

Th123 A Study of the Holy Spirit

Th123-10 Jesus Poured Out the Spirit

In this world, we are not surprised when people do not keep their promises. Because of this, we are sometimes tempted to doubt God's promises. However, we can be confident that God will always keep His promises. That's what happened on the Day of Pentecost; Jesus kept one of His most important promises. As we discovered in our last lesson, on four separate occasions, Jesus promised His disciples that He would send the Holy Spirit upon them. It was at Pentecost that He first fulfilled those promises.

The story of the outpouring of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost is found in the Bible in Acts 2. Luke describes the scene like this: After Jesus returned to heaven, the apostles went back to Jerusalem and told the others about Jesus' promise. Then they started to pray. About a week later, on the Day of Pentecost, 120 of Jesus' most committed followers gathered in the temple court to wait on the Lord. That's when things began to happen.

Suddenly, there came from heaven a sound like the roaring of a mighty windstorm. The deafening noise filled the entire temple complex, where thousands had gathered to celebrate the Jewish Feast of Firstfruits. Suddenly, what looked like a great mass of fire appeared over the heads of the 120 disciples. The flaming mass then divided itself into 120 "tongues of fire" and one settled above the head of each disciple. Then, "all of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues as the Spirit enabled them" (Acts 2:4). When the multitudes saw what was happening, they rushed to where the 120 had gathered. In wonder they cried out, "What does this mean?" (Acts 2:12).

Peter stood and explained to the crowd that they were witnessing a fulfillment of Joel's ancient prophecy: "In the last days, God says, I will pour out my Spirit on all people" (Acts 2:17). This outpouring of the Spirit was a further fulfillment of Jesus' promise to His disciples: "In a few days you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit" (Acts 1:5). Peter continued his message: "God has raised this Jesus to life, and we are all witnesses of the fact. Exalted to the right hand of God, he has received from the Father the promised Holy Spirit and has poured out what you now see and hear" (Acts 2:32-33).

You will remember that in the previous lesson, you learned that Jesus left His followers an amazing promise. Just before He ascended into heaven, He told them, "But 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).

Now, on the Day of Pentecost, immediately after receiving the Spirit, the disciples began to witness with power. Peter stood and preached. His Spirit-anointed words so pierced the hearts of all who heard him, that they cried out, "What shall we do?" (Acts 2:37). Peter told them to repent and be baptized in Jesus' name, and they, too, would receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. Amazingly, 3,000 obeyed Peter's instructions and committed themselves to the Lord Jesus.

However, not only did Peter witness with power, so did the others who received the Spirit on the Day of Pentecost. Because of their witness, "the Lord added to their number daily those

who were being saved” (Acts 2:47). This same “empowering-results-in-witness” pattern is repeated throughout the Book of Acts. On numerous occasions the Holy Spirit came upon and filled disciples. Each time, they were enabled to witness with great power and effectiveness.

We must not think, however, that this divine empowering was just for those early disciples. It is for every follower of Jesus until He returns from heaven. We all need the Spirit’s power because we have all been called to be Christ’s witnesses. On the Day of Pentecost, Peter told the crowd, “The promise [of the Holy Spirit] is for you and your children and for all who are far off—for all whom the Lord our God will call” (Acts 2:39). Like those first disciples, we too must each personally experience that divine empowering. The Bible teaches that we receive the Holy Spirit by asking in faith. Jesus taught that our “Father in heaven [will] give the Holy Spirit to those who ask him!” (Luke 11:13). Paul added that we receive the promise of the Spirit by faith (Gal 3:14).

Would you, right now, take a moment and invite the Holy Spirit to fill you and empower you as Christ’s witness to the lost? Pray this prayer: “Lord, I commit myself to You and Your mission. Holy Spirit, come upon me and come inside me. Fill and empower me as Christ’s witness to the lost.” (We will discuss how to be filled with the Spirit in Lesson 19.)

This lesson is **important** because it teaches how Jesus fulfilled His promise to pour out the Holy Spirit on His church. He first did this on the Day of Pentecost, and He continues to pour out His Spirit on receptive hearts today.

The **main truth** of this lesson is that the power of the Holy Spirit is available to anyone who will commit himself or herself to Christ’s mission. Anyone can, by faith, reach out and receive the Spirit.

Let’s **review** some important truths from this lesson.

1. When did Jesus first fulfill His promise to send the Holy Spirit upon His disciples?
A. [PAUSE] If you answered that Jesus first fulfilled His promise on the Day of Pentecost, you are right.
2. What was the result of the outpouring of the Spirit on the Day of Pentecost?
A. [PAUSE] If you answered, “As a result of the outpouring of the Holy Spirit on the Day of Pentecost, the church began to witness with power,” you answered correctly.
3. Why does every follower of Jesus need to be empowered by the Holy Spirit?
A. [PAUSE] If you answered, “Because every follower of Jesus has been commissioned to be His witness, you are correct.
4. How can one receive the gift of the Holy Spirit today?
A. [PAUSE] If you answered that we receive the gift of the Holy Spirit today by asking in faith, you are right.

Your **assignment** is to re-listen to this lesson several times until you understand it completely. Then, go out and share its truths with others.