

20:20 Vision Ministries – Devotions by Roger Browning

Week 50 (December 6-12, 2015)

From now until Christmas, we will examine the Holy Spirit's actions that bring about the virgin birth and subsequent protection of our Lord. This week's devotions will set the stage by examining the arrival of the Holy Spirit in the Book of Acts.

Sunday, December 6 (read Acts 1:1-5)

“Do not leave Jerusalem, but wait for the gift my Father promised, which you have heard me speak about.” (Acts 1:4b)

Luke's gospel (my former book) reveals more about the workings of the Holy Spirit than any of the other gospel accounts. Because he accompanied the apostle Paul on his mission journeys, Dr. Luke was perhaps more aware of the Spirit's activities than were the other gospel writers. Notice that the **Spirit** spoke through the resurrected Son of God to instruct the remaining apostles (v. 2). The account of the resurrection cannot be questioned by logical people, because Jesus appeared to His apostles several times during the period of 40 days following His resurrection (v. 3), appearing to more than 500 men at the same time (see 1 Corinthians 15:3-8). We will look at this text more closely in tomorrow's devotion.

Monday, December 7 (reread Acts 1:1-5)

“For John baptized with water, but in a few days you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit.” (Acts 1:5)

It is just as important today as it was then that preachers and teachers of God's Word wait until they have been filled with the Holy Spirit before they approach their listeners (v. 4). Only the Spirit can transform our words into a soul-saving message. Many preachers as well as singers are so talented that it is possible to stir the crowd's emotions through their own ability, while leaving them empty of any lasting knowledge. Like John, I can only baptize with water for the forgiveness of sins (see Matthew 3:11). Jesus is the One who baptizes us with the Holy Spirit (v. 5). We all receive the **gift** of the Holy Spirit at conversion (Acts 2:38), but make sure that you also experience His **daily** filling prior to trying to teach others by words or example!

Tuesday, December 8 (read Acts 1:6-8)

“But 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 1:8)

Like the apostles of Jesus, many people spend much time trying to figure out when the Lord will return to Jerusalem to establish His kingdom (v. 6). This is a secret known only to the Father (v. 7; see also Matthew 24:36). God teaches us in today's printed verse that “(we) will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on (us).” Among the many gifts that the Spirit bestows upon us, perhaps the greatest is the ability to live the Christian life so that others may see our good works and glorify the Father who is in heaven (see Matthew 5:16). While it is important to witness to others with our mouths, it is even more important to **be witnesses** by the life that we live. If there is a difference between what we preach and how we live, others will believe our actions, not our message. May the Holy Spirit fill us so that we can be “salt and light” to the lost world (see Matthew 5:14-15).

Wednesday, December 9 (read Acts 1:9-11)

*“Men of Galilee,” they said, “why do you stand here looking into the sky? **This same Jesus**, who has been taken from you into heaven, will come back in the same way you have seen Him go into heaven.” (Acts 1:11, emphasis mine)*

In today’s text, our Lord returns to His home in heaven, leaving His apostles gazing into the sky (v. 9-10). A cloud prevents them from seeing Him any longer. Similarly, Jesus is hidden from many believers today because of a “cloud of doubt” that distorts their view. Only the Holy Spirit can remove that blockage! The good news for today is printed above: “**This same Jesus** . . . will come back in the same way you have seen Him go into heaven” (see Revelation 19:11-16). That’s why He taught us to pray, “Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven” (Matthew 6:10). That’s also why the apostle John closes the book of Revelation with these words, “Amen. Even so, come, Lord Jesus” (Revelation 22:20b, KJV).

Thursday, December 10 (read Acts 1:12-17)

They all joined together constantly in prayer, along with the women and Mary the mother of Jesus, and with His brothers. (Acts 1:14)

If you want to see the Holy Spirit come in power in our times, try praying together for an entire week like the apostles do following the ascension of Jesus. Don’t miss the fact that Mother Mary is in the Upper Room along with her remaining sons (v. 14). Now you can see why the Lord sent His mother to live with John instead of allowing her to live with His unbelieving brothers (see John 7:1-5; 19:25-27). Jesus makes sure that His family will be present when the Holy Spirit comes to fill believers. Peter makes it clear that the words of David from the Old Testament actually come from the Holy Spirit (v. 15-17). I pray that you have no trouble believing the same fact!

Friday, December 11 (read Acts 2:1-13)

When the day of Pentecost came, they were all together in one place. (Acts 2:1)

The followers of Jesus are united in prayer and in purpose (v. 1). That formula is necessary if we want to see the Holy Spirit come upon us in power. The house in which they are praying is filled with wind and fire, both symbols of the Holy Spirit (v. 2-3). Because the 120 people in the Upper Room come from several countries and speak different languages, the Spirit enables the apostles to communicate in languages they have never learned. Don’t miss the fact that the text says three times that the tongues they are speaking in are a known language (v. 6, 8 & 11). In like manner, today the Spirit takes one message and makes application to many people, young and old. There will always be critics who misinterpret a movement of the Holy Spirit (v. 13), but we are to pray constantly that God will send a mighty movement of His Spirit among us in this generation.

Saturday, December 12 (read Acts 2:14-21)

And everyone who calls on the Name of the Lord will be saved. (Acts 2:21)

Rejoice that we are living in the Day of Grace when “everyone who calls on the Name of the Lord will be saved” (v. 21). Peter denies that these men are drunk, because it is only 9:00 a.m. (v. 15). Instead, he quotes an Old Testament passage from Joel to explain what is happening before their eyes and ears (v. 17-21). “The last days” (v. 17) refers to all the time following the death and resurrection of our Lord and the coming of the Holy Spirit up until the time Jesus returns to earth. This Day of Pentecost originates the Day of Grace (or the Church Age) referred to earlier in this devotion. Do not ignore God’s gracious offer of salvation during this time!

