

Life Group Lesson

40 Days with the Holy Spirit • Week of June 5

Introduction

A day that changes everything is when the Holy Spirit comes! In the beginning the earth was formless and void and darkness covered the deep waters. God's Spirit, hovering over the surface of the waters, birthed creation (Genesis 1:2). Fast-forward – on the Day of Pentecost, God's Spirit hovered over the city of Jerusalem, and as promised, breathed life into common men and women who believed in the Lord Jesus Christ. This is the day the church was born. Forty days after the crucifixion, Jesus "appeared to the apostles... and proved to them in many ways that He was actually alive. And He talked to them about the Kingdom of God" (Acts 1:3). Once when Jesus was eating with them, before He was taken from them into heaven, He instructed them: "Do not leave Jerusalem until the Father sends you the gift He promised, as I told you before. John baptized with water, but in just a few days you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit" (Acts 1:4). Welcome to our new message series: Forty Days with the Holy Spirit!

Under the first covenant, we see the promise of a New Covenant that God would make with not only Israel but all people, fulfilled through Christ. In the first covenant, every man in Israel was commanded to appear before God at the place of worship three times per year (Exodus 23:14). First, Israel was to observe Passover (on the 14th day of the first month in the Jewish calendar) the night when the paschal lamb would be sacrificed. Passover was an observance of the night God delivered His people from Egypt. God spared every home from the death angel through the shed blood of a perfect, spotless lamb applied over the doorpost of that home (Exodus 12). The very next day, Israel observed (1) the Festival of Unleavened Bread (in early spring); seven weeks later, Israel was commanded to celebrate (2) the Festival of the First Fruits (in early summer); and then (3) the Festival of Final Harvest was celebrated in early autumn, when great praise and thanksgiving was given to God for His provision.

Time will not allow for lengthy explanation, but to capsule: Passover points to Jesus' death on the cross. He sacrificed His own life on 'the day of preparation' (just before the Passover began) signifying that Christ is the Passover Lamb (John 19:31). The next day, the Festival of Unleavened Bread began (a time in which no yeast was to be found in any Israelite home) points to salvation offered first to the lost sheep of the house of Israel. Seven weeks later, the Festival of Harvest was when Israelites would present to God the first crops of their harvest: the only fes-

tival where Israelites were allowed to eat leavened bread. This points to inclusion of all people (Jews and Gentiles) in God's plan of salvation. Finally, at the end of the harvest season, Israel observed the Festival of the Final Harvest. This final harvest points to the time at the end, when Christ returns and 'the whole earth is harvested' (Exodus 23:16b-17, Matthew 25:31-33, Revelation 14:14-16).

Background

When Jesus told the disciples to go back to the city and wait until they received power from heaven, they actually did what the Lord told them! And devoted themselves to prayer and obedience. As the Lord promised, the gift of God's Spirit came like a mighty storm on the day of Pentecost – fifty days after Passover! The very festival when in Jerusalem, would be people from every nation! The rushing (roaring in) of God's Spirit "filled the house where they were sitting. Then, what looked like flames or tongues of fire appeared and settled on each of them. And everyone present was filled with the Holy Spirit and began speaking in other languages..." (Acts 2:2-4). Pentecost was God's undoing of the tower of Babel (Genesis 11:1-9). What God once 'scattered' because of man's pride—confusing their languages—God now brought back together at Pentecost. The Lord offers salvation to all people. Through Christ every nation of the world is united for Christ's glory and honor—through the power of His Holy Spirit.

Reading the Text

Read Acts 2:1-41

1. What is the Holy Spirit saying to you?
2. What are you going to do about it?
3. How can we help you?

In Closing

There is power in prayer, because prayer connects us to heaven. The more we pray for others, the more we will love others. Is there a difficult person in your family, at home, the workplace? Begin to pray selflessly for that individual and you will begin to see a difference, perhaps in you. Prayer unleashes the supernatural work of God's power, purpose, and promise in our lives. As believers in the

Lord Jesus, like those early apostles and believers, we cannot underestimate the importance of being united in prayer and obedience to our Lord's words. He said, "Go and make disciples of all nations!" (Matthew 28:19a). Christ will come again as He promised (see Acts 1:11, Mathew 26:64, Daniel 7:13, 2 Peter 3:10, Revelation 14:14). We are to be ready for Christ's return, living into the very marching orders He gave to the apostles—

"The Father alone has the authority to set those dates and times, and they are not for you to know. But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes upon you. And you will be my witnesses, telling people about me everywhere—in Jerusalem, throughout Judea, in Samaria, and to the ends of the earth" (Acts 1:7-8).

Close in a Time of Prayer asking:

How can I pray for my fellow Life Group participants this week?

40 DAYS WITH THE HOLY SPIRIT

Text: Acts 2:1-41

Plain Truth:

_____ unleashes a supernatural work of _____, purpose and _____ in our lives.

_____ - _____ work of God.

_____ - _____ direction of God.

_____ - God's Supernatural _____ to _____ others.

One Year Bible Readings

June 5: 2 Samuel 23:24-24:25, Acts 3:1-26, Psalm 123:1-4, Proverbs 16:21-23

June 6: 1 Kings 1:1-53, Acts 4:1-37, Psalm 124:1-8, Proverbs 16:24

June 7: 1 Kings 2:1-3:2, Acts 5:1-42, Psalm 125:1-5, Proverbs 16:25

June 8: 1 Kings 3:3-4:34, Acts 6:1-15, Psalm 126:1-6, Proverbs 16:26-27

June 9: 1 Kings 5:1-6:38, Acts 7:1-29, Psalm 127:1-5, Proverbs 16:28-30

June 10: Kings 7:1-51, Acts 7:30-50, Psalm 128:1-6, Proverbs 16:31-33

June 11: 1 Kings 8:1-66, Acts 7:51-8:13, Psalm 129:1-8, Proverbs 17:1