

The Heavenly Dove

by John Hames

The Holy Spirit, represented by the dove, brings peace, quietness, gentleness, purity, and loving nature to our lives, making us like Jesus and preparing us to be the Bride of the Lamb.

Scripture: John 1:32

Topics: "Holy Spirit", "Spiritual Transformation"

Description

John Hames preaches about the emblems of the Holy Spirit found throughout the Scriptures, such as the gentle dove, the gentle dew, and the still small voice. He highlights how the Holy Spirit brings beauty and order out of chaos, both in the physical world and in human hearts, transforming them into the likeness of Jesus. John emphasizes the traits of the dove as an emblem of peace, quietness, gentleness, purity, and loving nature, urging believers to exhibit these characteristics as they are being prepared as the Bride of the Lamb.

Transcript

There are several emblems of the Holy Spirit throughout the scriptures such as the gentle dove, the gentle dew, and the still small voice.

The very first mention of the Holy Spirit in the Old Testament is under the emblem of a dove: "And the Spirit of God brooded upon the face of the waters." -- Genesis 1:2.

The very first emblem under which the Holy Ghost is presented in the New Testament is also as a dove. "I saw the Spirit descending from heaven like a dove, and it abode upon him." -- St. John 1:32.

First, we see the Holy Spirit brooding like a dove over the wrecked, chaotic earth. What a strange picture to behold -- chaos, desolation, ruin, all discord, materials, earth and sea, mud, rock, mire and slime, seething waters, hissing flames, wild abyss, darkness and destruction everywhere!

A faint picture of the heart without God is here portrayed. Yet the hovering, nestling dove brooded over this chaotic desolation until out of the wreck and ruin came a beautiful, shining paradise with its singing birds and blooming flowers. Christian workers may find encouragement here. The same Holy Spirit that brought beauty and order out of a physical wreck is hovering over human hearts to woo and win them to be the Bride of the Lamb.

The Holy Spirit as a dove turns us into lamb-like beings until there is a softness in the eyes, a mildness in the voice, and a heavenly manner in our whole being. The Holy Spirit as a dove reproduces within us the tempers and dispositions of Jesus.

Let us notice some traits of the dove:

I. The dove is an emblem of peace. There is a twofold peace: peace with God, which is the result of a changed relationship, and the peace of God, which comes from the indwelling Christ himself, who possesses our spirit and imparts to us the very same peace which possessed His breast and kept Him calm in the awful hour when He stood alone in the judgment hall with His enemies thirsting for His blood.

The Apostle in Philippians 4:7 mentions three features of this peace:

1. It passeth all understanding. No brain or intellect can comprehend it.
2. It keeps the heart with its conscience, will, affections, and emotions. The heart is a little world within itself. No one has ever been able to keep the heart, but this deep, settled peace keeps the spirit calm and all the faculties regulated and restful.
3. This peace, we are told, keeps the mind. Since the mind largely controls the body, it is essential to have a quiet, peaceful, restful mind. All negative morbid thoughts disturb the nervous system and are health destroyers; whereas, cheerful, hopeful thinking is the health builder and sends soothing, healing waves all through the soul and body.

When the heart fully surrenders to Him, it is then the very peace of God enters in, and the Dove of Peace spreads His tranquil wings over the troubled sea of human strife and takes up His abode within.

II. Another trait of the dove is quietness and gentleness. The dove seeks a quiet, hidden place along the river bank to build her nest. The Holy Dove shrinks from the noisy, tumultuous, excited, and vindictive spirit and finds His home in the lowly breast of a peaceful soul.

A great many Christians look upon gentleness as a kind of weakness. They seem to think that the power of God consists of being loud and boisterous. As one has well said, "The ruin of deep spirituality among professed Christians is putting noisy, fussy things ahead of a divine being like Jesus."

Notice God's dealings with Elijah, the old, rugged Prophet of the Wilderness. He was hiding on a mountain crag at the entrance of a cave, discouraged and confused, waiting for God's message. God began to speak through the voice of nature. First came the mighty earthquake, with its heavings, tearing nature asunder. But the Prophet of Fire looked upon the scene unmoved and untouched. Then came the sweeping tornado, roaring and tearing rocks from their base and hurling them into the valley below. But there was nothing in that to subdue his fiery spirit or heal his broken heart. Next came the fire. Perhaps It was an electrical storm, with its forked tongues of lightning playing upon the great forest, with the roar -- of thunder like ten thousand storms. But even this did not move the man of God.

We are told that after this there came a "still small voice," or as the New Version expresses it, "a sound of gentle stillness, softer than the even hells, sweeter than a mother's tongue, gentler than music's tenderest note."

It broke his whole spirit into tenderness and awe Gathering his mantle about him, he crept into the cave and fell upon his face at the feet of God to listen to His message. The fiery heart at length was subdued, the mighty will was broken, and the stern prophet was as a child.

What the fiery tempest and heaving earthquake could not do, "the voice of gentleness" had done. God often breaks the hardest hearts and strongest wills by a touch of gentleness that is softer than a mother's hand. The heart in which the Dove of Peace dwells will be characterized by gentleness.

III. The dove is the symbol of purity. The great work of the Holy Ghost is to take out all the hatred, malice, envy, jealousy, and impurity in every form and fill the heart with perfect love.

We are told that the dove has no gall. Just as gall stands for bitterness, so the heart that is filled with the Spirit is free from all harshness, coldness, stiffness, biting sarcasm, and overbearing dictatorship. A pure heart is a soft, tender, gentle, lowly, affectionate, and Christlike heart.

IV. The dove is noted for its loving nature. It is He who sheds abroad the love of God in our hearts, giving us a love that is unselfish, full of longsuffering, and glad to pour itself out for the most unworthy and unlovely being.

Dr. S. A. Keen says: "Every child of God has an experience of love. When the soul is born of God, the love of God is shed abroad in it by the Holy Ghost. How often, however, the child of God finds mingling with this love -- even things contradictory to love -- ill will, unforgiveness, uncharitableness, inordinate affection, and unholy ambition.

"When the Holy Ghost Himself is received, He burns out everything inimical to, and out of harmony with, love, and leaves nothing but pure love."

V. Another trait of the dove is non-combativeness. Whenever the Holy Ghost reproduces the lamb-like, dove-like nature within us, all fight and secret revenge is completely taken out. Such persons receive persecution and ill usage with the meekness of a lamb. Look at Mr. Wesley's attitude toward his enemies When dragged about, bruised, having his clothes torn to pieces by angry mobs. He only exclaimed in a mild voice, "Friends, what harm have I done to any of you?" Nothing will test our piety more thoroughly than our feeling toward those who wrong us.

The Holy Ghost is now getting a bride ready for the marriage of the Lamb; and in order that she shall appear more lovely, and be presented blameless in that day, the true bridehood saints are being put through the furnace of trial in order to fix all the graces that they may mature and ripen for eternity.

"When sanctified people sour under persecution and go about fighting, scratching and clubbing God's people, they only show that they have been cracked in the annealing furnace of testing and are losing their place among the perfectly pure, gentle and dove-like souls who make up the Lamb's Bride."

Unless we are determined to be dissolved in divine love and hear all things in a lamb-like spirit, we shall never be among that blood-washed number that shall constitute the Bride of the Lamb. May the Heavenly Dove hover around us until Christ be formed within us the hope of glory.

Grow in Your Walk with Christ

Listen and read messages that will stir your heart for Christ and point you to deeper repentance and devotion.

- 50,000+ Sermons from speakers past and present
- 3,900+ Classic Christian Books freely readable online
- 1,200+ Bible Translations and Commentaries
- Over 450k forum posts — Join our vibrant online Christian forum

www.sermonindex.net