

Th123 A Study of the Holy Spirit

Th123-9 Jesus Promised the Spirit

To build an effective organization, leaders must be competent themselves, so they must instill that same competence in the lives of their team. This is what Jesus did. He promised them the same Holy Spirit who empowered and enabled Him in ministry.

In our last lesson, we discussed how Jesus ministered in the Spirit's power. He preached and taught by the Spirit's inspiration. He also did mighty works—such as healing the sick and casting out demons—in the Spirit's power. Peter put it this way: “God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and power, and ... he went around doing good and healing all who were under the power of the devil, because God was with him” (Acts 10:38).

In this lesson, we will look at how Jesus promised that same power to His followers. He did this on at least four occasions. Let's look at each of these four key promises and examine what Jesus' promises mean to us today.

First, Jesus promised His followers “streams of living water.” One day the Lord was in Jerusalem during the celebration of the Feast of Tabernacles. On the final day of the feast, He stood in the temple court and cried out, “If anyone is thirsty, let him come to me and drink. Whoever believes in me, as the Scripture has said, streams of living water will flow from within him” (John 7:37-38). Jesus was talking about the Holy Spirit, whom those who believed in Him would receive. They would not only receive the Spirit themselves, but the Spirit's power would flow through them to touch the lives of others. This promise was fulfilled on the Day of Pentecost and on many other occasions in the Book of Acts.

Today, the Spirit is still the same. He will freely flow in and through anyone who will sincerely seek the Lord. Jesus promised, “Your Father in heaven [will] give the Holy Spirit to those who ask him!” (Luke 11:13).

Jesus gave a second promise concerning the Holy Spirit. This occurred in an upper room on the evening before His death. He told His disciples that He would soon leave them. However, He would not leave them alone. He would send the Holy Spirit to take His place as their Helper and Guide. “I will ask the Father,” Jesus said, “and He will give you another Helper, to be with you forever, even the Spirit of truth” (John 14:16-17, ESV).

Jesus also explained what this would mean to them. “I tell you the truth,” He said, “anyone who has faith in me will do what I have been doing. He will do even greater things than these, because I am going to the Father.”

Jesus thus promised that, when the Helper came, He would do two things. He would live inside them, and He would empower them to do the kind of things Jesus himself did while He was here on earth. The Helper is the Holy Spirit, and He will do the same for us today. He will come to us and assist us in our walk with Christ and in our ministries for Him.

Several days later, Jesus gave a third promise concerning the Holy Spirit. On the night of His resurrection, He appeared to His disciples. After greeting them, He charged them, saying, “As the Father has sent me, I am sending you.” Then He did a remarkable thing: “He breathed on (or *into*) them and said ‘Receive the Holy Spirit’” (John 20:21-22). For the disciples, this experience represented both a present reality and a future promise. At that moment they received the Spirit—they were born of the Spirit. However, Jesus was also speaking of the future. He was promising to empower them with the Spirit on the coming Day of Pentecost.

Jesus issued His “Great Commission” at least three more times during the next 40 days. Each time He gave the Commission, He promised the Spirit’s presence or power. For example, in the gospel of Matthew Jesus commissioned His disciples to “go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.” Jesus then ended His Commission with a wonderful promise. He said, “And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age” (Matt 28:19-20). This was a promise of the Holy Spirit. Jesus was saying that He would be with them in the presence of the Holy Spirit as He had earlier promised in the upper room. Even today, Jesus is with every born-again Christian through His indwelling Spirit.

In Acts 1:8 Jesus promised the Spirit a fourth time. This is Jesus’ final promise to His church, which He gave just before He ascended back into heaven. In this promise, Jesus said to His disciples, “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.” Jesus had given them a job to do—the evangelization of the nations. It was a job beyond their human abilities, and it could only be accomplished in the Spirit’s power. Jesus therefore commanded them to “stay in the city until [they had] been clothed with power from on high” (Luke 24:49).

Jesus’ final promise and command still apply to us today. We have inherited the first disciples’ job of taking the gospel to the ends of the earth. It is therefore essential that we, like them, be empowered as Christ’s witnesses. We too must obey Christ’s command to receive the promise of the Holy Spirit.

This lesson is **important** because we have learned how on four occasions Jesus promised the Holy Spirit to His followers.

The **main truth** of this lesson is that each of us needs the promised Holy Spirit to live for Jesus and to fulfill His Commission to take the gospel to the ends of the earth.

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

1. What promise of the Spirit did Jesus make in the temple courts during the Feast of Tabernacles?
 - A. [PAUSE] If you answered, “Jesus promised that ‘streams of living water’ would flow from those who believe in Him,” you are right.
2. What promise of the Holy Spirit did Jesus make in the upper room the night before he was crucified?

A. [PAUSE] If you answered that Jesus promised to send in His place another Helper—meaning the Holy Spirit—you answered correctly.

3. With His Great Commission in Matthew 28, what promise of the Spirit did Jesus make?

A. [PAUSE] If you answered, “Jesus promised that He would never leave us or forsake us,” you are right.

4. What last promise and command did Jesus make to His followers?

A. [PAUSE] If you answered that His last promise was the power of the Holy Spirit to help them witness, and His last command was to wait for the Spirit, you are correct.

Your **assignment** is to re-listen to this lesson several times until the truths are deep in your heart. Then claim Jesus’ promise of the Holy Spirit in your own life. Memorize what Jesus said, “Your Father in heaven [will] give the Holy Spirit to those who ask him!” (Luke 11:13).