

The Spirit's Testimony to Jesus

The Book of Acts

Intro: In our study “Thirty Days with Jesus” we looked at the proofs that Jesus gave to confirm His claims to be the Christ, the Son of God and they are impressive. However, Jesus acknowledged one more witness who would testify after His ascension to heaven—the Holy Spirit. On the night before He was crucified He spoke to His apostles about this witness:

When the Helper comes, whom I will send to you from the Father, that is the Spirit of truth, who proceeds from the Father, He will bear witness of Me, (John 15:26)

We commonly refer to the book following the gospels as the “Acts of the Apostles”. But it could also perhaps even more appropriately be called “The Testimony of the Holy Spirit”; for in this book we can read how the Holy Spirit bore witness, making possible the spread of the gospel of Jesus from Jerusalem to Rome just as Jesus had promised. Let’s take a few moments to consider “The Spirit’s testimony to Jesus”.

Jesus Promised the Spirit’s testimony

Jesus indicated that the Holy Spirit would be helper to the apostles in testifying about Jesus.

And I will ask the Father, and He will give you another Helper, that He may be with you forever; that is the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it does not behold Him or know Him, but you know Him because He abides with you, and will be in you. I will not leave you as orphans; I will come to you. (John 14:16-18)

Jesus wanted the apostles to understand that though he was returning to heaven, they would not be left alone. He would send “another Helper” to them. Both words demand careful thought:

The Greek word Jesus used suggests “someone who appears in another’s behalf, a mediator, intercessor, or helper”. The NASV translates “helper” suggesting the assistance that the Holy Spirit would give.

The term for “another” means “one of the same sort or kind” as Jesus had been to the apostles.

Jesus specifically mentioned the kind of “help” the Holy Spirit would provide them in giving their testimony

But I tell you the truth, it is to your advantage that I go away; for if I do not go away, the Helper shall not come to you; but if I go, I will send Him to you. And He, when He comes, will convict the world concerning sin, and righteousness, and judgment; concerning sin, because they do not believe in Me; and concerning righteousness, because I go to the Father, and you no longer behold Me; and concerning judgment, because the ruler of this world has been judged. I have many more things to say to you, but you cannot bear them now.

But when He, the Spirit of truth, comes, He will guide you into all the truth; for He will not speak on His own initiative, but whatever He hears, He will speak; and He will disclose to you what is to come. He shall glorify Me; for He shall take of Mine, and shall disclose it to you. All things that the Father has are Mine; therefore I said, that He takes of Mine, and will disclose it to you. (John 16:7-15)

The Spirit's testimony is related to four groups or individuals:

The apostles—The Spirit would guide the apostles into all truth. He would reveal to them what Jesus Himself willed to make known to them. He would teach them all things and bring to their remembrance all that Jesus had said (Jn. 14:26)

The world—The Spirit would convince the world of the sin in their unbelief in rejecting Jesus.

Jesus—The Spirit would bring glory to Jesus by declaring His innocence in the matter of His crucifixion and His vindication in His ascension to heaven. He would glorify Jesus in the declaration of His truth and by the powerful miracles performed in His name.

Satan—The Holy Spirit would declare his judgment as the defeated ruler of this world and the establishment of the kingdom of Christ, his archenemy!

Jesus indicated when, where, and how the Spirit's testimony would begin

Shortly before Jesus' ascension Jesus announced to the apostles the imminent fulfillment of the promises He had made in the upper room. *And gathering them together, He commanded them not to leave Jerusalem, but to wait for what the Father had promised, "Which," He said, "you heard of from Me; for John baptized with water, but you shall be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days from now." (Acts 1:4-5)*

but you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be My witnesses both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and even to the remotest part of the earth." (Acts 1:8)

It is important for modern Bible students to recognize the uniqueness of the apostles in relation to these promises. They were made to them specifically as ambassadors of Christ, not to all believers.

The Holy Spirit Fulfilled Jesus' Promises

The Holy Spirit testified of His arrival through the miracles of Pentecost.

And when the day of Pentecost had come, they were all together in one place. And suddenly there came from heaven a noise like a violent, rushing wind, and it filled the whole house where they were sitting. And there appeared to them tongues as of fire distributing themselves, and they rested on each one of them. And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit was giving them utterance. (Acts 2:1-4)

Here in Acts chapter two we see the beginning of the fulfillment of Jesus' promises concerning the Holy Spirit's testimony. This testimony would be given through the apostles themselves and confirmed by the miracles they performed by the Spirit's power.

The Holy Spirit testified that His coming fulfilled Joel's prophecy of a day of salvation for Israel before the great day of the Lord had arrived.

but this is what was spoken of through the prophet Joel: 'And it shall be in the last days,' God says, 'That I will pour forth of My Spirit upon all mankind; (Acts 2:16-17)

Peter speaking by the Spirit explained to those present that the miraculous tongues in which they were speaking was the evidence of the outpouring of the Spirit. It was the proof that a day of salvation had arrived for Israel before the great day of God's judgment.

The Holy Spirit testified that the Jesus whom they had crucified was the Savior of Israel.

Peter guided by the Spirit explains first that they had crucified Jesus; but that this act was by the predetermined plan and foreknowledge of God (Ac. 2:23).

God had raised Him from the dead and seated him at His right hand in heaven. Peter by the Holy Spirit gave three proofs:

The testimony of OT prophecy

Messianic passages like Psalm 16 indicated that the Christ would "not be abandoned to Sheol"

Messianic passages like Psalm 110 indicated that the Christ would "sit at the right hand of God"

The first passage pointed to his resurrection; the second point to his ascension!

The eye-witnesses testimony of the apostles who saw Jesus alive:

"This Jesus God raised up again, to which we are all witnesses. (Acts 2:32)

The miraculous manifestations that they could see and hear

"Therefore having been exalted to the right hand of God, and having received from the Father the promise of the Holy Spirit, He has poured forth this which you both see and hear. (Acts 2:33)

Thus, the one that they had crucified was in fact Lord and Christ.

The Holy Spirit announced the conditions upon which this salvation could be received.

Faith in Jesus as Lord and Christ

Therefore let all the house of Israel know for certain that God has made Him both Lord and Christ—this Jesus whom you crucified. (Acts 2:36)

Repentance and baptism in Jesus' name

And Peter said to them, "Repent, and let each of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. (Acts 2:38)

Thus Peter urged them to be saved.

And with many other words he solemnly testified and kept on exhorting them, saying, "Be saved from this perverse generation!" (Acts 2:40)

Thus, the Holy Spirit accomplished all that Jesus said He would do!

He had given the apostles a message to reveal and credibility by the miracles they were working.

He had vindicated the righteousness of Jesus by proclaiming His resurrection and ascension to heaven.

He convinced the world that they had sinned in their unbelief and rejection of Jesus.

He had declared the overthrow of Satan's rule and the establishment of the kingdom of God.

Through the Holy Spirit's work the salvation that God had planned for all mankind was made possible, the kingdom of God made up of people of both groups was established, and the glorification of Jesus was accomplished in Jerusalem, Samaria, even to the remotest part of the earth.

Conclusion: The testimony of the Spirit is a fundamental proof in the establishing the truth of Christianity. It explains how the church began; it explains how people all over the world were convinced to abandon their previous beliefs and fully embrace Jesus as Savior and Lord of their lives, even confessing murder to do so!

If the testimony of the Spirit did not occur nor is not true what explanation can be given for the existence of the church in Jerusalem and all over the Roman world? How could the message of the apostles of a resurrected Savior have ever been convincingly proven to thousands of people? It could have been falsified in one minute but the presentation of the body of Jesus!

Thus the testimony of the Spirit assures us that Jesus is the resurrected Lord and that through faith in Him we can be saved.