

Th131 God's Plan

Lesson Th131-37 The Day of Pentecost

Having the authority to do something is very important. But without the power to do it the authority is hollow and empty. Who grants the authority to build a church building? In most places you must first obtain permission or a building permit from the local government. The permit grants you the authority to build the building. But authority does not build the building. You must also have the building materials and workers to accomplish the work of the building. In this lesson we will learn that Jesus not only gave us the authority to build His church, but He also gave us the power to accomplish the work.

In our last lesson Jesus arose from the dead and showed himself to over 500 people. Before He ascended into heaven He gave His followers a command. He said, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age"(Matt 28:18-20). And with this command He entrusted authority to His follows to make disciples and to build the church. But as we have discussed, authority without power is empty. God would not grant authority for a task without also giving the power to accomplish the work.

On one occasion after Jesus rose from the dead He was with His disciples sharing a meal and He said to them, "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). With these words Jesus promised His disciples that God would give them the power to accomplish the task of building the church.

God led Moses to give the Jews certain festivals that they were required to observe each year. The first festival of the year was the Passover and it was during the Passover that Jesus was crucified. The apostle Paul wrote that Jesus was our Passover lamb and that it is His blood that covers our sins. The first day after the Passover Sabbath was the beginning of the next festival. It was the day of firstfruits when the people of Israel would present an offering from the first harvest of the year, which was from their barley crop. Jesus arose from the dead on this very day, the day of firstfruits, and with Him all of the Old Testament saints who had been in Paradise. Seven weeks later, on the fiftieth day from Passover, the Jews were required to return to Jerusalem for the Festival of Weeks, later called "Pentecost." They were to bring an offering from the wheat crop, which was the second harvest of the year. People from all over Israel and Jews from many foreign lands gathered in Jerusalem for this very important Jewish festival.

The disciples were all gathered together in the upper room of a building. One hundred and twenty disciples of Jesus were praying and waiting for the promise of the coming of the Holy Spirit. 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 languages as the Spirit enabled them.

When the people visiting Jerusalem heard this sound, a crowd came together in bewilderment, because each one heard their own language being spoken. Utterly amazed, they asked: "Aren't all these who are speaking Galileans? Then how is it that each of us hears them in our native language?" This was shocking as there were people present from countries across northern Africa, Europe, and Asia. Amazed and perplexed, they asked one another, "What does this mean?"

Some, however, made fun of them and said, "They have had too much wine."

But Peter, filled with the Holy Spirit, raised his voice and addressed the crowd: "Fellow Jews and all of you who live in Jerusalem, let me explain this to you; listen carefully to what I say. These people are not drunk, as you suppose. It's only nine in the morning! No, this is what was spoken by the prophet Joel:

'In the last days, God says,
I will pour out my Spirit on all people.
Your sons and daughters will prophesy,
your young men will see visions,
your old men will dream dreams.
Even on my servants, both men and women,
I will pour out my Spirit in those days,
and they will prophesy'" (Acts 2:14-18).

Peter continued preaching under a tremendous anointing of power. Then the people cried out to Peter saying, "What must we do?"

Peter answered them saying, "Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins. And you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. The promise is for you and your children and for all who are far off—for all whom the Lord our God will call" (Acts 2:38-39). And that day about 3000 people became disciples and followers of Jesus.

These two great promises, that of authority and power, are for every man, woman, boy, or girl who chooses to follow Jesus and become a child of God. This was God's plan from before the creation of the universe. The apostle John wrote this at the very beginning of his Gospel. "Yet to all who did receive him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God—children born not of natural descent, nor of human decision or a husband's will, but born of God" (John 1:12-13).

The apostle Paul also wrote about our being God's children. He wrote this: "For those who are led by the Spirit of God are the children of God. The Spirit you received does not make you slaves, so that you live in fear again; rather, the Spirit you received brought about your

adoption to sonship. And by him we cry, ‘Daddy, Father.’ The Spirit himself testifies with our spirit that we are God’s children. Now if we are children, then we are heirs—heirs of God and co-heirs with Christ, if indeed we share in his sufferings in order that we may also share in his glory” (Rom 8:14-17).

With this lesson we see God's plan for His children come together—with not only the granting of authority but the enduing of power to accomplish Jesus' command to make disciples. Every follower of Christ should be engaged in testifying to all about Jesus and God's plan for all of mankind. Each believer already has the authority and the command to do so. We each should seek the Baptism in the Holy Spirit as it is the power to accomplish Christ's command.

This truth is the greatest theology we can know. God loves us and created us to be His children. And to His children He has given great power and authority. In our next lesson we will discover God's purposes for granting power and authority.

This lesson is **important** because it teaches that God desires that all His children be filled with the Holy Spirit. The Spirit gives us both power and authority to do God’s will.

The **main truth** of this lesson is that that Jesus gave His disciples not only the authority, but also the power of the Holy Spirit to accomplish His work on earth.

Let's **review** what you learned in this lesson.

1. What was the name of the Jewish feast that happened 50 days after Passover? [Pause]
 - A. If you said the Feast of Weeks, or Pentecost, you are correct.
2. What happened to the disciples on the Feast of Pentecost? [Pause]
 - A. If you said, “The 120 disciples in the upper room received the Baptism in the Holy Spirit,” then you answered correctly.
3. Who did Peter say the promise of the Holy Spirit was for? [Pause]
 - A. If you answered that Peter said, “The promise is for you and your children and for all who are far off—for all whom the Lord our God will call,” then you are right.

Your **assignment** for this lesson is to pray and seek the Baptism in the Holy Spirit, with the evidence of speaking in other tongues. If you have already been baptized with the Holy Spirit, set apart time to pray for a fresh infilling of power. Review this lesson at least three times to become familiar with the Day of Pentecost and the promises spoken of by Peter, John, and Paul.