

Di223 We Believe

Lesson Di223-16 The Holy Spirit

We live in a world that idolizes power. We refer to some countries as ‘superpowers.’ Some countries are trying to develop the powerful nuclear weapons. We admire athletes who can ‘overpower’ their opponents. We admire wealthy people, thinking that money gives them power.

It is hard to match this philosophy of power with the Bible emphasis on meekness and humility. Yet, the Bible does talk about power—the power of the Holy Spirit. The apostle Paul reminds us that the Spirit is a greater power than any human strength. He was describing Pentecostal power that comes with the baptism in the Holy Spirit.

Who is the Holy Spirit? The Holy Spirit is the third Person of the Godhead. He has existed for all time just as God the Father and God the Son have. He participated in creation: “The Spirit of God was hovering over the waters” (Gen 1:2). He was involved in the creation of humans: “Let us make mankind in our image, after our likeness” (Gen 1:26). Old Testament men and women, such as Bezalel and Oholiab, were enabled by the Spirit as their source of wisdom, understanding, and workmanship (Ex 31:2-7). Moses and the 70 elders were anointed by the Holy Spirit to lead (Num 11:16-17).

God chose men and women as judges of Israel, who were enabled by the Spirit of God. They led Israel to victory. Samuel the prophet and David the king were men mightily used by the Spirit as recorded in First Samuel: “The Spirit of the Lord came upon David from that day forward” (1Sam 16:13). Peter wrote, “For prophecy never had its origin in the human will, but prophets, though human, spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit” (2Peter 1:21). Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Daniel, and the minor prophets were all inspired by the Spirit. They spoke and wrote of the Messiah, coming events, and the end times.

The Holy Spirit has existed for all time. In the Old Testament times, the Holy Spirit came upon only certain people at certain times. Before Jesus returned to heaven, he promised that God would give the Holy Spirit to be with believers and to live inside them (John 14:16-17). Jesus called the Holy Spirit the Comforter and the Spirit of Truth. He promised that the Holy Spirit would teach us all things and remind us of everything Jesus had said to his followers. In New Testament times and until now, the Holy Spirit is our Counselor. He convicts us of sin. He is our Sanctifier, helping us to live a holy Christian life.

The prophecies of the coming of the Holy Spirit were made long before Jesus’ birth on earth as a human being. The prophet, Joel, said, “I will pour out my Spirit on all people. Your sons and daughters will prophesy, your old men will dream dreams, your young men will see visions. Even on my servants, both men and women, I will pour out my Spirit in those days” (Joel 2:28-29).

Each year, the Jews had a special memorial feast and celebration. This feast was held 50 days after Passover and was the final day of the Feast of Weeks. Passover was celebrated in Israel at the beginning of the wheat harvest in which the first sheaf of wheat was presented to God in thanksgiving. After a week of celebrating the Passover, the Jews returned to their fields to finish the wheat harvest. Fifty days later, the wheat harvest was finished and the people had another celebration called the Feast of Pentecost. The word ‘Pentecost’ means ‘50.’ The people brought

bread made from the wheat and made sacrifices to the Lord, thanking God for the blessing of harvest in their land.

We have studied the Passover where Jesus ate the Last Supper with his disciples before he was arrested, tried and crucified. Three days after his death Jesus arose from the dead. Forty days after his resurrection, Jesus was about to leave his disciples and return to heaven. He told them, “Do not leave Jerusalem, but wait for the gift my Father promised” (Acts 1:4). As the disciples waited in Jerusalem, they worshiped and praised God—for 10 days. Then on the tenth day, 50 days after Passover, it happened!

Acts 2 records the coming of the Holy Spirit. The sound of a roaring wind, the tongues of fire, the speaking in tongues! The promised Holy Spirit came and was outpoured on each of the 120 disciples waiting in the upstairs room. “All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues as the Spirit enabled them” (Acts 2:2-4). The promise had been fulfilled—or so it has been thought by some. However, it was just the beginning.

There were visitors in Jerusalem who witnessed the outpouring of the Holy Spirit on that Day of Pentecost. They were “God-fearing Jews from every nation under heaven” (Acts 2:5) who had come to the Feast of Pentecost. Peter preached a powerful sermon that day through the power of the Holy Spirit. Three thousand accepted his message about Jesus, were baptized, and became a part of the body of believers.

Our *Statement of Faith* for this lesson says: “We believe the baptism in the Holy Spirit, according to Acts 2:4, is given to empower a believer to witness and to live an overcoming Christian life.” Our memory verse is: “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 1:8).

This lesson is **important** because it explains the person and work of the Holy Spirit both in Old Testament times before Christ’s coming and in New Testament times after Christ’s coming. Since Pentecost, the promise of the Holy Spirit is for all who have accepted Jesus as Savior.

The **main truth** of this lesson is that the Holy Spirit is the third Person of the Godhead who lives inside believers. He also baptizes believers, giving them power to witness and to live a holy Christian life.

Let’s **review** this lesson—

1. Who is the Holy Spirit? [Pause.]
 - A. If you answered, “The Holy Spirit is the third Person of the Godhead,” you are right.
2. Upon whom did the prophet Joel say the Holy Spirit would come? [Pause.]
 - A. If you answered that the Holy Spirit would come on all people, you are correct.
3. What is the meaning of the words ‘Pentecost’ and the ‘Feast of Pentecost’? [Pause.]
 - A. If you answered, “The word ‘Pentecost’ means 50 and the ‘Feast of Pentecost’ was 50 days after Passover and the end of the wheat harvest celebration,” you are right.

Your **assignment** is to begin to memorize the eighth *Statement of Faith*: “We believe the baptism in the Holy Spirit, according to Acts 2:4, is given to empower a believer to witness and to

live an overcoming Christian life.” The verse to memorize is: “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 1:8). Share with two other people in your group about the person and work of the Holy Spirit.