

The Promise of the Holy Spirit

John 7:37–40

by Charles B. Hodge Jr.

Jesus is in the “lion’s den” in John 7! Amazingly, this is where He chooses to introduce the Holy Spirit. In the “Farewell Discourses” Jesus will center all His promises with the Holy Spirit. John 7 reveals an arrest that was never made. The lions growled, but no one touched Him. Someone has observed, “A Christian is fearless, joyous, and constantly in trouble.”

I. READ THE TEXT

It was the last, great day at the Feast of Tabernacles. The time is October. This feast was the one celebrating the annual harvest and the Exodus. One problem was this: The Jews had added the “waterpots.” From the pool of Siloam, the Fountain of Gihon, the priests carried water to the temple chanting Psalm 118:28. It celebrated God’s providential care in the wilderness. What about “adding to”?

Another problem is seen in verse 38 as Jesus quoted Scripture. Which Scripture did He quote? There are several alternatives but not an absolute. Honesty must prevail in our Bible study.

One lesson is evident: Jesus could not do anything without God! Jesus was totally dependent upon God! Would that we would learn this! We try to live without God! We do not wish to bother Him! We further try to do God’s work under our own power. God’s will must be done *God’s way by God’s power*. If Jesus was powerless without God, what about us? Jesus had the Holy Spirit without measure (3:34); the Holy Spirit was the power of Jesus.

II. THE HOLY SPIRIT

Now on the last day, . . . Jesus stood and cried out, saying, “If any man is thirsty, let him come to Me and drink. He who believes in Me, as the Scripture said, ‘From his innermost being shall flow rivers of living water.’” But this He spoke of the Spirit, whom those who believed in Him were to receive; for the Spirit was not yet given, because Jesus was not yet glorified. Some of the multitude . . . were saying, “This certainly is the Prophet” (7:37–40).

Tragically, many of us are more afraid of the Holy Spirit than we are of Satan! Jesus said the Holy Spirit who had been a *power* would now be a *Person*! Many know how the Holy Spirit is abused by others with tongues, etc.; however, we are ignorant of who He is in us! The Holy Spirit is here to glorify Jesus. Any time a doctrine glorifies the Holy Spirit, you automatically know it is wrong. We have known what the Holy Spirit once did; now we know who He is!

In Acts 1:5–8 Jesus announced “church power” as “Spirit power.” The power of Pentecost is the Holy Spirit. In conversion God, Jesus, and the Holy Spirit are totally limited to the Word (the Bible). In “believers,” God, Jesus, and the Holy Spirit can operate directly. Do we not pray, “Guide, guard, and direct”; “Give the preacher a ready recollection”; “Guide the hands of doctors who attend to our sick”? Someone objects to a personal indwelling of the Holy Spirit thinking that the Holy Spirit would be fragmented. Be consistent. No one denies that the Holy Spirit was in the twelve apostles! That

would be twelve fragments! No one denies that the Holy Spirit is in Bibles. There are more Bibles than believers!

In John 7 the Holy Spirit had not yet been given. He came to remain at Pentecost. Paul “re-baptized” the twelve Ephesians in Acts 19 who had not heard of the Holy Spirit. We have a five-finger exercise for conversion—hear, believe, repent, confess, and be baptized. The original five-finger exercise came from Walter Scott—faith, repentance, baptism, remission of sins, and the gift of the Holy Spirit. We need to return to his five.

There is more power in the church than mere “positive thinking.” When God does big things, He always uses the Holy Spirit: Cases in point would be creation, the incarnation, the resurrection, and regeneration. Read Ephesians 3:20, 21 more closely. It does not read, “We are able”; it says rather, “God is able.” The power of the church is the Holy Spirit by faith. The church is dependent upon grace; it is not a “self-reliance society.” People trying to go to heaven on their own are scared to death to die.

The fruit of the Holy Spirit is love (Galatians 5:22, 23). There are some I cannot love, but through God’s power in me I can! Even sinners love sinners! Christians, like Jesus, love their enemies. The love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Spirit (Romans 5:5). The Holy

Spirit has one fruit of self-control (Galatians 5:22, 23). Any theology that encourages hysteria is not of the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit is not here to do our will—but God’s will! Evangelism to further our own ambition is futile. “We must have something to show for our efforts” is not proper motivation for evangelism. We plant and water, but God gives the increases (1 Corinthians 3). The Holy Spirit exalts about Jesus; He gives Christians the ability to love. Evangelism is not a decision to teach somebody; evangelism is a decision to love everybody.

The Holy Spirit is the power to live the life of Christ. “For if while we were enemies, we were reconciled to God through the death of His Son, much more, having been reconciled, we shall be saved by His life” (Romans 5:10). We recognize the value of His death. We forget His life! “His life” is not a reference to His earthen sojourn; it is a reference to real life, the life of Jesus. The Holy Spirit imparts the life of Christ. The Holy Spirit comes to make Christians resemble or look like Jesus.

CONCLUSION

Paul gives his application of this in 2 Corinthians 12: “Grace.” God uses our “weakness” to reveal His “strength.” This comes by the Holy Spirit.

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