

## The Baptism of the Holy Spirit (Acts 1:4-8)

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Being baptized with the Holy Spirit (or Spirit Baptism) is our topic today

- **What** is it? **Do** you have it? **Why** should you care? **How** do you get it?
- **What we will do at the end of the sermon...** (about fear, abuses and how we learn doctrine) (biblical)

The greatest promise ever made to the world is: "For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish, but have eternal life." (John 3:16)

The greatest promise ever made to the church is: "You will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you." (Acts 1:8)

- The first was made **about** Jesus—the second was made **by** Jesus
- The first has to do with being **made new** (regeneration)—the second has to do with being **made effective** (unction)
- **Both** are absolutely necessary for the Christian
- The first is the **means by which we become** Christians—the second is the **means by which we live** faithful and fruitful Christian lives
- The first is **demonstrated** by water baptism—the second is **evidenced by** power
- The first is **putting our faith in** Jesus Christ—the second is **being baptized in** The Holy Spirit

Way back at the beginning of Luke's Gospel, John the Baptist said

- "I baptize you with water; but one is coming who is mightier than I, and I am not fit to untie the thong of His sandals; He will Baptize you **with the Holy Spirit**." (Luke 3:16)

He was talking about Jesus and something He would do for us

- Jesus had explained to His disciples that there would be a few ways the Holy Spirit would work in us
- **John 14:14-17**, NASB (**with** and **in**)

And in the closing chapter of Luke's Gospel Jesus said to His disciples:

- "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**." (Luke 24:49) (not just for first disciples; continued in Acts and beyond)

### **With, in and upon**

After Christ's resurrection the disciples were converted—the Spirit **in** them made them brand new

- After Christ's resurrection: "Jesus breathed on them and said to them receive the Holy Spirit." (John 20:22)
- What happened there is that the Holy Spirit was now **in** them
  - Though they believed and followed Jesus before then they had not been reborn because the Spirit had not yet been given to them (**John 7:37-39**, NIV)

It is the work of the Holy Spirit '**in us**' that causes us to be **born again—regenerated—new creations—saved**

- One cannot be a Christian without the Holy Spirit coming **into** them (happens through faith & repentance in Christ)
- Speaking to Christians, Paul said in Romans 8, "You are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if indeed the Spirit of God dwells **in** you. But if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he does not belong to Him... The Spirit bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God." (Romans 8:9,16)

### **If you are a Christian, you have the Holy Spirit in you (guaranteed)**

But there is a **second work and experience** of the Holy Spirit for the Christian

- That is the Holy Spirit coming **upon you**—or the experience of being **baptized with/in the Holy Spirit** (filled)
- This is what Jesus was talking about when He said to the disciples (who had the Spirit **in** them at this point):
  - "You will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come **upon** you." (Acts 1:8)
    - These were promised after the Spirit was already 'in' them

This second work of the Holy Spirit is the 'upon' experience (not the 'in' experience)

- The 'in' experience has to do with **salvation/regeneration/conversion**—it makes us Christians
- The 'upon' experience has to do with **power/enabling/filling**—it makes us faithful and fruitful Christian Witnesses

Jesus said that **the result of** being Baptized with the Holy Spirit (Spirit Baptism) would be:

- **"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, even to the remotest part of the earth."** (Acts 1:8)

Being baptized in the Spirit is so necessary/vital to the Christian life of witness and mission that Jesus had **forbid the disciples from doing anything about the great commission** until they had it! (**Acts 1:4-5**)

The issue at hand is being **witnesses** for Christ—that involves 3 things

1. **Exalting Christ (Thinking more of Jesus)**
  2. **Living holy lives (Living more like Jesus)**
  3. **Being on mission (Doing more with Jesus)**
- Cf. Our paradigm for understanding the person and the work of the Holy Spirit

When the Holy Spirit came **upon** the disciples with **power** everything changed!

- The Day of Pentecost (one of the Jewish Feasts prescribed in the OT)
- **Acts 2:1-4**
  - **Peter:** From denying to proclaiming (**Acts 2:36-41**)
  - **Disciples:** From unsure and fearful to bold and fruitful
- This is the "**power from on high—upon**" experience of Spirit Baptism! The world was never the same!!!!

**As in all things, Jesus is our model for how the Spirit works in us:**

- Luke 3 tells us that when Jesus was to begin His ministry the Father spoke from heaven saying, "**You are my beloved Son, in Whom I am well pleased.**"
  - We are also told that, "**The Holy Spirit descended upon Him...**" (3:22)
    - Modeled by the life of Christ—every Christian need these 2 issues settled for faithful fruitful life on mission
1. **To be settled in your identity as beloved son/daughter (the 'in' work of the Spirit)**
  2. **To be full of the Spirit (the 'upon' work of the Spirit)**
- And then we are told His ministry began and he went forth "**full of the Holy Spirit**" (Luke 4:1)
  - **If The Son of God—who was without sin—needed to be filled with Spirit, how much more do we?!?!?**

**Not every Christian has necessarily been filled with—baptized in—the Spirit yet**

- There is the **Holy Spirit converting us** and then there is the **Holy Spirit filling us** (2 different experiences)
- Every Christian has the Holy Spirit **in** them for salvation and new life (conversion/regeneration)
- Not every Christian has had the Holy Spirit come **upon** them for filling for power and fruitful witness
- That experience is available and needed for every Christian—not all have it yet

**The testimony of the Book of Acts concerning Spirit Baptism as a second experience:**

1. The example of the disciples on Pentecost (**Acts 1 and 2**)
2. The example of some Christians in Samaria (**Acts 8:14-17**)
3. The example of Paul the Apostle (**Acts 9:10-17**)
4. The example of some Christians in Ephesus (**Acts 19:1-6**)

**All of this shows us that sometimes—people are born again (the Spirit is in them)—but they don't receive the promise of power (the Holy Spirit coming upon them) until a later time**

**If this new experience had not been given, the Samaritan & Ephesian Christians would still have been Christians, but they would have remained weak**

- This is the state of many Christians today! (Can't deny that. Apathy, rebellion also play a role)

**Sometimes it happens at the same time—you are saved (in) and baptized in the Spirit (upon) concurrently**

- The example of the household of Cornelius (**Acts 10:44-48**)
- **This is probably normative...**

## How do you know whether or not you have been baptized in the Holy Spirit?

- Consider this example from someone in our church:

*I grew up in the church all my life, but was saved around 19-20 years old. I know I was, because my heart came alive for the first time to those things I heard all my life, when a friend led me through a month long Bible study of Philemon. So I would say that my desires and allegiances changed at this point. But for the next 6 years, I would never quite experience that "passionate" Christianity some of my friends had; I often backslid, repented, and then backslid again never fully grabbing a hold of my new identity and was still overly concerned with the things of the world. I genuinely loved the Lord and wanted to follow him, but I also felt like what Paul described in Romans 7:19 "For I do not do the good that I want to do, but I practice the evil that I do not want to do." I never read my Bible. I never prayed. I was more concerned with my life than God's mission. And I constantly struggled with sin. Then in my first year at Reality Carpinteria, a group of guys laid hands on me and anointed my head with oil and prayed for the Spirit to come **upon** me. **I can only describe what I felt like as being engulfed by the love of the Father. I broke down in tears.** That was several years ago. From that point on, my life has never been the same. Here were some noticeable and immediate differences:*

*1. **I increased in holiness.** Sins I had been mastered by my whole life, even as a Christian (e.g., rage) were broken immediately. I still sin, but I do not backslide (in the same way)*

*2. **I experienced boldness in witness** that I didn't know was possible. After that baptism, I took a close college friend I used to party with to Freebirds and testified of what Jesus did in my life, shared the gospel with him, and gave him a Bible study. This was the first time I have ever shared the gospel in six years as a Christian, but I couldn't stop talking about Jesus! It lasted for two hours.*

*3. **I wanted to know God.** I never read the Bible as a Christian, but after being baptized in the Holy Spirit, I had an insatiable desire for the Word. I read it all the way through for the first time that year (2006). I have read the Bible through 7 times since then. (This is from Pastor Chris Lazo of Reality Santa Barbara)*

Like the disciples, he experienced **radical transformation**. From a sort of **weak Christianity** to a **vibrant, fruitful and faithful following of and witness for Jesus**

When we are baptized in the Holy Spirit we are **enabled/empowered** to live lives that are **witnesses** for Christ

- Exalting Jesus; growing in holiness; engaging in mission** (The goal is always Christ oriented)
  - THE TRUE EVIDENCE OF THE SPIRIT IS THAT JESUS IS MADE MUCH OF AND SERVED FERVENTLY
- It is possible to have much of the work of the Spirit in your life (He is in you!) but come short of the fullness of His work of enabling and empowering through filling (Cf. Baptism)
  - Cf. Moody's (d. 1899) Story (Auntie Cook and Mrs. Snow)
  - "I have lived long enough to know that if I cannot have the power of the Spirit of God on me to help me to work for Him, I would rather die, than to live just for the sake of living." –Moody

## What are some barriers to Spirit Baptism?

- God's sovereign timing (mystery; Moody)
- Lack of understanding (Cf. the believers in Ephesus in Acts 19)
- Grieving and quenching the Spirit through rebellion (no consecration)
- Lack of a deep conviction of need
- Wrong motives (Jesus said to ask and receive—James tells us about not receiving due to wrong motives)

## What must be done?

- Acknowledge your need before God
- Be willing to surrender your will to God's (you do not need power— but Lordship)
- Be willing to forsake the sin that is holding you back from pursuing God's will
- Ask in trusting faith

**I say to you, ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you. For everyone who asks, receives; and he who seeks, finds; and to him who knocks, it will be opened. Now suppose one of you fathers is asked by his son for a fish; he will not give him a snake instead of a fish, will he? Or if he is asked for an egg, he will not give him a scorpion, will he? If you then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, **how much more will your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask Him?**" (Luke 11:9-13)**

## What will happen? How will I know I've received Spirit Baptism?

1. By faith in what God's Word has promised
2. Possible signs
  - Pentecost there was **tongues** and immediate witness
  - Paul and Lazo there was immediate, fruitful change
  - For the believers in Ephesus there was **tongues** and **prophesying** (Acts 19:6)
  - The household of Cornelius there was **prophesying**, **tongues** and **worship** (Acts 10:46)
  - For the believers in Samaria there was **no accompanying signs** (Acts 8:17)
  - For me, there was no immediate sign—but there was evidential life change and fruit
    - Moody and Finney and John Wesley all felt the **presence and joy** of God
    - We should not expect everyone to have the same experience or sign or feelings—or any!
3. Future faithful and fruitful living
  - "I was powerfully converted on the morning of the month of October, 1822. In the evening of the same day I received overwhelming baptisms of the Holy Ghost, that went through me, as it seemed to me, body and soul. I immediately found myself endued with such power from on high that a few words dropped here and there to individuals were the means of their immediate conversion." - Charles Finney

## Baptism with the Holy Spirit is not optional—we are joyfully commanded to seek Spirit Baptism

- It is not a matter of preference
  - **Ephesians 5:18** (more on that in coming weeks) (subsequent)
- Cf. Acts 4:8 = "**Then Peter, having just been filled with the Holy Spirit**" (Cf. **Acts 4:31**, NASB)
  - **Vernacular: Baptized or filled? (Baptism only used for the Acts 2 experience)**
    - **Same effect—different sequence -- initial (baptism) versus ongoing (filling)**

## Baptism with the Holy Spirit is not a reward—it is rather the gracious gift of the Father

- **Luke 24:49**, NASB
- If it is a gift then **it is free** and cannot be worked for, merited or deserved in any manner
  - Not received as a reward for hours of prayer, nor because of deep sacrifices made
  - Comes as a free gift of God's grace (the sacrifice has been made!)
- It is **the promise of the Loving Father**—it is not something we have to convince Him to give us
- We do not have to tarry long, sacrifice much, or plead hard... but we do need to seek by faith

## Baptism with the Holy Spirit is for you—it is not exclusive, hierarchical, or a mark of super spirituality

- On the contrary **all believers** are told to expect it (**Acts 2:38**, NASB)
- It is available immediately—not just for mature or super spiritual or accomplished (Cf. disciples—Peter's denial)
- The baptism with the HS is **not something to have**, but **something to help—to be used for Christ's glory**
- It is not the height of spiritual experience, but one of the **tremendously essential foundations** for further **development** and **faithful and fruitful** Christian living

Now, we are going to seek **The Promise of the Father** (Spirit Baptism)

- Not because we want or need to see some **experience**—but because we want to see Jesus exalted in our **existence**
- Not power for power's sake—but that we might be **faithful witnesses** to the **Power of the Resurrection** of Christ and the **Power of the Gospel** to save!

Maybe you just need a **fresh filling** (or you are not even sure—but God knows what you need)

You may be feeling **unsure** or **confused** or even **fearful**

- The Father can be trusted and knows what you need... come in earnest saying I want all that you have for me Father—nothing more and nothing less (He gives good gifts)
- He knows what we need and are asking for even when we do not
  - Not seeking anything outside Scripture (you may see it differently, but cannot deny need)

Lay hands on each other (prayer team too and staff and elders at front of stage)

- Some will speak in **tongues** and some will **prophesy** and some will see **visions** and some will **glorify God** and some will **just joyfully receive it by faith...**