



What about me? Part 2 THE DOVE ON YOUR SHOULDER



TEXT: LUKE 3:21-22, JOHN 1:32-33 ... one of rare accounts inc. in all 4 gospels.

We can get misled into seeing Him as some kind of impersonal FORCE or POWER and fail to appreciate the CHARACTERISTICS, PERSONALITY, THOUGHTS + FEELINGS of His PERSON.

→ *Are you ever tempted to do that? What is His personality like? In what respect does He have feelings?*

NATURAL CHARACTERISTICS OF A DOVE

- a) BEAUTY & PURITY → Pure white, rare + stunning (specially bred), obvious symbolism
- b) GENTLENESS → Make soft, low, lulling, cooing sound ... Considered to be loving, docile, peaceful + gentle in nature, unusually tame when caged
- c) EASILY SCARED → Very sensitive bird ... exceedingly shy ... flies away at tiniest disturbance ... easily spooked by strange noises ... intimately aware of surroundings (perhaps having been hunted for centuries)

CULTURAL REFERENCES

In art, doves often used to represent some aspect of the DIVINE, appearing WITH deities, acting as GUIDES or MESSENGERS ... (Aphrodite/Venus, Mohammed, Virgin Mary, prophets + saints, '2nd day of Christmas')

BIBLICAL APPEARANCES

a) DOVE IN CREATION (Gen 1:1-3) → BROODING over the waters

FATHER spoke Word: *Let there be light* ... JESUS is Word (Jn 1) ... SPIRIT waiting ready to act on Word.

PICTURE: Spirit of God moving on waters / hovering as bird would / several versions use word 'brooding' → Brooding is associated with pregnancy, gestation, incubation ... Waiting over eggs, ready to give birth / for new life to burst out ... Protecting, warming, preparing

The SENSE = "I'm ready, just say it. Release that Word + let me manifest it. That's what I do, I take that Word, infuse it with power + it produces, creates, quickens, heals, saves, sanctifies + liberates."

TALMUD: "For it is said: And the spirit of God hovered over the face of the waters — like a dove which hovers over her young without touching [them]."

- * In this context, Holy Spirit influence is about CREATIVITY, NEW BIRTH, SPIRITUAL LIFE, MANIFESTATION.
- * God SPEAKS; the Holy Spirit ACTS, PRODUCES, BIRTHS.

b) DOVE & THE FLOOD (Gen 8:6-12)

- * Both the DOVE + OLIVE BRANCH became symbols of God's PEACE following judgment.

In this scene, God is indicating peace after wrath, purity after wickedness, Noah passing thru flood into new life ... Dove becomes visual symbol of all that

Similarly, Holy Spirit is our peace, SHALOM → God sends us Dove to show (like Flood) long reign of sin is ended + grace is now available to us ... Similarly, at Jesus' Baptism, Dove descending implies peace with God is possible thru Messiah ... Passing thru waters like flood into new life ... Dove alluded to at creation, new creation + re-start of creation after flood ... = not coincidence

c) DOVE AS A SACRIFICE (Leviticus 5,12, Luke 2:24)

- * Used either as a SIN offering or PURIFICATION ritual → Jesus as sacrificial offering ... perfect, spotless ... bringing atonement + reconciliation
- * WHITENESS of doves makes it powerful symbol of PURITY and INNOCENCE, befitting the Holy Spirit.

d) DOVE AS A SYMBOL OF BEAUTY + PURITY

- * Song of Solomon 1:15, 2:14, 5:2 → A love song between LOVER + BELOVED, representing the espousal relationship between CHRIST and His BRIDE, the Church ... So, in this context, dove represents undefiled, unconditional love of the Lover for His Beloved / Christ for His Bride / Saviour for His chosen ones
- * See also Matt 10:16 → INNOCENT as doves ... We're to be above reproach, holy, pure, harmless, pleasing God

FOR US, THE APPLICATION

Bill Johnson: "Walk with the DOVE on your SHOULDER and such that He STAYS THERE. How? Live every moment with the Dove IN MIND."

→ *What would it look like to live as though dove was on your shoulder? Would that affect what we say, think + do? How'd life change if we lived with dove in mind? What attributes could He bring to your life and how could He change your walk with God?*

PERSONAL CONTEXT

- * That intimacy, purity, beauty, gentle peacefulness comes as we WALK with the One who is HOLY and SPIRITUAL.

He's HOLY Spirit (1st name) + holy is primary attribute ... ahead of power, wisdom, anointing.

He's also a SPIRITUAL being + calls us out of fleshly living + into spiritual sensitivity

- * But you cannot have that if you are UNHOLY and UNSPIRITUAL.
- * Because He is DOVE-LIKE, He is easily SPOOKED.
- * Because He cannot TOLERATE SIN, He TAKES FLIGHT easily.

He teaches us to flee from sin + that's exactly what He Himself does. Bible refers to Holy Spirit being grieved, offended, quenched, vexed, resisted. Because He's PERSON, with personality, feelings + sensitivities. Above all, grieved by ALL SIN: Anger, gossip, impurity, immorality, bitterness, disrespect

Ephesians 4:30 → *Do not GRIEVE the Holy Spirit of God.*

* His LIFTING is a function of His MERCY ... If God stayed present while we persisted in WILFUL sin, we'd experience the SEVERITY of His JUDGMENT, because God is also a CONSUMING FIRE.

A key part of the Paraclete's role (John 16:8) is as CONVICTER of SIN, teacher of RIGHTEOUSNESS, warner of JUDGMENT.

* Much of His work is SANCTIFYING, TEACHING, MATURING (Heb 12:14, Matt 5:8) Making us more like Jesus, so we bear more of FRUIT of Jesus (think Gal 5:22, Beatitudes)

→ *How can walking with dove on your shoulder, always at the forefront of your mind, help you become more like Jesus or to bear more Kingdom fruit?*

* Sin GRIEVES the Dove, so we must be HOLY. FLESH RESISTS the Dove, so we must put flesh TO DEATH and be ALIVE to the SPIRIT.

→ *How do we grieve the Holy Spirit? How does He respond to our sin? What is the difference between grieved, offended, quenched and resisted, and how is sin at the root of all of them?*

→ *How does flesh resist the Spirit? How do we 'put flesh to death' and be 'alive to the Spirit?'*

→ *Why is His lifting a function of mercy?*

→ *What could we do to grow in Heb 12:14 and Matt 5:8?*

CORPORATE CONTEXT

When the Dove is IN THE ROOM, it should affect the WAY WE ARE.

* There must be an AWE + REVERENCE for His Presence (1 Thess 5:19).

→ *How did they honour the presence of God in the Old Testament? Is there enough awe and reverence in our Christian culture? Can you go too far? How do we balance the fact that He is Lord of Glory and the Lover of Song of Solomon? What, in your opinion, could we change to cultivate that sense of awe + reverence?*

* There's no room for OVER-FAMILIARITY, DISRESPECT, FLIPPANCY.

→ *If a dignitary enters the room how do we act? If the Holy Spirit is at work, how should we act? What should we do? What should we not do?*

→ *Why does the Holy Spirit 'withdraw?' What is He trying to teach us?*