

Why You Need to Know the Holy Spirit as a Person

Every woman loves a love story. What girl, young or old, hasn't dreamed of being Cinderella, pursued by her Prince Charming?

Most people don't consider Christianity to be first and foremost a love story; but it is. In fact, if you are a Christian you are involved in the greatest love story ever. And, it gets even better; you aren't the ugly stepsister. You are the beautiful bride!

The Song of Solomon gives us a picture of our Bridegroom King, Jesus, who left heaven's paradise to come to fallen Earth and redeem His bride: "Who is this coming up from the desert like a column of smoke, perfumed with myrrh and incense made from all the spices of the merchant?" (Song 3:6, NIV). Here Jesus is coming out of the wilderness perfumed with myrrh and frankincense, signifying His sufferings and intercession for His bride.

This is the same Bridegroom who ascended to heaven, and who can declare, "Father, I did it! I paid the price for her" (see John 17:4; 19:30). In response, the Father can reply to His Son, "Sit here, on my right hand while I send my Holy Spirit to train your bride" (see Heb. 12:2; John 16:13).

The Holy Spirit prepares us for the Bridegroom King. He is our teacher and guide. He awakens our spirits and sets our hearts on fire. He is the One who brings the revelation of conviction, repentance and salvation.

The Spirit illuminates the Word of God, taking the logos (doctrine or the revealed will of God) and making it a heart-gripping rhema (an individual Scripture given for a specific purpose). And He is the One who makes known to us our

birthright and awakens us to our destiny.

In Search of a Bride

The story of Isaac and Rebekah is a picture of the great love adventure between Christ and His bride. In Genesis 24, Abraham (Father God) commissions his servant (the Holy Spirit) to find a bride for his son, Isaac (Christ).

In Genesis 24:14, the servant leaves the father and goes through the wilderness with 10 camels loaded down with a large dowry. When he arrives at the town, it is evening, the time when the women would go draw water at the well. The servant prays to God and puts forth a fleece: "Have the maiden You have selected as Isaac's wife give me a drink and offer to water my camels as well."

Before he even finished his prayer, Rebekah came to the well, dressed as a servant, going about her daily chores. The servant asked her for a drink and immediately something quickened her heart. She answered, "Yes, of course, and may I also water your camels?" (See Genesis 24:19.)

Now that was an extravagant offer. The camels had just come out of the desert and were extremely thirsty. One camel can drink about 30 gallons, so she was offering to draw about 300 gallons of water for his 10 camels.

In the natural, all Rebekah saw were thirsty camels. She didn't know about the son. But hidden beneath this simple request for a drink was a prophetic invitation for her. Often, the Holy Spirit comes to us asking for what could be compared to only a drink of water, and we reject His invitation because we can't see what is concealed within it.

After Rebekah watered the camels, the servant presented her with jewelry—a golden nose ring and gold bracelets (Gen. 24:22). When she told her brother Laban about the visitor and the gifts he had given her, he ran to meet the servant and

extended him a personal invitation to his home (v. 31).

When we see all the wonderful gifts the Holy Spirit has to offer, we greatly desire and need them.

But often we get so focused on the gifts that we forget the Holy Spirit is a Person with a personality and that we need intimacy with Him even more than we need His gifts.

The Journey Leads to Jesus

When the servant entered Laban's home, the servant refused to eat any of the food set before him, saying that first he must explain his mission. The servant shared the story of Isaac's miraculous birth and recounted the series of events from earlier that day—his prayer at the well and Rebekah's response (Gen. 24:36-48).

After the servant related the story, they ate and fellowshiped all night. The next morning as the servant prepared to leave, Rebekah's family asked if he would stay another 10 days before taking Rebekah to his master. The servant refused the invitation because he had a mission. He had to get the bride to the son! (See Genesis 24:56.)

So often we want to stay in the bride's house. We want to stay where the party is, and where all the gifts are. We lack the revelation of the importance of our journey.

We view the Holy Spirit as though He is there only for our benefit—for a little healing and a little refreshing. We fail to understand the magnitude of this incredible love story and the importance of the journey to the Bridegroom King, who longs for His bride.

When Rebekah's family asked her if she were willing to go with the servant, she replied, "I will go." Likewise, the Holy Spirit is looking for voluntary lovers who will say, "Yes, I will go with You! Yes, I want to know the Bridegroom King! I

am willing to leave my family to follow You now.”

Rebekah didn't know how to get to Isaac on her own. She didn't know that she must travel hundreds of miles through the wilderness of varied terrain, through valleys, mountains, streams and pools. She had to totally trust her relationship with the servant to lead her to her bridegroom.

Rebekah was willing to leave her comfort zone. She didn't know about the times of isolation she would face or the criticism that would come her way when others did not understand how the Lord was leading her. She was totally dependent upon the servant.

The Holy Spirit is jealous to bring a pure, lovesick bride to Jesus. He knows the fears and weaknesses we have. He knows the times our hearts faint, and He will protect us.

He takes away everything that hinders love—callousness, brokenness, unforgiveness and pain. He wants to do a radical work of healing, cleansing and deliverance so that we will mature into the beautiful bride we were created to be.

Every time we say yes to the Holy Spirit's leading, our Bridegroom's heart must leap as He sees His bride moving closer to Him in love. Jesus wears many crowns, but the one crown the bride can give to Him is her love (Rev. 19:12).

The Holy Spirit may express Himself through the phenomena of fire, wind and oil, but He is more than those attributes; He is a person, and we must develop an intimate relationship with Him to prepare us for our personal journey through the wilderness.

The Purpose of the Wilderness

Our individual wildernesses are unique. There are different types of mountains for each of us to cross. These symbolize the obstacles, persecutions and misunderstandings we

encounter.

The Holy Spirit will lead you to the mountain of myrrh—the time of the dark night of the soul. This is akin to the time when He led Jesus into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil (Luke 4:1-14).

When Jesus came out, He was filled with authority and with heavenly power. He was able to do whatever the Father told Him to do. Just like Jesus, we, too, will go through sufferings and temptations, but the Holy Spirit will be there with us.

He will walk with us over the hills of daily pressures where we will choose whether or not to continue climbing higher. But there will also be low times when we'll go through the valleys, and our hearts will faint with despair.

In the valley, we won't understand the way, and we'll want to cry out: "Holy Spirit, are You still with me? I can't feel You!" But He is always there. He is our skillful guide who alone knows all the terrain.

Actually, the wilderness isn't all that bad. As we continue on our journey to meet our Bridegroom King, God establishes places of remembrance for us. These are times when we meet intimately with the Holy Spirit.

During stressful and painful seasons, the Lord invites us to meet with Him and make a holy covenant. Then, in the future, when we encounter hard times, we will be able to look back at this place and remember that we have met with God.

Prophetically, I believe the word to us for this hour is that we come to know the Holy Spirit as a person. We need to break outdated mindsets and paradigms of church culture that put limitations on the Holy Spirit.

Cultivate a personal relationship with Him. When we do not know Him in this way and aren't experiencing seasons of

renewal, we will feel alone and abandoned.

We must cry out to know the Holy Spirit better. As we learn to embrace Him as a Person, He will come to center stage because He is leading us to the Bridegroom King.

Each of us is responsible for maintaining an intimate relationship with our beloved guide, so that when we go through the despair of the wilderness, we know immediately to lean on Him. Yield to Him and come to know Him as the best friend of the Bridegroom.

As Rebekah was going through the wilderness, I am sure she was saying to the servant, "I'm nervous about this high mountain in front of me, please tell me more about Isaac. What does he look like?"

Only the servant knew Isaac intimately. Rebekah had never seen him face to face.

As they trudged along through the heat, the servant likely talked about Isaac to Rebekah, saying: "I have known him since the day he was born. He is wonderful, stunning, dazzling and full of light and compassion. This bridegroom is a good, tenderhearted man, and when he sees those who are broken, despised and rejected, he quickly goes to them. He is a tender shepherd."

Finally, when Rebekah and the servant had successfully navigated through the desert and come up out of the wilderness, she saw in the distance a man walking to meet them. "Who is he?" she asked.

The servant replied, "He is my master, the bridegroom!" (See Genesis 24:64.)

I'm guessing that Rebekah got off her camel and ran to meet Isaac. I would too, wouldn't you! He was her glorious bridegroom. She had come to know him on the long journey

through the wilderness and was ready to give him her love.

Jesus is seated in heaven on His Father's right hand (Heb. 1:3). The angels are there, along with a "great cloud of witnesses" (Heb. 12:1). He is watching and waiting for us, His victorious bride, to come up out of the wilderness, leaning on the Holy Spirit.

Even as we are longing for the appearing of our Bridegroom King, He is awaiting His spotless, blameless bride, who will bow before Him and crown Him with her love.

Read a companion devotional.

*The late **Jill Austin** founded Master Potter Ministries.*