

Di122 Essentials of Christianity

Di122-8 Baptism in the Holy Spirit--Power to Witness

The Jews understood what a promise is. Centuries before Christ, God had promised Abraham to bring his descendants into a land that would be their own. The promise gave them hope, while they endured hardships for 40 years in the desert. And then God kept his promise when he helped Joshua and the leaders of Israel conquer Canaan. He kept his promise about sending the Messiah. And he would keep his promise to send the Holy Spirit to those who believe in his Son. The next step to following Jesus in obedience through water baptism, Bible study, and communion, is being baptized in the Holy Spirit.

We hear about this promise from John the Baptist. He said, “After me comes the one more powerful than I, the straps of whose sandals I am not worthy to stoop down and untie. I baptize you with water, but he will baptize you with the Holy Spirit” (Mark 1:7-8).

After John the Baptist was put in prison, Jesus began his public ministry. Eventually the crowds grew so large that Jesus Christ could not enter into the towns. He performed miracles and ministered in the surrounding countryside. Jesus taught the people that they could believe, by his signs and wonders, that he was the long promised Messiah. He had come from God to seek and to save lost mankind. He promised to give eternal life to those who believed in him.

The apostle John remembers Jesus’ words to the eleven disciples just before his betrayal. They were anxious and confused because they didn’t understand that Jesus was about to die. Jesus told them, “If you love me, keep my commands. And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Advocate to help you and be with you forever—the Spirit of truth. The Advocate, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you all things and will remind you of everything I have said to you” (John 14:15-18, 26).

God promises to send another Advocate. The word ‘advocate’ here means ‘counselor’ or ‘helper.’ The Spirit will always stand by Christ’s people. The people had seen too much to doubt that Jesus meant what he said. There was coming to them a Comforter, the Holy Spirit. He would help each one to live a life for Jesus, helping them overcome temptations and giving power to witness. It was hard to remember this promise as they watched Christ die on the cross and be buried in a tomb. They were surprised and overjoyed that he rose from the dead and appeared to them again in various places over a period of 40 days.

Then, just before he went to heaven he told those watching, “Do not leave Jerusalem, but wait for the gift my Father promised, which you have heard me speak about. For John baptized with water, but in a few days you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit. You will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth” (Acts 1:4-5, 8). They would be “clothed with power from on high” (Luke 24:49), so they could testify about all they had seen and heard.

Jesus had been with his disciples 40 days after his Resurrection. Then ten days after Jesus had gone back to heaven, some 120 disciples were gathered together in an upper room. They

were praying together and waiting. “When the day of Pentecost came, they were all together in one place. Suddenly a sound like the blowing of a violent wind came from heaven and filled the whole house where they were sitting. They saw what seemed to be tongues of fire that separated and came to rest on each of them. All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues as the Spirit enabled them” (Acts 2:1-4).

The moment each believer received the Holy Spirit, they were filled to overflowing with great joy. They began to worship and praise God for sending the Holy Spirit to them. They began to go out preaching the good news to everyone. With great power the apostles continued to testify to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus, and God’s grace was powerfully at work in them all (Acts 4:33).

This story is **important** because it teaches that God wants all believers to be baptized in the Holy Spirit and be Christ’s powerful witnesses in every part of the earth.

The **main truth** of this lesson is that Jesus promised those who believe in him as the Son of God that they will be given the Holy Spirit in power. He will be in them to empower each one to witness far and wide about who Jesus is and what he has done.

Your **review** questions are:

1. When was the Holy Spirit first poured out on God’s people as a group?
A. [Pause] If you answered, “On the day of Pentecost, ten days after Jesus went back to heaven,” you have answered correctly.
2. What was the sign that the 120 experienced as evidence of the baptism in the Holy Spirit?
A. [Pause] If you answered, “They all began to speak in other tongues as the Spirit enabled them,” you are right.
3. Why was the Holy Spirit given to God’s people?
A. [Pause] If you answered, “The Holy Spirit was given to empower them to witness, testifying about Jesus and his great salvation,” you have answered correctly.

Assignment: Listen to this lesson several times, understanding the importance of being baptized with the Holy Spirit. Have you personally received baptism in the Holy Spirit? It is promised to you as a believer. Jesus is the Baptizer. You need only to ask him and receive. Teach this lesson to someone. Pray with them to be baptized in the Holy Spirit so they may be empowered to live and witness for Christ.

Memorize Acts 1:8: “You will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.”

Prayer: Father, *I need your Holy Spirit to fill me with your power from heaven. Please baptize me right now. Help me to live for you and witness to someone today of your forgiveness and eternal salvation. Thank you for your grace, your forgiveness, and your mighty power in my life. I praise you, in the wonderful name of Jesus, amen.*