

Thirty Years of Experiencing the Holy Spirit — September 2 & 3, 2017

Follow-up Bible Studies

Written by Maggie Baxter

Day One: Genesis 11:1-9

- What was language and communication in the world once like (1)? Imagine this being the case today. Where did people settle in the east (2)? What idea did they have (3-4)? Why did they want to do this (4)? Why do humans so often want to “make a name for themselves”? How can you go against this cultural grain? What are some ways to exalt Jesus’ name instead of your own?
- Describe God’s response to the people’s activity (5-6). What in particular concerned him (6)? To rein the people in, what did he do (7-9)? Why is the city called Babel (9)?
- Compare this passage to Acts 2:5-12. The day of Pentecost, infused with Holy Spirit power, reversed the curse of Babel; it was a day when people heard the message of Jesus in their own language. Give thanks to God for this miracle and his perfect plan to have us experience the Holy Spirit in such personal ways.

Day Two: Mark 1:9-11

- Set the scene of this text (9). Why do you think Jesus wanted to be baptized? Imagine what it must’ve been like for John to baptize him. Was he excited? Nervous? Humbled?
- Describe what happened as Jesus came out of the water (10-11). What do you think it looked like for heaven to be torn open? Why do you think the Holy Spirit touched Jesus like a dove, instead of something like wind or fire? Reflect on the words God spoke to Jesus. Why do you think he expressed love and pleasure?
- Note the very personal and tangible nature of this exchange: Jesus saw heaven open, the Spirit touched him and the audible voice of God addressed him directly. Ask God to give you your own intimate encounter: may you sense the Spirit’s touch and may he pull back the curtain for a moment so you can hear God’s voice and experience his love in new, clear ways.

Day Three: Acts 1:1-11

- What did Luke previously write about (1-2)? Describe Jesus’ interactions with the apostles after he rose from the dead (3). Set the scene of this particular occasion (4). What was Jesus’ command to the apostles (4-5)? What did the men think this might mean (6)? How did Jesus respond to their inquiry (7-8)?
- Meditate on verse 8. Picture Jesus speaking this promise directly to you. How does this make you feel? Recall your experiences of receiving “power when the Holy Spirit comes on you.” Then pray this classic prayer: “More, Lord!” How else do you want to experience the Spirit, and what do you want him to give to you? Ask him for those things now.
- What happened next (9-11)? Imagine how the apostles processed each aspect of this encounter: Jesus’ words, his ascension and the angelic message. What were their ensuing conversations like?

Day Four: Acts 2:14-21

- What did Peter do (14)? In beginning his address, what did he say (14-16)? What do you think gave Peter so much confidence, and what inspired him to quote the prophet Joel? When has the Holy Spirit given you boldness and the right words to speak in intense situations? While not tangible, this is one way the Holy Spirit empowers us. Take a moment to thank God for this.

- Summarize the Joel passage (17-21). What picture does the phrase “pour out” paint of experiencing the Spirit? Also consider the Holy Spirit’s manifestations of power: prophesy, visions, dreams, deliverance, etc.? What do you particularly long for more of right now: The Spirit’s touch or his empowerment? Bring this longing before the Lord, and ask him to bless you with it.
- Between depicting the reversal of Babel’s curse and quoting an ancient prophet, this chapter in Acts reminds us the entire Bible tells one story of God’s great rescue plan. Tell the Lord your thoughts and feelings about this beautiful overarching story.

Day Five: Romans 9:6-18

- Summarize Paul’s beginning argument that we are not saved by ethnic descent (6-9). What do you think it means to be “children of the promise”? How does it feel to be Abraham’s offspring, regardless of whether you biologically descended from him?
- How does Paul explain that God gets to choose whoever he wants for his family (10-13)? What does he say to those who think this makes God unjust (14-18)? Which parts here do you readily accept? Which verses stir up questions? Pose them to the Lord now. What response do you sense him speaking?
- Think about verse 16 in the context of experiencing the Holy Spirit. What makes it an act of God’s mercy? God-orchestrated Holy Spirit encounters may seem sudden, or intense in other ways. Pray for grace to fully embrace all the Spirit experiences he wants to give to you. What is the first step you can take to walk this out?