

The Promise of the Holy Spirit



SABBATH—APRIL 15

READ FOR THIS WEEK'S STUDY: Exodus 31:3; Numbers 11:25; Isaiah 6:1-7; Isaiah 48:10; Ezekiel 36:25-27; Malachi 3:2, 3; Matthew 3:11; Romans 8:9; 2 Corinthians 3:3; 2 Corinthians 5:17; 2 Corinthians 7:1.

MEMORY VERSE: "I [Jesus] will ask the Father. And he [the Father] will give you another Friend [the Holy Spirit] to help you and to be with you forever" (John 14:16, NIRV).

JESUS WAS NOT GOING TO BE ON EARTH FOREVER. The plan of salvation called for Him to return to heaven. He is to work in heaven as our High Priest in the sanctuary before coming back and claiming those bought with His blood. So Jesus promised to send His Holy Spirit to His disciples. The Spirit would be their Guide and Comforter because they would not be able to follow Jesus to heaven. The Holy Spirit was to be the disciples' constant Companion. The Holy Spirit's presence would more than make up for Jesus' going to heaven. The promise of the Holy Spirit was both for Jesus' first disciples and for us.

Study this week's lesson to prepare for Sabbath, April 22.

SUNDAY—APRIL 16**THE PROMISE OF WATER
(Ezekiel 36:25-27).**

What is God saying He will do for His people in Ezekiel 36:25-27? What does Ezekiel 36:25-27 mean to you personally? (Also read Romans 8:9; 2 Corinthians 3:3; 2 Corinthians 5:17; Galatians 5:16, 25; Ephesians 5:25, 26; 1 Thessalonians 4:3.)

By using the symbol of water, Ezekiel shows the Holy Spirit both as a cleansing and life-giving agent.¹ Christ's followers will have new lives. Through the Holy Spirit's power, they are cleansed of sins. Then they can live a life of faith and obedience.

Ezekiel 36:25-27 also tells us that the Holy Spirit's work includes sanctification.² Sanctification includes a change of habits, actions, and words. Most important, His work includes a change of heart.

How does 2 Corinthians 3:3 explain what the Holy Spirit will do in our lives?

If you are a "letter of Christ," what is your message to all who "read" you?



The Holy Spirit cleanses us from sin, the same as water cleanses us from dirt.

MONDAY—APRIL 17**JOHN THE BAPTIST'S PROMISE
(Matthew 3:11).**

"John announced the coming of the Messiah. He also called the people to repentance.³ As a symbol of cleansing from sin, John baptized them in the Jordan River. By this symbol, John taught that those who claimed to be God's chosen people were defiled⁴ by sin. He also taught that they could not enter into the Messiah's kingdom without making their hearts and lives pure."—Adapted from *The Desire of Ages*, p. 104.

But John was very aware that his baptism would not be enough for people to stand in God's presence. People needed the baptism of fire. Both water

¹ agent—someone, or something, who does work for someone else. The Holy Spirit works for God and Jesus.

² sanctification—becoming like Jesus with the help of the Holy Spirit. Jesus living in us through the Holy Spirit so that we develop Jesus' character. The Holy Spirit's work of making us holy.

³ repentance—to be sorry for your sins and, with the Holy Spirit's help, to want to stop sinning.

⁴ defiled—made filthy.

and fire are symbols of the Holy Spirit's work. Fire and water are very different from each other. But both fire and water describe the Holy Spirit's work.

How do the following verses help us understand the Holy Spirit's work as fire? Isaiah 6:1-7; Isaiah 48:10; Malachi 3:2, 3; Luke 12:49; Hebrews 12:29.

Fire and water are two great natural cleansing agents. So, both are used to represent the cleansing of the heart. This cleansing is the Holy Spirit's work. But fire acts very differently upon us than does water. When we think of water, we often think of something cool, refreshing, and delightful. But fire brings great heat. Fire also suggests a time of trouble, pain, and suffering (1 Peter 4:12). The idea of a refiner's fire does not make a person feel comfortable. This is because the



A refiner's fire makes metal pure. The Holy Spirit makes us pure by removing sin from our lives.

work that the Holy Spirit needs to do in us is the same as a refiner's fire. We have to be cleansed of sin, and the cross (dirt) has to be burned away.

What have been some trials "by fire" that caused important changes in your life? What did you learn from these trials that could help others?

TUESDAY—APRIL 18

THE HOLY SPIRIT NOT YET GIVEN (John 7:37-39).

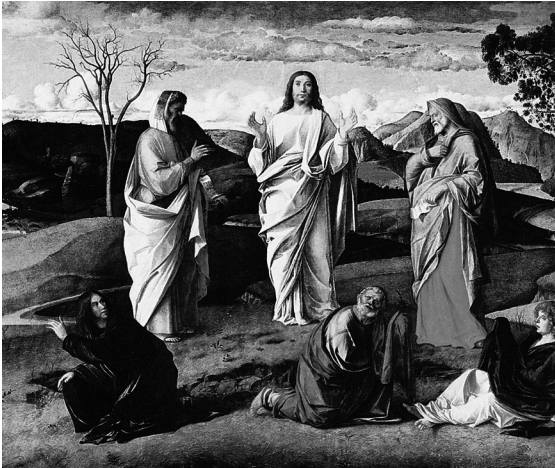
Read John 7:37-39. What does John mean when he says, "The [Holy] Spirit had not yet been given"? The Holy Spirit had worked with people from the time sin entered the world. But He had not come to earth in His fullness. He would not come in His fullness until Jesus would return to heaven.

As Jesus was about to leave the disciples, what promise did He give them? Matthew 28:20; Acts 1:4, 5.

How does John 16:7 help us understand Jesus' promise?

Jesus' departure (leaving) would give the disciples and all believers more power. While on earth, Jesus could be in only one place at a time. But the Holy Spirit can be everywhere. Through the Holy Spirit's pres-

ence, Jesus remains with us, even to the end of the world.



While on earth, Jesus could only be in one place at a time.

Read John 7:37-39 again. Is there anyone whose “streams of life-giving water” have poured out upon you? What was that person like? How could you be more like that person?

WEDNESDAY—APRIL 19

JESUS’ PROMISE (John 14:16).

Before His crucifixion, what did Jesus again promise His disciples? What hope continues for us in that promise? John 14:16.

John 14:16 is the first direct promise Jesus made to His disciples about the Holy Spirit coming. Jesus is clearly speaking about the Day of Pentecost.⁵

But this was not the first time the Holy Spirit appeared on the earth.

“Before Pentecost, the Holy Spirit had been in the world. From the very beginning of the work of salvation, the Holy Spirit had been moving upon people’s hearts. But while Jesus was on earth, the disciples had desired no other helper. When they were without Jesus, they would feel their need of the Holy Spirit. Then the Holy Spirit would come.”—Adapted from *The Desire of Ages*, p. 669.

What do the following verses tell us about the Holy Spirit’s influence before Jesus’ first coming? Exodus 31:3; Numbers 11:24, 25; 1 Samuel 10:1-6; Psalm 51:10, 11; Ezekiel 36:25-27.

John 20:22 shows that before Jesus left His disciples, He “breathed on them. He said ‘Receive the Holy Spirit’ ” (NirV). Again, He said “I am going to send you what my Father has promised” (Luke 24:49, NirV). But not until after Jesus went to heaven did the disciples fully receive the Holy Spirit. Not until after the disciples had surrendered themselves fully through faith and prayer did they receive the Holy Spirit. Then, the good things of heaven were given to Christ’s followers. Jesus promised His followers the Holy Spirit. We, too, must be ready to receive the Holy Spirit.

We are to pray for the Holy Spirit.

⁵ Pentecost—fifty days after Jesus went to heaven, there was an outpouring of the Holy Spirit upon the believers in the upper room (Acts 2:1-4).

But what must we do to be ready to receive Him?

THURSDAY—APRIL 20

ANOTHER COMFORTER (John 14:18).

The two words that make the word *Comforter* are *para*, which means “alongside” and *Kletos*, which means “one called.” So, *parakletos* means “one called to stand at one’s side.” Or it can mean one called to help another person in the time of need. *Parakletos* means an “advocate (supporter)” or “counselor (advisor).”

The same verb (action) form of *parakletos* is translated “exhort (encourage).” So, the Holy Spirit is also an “exhorter (encourager).” In fact, this meaning is the Holy Spirit’s major work. “He [the Holy Spirit] will teach and remind you of everything I [Jesus] have said to you” (John 14:26, NIV). He will tell people about Christ (John 15:26). He will “prove that the world’s people are guilty. He will prove their guilt concerning sin and godliness and judgement” (John 16:8, NIV). He “will guide you into all truth” and “tell you what is still going to happen” (John 16:13, NIV). He will bring Christ glory by receiving something from Him and showing it to the disciples (John 16:14). It is clear the Holy Spirit will do for us what Jesus

Himself would do.

How do 1 John 3:24 and 1 John 4:13 help us understand the Holy Spirit’s work in our lives today?

The apostles⁶ and their fellow believers were not to be left alone or without help after Jesus went to heaven. A capable⁷ Helper was to be with them. “By the Holy Spirit, Jesus said He would show Himself to them.” —Adapted from *The Desire of Ages*, p. 670.

How have you experienced the Holy Spirit as a Comforter? Be prepared to share your answer with the class.

FRIDAY—APRIL 21

ADDITIONAL STUDY: Ellen G. White, *The Acts of the Apostles*, pp. 36, 40, 41, 52–54; *The Desire of Ages*, pp. 100–103, 668–672; *Gospel Workers*, pp. 284–289.

“The Holy Spirit is Christ’s Representative. But the Holy Spirit does not have a human personality. Limited by human form, Christ could not be everywhere in person. So, it was for the disciples’ interest that Jesus should go to the Father and send the Holy Spirit to be His Successor⁸ on earth. Then, no one could have any advantage because of the Holy

⁶ apostles—God’s disciples who preached the gospel after Jesus returned to heaven. The word *apostles* means “people who are sent out.” The apostles were sent out into the world to tell others about Jesus.

⁷ capable—to be able to do something well.

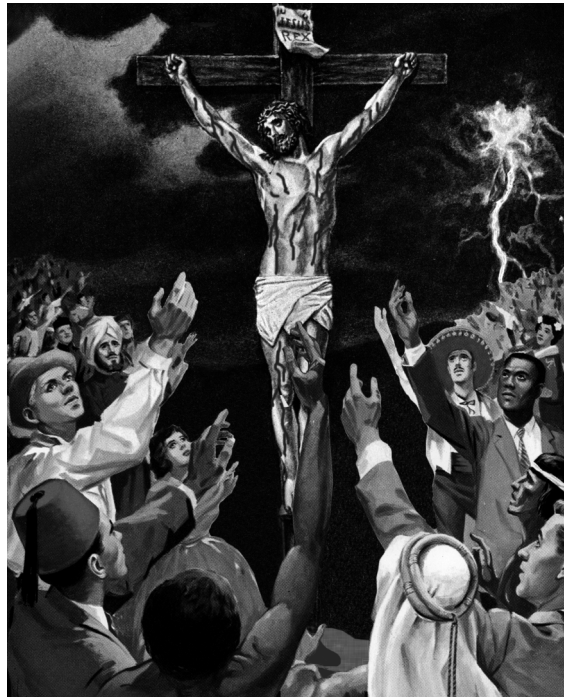
⁸ successor—someone who comes after someone else.

Spirit's location or his personal connection with Christ. By the Holy Spirit, Christ would be available to all people. In this way, Christ would be nearer to them than if He had not gone to heaven."—Adapted from *The Desire of Ages*, p. 669.

"If we look to Jesus and trust in Him, we will have a power (the Holy Spirit) that has conquered Satan. With every temptation, Jesus will make a way of escape. When Satan comes in like a flood, we must meet his temptations with the sword of the Holy Spirit. Jesus will be our Helper and will lift up a shield for us against Satan."—Adapted from *Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 5, p. 426.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

1. As a class, discuss your answers to Thursday's last question.
2. Do you know anyone going through serious trouble right now? Why not get in touch with that person and let him or her know your concern. Ask that person if there is anything you or the class could do to help.



Look to Jesus. Trust Him. Then He will give you His Holy Spirit.

3. How can we do some of the same work as the Holy Spirit? For example, how can we comfort, encourage, or teach others? What other ways can we show the presence of the Holy Spirit in us? How does the Holy Spirit's work in us agree with the Bible commands to love others and to care for their needs?