

## THE HOLY SPIRIT AND THE EARLY CHURCH

### “The Lord of the Harvest”

[Jkroberts\\_us@yahoo.com](mailto:Jkroberts_us@yahoo.com)

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Matthew 9:35-38

1. To date we have looked at:
  - a. The Holy Spirit in the life and ministry of Jesus.
  - b. The ministry of the Holy Spirit as taught by Jesus.
2. This morning we will highlight:
  - a. The Holy Spirit and the early church.
  - b. The Holy Spirit functioning as “the Lord of the Harvest”.
3. Jesus declared that because the harvest is plentiful and the workers few we are to beseech the Lord of the harvest to send out workers into His harvest.
4. What God wills He also directs and oversees. Philippians 2:12  
“It is God who is at work in you, both to will and to work for His good pleasure.”
5. Problems occur whenever the harvesters are in charge of the harvest.
  - a. Picking Grandpa’s blueberries-many were missed and even stepped on because we all wanted to pick where the blueberries were the most plentiful.  
Caused frustration and anger.
  - b. Grandpa took charge of the harvest and laid out lanes for us to pick in, and we had to harvest all of the berries in our lane before we could move to a new one.
6. Can you imagine a business functioning like the church sometimes does?
  - a. I go looking for a job at the local widget factory. (A widget is anything you want it to be.)
  - b. The owner says, “I am committed to making widgets and getting everyone in America to buy one. Everyone who works for me must be fully committed to the manufacturing and marketing of widgets. I have put together a widget making and marketing manual that you will be expected to study faithfully. Now get out there and make and market widgets. Spend a few days reading the widget making and marketing manual, observe the widget making and marketing process, and then decide where you want to fit in and get to work.”
  - c. I reply, “But sir, who should I report to? Who is in charge?”
  - d. “Nobody is in charge,” he replies, “I have provided you and your fellow widget makers with everything you need to make and market widgets. I have explained fully the widget making and marketing process in the widget making and marketing manual. It is up to you widget makers to decide what you want to do and who does what.”
  - e. Would such a system work? No, because everyone would want the easy jobs, the high profile jobs, the highest paying jobs, or whatever.
  - f. There has to be someone in charge; someone who has oversight and authority over the whole widget making and marketing process.
7. Jesus said, “All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son

and the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I commanded you; and lo, I (**in the person of the Holy Spirit**) am with you always, even to the end of the age.”

Matthew 28:18-20

8. We have already seen in the life and ministry of Jesus and through the teaching of Jesus in the Gospels that the Holy Spirit, the third Person of the Godhead, manifests the presence of God on earth in this age in which we are living.

9. We need to understand that the Holy Spirit possesses the power, resources, and strategy to accomplish God’s will in this age, and that He is in us, with us, and wants to fill us, empower us, and use us to accomplish God’s redemptive plan.

### **I. The Holy Spirit has come.**

A. Acts 2:1-4

B. The Spirit’s coming:

1. Was promised in Scripture. Acts 2:17-18

2. Was prayed for by Jesus. John 14:16

“If you love Me, you will keep My commandments, and I will ask the Father, and He will give you another Helper.”

3. Was the fulfillment of God’s promise. Luke 24:49

“And behold, I am sending forth the promise of My Father upon you, but you are to stay in the city until you are clothed with power from on high.”

4. Was manifested at Pentecost when Jesus was exalted to the right hand of God. Acts 2:33

C. The Holy Spirit may be ignored, grieved, quenched and insulted, but He is here.

### **II. The Holy Spirit prepares the harvest and directs the harvesters.**

A. Jerusalem was filled with Jews from every nation. (Note Acts 2:5-12)

B. Philip and the Ethiopian eunuch. Acts 8:26-40

C. Peter and Cornelius. Acts 10:1-48

1. Acts 10:1-8

2. Acts 10:19-20

D. Paul and his companions.

1. Acts 13:1-4

2. Acts 16:6-10 (A good passage to illustrate the Trinity)

### **III. The Holy Spirit equips and empowers the harvesters.**

A. “They were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak as the Spirit was giving them utterance.” Acts 2:4

B. Note Jesus’ words in Acts 1:5 and 8

C. Acts 4:8, 13-14, 23-31

### **IV. The Holy Spirit comforts the harvesters.**

A. Stephen at his stoning. Acts 7:54-60

B. Acts 9:31

## **APPLICATION**

1. Was the evident working of the Holy Spirit in the life of the early church and in the lives of early Christians supposed to be confined to the Apostolic Age?  
-Sort of a spiritual launch pad?
2. Not according to Acts 2:17-18, 38-39, and the testimony of church history.
3. May God lead us to a full understanding and appropriation of the Truth as it relates to the Holy Spirit.