

Be Baptised In The Holy Spirit

The first thing we need to know about the Holy Spirit, is that He is He, not an 'It'. He is one of the Godhead and Jesus referred to Him as 'He' and 'Him', never 'It'. "And I will ask the Father, and He will give you another Comforter, that He may remain with you forever. The Spirit of Truth, Whom the world cannot receive because it does not see Him or know Him; but you know Him, for He lives with you and will be in you." (John 14:16 & 17)

The Holy Spirit is sensitive and we are not to grieve Him or quench Him. The one and only sin that will never ever be forgiven, is blasphemy against the Holy Spirit. 'Do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God' (Ephesians 4:30). 'Do not quench [subdue or suppress] the Holy Spirit' (1 Thessalonians 5:19). "Whoever speaks against the Holy Spirit, the Holy One, will not be forgiven, either in this world, or in the world to come" (Matthew 12:32). "Whoever speaks against the Holy Spirit can never get forgiveness but is guilty of an everlasting sin" (Mark 3:29). "He who blasphemes against the Holy Spirit, it will not be forgiven him" (Luke 12:10).

'You receive the result of your faith; the salvation of your souls. The prophets, who prophesied of the grace which was intended for you, earnestly searched and inquired about this salvation. They sought to find out to whom or when this was to come, which the Spirit of Christ working within them, was indicating when He predicted the sufferings of Christ and the glory that should follow. It was then disclosed to them that the services they were rendering were not meant for themselves and their time, but for you. These things which have been made known plainly to you by those who have preached the Gospel to you, was by the same Holy Spirit sent from heaven. Into these things the very angels long to look!' (1 Peter 1:9 to 12)

We can see by this passage of scripture, there is the Spirit of Christ; the Son of God Who was working with the prophets long before He was born on earth; and there is also the Holy Spirit Who came down after Jesus was resurrected and ascended to heaven. 'I will send Him to you' (John 16:7). There is a clear distinction between the Spirit of Christ and the Holy Spirit. The Old Testament prophets spoke in the first person of events that never happened to them. King David wrote, 'They pierced my hands and my feet' and 'They parted my garments among them' (Psalm 22:16 & 18). David even quoted the exact last words that Jesus spoke on the cross. "My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?" "It is finished!" (Psalm 22:1 & 31). 'I gave my back to the smiters and My cheeks to those who plucked off my hair; I hid not My face from shame and spitting' (Isaiah 50:6).

Those things never happened to David or Isaiah. It would be very hard to understand, if God prompted us to write things like that down, when those events never happened to us. We would wonder what we were actually asked to write about, just as the prophets wondered what they were talking about. It was revealed to them, they were not speaking about themselves, but they were speaking to those who would follow later. It was the Spirit of Christ in them Who was speaking in the first Person. They were writing about things that were to happen to Jesus. Their faith must have been incredible. Think of Moses and the people who constructed the tabernacle and carried out all the ordinances of worship and sacrifice, year after year, never knowing what it was all about. That is a real example of obedience and faith. In 1 Peter 1:12, we see that the prophet's writings from the past, and the angels, are actually focussed on us. The prophets looked forward to what we now have, and the angels desire to look down into it. That makes the salvation we have in Christ, somewhat startling. It is part of the huge overall eternal plan, God has for mankind.

Now that we have seen the distinction between the Spirit of Christ and the Holy Spirit, we'll look at the distinction between baptism in water and baptism in the Holy Spirit. The word 'baptise' means to immerse. There are two ways of being immersed. One is to go down under the water, and up again, like in water baptism. The other is having water poured over us, drenching us as though we are standing under a waterfall. That is baptism in the Holy Spirit. Everywhere the Holy Spirit is mentioned in the Bible, it tells us He came down over the people from above and they were totally immersed. They were not sprinkled, but soaked, drenched, filled, overflowed; totally immersed.

All four Gospels teach us specifically, that Jesus will baptise us in the Holy Spirit. 'He will baptise you with the Holy Spirit and with fire' (Matthew 3:11). 'He will baptise you with the Holy Spirit' (Mark 1:8). 'He will baptise you with the Holy Spirit and with fire' (Luke 3:16). 'There is the Lamb of God ... this is the Son of God ... that One is He Who baptises with the Holy Spirit' (John 1:29, 33 & 34). This is the official introduction of Jesus by His forerunner, John the Baptist. Too little attention has been given to what John said. He said three things; Jesus is the Lamb of God; He is the Son of God and He is the one Who baptises with the Holy Spirit. Only once in the four Gospels, do we read the statement that Jesus is the Lamb of God, but in all four Gospels is it stated that Jesus is the baptiser with the Holy Spirit. It is one of the most important things we need to know about Him. It is wonderful to know Him as Saviour, to know Him as the Lamb of God, to know Him as the Son of God, but it is very important that we come to know Him individually as our Baptiser. Jesus baptises us.

After Jesus' resurrection, He was careful to repeat the promise with which John the Baptist had introduced Him in the start of His ministry. 'And while being in their company and eating at the table with them, Jesus commanded them not to leave Jerusalem but to wait for what the Father had promised, of which He said, "You have heard Me speak. For John baptised with water, but not many days from now, you shall be baptised with the Holy Spirit. You shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you shall be My witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria and to the ends of the earth"' (Acts 1:4, 5 & 8).

The fulfilment of this promise was recorded in Acts 2:1 to 4. 'And when the Day of Pentecost had fully come, they were all assembled together in one place when suddenly there came a sound from heaven like the rushing of a mighty wind, and it filled the whole house in which they were sitting. And there appeared to them tongues resembling fire, which settled on each one of them, and they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues as the Holy Spirit gave them their new language'. Read again in Matthew 3:11 and Luke 3:16 where John the Baptist said they would be baptised with the Holy Spirit and with fire. There are three successive phases to that experience. (1) It was a baptism, an infilling, a diffusing. The Holy Spirit immersed them. He came from above and filled the whole place where they were sitting. (2) Each person was individually filled with the Holy Spirit. It was not a collective experience. Each individual person had his personal share. (3) There was an overflow. A supernatural outflow from the infilling. Every individual spoke with other languages and tongues. Their hearts were filled and it overflowed out of their mouths. 'Out of the fullness of the heart [the overflow] the mouth speaks' (Matthew 12:34).

In every passage of scripture that speaks about people being filled with the Holy Spirit, the next thing they did was speak. Some prophesied, some spoke in tongues, but they all spoke. When our hearts are filled, it overflows through the mouth in speech and that is what happened on the Day of Pentecost. This is where God and man have to co-operate.

It is a 50-50 arrangement. We can't do it all and God won't do it all. God filled them, but they began to speak. The Holy Spirit didn't do the speaking, the people did the speaking but the Holy Spirit gave them the language.

The disciples had to wait in Jerusalem for ten days for the Holy Spirit to come, but after the Day of Pentecost, there is no record in the scriptures that anyone had to wait for the Holy Spirit. He had already been sent. After the disciples prayed for people, and they met God's conditions, they immediately received the Holy Spirit. We do not need to wait for the Holy Spirit. It is our own choice whether we receive Him or not, and when. If we ask, He will come to us and we will receive Him (Luke 11:13).

The Holy Spirit is a seal of God and He is a deposit or down payment of things to come. 'He Who establishes us with you in Christ and has anointed us, is God Who also sealed us and gave us the deposit of the Holy Spirit in our hearts' (2 Corinthians 1:21 & 22). 'You, who have heard the Word of Truth; the Gospel of your salvation and have believed on Him, were stamped with the seal of the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit is the deposit, guaranteeing our inheritance until the redemption of those who are God's possession – to the praise of His glory' (Ephesians 1:13 & 14).

The Holy Spirit is the Baptism which is both visible and audible; which is not something that happens inside of us that cannot be seen by others. He is Someone Who can be seen and heard. He is a seal and a deposit. If we can imagine a seal on a legal document that is imprinted in hot red wax; our seal is like that. We already belong to Jesus, but this publicly identifies us as belonging to Him. We are legally His property. He sets His public, stamped seal upon our foreheads (Ezekiel 9:4; Revelation 7:3; 9:4; 22:4). We are forever then, set apart by Him and for Him.

If the disciples were not immersed in Acts 2:4, it could not have been a baptism because a baptism is by full immersion. It is possible to be enveloped with the Holy Spirit, but never actually filled. Wherever we read about being filled with the Holy Spirit, the Bible says He came down over them from above. Every person there on the Day of Pentecost was immersed in the Presence of the Holy Spirit, and the whole house was filled. Once we have received the Holy Spirit, He is in us, He is also with us, around us, over us, in front of us, behind us, all over us. That is total immersion. If we live without this supernatural Presence in our lives, we are living below God's provision for us. When we live with the Holy Spirit, wherever we go, there should be His supernatural Presence in us and with us.

The New Testament only indicates one seal, or proof that the person has received the Holy Spirit and that is the gift of other tongues, as the Holy Spirit gives the language. It can be a language that is spoken on earth (Acts 2:6 to 12) or it can be a heavenly language of angels (1 Corinthians 13:1). The gift of tongues was the seal the apostles received in their own experience. It was the seal they accepted in others and they never asked for any other seal. We see this vividly in Acts 10:43 to 48 then 15:3, when the Jews didn't believe the Gospel was for anybody other than Jews. The Gentile people believed, were forgiven and immediately received the Holy Spirit. They had met God's conditions. The Jews were convinced the Gentiles were saved because they heard them speak with tongues. They didn't have any other evidence nor did they ask for any other evidence.

If we want proof we have been baptised in the Holy Spirit, we need to look at the experience of the apostles. In order to receive the Holy Spirit, you have to be a Christian and meet God's conditions. As we read in Luke 11:13, we need to ask our heavenly Father to give us the Holy Spirit. The gift of tongues is the proof we have received Him and as the

Spirit gives us the language, then we know we have been filled with Him. The New Testament does not offer us any other alternative. Having joy and being happy is not the seal of God. Anybody can feel happy. You don't have to be a Christian to feel happy, but you do have to be a Christian to receive the Holy Spirit. If we read Luke 24:52, we read that they had great joy, but they had not yet received the Holy Spirit.

We notice in Acts 10:46 & 47, these people were filled with the Holy Spirit and spoke with tongues before they were baptised in water. In Acts 11:15, the Holy Spirit came down upon them as He had done with the apostles and they all spoke with other tongues. The Holy Spirit is a gift, given impartially to all those who believe and who ask (Acts 11:12, 15 to 17). It is given in a single transaction and is not drawn out. You can't be half filled now and finish being filled later. You are either filled or you are not filled. The evidence of being filled with the Holy Spirit is the gift of tongues. If you can't speak with tongues, then you are not filled with the Holy Spirit because that is the proof of the infilling. There is no difference in being filled with the Holy Spirit, baptised in the Holy Spirit, immersed in the Holy Spirit, receiving the Holy Spirit or drinking of the Holy Spirit. They are all one and the same and all mean the same thing. The vocal proof of being filled, baptised, immersed, receiving or drinking of the Holy Spirit, is the gift of tongues.

When some people hear others speaking in a language they have never learned, and the speakers are becoming excited, it can put them off side. Some even become offended. Tongues can seem quite silly. In Acts 2:13, it says they thought the disciples were drunk. But read what the scripture says in Acts 2:15. It was only about 9 am, and Peter said they were not drunk but were acting in response to the promise spoken of by the prophet Joel. Here are two equal opposites. Being filled with the Holy Spirit is the will of the Lord. Sometimes Christians focus on the verse 'Don't get drunk with wine for that is debauchery' and forget it is equally wrong for Christians not to be filled with the Holy Spirit (Ephesians 5:18).

The result of being filled with the Holy Spirit is singing praises, making melody in our hearts to the Lord, giving thanks to God in every circumstance (Ephesians 5:19). Everywhere in the New Testament where it speaks of people being filled with the Holy Spirit, the first immediate expression of that comes out of their mouths. You'll speak about God, you'll sing to Him and you'll give thanks to Him. The people in the Bible became excited. They cried, they shouted, they clapped their hands, they groaned, they danced, they sang, they were enthusiastic. There is no substitute for enthusiasm. If you want people to believe in the Gospel of salvation, the best way to convince people is to be enthusiastic about what we have. We have the remedy for sin, sickness, hell and the fear of death. That should be enough to get excited, but we also have the Holy Spirit Who fills us with peace, joy, comfort, hope, guidance etc. That should be enough to have the living waters pour out of your mouth with great enthusiasm. 'May the God of Hope fill us with all joy and peace, in believing that we may overflow in hope, by the power of the Holy Spirit' (Romans 15:13).

In the New Testament there are two ways the Holy Spirit is administered. One way is directly from heaven. He just comes down and falls on people as He did on the day of Pentecost, as we have read earlier. The other way is by the laying on of hands by those who already have the Holy Spirit. The apostles were not satisfied with the fact these people had been wonderfully saved, they wanted the people to receive the Holy Spirit. 'Then the apostles laid their hands on them one by one, and they received the Holy Spirit' (Acts 8:17). Ananias laid his hands on Saul/Paul so Paul could be healed and receive the

Holy Spirit (Acts 9:17). Then later Paul laid his hands on people in Ephesus and they received the Holy Spirit (Acts 19:1 to 6).

So now we come to God's purposes and why we are given the wonderful gift of the Holy Spirit. We have seen He is a deposit and our seal showing the proof of our salvation. The purposes of being baptised in the Holy Spirit, is to bring us into the realm of the supernatural. It is the only realm in which the Gospel can be effectively proclaimed. Another purpose is to bring unity in the Spirit as one body, and so we can receive supernatural power from God to be His witnesses. These are the last recorded words of Jesus on earth. "You shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you and you shall be My witnesses in Jerusalem and all Judea and Samaria and to the ends of the earth." (Acts 1:8) This is where Jesus indicates the Gospel would go to the Gentiles who were at 'the ends of the earth'.

If anyone needed power to be God's witness, it was Simon Peter. When we read the four Gospels, we see that Peter was so afraid of being caught up with Jesus at the time of the crucifixion, Peter denied Jesus three times (Matthew 26:34, 74 & 75; Mark 14:30, 68 & 72; Luke 22:34, 60 & 61; John 13:38 & 18:27). After Peter was filled with the Holy Spirit, he had amazing power to preach with boldness (Acts 4:13), and the first time Peter ever preached the Gospel, 3,000 people were saved in one day (Acts 2:14 & 41). Soon afterwards, a further 5,000 people were saved (Acts 4:4). Peter healed the sick (Acts 3:6). The book of Acts are filled with miracles the Lord did through Peter's newfound courage, strength and faith. The disciples were not called apostles until after they had received the Holy Spirit.

The message of the Gospel is supernatural. Jesus was supernaturally born to an innocent young woman who had been spoken to by an angel; Jesus healed the sick and gave life to the dead; Jesus rose from the dead and spoke to people after He had died and had risen again. These are not natural events. If we are going to testify about supernatural events, we need supernatural power. We need power to have supernatural utterances from the Holy Spirit. 'Do not be anxious about what you are to say, but say whatever is given to you in that hour, for it is not you who will be speaking, but the Holy Spirit' (Mark 13:11). We need supernatural guidance, supernatural strength to endure persecution and overcome insurmountable difficulties. We all need an individual supernatural experience. Just having Biblical theology is not enough. We need to be empowered to show signs and wonders like the apostles did (Romans 15:19). Jesus said, "Heal the sick, raise the dead, cleanse the lepers, cast out evil spirits, freely without charge" (Matthew 10:8). Jesus never retracted that statement so we need to do what He told us to do. The first Person Who proclaimed the Gospel was Jesus and it was confirmed by the eyewitnesses and the signs and wonders He did.

There is another reason why we receive the baptism of the Holy Spirit. It is to produce unity in the body of Christ. The Holy Spirit never baptises people. Jesus baptises us. We are baptised with the Holy Spirit into the body of Christ. The purpose of the baptism with the Holy Spirit is to make us one, united body. 'For by one Holy Spirit we were baptised into one body, and all, whether Jews or Gentiles, slaves or free, made to drink of one Holy Spirit' (1 Corinthians 12:13). Three times in that verse, Paul uses the word 'one'. It doesn't matter what our race, colour, denomination, country or language, if we are baptised with the Holy Spirit, then we are part of the body of Christ and we are one. We need to live our lives that way and love our fellow believer. There is only one Holy Spirit and there is only one body of Christ. That was God's purpose.

This is a challenge to churches everywhere. The early church frequently manifested the signs, wonders and gifts of the Spirit, but the modern church is living way below the will of God. Most churches don't have deliverances from evil spirits; some don't have Holy Spirit worship; complete, divine healings are rare and in the western world, having people raised from the dead almost never happens. The sermons are usually very narcissistic, intellectual, dignified and sometimes the speaker quotes a few scriptures but in most churches, the emphasis is more on money than salvation of souls. Some people are getting saved and that is wonderful, but the spiritual growth of modern Christians is stunted to say the least. There is far too much division and animosity between some churches and between Christians who attend the same church! The modern church is not God's best and they usually quench the Holy Spirit. He simply cannot operate in some churches. In order for Jesus to come for His bride without 'spot and wrinkle', the church is going to have to change dramatically! Churches operate far short of the scriptural standards of the Bible, both in the level of holiness and the gifts of the Spirit. If we study the book of Acts, we see the miracles done by the apostles. How many churches today, regularly have those miracles? Very few! The excuse people use for the lack of miracles is usually, "God doesn't do miracles today like He used to." That is a cop-out. The reason the Lord can't do miracles today is lack of faith, lack of true worship, lack of spiritual maturity, lack of a disciplined prayer life, lack of holiness, too much unbelief, too much focus on the world, sport, finance and material possessions, too few people are prepared to speak out for righteousness, too few men in leadership are prepared to listen to those who do try to speak out, too few are really listening to what the Spirit is trying to say to the churches (Revelation chapters 2 & 3). We only have to read the New Testament to see the church in this age is grossly inadequate. Revival can't come until the church wakes up to its complacency and dullness of spirit!

So now, back to the intended text. There are seven easy steps to receiving the Holy Spirit. (1 & 2) 'Repent and be baptised, every one of you (Acts 2:38). (3) We need to know in our hearts, that we need the Holy Spirit so we can be effective witnesses. We need to desire a close relationship with the Lord, or in other words, we need to thirst for Him, knowing the only way, is to 'drink' of Him (John 4:14; 7:37). (4) We need to come to Jesus. If we want the baptism we need to come to the Baptiser (Matthew 3:11; Mark 1:8; Luke 3:16; John 1:33). (5) We need to ask (Luke 11:13). (6) We need to receive Him. 'Jesus breathed on them and said to them, "Receive the Holy Spirit"' (John 20:22). (7) We need to speak (Acts 2:4). When you are seeking baptism in the Holy Spirit, do not remain silent. Speak in an audible voice, and then the Holy Spirit will fill you and you will speak in a language you have never learned. When that happens, you will also be filled with unspeakable joy!

Amen and God bless you.

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