

Baptism in the Holy Spirit

Testimonies

Pip: I was 15 years old when I came to Christ. The church I went to was very good in teaching the word of God but did not believe that the baptism of the Spirit or the gifts of the Spirit were for today. Consequently I had no teaching on this from my local church. My brothers are both Anglican ministers, so when one of them came to visit our family, I asked them what this gift was all about. My brother explained it to me and then began to speak in tongues! I was hungry for God and thought that if this was a gift from God to empower us in our lives then I don't want to miss out! My brother invited me to their youth camp in the summer holidays and told me that on the Saturday night, the teaching would be about receiving the baptism of the Holy Spirit. He gave me a book to read and encouraged me to ask God for this gift.

The summer came and I joined the week-long camp. I was full of expectation for the Saturday night meeting. We sat and listened to teaching from the scriptures and were then encouraged to simply ask the Holy Spirit to come and fill us and give us our prayer language. I watched and saw my friends receiving so I simply asked the Lord to baptise me in his Spirit and I put my hands out in front of me to receive. All I can remember is being filled with such an incredible joy and love of God and I began to laugh. I opened my mouth to speak and words came out. I didn't know what I was saying but I trusted the Giver and kept receiving. I was filled with a deep assurance of God's love that I hadn't known before.

Sometime after my return home, I began to doubt that the gift of tongues was real and thought I was making it up. I stopped speaking in tongues and soon became dry in my faith. I found myself in a bit of a desert until the school term started. One day I was walking down the corridor at school and a friend who was in the year above me walked towards me. His face was beaming and I just knew that something had happened to him! We compared notes and he told me he had also received the baptism of the Holy Spirit over the summer. He encouraged me to use the few words I had and to trust the leading of the Holy Spirit not my intellect. I began to step out in faith and over time I found that in my personal times with the Lord, my worship would shift from English to an unknown tongue and back. It was as though when my words didn't seem enough to express how wonderful the Lord was, that the Holy Spirit gave me another language. I stopped looking inward and lifted Jesus up in my thinking and as I did so my spirit rose again in joy and faith in Him. Speaking in tongues has become a vital part of my faith.

Pete's experience was different. He was on his own when the Lord baptised him in the Spirit. He didn't receive the gift of tongues. In fact he didn't even know what the baptism in the Spirit or the gift of tongues was; he just wanted more of God and God met him. It wasn't until we were married and working in the USA that the leaders of a local church we went to asked us both if we were baptised in the Spirit and spoke in tongues. I said 'yes' and Pete said 'no'! It was a challenge to the leaders as this didn't fit their paradigm of how God works and it was a challenge to Pete in a good way, as he'd never asked for the gift of tongues. Needless to say the Lord answered his prayers and he received the gift of speaking in tongues and also began to understand the value of this gift of God for every believer.

Understanding this through scripture

When you became a Christian God sent His Spirit to live in you.

Baptism in the Holy Spirit

Acts 2:38

'Then Peter said to them, 'Repent and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.'

Ephesians 1:13-14

'In Him you also trusted after you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation, in whom also having believed you were sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise who is the guarantee of our inheritance.'

Yet the Bible also teaches about another blessing of the Holy Spirit for the believer. Receiving the Holy Spirit upon conversion and being baptized in the Holy Spirit are generally two separate and distinct experiences. This next verse outlines the first time the disciples received the Holy Spirit.

John 20:21-22

"So Jesus said to them again, "Peace to you! As the Father has sent me, I also send you." And when He had said this, He breathed on them, and said to them, "Receive the Holy Spirit."

Fifty days later they received the baptism of the Holy Spirit in the upper room.

Acts 2:1-4

'When the day of Pentecost had fully come they were all with one accord in one place. And suddenly there came a sound from heaven as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled the whole house where they were sitting. Then there appeared to them divided tongues as of fire, and one sat upon each of them. And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak with other tongues as the Spirit gave them utterance'.

How to receive the infilling or baptism in the Holy Spirit

The first thing to understand is that the baptism of the Holy Spirit is administered by Jesus.

Luke 3:16

"John answered, saying to all, "I indeed baptize you with water; but One mightier than I is coming, whose sandal strap I am not worthy to loose. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire."

Preparing your heart for receiving the Holy Spirit

Acts 1:8

'But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you and you shall be witnesses to Me in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth'

The baptism of the Holy Spirit, or 'being filled with the Holy Spirit,' is given as an empowerment for service. Yielding one's life and will to God afresh for his will and purpose is therefore a pre-requisite for the baptism of the Holy Spirit.

The baptism in the Holy Spirit is a gift received by faith.

Galatians 3:14

Baptism in the Holy Spirit

"...that the blessing of Abraham might come upon the Gentiles in Christ Jesus, that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith."

Hebrews 11:6

"But without faith it is impossible to please Him, for he who comes to God must believe that He is, and that He is a Rewarder of those who diligently seek Him."

We receive by asking

I John 5:14

"Now this is the confidence that we have in Him, that if we ask anything according to His will, He hears us. And if we know that He hears us, whatever we ask, we know that we have the petitions that we have asked of Him."

Luke 11:9-13

"So 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. If a son asks for bread from any father among you, will he give him a stone? Or if he asks for a fish, will he give him a serpent instead of a fish? Or if he asks for an egg, will he offer him a scorpion? 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!"

God the Father gave, (poured out) the Holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost once and for all. Therefore it is not a matter of God giving you the Holy Spirit, but rather you receiving what God made available. Now pray to receive the gift that God has already given to the believer.

Pray the prayer of faith:

You can use the following prayer to ask the Lord to baptise you in his Spirit...

"I thank you Lord that you shed your blood on Calvary's cross for my sins. I thank you that you have already given me your Spirit as a guarantee of my salvation. Yet now I ask that you fill me with your Holy Spirit so that I can do your will in the power that you give. I sincerely from my heart desire to serve you with my life, to live for your will and not my own. So I dedicate myself afresh to you. I ask you to baptize me in the Holy Spirit."

Speaking in Tongues

Acts 2:4

'And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance'

One of the gifts of being baptised in the Holy Spirit is being able to speak in another language that is specifically given to you by God. You will be using your vocal chords and lips and you will be speaking, but just as the disciples did on the day of Pentecost, the Holy Spirit will be giving you a new language in which to pray and praise God. Just open your mouth and speak but not using your mind. Speaking in tongues comes from your spirit. When you speak in tongues it is the Holy Spirit who takes control of your tongue and gives you a prayer

Baptism in the Holy Spirit

language for worship and praise to God. It is a step of faith to speak out. Expect the Holy Spirit to give you words that you do not naturally speak or understand. If you find yourself struggling to receive the gift of tongues, you may want to ask a believer who is filled with the Spirit, and who has received this gift, to spend some time praying with you.

Pip: I remember one occasion when I was walking along an unfamiliar road and I found myself speaking in tongues in a strong way. It wasn't a worshipping tongue but rather what you could call a tongue of authority. What I didn't know is that I was about to pass by a place of darkness where the occult was practiced. I found that very interesting; I didn't know that meeting place was there but the Lord did and his Spirit in my spirit began to worship to lift the name of Jesus up where it was not honoured. I learnt from that how the Lord fellowships with us in our worship and prayer and how speaking in tongues edifies and builds up our faith.

Jude :20

"But you beloved, building yourselves up on your most holy faith, praying in the Holy Spirit, keep yourselves in the love of God, looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life."

I Corinthians 14:2, 4

'He who speaks in a tongue does not speak to me but to God, for no one understands him; however in the spirit he speaks mysteries'... 'He who speaks in a tongue edifies himself...'