

THE SPIRIT'S MINISTRY IN 'TYPE'

Theme: The Scriptures show us the truths about the Spirit's ministry through various 'types'.
(All Scripture is taken from The New King James Version, unless otherwise indicated.)

The Bible is filled with 'examples' and 'types'. Some events in the Bible are clearly said to be “examples” of something else (such as the examples of the stories of Israel; see 1 Corinthians 10:6, 11). Romans 5:14 says that Adam was “a type of Him who was to come” (that is, Christ). The Greek word used is *typos*; from which we get the word “type”.

To help us understand the Spirit more clearly, the Bible provides us with “types”—that is, illustrations, symbols, figures or emblems—for which certain aspects of His nature and ministry are the “antitypes” (that is, the real things represented in the symbols). Typologies are a fascinating thing to study; But they are also potentially dangerous. We must be careful not to make things into types that the Bible doesn't present as types, or to misinterpret the meaning of the types it gives us. If we retain a good, sound knowledge of the realities concerning the Holy Spirit that the types are meant to picture, we will keep the types in balance and not go far astray in our use of them.

The Bible gives us some clear and trustworthy 'types' of the Holy Spirit's ministry ...

1. A DOVE.

In all four Gospels, the Holy Spirit is depicted as descending from heaven in bodily form like a dove and remaining upon the Lord Jesus at His baptism (Matthew 3:16-17; Mark 1:9-11; Luke 3:21-22; John 1:31-32). This event identified Jesus to John the Baptist as the Son of God (John 1:33-34). Doves are used in the Scripture as symbolic of innocence (Matthew 10:16)—which would picture the Spirit's purity and holiness as One sent from heaven to earth. And because a dove from the ark was used to mark the recession of the waters of the flood (Genesis 8:8-12), the Holy Spirit's descent would also have served as an emblem of the redemption and peace God offers toward fallen and sinful humanity through the ministry of His Son.

2. WIND (OR BREATH).

In John 3:8, the Lord Jesus used “the wind” as an illustration of the Spirit's ministry in regeneration. Like the wind, His immediate presence isn't visible to the human eye; but He is clearly seen in His powerful effects of His works. And like the wind, He is not subject to human control; but rather, He works sovereignly as He wishes. Just as God breathed into Adam's nostrils “the breath of life” (Genesis 2:7); so Jesus describes the new life of salvation as being “born of the Spirit” (John 3:5-6). It's interesting to note that after His resurrection, Jesus breathed on His disciples and said, “Receive the Holy Spirit” (John 20:22); and that at Pentecost, the Spirit's coming was with the sound of “a rushing mighty wind” (Acts 2:2).

3. FIRE.

In the Old Testament, the presence of God was accompanied by fire—as in the burning bush (Exodus 3:2), the pillar of fire in the wilderness (Exodus 13:21-22), and the ministry of the priests (Leviticus 9:22-10:2). This may help us understand something of why John the Baptist

said that Jesus, when He came, would baptize His people with “the Holy Spirit and fire” (Matthew 3:11-12); because fire illustrates the way the Spirit illumines, protects, and refines the things of God. It’s worth noting that when the Holy Spirit came at Pentecost, He came as “divided tongues, as of fire” that sat upon each of the disciples (Acts 2:3).

4. WATER.

In Isaiah 44:3, the outpouring of the Holy Spirit is directly compared with the outpouring of water. The Lord Jesus told the woman at the well that He offered “living water” (John 4:10); and that whoever drank of it “will never thirst”; for it “will become in him a fountain of water springing up into everlasting life” (v. 14). This symbolizes a living, life-giving dynamic which is freely available to all who wish it (see Revelation 22:17), and that perpetually quenches and continually refreshes from within. Jesus later 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 7:37-38; see also Isaiah 55:1). The apostle John writes, “But this He spoke concerning the Spirit, whom those believing in Him would receive ...” (v. 39).

5. OIL.

In the Old Testament, oil was used for the anointing of the priests and the articles of the tabernacle for ministry (Exodus 40:9-16; Leviticus 8:30). This was not a common kind of oil; but rather a specific kind of oil, the compounding of which was strictly for the work of the priesthood only, and that could not be made or used for any other reason (Exodus 30:22-33). The anointing by this sacred oil was so serious a matter that, so long as Aaron or any of his sons bore it, they were forbidden from even mourning over the death a son or a brother (Leviticus 10:6-7). This pictures for us the Spirit’s work of anointing those God has appointed for ministry and of setting them apart for His specific and sacred uses (see Isaiah 61:1-3). Note that Jesus’ “witnesses” (the apostles) were to wait in Jerusalem until they were “endued with power from on high” (Luke 24:49); which power was the Holy Spirit (Acts 1:8). The “anointing” of oil may also depict the instructing and illuminating ministry of the Holy Spirit; since, because He was the perpetually abiding “anointing” which they had received from God, they were taught “concerning all things” (1 John 2:20, 27; see also John 16:13-14). This was also depicted in the temple by the lampstand that burned with pressed olive oil, and that illuminated the holy place of the temple and gave light to those who ministered in the things of God (Exodus 27:20-21).

6. A SEAL.

In the Old Testament, a written transaction was completed—and the thing deeded was secured for future redemption—by a seal (see Jeremiah 32:9-10). The presence of an official seal had the effect of completely settling the matter (see 1 Kings 21:8; Esther 8:7-8). It was used as a figure of speech for the possessiveness of love in Song of Solomon 8:6—“set me as a seal upon your heart, as a seal upon your arm ...” This depicts the Holy Spirit’s ministry of sealing those whom God has chosen for Himself, and of guaranteeing their full future redemption. God has “sealed us and given us the Spirit in our hearts as a guarantee” (2 Corinthians 1:22). His indwelling guarantees us for the full assurance of our future glorification in an eternal body (2 Corinthians 5:1-8, esp. v. 5). We are “sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise, who is the guarantee of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession” (Ephesians 1:13-14). But more; His sealing—thus identifying us as God’s possession—also motivates us to put off the corrupt behavior that displeases Him (Ephesians 4:29-30).