

What is the Baptism in the Holy Spirit?

Lesson #3

May 1 and 8, 2002

Introduction: In the first week of our *Holy Spirit* seminar, we asked the question, “*Who is the Holy Spirit?*” In summary, we noted:

- The Holy Spirit is God.
- The Holy Spirit is a real Person (a distinct divine person).
- The Holy Spirit is a real Person who lives in real people.
- The Holy Spirit is the “breath of God,” the life-giving presence of our Creator and Lord who lives within our lives.

The following two weeks we asked the question, ***What does the Holy Spirit do?*** We noted “*The Top Ten Things the Holy Spirit Does For Us Today.*”

1. The Holy Spirit makes known to us what Jesus has done for us.
2. The Holy Spirit convicts (convinces) us.
3. The Holy Spirit produces spiritual life in us.
4. The Holy Spirit lives in us, continually giving us spiritual life.
5. The Holy Spirit assures us that we are saved, that we are children of God.
6. The Holy Spirit gives us power over the flesh.
7. The Holy Spirit brings forth the fruits of righteousness in believers’ lives.
8. The Holy Spirit helps us pray.
9. The Holy Spirit counsels us and guides us into truth, the truth of Christ.
10. The Holy Spirit empowers us for service.

We noted: *Trying to serve God without the power of the Holy Spirit is like trying to navigate the Atlantic Ocean in a row boat.*

Let’s continue to answer other questions that you have submitted.

Question: “If the Holy Spirit doesn’t ‘speak of himself,’ how in-depth of a study can we really make? There’s not a lot in the Word specifically about the Holy Ghost.”

Answer: Actually, there are lots of references in Scripture to the Holy Spirit. According to A.C. Valdez, Sr., in his book *Fire on Azusa Street*, the Holy Spirit is mentioned 142 times under 15 different names in the Old Testament, and 256 times under 7 different names in the New Testament.

Question: “Do I pray to the Holy Spirit? If I do what do I pray for?” (Mark Weiss, Teen Challenge)

Answer: Jesus gave us the pattern to pray. He taught, “*This, then, is how you should pray: ‘Our Father in heaven. . .’*” (Matthew 6:9).

Jesus gave further teaching on this when He told his disciples, “*Then the Father will give you whatever you ask in my name*” (John 15:16b). And a little later we read, “*In that day you will no longer ask me anything. I tell you the truth, my Father will give you whatever you ask in*”

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my name. Until now you have not asked for anything in my name. Ask and you will receive, and your joy will be complete” (John 16:23, 24).

We should pray to the Father in the name (authority) of Jesus.

Question: “I don’t understand speaking and/or praying in tongues. What’s the purpose in this age? What is the baptism of the Holy Spirit and how does that differ from receiving the Spirit when you’re saved? Does it take a touch or prayer by someone who has this or how do you receive it?”

Answer: That’s begin to answer those questions tonight!

What is the baptism in the Holy Spirit? **The baptism in the Holy Spirit is a spiritual experience, based on the events and teaching of Acts 2:1 – 4, in which the follower of Christ is immersed in (or filled with) the Holy Spirit. This baptism, which is distinct from, and subsequent to, salvation is available to all of Christ’s followers, and is received by faith to those who ask.**

“This (baptism) signifies a total submergence within the reality of the Holy Spirit so that whoever is so baptized has a vivid sense of the Spirit’s presence and power” (Stanley M. Burgess and Gary B. McGee, in *Dictionary of Pentecostal and Charismatic Movements*, page 41).

Let’s note several specific aspects of the baptism in the Holy Spirit!

I. The baptism in the Holy Spirit is referred to in several ways in Scripture.

A. *“Baptized in (or with) the Holy Spirit”*

1. Acts 1:4, 5
2. Acts 11:16 (Peter was recalling the Caesareans – the Roman centurion Cornelius, his relatives, and close friends – who previously had been baptized in the Holy Spirit).

B. *“Filled” with the Holy Spirit*

1. Acts 2:4 -- “Jesus had promised that His disciples would be “baptized” in the Holy Spirit. When it happened, Luke writes, “They were filled.”

The word “baptize” speaks of submersion into, or immersion.
The word, “filled” speaks of penetration or pervasion.

2. Acts 9:17 - Paul is filled with the Holy Spirit.
3. Some Pentecostals sometimes speak of this as the “infilling” of the Holy Spirit. This term is not used as such in the New Testament. The reason it is used, however, is to distinguish the experience of the baptism in the Holy Spirit from the “indwelling” of the Spirit.

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All believers have the Spirit within them. That is, the Spirit “indwells” every believer. So the word, “infilling” is a term that some use to refer to the experience in which the believer receives the full penetration of the indwelling Spirit.

C. *“Outpouring” or “pouring out” of the Holy Spirit*

1. Acts 2:17, 18 (from the prophecy in Joel 2:28, 29)
2. Acts 2:33 -- This outpouring happens through Jesus.
3. Acts 10:45, 46 -- Describes the Caesareans’ experience
4. “The language of ‘outpouring,’ like ‘baptizing’ or ‘filling,’ suggests totality, but it also points to abundance. God does not give sparingly: gives the Spirit without limit” (John 3:34 -- Burgess and McGee, page 41).
5. Words like “outpouring” and “filling” do not suggest that one has more of the Spirit than someone else. Rather “the Spirit who is totally present now totally claims the person.

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Another way to look at this is to think of the word, “release.” When one is baptized in the Holy Spirit, the Spirit who is within is released for a “total inward occupancy” (John 7:37 – 39).

D. *“Falling” of the Holy Spirit (or “come upon”)*

1. Acts 8:14 – 16
2. Acts 10:44
3. Acts 1:8
4. Acts 19:6
5. Luke 24:49 -- “clothed with power from on high”
6. This term suggests “suddenness” and “forcefulness” as in Acts 2:2.
7. People often testify, “The Holy Spirit ‘fell’ on me.”

E. *“The gift of the Holy Spirit”* (Acts 2:38, 39)

1. The word, “gift,” signifies that the baptism in the Holy Spirit is not earned by being a child of God for a certain length of time or by achieving a level of spirituality. Like salvation, the baptism in the Holy Spirit is a gift, a blessing we cannot earn or even deserve.

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2. The “gift” of the Holy Spirit is different than the “gifts” of the Holy Spirit.
 - a. The “gift” of the Holy Spirit is another way to describe the baptism in the Holy Spirit.
 - b. The “gifts” of the Holy Spirit are God-given abilities which enable the believer to minister.

F. *The “promise” -- Acts 2:39*

1. Gk: epangelia – “a gift graciously announced and bestowed”
2. “*A promise is the declaration of some benefit to be conferred*” (Samuel Johnson).
3. There is a difference between a “fact” and a “promise.”
 - a. “Bible facts are to be accepted as being actual and therefore must be believed” (Herbert Lockyer, *All the Promises of the Bible*, page 15). Facts are to be accepted by faith.
 - (1) “*And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age*” (Matthew 28:20b). This was David Livingstone’s favorite verse and he said this about it, “That’s the word of a perfect Gentleman, and that’s the end of it.”
 - (2) “*God is light and in Him is no darkness at all*” (I John 1:5b). That is a fact, not a promise.
 - b. Promises must be believed, received, and claimed.
 - (1) Example: “*For the Lord God is a sun and a shield: The Lord bestows favor and honor; no good thing does He withhold from those whose walk is blameless*” (Psalm 84:11).
 - (2) Jesus said, “*But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you. . .*” (Acts 1:8). In order for this to happen, we must believe Jesus’ words, and then receive and claim this blessing. The baptism in the Holy Spirit, then, is not just a fact, it is a promise.
3. What does God say about His promises?
 - a. “. . . *Not one word has failed of all the good promises He gave through his servant Moses*” (I Kings 8:56).

- b. *“For He remembered his holy promises given to his servant Abraham”* (Psalm 105:42).
 - c. *“For no matter how many promises God has made, they are ‘Yes’ in Christ. And so through him the ‘Amen’ is spoken by us the glory of God”* (II Corinthians 1:20).
 - d. *“Through these he has given us his very great and precious promises, so that through them you may participate in the divine nature and escape the corruption in the world caused by evil desires”* (II Peter 1:4).
4. For some, promises *“are like pie-crusts, lightly made and easily broken.”*
But not so with God!

II. The baptism in the Holy Spirit is a promise to all believers.

- A. The prophet Joel, writing as the Spirit inspired him, promised this blessing (Joel 2:28, 29).
- B. John the Baptist promised this blessing (Matthew 3:11).
- C. Peter promised this blessing (Acts 2:38, 39).
- D. Our heavenly Father promised this blessing (Acts 1:4).
- E. Jesus promised this blessing.
 - 1. Luke 24:49
 - 2. Acts 1:5 – 8
- F. May God give us the faith to believe, receive, and claim this blessing, which, as we have noted, is for each of us.

Illustration: “Crowfoot and God’s promises”

III. The baptism in the Holy Spirit produces additional spiritual power in our lives!

- A. Jesus said so (Acts 1:8)!
- B. Why was Peter so bold on the day of Pentecost, though he was so timid and fearful on the night of Jesus’ crucifixion? (Compare: Luke 22:54 – 62 with Acts 1:14 – 39 and Acts 4:8 – 20).
- C. The first century followers of Jesus spoke boldly after they had been filled with the Holy Spirit (Acts 4:31).

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- D. Stephen had courage and power as a result of being filled with the Spirit (Acts 7:55).
- E. Paul's power came from being filled with the Spirit, too (Acts 13:9, 10).

Illustration: Grandmother Sorbo

CONCLUSION: The Holy Spirit, the breath and life of God, is active in our lives today. Let's open our hearts fully so Jesus can baptize us with the Holy Spirit, and so we can experience new dimensions of the Spirit's life in our lives, including God's power.

Question to be answered in the next two weeks: *How do I receive the promise of the baptism in the Holy Spirit?*

Questions to be answered in the near future:

“In view of Pastor Palmer's daughter now attending a religious college different than the Assemblies of God, and the possibility of his future grandchildren 'not being taught about the sign of tongues' as he knows it, will he love them any differently if they do not?”

“What are the gifts of the Spirit? Are they for today?”

“What is slaying in the Spirit? Do you believe in it? Give Bible verses.”

“How does the fruit of the Spirit differ from the gifts of the Spirit?”

“Why do so many believers and churches discount the need for the work of the Holy Spirit in their lives?”

“Is there a difference between our heavenly language God gives us to communicate with Him for our edification and the speaking in tongues with interpretation I hear spoken in the assembly?”

“How am I led by the Spirit?”

“Does speaking in tongues prove that you are saved? Why or why not? Give Bible verses.”