



THE REVELATION OF JESUS CHRIST

“Spirit Guide”

4:5

Revelation 4:5 And from the throne proceeded lightnings, thunderings, and voices. Seven lamps of fire *were* burning before the throne, which are the seven Spirits of God.

Decoders were a fun way for kids to tap into the fascination that children often have with encryption, ciphers, and secret codes that they could use to send hidden messages back and forth to one another. A number of companies that marketed decoders in the form of badges or rings to children and then broadcast "secret messages" on various radio shows aimed at children. The kids needed to use their devices to decode the secret message (which was almost invariably a preview to the next episode of the show).

There is an urban legend that the *Little Orphan Annie* radio show transmitted a secret message that deciphered to, "Be sure to drink your Ovaltine." No such message was ever sent, but the legend was immortalized in the movie *A Christmas Story*.

The Revelation of Jesus Christ is encoded with signs. **The decoder is the Old Testament.** There are over eight hundred Old Testament references in the Revelation. With it open we can “decode” its signs.

It's no use trying to identify **the seven spirits of God** without an Old Testament. With it, however, the sign conveys its message.

We see **the seven spirits of God** through a storm around God's throne.

Revelation 4:5 And from the throne proceeded lightnings, thunderings, and voices...

Lightnings and **thunderings** around God's throne or emanating from Heaven usually mean a storm of God's judgment is about to break forth upon the earth.

There are also **voices**. There is a scene in *The Lord of the Rings: The Fellowship of the Ring* that captures a sense of **voices** in a storm. The nine members of the fellowship are attempting to climb Mount Caradhras. A violent snowstorm breaks upon them. As if things were not difficult enough they discern a fell voice in the storm. It's the voice of their enemy, Saruman.

In the Revelation the storm is about to break forth upon the earth. It is a depiction of God's wrath against sin. The bulk of the book – from chapters six to nineteen – describe the storm in its ever worsening destruction.

But there are voices in the storm! Throughout the Great Tribulation God is calling upon sinners to repent of their sin and be saved.

1. We'll see Him calling to men through two amazing witnesses. They appear in chapter eleven and witness for one-thousand two hundred sixty days. They are indestructible. They are **voices** calling upon men to repent.
2. We'll see God calling to men through one-hundred forty-four thousand evangelists. They are sealed to serve in chapter fourteen then sent out as **voices**.
3. We'll see God calling to men from the sky as angels call upon men to repent. In chapter fourteen they fly through the atmospheric heavens **having the everlasting Gospel to preach**

to those who dwell on the earth to every nation, tribe, tongue, and people.

When we get to the details of the storm let us listen for the voices calling men to their Savior.

The seven spirits of God are mentioned four times in the Revelation:

1. Revelation 1:4 mentioned that the seven spirits are before God's throne.
2. Revelation 3:1 indicated that Jesus Christ holds the seven spirits of God.
3. Revelation 4:5 links the seven spirits of God with seven burning lamps that are before God's throne.
4. Revelation 5:6 identifies the seven spirits with the seven eyes of the Lamb and states that they are sent out into all the earth.

It all sounds a little mystical to us at first. With our “decoder” we can identify the seven spirits of God. It is a phrase that describes the Person we know more concisely as the third Person of the trinity, God the Holy Spirit.

The important Old Testament passage is the eleventh chapter of Isaiah. Isaiah identified the coming Messiah in verse one when he said, - being changed to bring change -

Isaiah 11:1 There shall come forth a Rod from the stem of Jesse, And a Branch shall grow out of his roots.

Jesse was the father of David. The person being spoken of would be of the family of Jesse and a descendant David.

The word **branch** occurs several times in the Old Testament and in most, if not all, with express reference to the Messiah. For example:

Jeremiah 23:5 "Behold, the days are coming," says the LORD, "That I will raise to David a Branch of righteousness; A King shall reign and prosper, And execute judgment and righteousness in the earth.

As we continue in Isaiah eleven you see the seven spirits of God in relationship to the Messiah.

Isaiah 11:2 The Spirit of the LORD shall rest upon Him, The Spirit of wisdom and understanding, The Spirit of counsel and might, The Spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the LORD.

Do you 'see' **the seven spirits of God**? Count them: the **Spirit of the Lord** (1), of **wisdom** (2), of **understanding** (3), of **counsel** (4), of **might** (5), of **knowledge** (6), and of **the fear of the Lord** (7).

The eleventh chapter of Isaiah goes on to describe the reign of the Messiah over the future kingdom of God on the earth:

Isaiah 11:4 ...with righteousness He shall judge the poor, And decide with equity for the meek of the earth; He shall strike the earth with the rod of His mouth, And with the breath of His lips He shall slay the wicked.

Isaiah 11:5 Righteousness shall be the belt of His loins, And faithfulness the belt of His waist.

Isaiah 11:6 "The wolf also shall dwell with the lamb, The leopard shall lie down with the young goat, The calf and the young lion and the fatling together; And a little child shall lead them.

Isaiah 11:7 The cow and the bear shall graze; Their young ones shall lie down together; And the lion shall eat straw like the ox.

Isaiah 11:8 The nursing child shall play by the cobra's hole, And the weaned child shall put his hand in the viper's den.

Isaiah 11:9 They shall not hurt nor destroy in all My holy mountain, For the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the LORD As the waters cover the sea.

Putting all this together it's pretty clear to me that **the seven spirits of God** is the way the Old Testament referred to God the Holy Spirit in His relationship to the ministry of Jesus Christ.

It is interesting to realize that the Holy Spirit is always invisible unless represented in some way:

1. At the baptism of Jesus He was represented in the form of a dove descending upon the Lord.
2. At the birth of the church He was represented by tongues of fire resting above the believers gathered in the upper room.

It reminds us that when the Holy Spirit is at work He is bringing glory to Jesus Christ and focusing attention on the Lord. If He is at work in us we will *not* bring attention to ourselves. We will focus everyone's attention on the Lord.

If the Holy Spirit affects Jesus in these seven ways might we not expect Him to effect us similarly? I think the answer is a qualified "Yes."

Let's take a look at our own ministering in a relationship with God the Holy Spirit.

He is the **Spirit of the Lord**. It's too bad we overdid the "What Would Jesus Do?" campaign because it is a very good question to ask when we want to qualify our ministering. Jesus had and has a style of ministering that we will portray when the Holy Spirit is using us.

The Holy Spirit is the Spirit of **wisdom**. Most issues are spiritual or they have a spiritual component to them. God the Holy Spirit wants to keep us focused on the spiritual. If I am heeding Him I am thinking about how I can bring Jesus into my conduct or conversation. I see that my circumstances are more than just coincidences. They are God's providences.

The Holy Spirit is the Spirit of **understanding**. This usually couples with **wisdom** as its effect. When the Holy Spirit gives me **wisdom** then I understand how to proceed. Understanding is wisdom in action.

The Holy Spirit is the Spirit of **counsel**. The word translates as *plan* or *advice*. It's not so much my giving advice or formulating a plan as it is my heeding His advice and following His plan. How quickly we turn to other counsel! How quickly we follow it! If it is not based solidly upon God's already revealed Word we should reject it.

The Holy Spirit is the Spirit of **might**. This seems to be an inner resolve to endure, to persevere in trusting the Lord.

The Holy Spirit is the Spirit of **knowledge**. The particular word can mean *knowing by experience*. I am never alone but experience everything with the Holy Spirit indwelling me. That is why, for example, I can cause Him grief. On the positive side He is my comforter who comes alongside me to strengthen me.

The **fear of the Lord** is the last of the seven qualifiers. I have come to think of this **fear** as not wanting to hurt or disappoint the Lord. In our context it is something God the Holy Spirit encourages me about. He guides me to choose attitudes and behaviors consistent with the joy of pleasing God.

Back to our text in verse five... We skipped a phrase because I wanted to establish that the **seven spirits of God** is the Holy Spirit. We're also told, **seven lamps of fire were burning before the throne**. Remember we can't 'see' the Holy Spirit unless He is embodied somehow. **The seven spirits of God**, the Holy Spirit, is embodied in **seven lamps**.

We've encountered **seven lamps** before, have we not? The churches on earth were described in chapter one as **seven golden lampstands**.

It is another reason I believe that the church will be resurrected and raptured to Heaven and be surrounding the throne of God prior to and all during the storm that proceeds from the throne.

It also provides us a final encouragement. God the Holy Spirit is the power within our midst as a fellowship. The prophet Zechariah wrote,

Zechariah 4:6 ..."This *is* the word of the LORD to Zerubbabel: 'Not by might nor by power, but by My Spirit,' Says the LORD of hosts.

Might is a word often used to describe strength in numbers; it is our collective strength as a congregation.

Power is a word often used to describe strength without numbers; it is your personal strength as an individual.

Neither the strength of our numbers as a group, nor your personal strength as an individual, can accomplish the work of God. God's work can only be accomplished by God's Spirit.

Having said that we realize that God's Spirit works within and through individuals and congregations. But this is only successful as God supplies His Spirit to us and through us!

