

The Fire of the Lord

an introduction to the Person and work of the Holy Spirit

Sometimes spoken of as 'the forgotten Person' of the Godhead, the Holy Spirit exercises a hugely important ministry in the outworking of the purpose of God.

This series of 7 introductory studies is intended to deepen your understanding of what that ministry is, and transform your experience through the enjoyment of that ministry in your life.

You can find the background to this short series [here](#).

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3. 'Pictures' of the Spirit

(Acts 2.1-18)

[w/b Sunday 12th May 2019]

".. like the blowing of a violent wind .."

In our previous study we read of Jesus promising *another* (that is, another of the same as Him) Counselor or Advocate, the Holy Spirit (John 14.16f): from what Jesus said the Holy Spirit is clearly 'personal'. But what is He like? How are we to think of Him?

To answer that, the Scriptures revert to the well-tried practice of using 'picture' language: it paints graphic pictures, uses startling images - declaring as it does so that it's .. *like* this. In that way we're helped to understand, at least in some measure, what is actually beyond our understanding. So in this study we look at the main 'pictures' which are used in relation to the Holy Spirit.

[Despite your best intentions, there may not be time for all the questions to be addressed in your Community Group! It may be helpful to try and ensure that in this study you cover questions 3, 4 and 7. As always try to leave good time for shared prayer!]

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1. **Read Acts 2.1-18.** Don't let familiarity with the passage blind you to the drama of the occasion! Something remarkable took place in Jerusalem - picture the scene as you read the passage.

How do you tend to think of the Holy Spirit?

Imagine yourself to have been in Jerusalem that day: how would you have felt and what would have struck you most?

2. Read Acts 2.1. The setting is important, a fact underlined by the reference to their being 'all together' and 'in one place'

Read Psalm 133 and Acts 1.14: what (if any) is the connection between God's people 'dwelling together in unity' and their enjoying the activity of God's Spirit?

In what ways does this challenge us as a fellowship and you as an individual?

3. Read Acts 2.2. Here in this verse we're given the first and, indeed the primary, 'picture' used in reference to the Holy Spirit - that of the wind.

Consider all that is said about the wind here (*'suddenly .. sound .. blowing .. violent .. from heaven .. filled the whole house'*): what does this 'picture' with all the above 'colouring' tell you about the Holy Spirit?

Read John 3.5-8: what truths about the Spirit does Jesus highlight by using this 'picture' of the wind?

4. **Read Acts 2.3-4.** The Spirit made Himself visibly known on the day of Pentecost through fire as well as wind: this is the second 'picture' commonly used in relation to the Spirit.

Why is 'fire' such an apt 'picture' of the Holy Spirit and His work?

What is the significance in it being in "*what seemed to be tongues of fire*" that the Spirit made His presence visible?

5. **Read Acts 2.5-11.** One key and constant feature of the Spirit's work is His bringing together what has been separated, integrating what has disintegrated.

What in particular was it that drew the crowd together?

If you find it a struggle to be '*declaring the wonders of God*' to others (v.11), what encouragement is there for you in these verses?

6. **Read Acts 2.12-16.** The questions prompted by what happened in Jerusalem that day as the disciples were filled with the Holy Spirit gave Peter the opportunity to preach.

Have there been occasions when your experience of the Spirit has left others asking what on earth is going on?

Read Eph.5.18: in what ways is our being filled with the Holy Spirit comparable to being drunk?

7. **Read Acts 2.17-18.** The promise articulated by Joel ("*I will pour out my Spirit..*") points up the third common 'picture' used in relation to the Holy Spirit - that of water.

Compare Peter's quote with Joel's message (Joel 2.28f): why do you think Peter adds (repeats) the words "*.. and they will prophesy*" in underlining the work of the Spirit?

Read Isaiah 44.3-5: how does the imagery of these verses help your understanding of the Spirit's ministry?