

The Promise of the Father: Baptism in the Holy Spirit #3

In recent studies, we learned about Pentecost (the Jewish Shavuot, or the “Feast of Weeks”), and how Jesus told his disciples that he would send “another Comforter” after he had returned to the Father. We also observed a few things about the Spirit, and about the purposes of the Baptism in the Holy Spirit, from Lk. 24, Jn. 14-16, and Ac. 1.

What else should we know about this Baptism?

1. The disciples were to wait for the Spirit, not to immediately go into ministry.

Lk. 24:49 – “And, behold, I send the promise of my Father upon you: but tarry ye in the city of Jerusalem, until ye be endued with power from on high.”

Ac. 1:4 – “And, being assembled together with them, commanded them that they should not depart from Jerusalem, but wait for the promise of the Father, which, saith he, ye have heard of me.”

Also in Ac. 9:17, God didn’t restore Saul’s sight and send him out in ministry before telling him that he was to be filled with the Holy Ghost.

People today are trying to live the Christian life without waiting for, and receiving, the Holy Spirit who is intended to empower them to live this new life. Why? Many, if not most, are simply ignorant– nobody told them that there is such an experience to be had. Then when they read the book of Acts they tend to explain away the examples of the Baptism in the Holy Spirit as “the way things used to be”. Some churches and individuals actually oppose and resist the experience. Why such opposition? Fear, pride, and religious spirits. Even some who do believe in it tend to keep their mouths shut because they are afraid they will get kicked out of their church. Compare this to Jn. 12:42-43 – many of the chief rulers actually did believe in Christ, but would not say so because they were afraid of the Pharisees, and being put out of the synagogue. “For they loved the praise of men more than the praise of God.” Others are offended to think they have an incomplete experience (they do).

2. The Baptism in the Holy Spirit is something we receive after being saved.

Ac. 2 – Obviously the 120 that were waiting in the upper room were already believers (“saved”) before the Holy Spirit came upon them.

Ac. 8:5-17 – Philip preached in Samaria and did many miracles of healing and deliverance that confirmed what he was preaching. They were then baptized in water (v. 12). Even a local sorcerer named Simon was apparently converted. But notice verses 14-17 – “Now when the apostles which were at Jerusalem heard that Samaria had received the word of God, they sent unto them Peter and John: Who, when they were come down, prayed for them, that they might receive the Holy Ghost: (For as yet he was fallen upon none of them: only they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus.) Then laid they their hands on them, and they received the Holy Ghost.”

Ac. 9 – Saul was converted on the road to Damascus, and was three days in blindness. Then in verse 17 Ananias said to him “Brother Saul, the Lord, even Jesus, that appeared unto thee in the way as thou camest, hath sent me, that thou mightest receive thy sight, and be filled with the Holy Ghost.”

Ac. 10-11 – When the Holy Spirit fell on Cornelius’ household, it appears to be at the same time as they were saved, which was necessary to overcome the misconception of the church up until that point, that only Jews could be saved. But even so, it is obvious that they believed unto salvation as Peter was preaching to them, and then the Spirit fell on them.

Ac. 19:1-6 – Paul came to Ephesus, and found about a dozen “believers”. As it turns out, they knew nothing about Jesus, but had believed the teaching of John the Baptist. Before Paul knew that however, he asked them in verse 2, “**Have ye received the Holy Ghost since ye believed?**” That is extremely important, and shows the common belief of the early apostles (as in Ac. 8), that when people received the gospel, they needed to follow up by receiving the Holy Spirit. In this case they knew nothing about it so Paul gave them the full gospel in verse 4. Then in verses 5-6 it says “When they heard this, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. And when Paul had laid his hands upon them, the Holy Ghost came on them; and they spake with tongues, and prophesied.”

3. The evidence of receiving, is speaking in other tongues.

Ac. 2:4 – “And **they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues**, as the Spirit gave them utterance.”

Ac. 10-11 – “While Peter yet spake these words, the Holy Ghost fell on all them which heard the word. And they of the circumcision which believed were astonished, as many as came with Peter, because that on the Gentiles also was poured out the gift of the Holy Ghost. **For they heard them speak with tongues, and magnify God.**”

Ac. 19:6 – “And when Paul had laid his hands upon them, **the Holy Ghost came on them; and they spake with tongues**, and prophesied.”

Ac. 8 – In this instance it does not specifically say anything about tongues, but Simon the sorcerer had heard the preaching, and had seen the healings and deliverance from demons that Philip had done. This impressed him enough to confess Christ and be baptized, but notice verses 14-17. When Peter and John prayed for them to receive the Holy Ghost, and laid hands on them, they received. This caused Simon to offer them money so he could also have the power to impart the Holy Ghost. There obviously had to be some visible or audible evidence of them receiving, that would make Simon want the power that badly. It wasn't merely an “inward feeling”.

Some claim to have received, but “without tongues”. But if this is a scriptural promise, then how can we be confident that we have received if it is some way other than what is recorded in scripture?

4. The Baptism in the Holy Spirit was not meant for the early church only – it is for us as well.

Following Peter's explanation of the outpouring in Ac. 2, he gave an invitation in verses 38-39 – “... Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost. **For the promise is unto you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call.**”

Ac. 19 was many years after the day of Pentecost, and it was still happening. For that matter, we are now about 2000 years after the day of Pentecost, and it is still happening to millions of people all around the world. Yet there are religious people who declare without evidence that the Baptism and gifts, and miracles passed away with the early church,

If the Baptism and the gifts of the Spirit were intended to be temporary, only for the initial establishment of the church, why doesn't the Bible say so? Something that important would surely have merited at least a mention!

5. We receive the Holy Spirit by asking, and often (usually?) by the laying on of hands.

This may not be obvious by reading about the outpouring on the day of Pentecost (Ac. 2), or when the Spirit fell on Cornelius' household (Ac. 10), but those were exceptional by being the first time the Holy Spirit came to the disciples, and to the Gentiles.

Lk. 11:9-13 – “... **If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children' how much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him?**”

Summary:

- Jesus promised the Spirit would come to his disciples.
- There are many examples through the book of Acts of this happening.
- The purposes for the Holy Spirit's presence are still as valid today as then.
- There is no indication that this was to pass away in time, and in fact millions just in the last hundred years have received, just like in the book of Acts.
- Therefore we can, and should, ask for and receive the Spirit, and we should expect to receive it the same way as it happened in the Bible – with speaking in tongues.