

Appendix 1

The Baptism in the Holy Spirit God Promises Us Power

Our world is obsessed with power. Massive machines can dig through mountains. Rocket engines cause the ground to shake as spacecraft lift skyward, achieving speeds sufficient to break the pull of earth's gravity. Nuclear warheads yield enough power to destroy entire cities. Car engines are built to deliver more and more horsepower. While much has been achieved through science and engineering, man's quest for power continues.

Power is an issue that relates not only to the physical world, but to the spiritual realm as well. While the purpose and use of spiritual power is much different than physical power, it is nonetheless crucial to accomplishing God's kingdom purposes in this world.

Before Jesus left earth to return to the Father in heaven, He commissioned His followers to "Go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you." Then He added, "And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age" (Matthew 28:19,20). Making disciples of all nations would be a monumental task, and Jesus knew that His followers would face many challenges and many obstacles in fulfilling this commission. Therefore, they would need a measure of power far beyond their own ability. Provision was made for that power; and it is still available today to every believer who is willing to receive it.

1. Jesus Promised to Send His Power.

A. Jesus said He would send the Holy Spirit to help His followers. (John 14:15-17; 16:7-11)

While on earth, Jesus taught the principles of the kingdom of God, healed the sick, cast out demons, and poured His life and teachings into His followers. A day would come, however, when He would no longer be with them physically. Yet His followers still would have the monumental task of carrying on His work throughout the world (Matthew 28:19,20). He would have to go away, returning to the Father, so He could send the Holy Spirit, who would convict the world of sin and guide all who would follow Christ into the great truth of His teachings.

B. Jesus told His disciples to wait for the promised gift of the Holy Spirit. (Luke 24:46-49; Acts 1:4,5)

Following His resurrection, Jesus helped His disciples' understand what had taken place and why. The task before them would be large, so they were to wait for the promised Holy Spirit until they had been "clothed with power from on high" (Luke 24:49). Just before

returning to the Father, Jesus told His disciples to wait in Jerusalem for the gift that God had promised. This gift continues today, and consists of real and essential spiritual power from God. We refer to that gift as the baptism in the Holy Spirit.

2. This Power Is for Everyone

A. Pentecost was promised long before New Testament times.

(Joel 2:28,29; Acts 2:16–21)

More than 800 years before Christ was born, the prophet Joel announced that in the last days God would send the Holy Spirit to be poured out on all people: sons, daughters, men, and women. No one would be excluded from the offer of receiving this power. In Acts 2, Peter quoted Joel's prophecy, explaining that the outpouring of the Holy Spirit had happened just as it was promised by the prophet.

B. The "last days" are a time when the Holy Spirit is intensely active in our world. (Mark 1:15; Luke 4:18–21; Hebrews 1:1,2)

The last days began with Christ's first coming, as He was born into this world, and will extend until He returns. This will be an ongoing period of an intense work of the Spirit through God's people to bring the lost into a relationship with Christ. Believers everywhere will do spiritual battle against the forces of wickedness in this world and be powerful witnesses of Christ's love, salvation, and redeeming grace. Therefore, intense spiritual power is needed among God's people throughout the Church.

C. The promised power of the Holy Spirit is for every believer of every generation. (Acts 2:39)

Peter explained to the crowd that the promised gift of power from the Holy Spirit was for them, their children, and for everyone who believes in Jesus Christ in every era and generation until Jesus returns.

3. How is Holy Spirit Baptism Related to Our Salvation?

A. Holy Spirit baptism is not required for salvation. (John 3:16; Romans 10:9)

Salvation is received through confession of sin and faith in Jesus' sacrifice on the cross for our sins. According to Scripture there is no further requirement for salvation beyond this.

B. The Holy Spirit convinces people of their need for salvation. (John 16:8–11)

When people who do not know Christ hear the truth of the gospel and sense an urgency to align with its teachings, they are experiencing the work of the Holy Spirit.

He draws people to Christ's love and salvation as truth is shared with them by Christians or revealed to them as they read Scripture.

C. Salvation is a prerequisite to receiving the baptism in the Holy Spirit. (Acts 2:38)

Peter challenged those listening to Him to “repent and be baptized.” Water baptism is a commonly understood sign that someone has recently become a follower of Christ. To receive Holy Spirit baptism, we must first seek forgiveness of sins and establish a relationship with Christ.

D. The Holy Spirit resides within us following salvation. (John 14:17)

When we begin a relationship with Christ, the Holy Spirit takes residence in our lives, guiding us into truth, warning us when we do wrong, and helping us grow in our walk with Him. We can sense His presence because, as John states, “he lives with you and will be in you.” Yet there is an even greater dimension of life in the Spirit through the gift of baptism in the Holy Spirit.

4. How Do We Receive the Baptism in the Holy Spirit?

A. It begins with sincere desire. (Acts 8:18–24)

The baptism in the Holy Spirit must not be regarded as some sort of “achievement” that allows us acceptance into a particular group of Christians or a church. It also should not be viewed as a spiritual option that can either be pursued or ignored. Neither should it be viewed as a spiritual enhancement, making us superior to others. Simon the sorcerer discovered the fallacy of wanting to receive the gift in order to impress others. Sincere desire for spiritual power to follow God's plan for our lives and ministries forms the proper motivation for this gift.

B. The recurring biblical sign of the baptism in the Holy Spirit is speaking in languages that you have not learned. (Acts 2:1–4; 10:45,46; 19:6)

While Acts 2 reveals two other signs—wind and tongues (or flames) of fire—speaking in tongues (foreign languages you have not learned) is the only sign of Holy Spirit baptism that is repeated in Scripture. Additionally, in 1 Corinthians 14:18, the apostle Paul testified to speaking in tongues frequently. Thus, speaking in tongues is described as the “initial physical evidence” of the baptism in the Holy Spirit.

C. Speaking in tongues indicates submission to the Holy Spirit, often arising during times of sincere prayer and praise. (Acts 1:12–14)

After Jesus ascended into heaven, His followers gathered in a place called the Upper Room in Jerusalem. There they came together for constant, faithful prayer. Their

example is important to us. As we fill our hearts with praise and adoration toward God, and sincerely desire the gift of the Holy Spirit, God will pour this gift into our lives in this dynamic way. Through it we are able to express praise to God and intercede for needs more fully and powerfully than what is possible in our own language.

5. What Is the Purpose of Holy Spirit Baptism?

A. Through this gift we receive power to witness. (Acts 1:8)

Speaking in tongues must not be regarded as the end purpose of the baptism in the Holy Spirit. It is only the initial, physical sign that a person has received the gift. Through this experience, believers are empowered to be more effective witnesses of Jesus Christ to others. Our witness is to be local, regional, national, and global—wherever we live or travel, we are called to tell others about Jesus. And the Holy Spirit empowers us to do just that.

B. Through this gift we receive supernatural boldness and enablement to witness for Christ through word and action. (Compare John 18:15–17,25–27 with Acts 2:14–16,36–39; see Acts 6:3; 7:55; 11:22–24)

During Jesus' trial prior to His crucifixion, Peter denied that he even knew Christ. On the Day of Pentecost, Peter boldly preached to a large audience, and 3,000 believers were added to the Church. In other passages in Acts, leaders are described as being “full of the Spirit and wisdom,” “full of the Holy Spirit,” “full of the Holy Spirit and faith.”

C. The baptism in the Holy Spirit is about winning the spiritually lost for Christ. (Luke 24:46–49; Acts 1:8; 2:42–47)

As Jesus met with His followers after His resurrection He emphasized that “repentance and forgiveness of sins” would be preached to all nations. Before that could happen, however, they were to wait for the promise of the Father and be “clothed with power from on high.” After Pentecost, Christ's followers were uniquely empowered to fulfill His mandate to reach the lost and multitudes began coming to Christ. This mandate remains to this day, as does the availability of the Holy Spirit's power to fulfill it.

If you have not yet done so, begin seeking the promised power of the Holy Spirit in your life. You will never be the same as you're empowered to make a powerful difference in peoples' lives wherever you are.