfulness, His gentleness and self-control. In every respect, He is the ideal, perfect Personality. We can understand, then, that when this cluster of fruit is being developed in us, the Holy Spirit is really making us more Christ-like! There can be no higher spiritual goal than this - to be reflectors of the beautiful qualities so perfectly seen in the Saviour!

In **Galatians 5**, the **“fruit of the Spirit”** is set in very sharp contrast to the **“works of the flesh”**. (**verses 19-21**) The ‘flesh’ is our sinful, fallen nature which, even though we are now Christians and have a new nature, is still very much with us! An unending conflict goes on! (See **verse 17, “For the desires of the flesh are against the Spirit, and the desires of the Spirit are against the flesh...”**) If we allow the flesh to take control, we can quite easily become guilty of the horrible things listed in **verses 19-21**. We can, however, have victory over the flesh through the Holy Spirit who is in us. Our responsibility is to open up our lives more and more to Him, through faith and obedience. This is what **Galatians 5: 16** means when it says: **“Walk by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the flesh”**.



This is the third of three units on **God the Holy Spirit**.

## B12 - God the Holy Spirit

Study 4 - The Fruit of the Spirit (B)

### BIBLE READING:

**John 15: 1-5; Galatians 5: 22-26**

### KEY VERSE:

**“I am the vine; you are the branches. Whoever abides in Me, and I in him, he it is that bears much fruit, for apart from Me you can do nothing.”**

John 15: 5

When we become Christians, the Holy Spirit fills us, and He begins to produce good fruit in us, making us more like Jesus. We cannot produce the fruit of the Spirit in our lives through our own strength. **(John 15: 5)** Apart from the Lord Jesus and the power of the Holy Spirit, we can do nothing; we must remain dependent upon God to help us grow.

Let us now look at each of the nine characteristics of the fruit of the Holy Spirit in more detail.

### LOVE

The Bible teaches that God is love and God demonstrated His love by sending His Son to die for us. **(1 John 4: 8, 9)** In **John 15: 12** Jesus commands His disciples to love others as He loved us. We are to love each other sacrificially, laying aside our own feelings and desires to put others first. **(Philippians 2: 1-3; 1 Corinthians 13: 1-7)** We cannot do this in our own strength; rather the Holy Spirit fills our heart with God's love and empowers us to love others. **(Romans 5: 5)**

### JOY

Joy is more than merely being happy. As Christians our joy comes from the fact that we know God loves us, our sins are forgiven and that we have eternal life. The world's joy cannot last because it is based on fleeting, physical circumstances. But we can know the joy of the Lord even when we are going through difficult times, through the power of the Holy Spirit.



### PEACE

We live in tense and anxious times. The world does not offer much peace, indeed the world cannot give it, because the world does not know the One who is Peace. But for us as Christians, the peace of Christ is possible, no matter our circumstances, through the power of the Holy Spirit. **(John 14: 27)** When we fix our minds on God **(Isaiah 26: 3)** and give our worries to Him **(Philippians 4: 6, 7)** we can experience deep and lasting peace.

### PATIENCE

We don't see much patience in our fast-paced culture of instant gratification. But as Christians we are called to be patient and the more we grow in patience, the more we are like God, who is always patient with us. He doesn't treat us as our sins deserve, rather, He patiently brings us back to Himself. Because God is patient, we too must be patient with others. **(Ephesians 4: 2)**

### KINDNESS

God saved us because He is infinitely kind. **(Titus 3: 4, 5)** Even though we were sinful, God's heart was filled with kindness toward us, and He sent His Son to die in our place so that we could be forgiven. We are called to be kind toward others and reflect that same kindness. **(Colossians 3: 12)**

### GOODNESS

Goodness means more than simply being a good person. Rather, it means actively seeking to do good to other people to bless them and to care for them. Just as God pours out good things into our lives day after day, so we should ask for the Holy Spirit's help to pour out good things into the lives of others.

### FAITHFULNESS

Just as God is faithful, so we too must be faithful. Firstly, we are called to be faithful to God. There will be times when it is difficult to follow God, when life is hard, but through the power of the Holy Spirit we can remain faithful to God. Secondly, we must also be faithful to one another. When another Christian is struggling, we must faithfully care for them and encourage them. Thirdly, God calls us to faithfully serve Him, using the gifts He has given us. **(Matthew 25: 21)**

### GENTLENESS

We live in a culture where self-assertiveness is prized, but as Christians we are called to be gentle toward one another. Consider how gentle God is toward us: when we sin, He gently convicts us, leading us back to Himself. Or when we struggle, He gently comforts us. Just as God is gentle with us, so we must be gentle toward others.

### SELF-CONTROL

To be self-controlled means to be in control of our thoughts and actions. We must be self-controlled in every area of our lives, including the things we say, what we watch on television and what we think about. Even though self-control is difficult, when we rely on the Holy Spirit, He can help us grow in this area.

This is the third of three units on **God the Holy Spirit**.

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