

The Baptism of the Holy Spirit

1. Introduction

- a. Some religious groups believe that the baptism of the Holy Spirit is evidenced by their speaking in tongues. This baptism of the Holy Spirit is seen by them as different than the initial receiving of the Holy Spirit of God. This baptism of the Holy Spirit is believed to embolden believers, give them the ability to speak in unknown tongues, and to live a more victorious life in Christ.
- b. Some questions to ask.
 - i. What exactly is the Baptism of the Holy Spirit?
 - ii. Is a Baptism of the Holy Spirit valid today?
 - iii. Does the expression “Baptism of the Holy Spirit” occur in the scriptures?
- c. In previous lessons we have seen the promise of the Holy Spirit in scriptures.
 - i. Joel 2:28-32
 - ii. Acts 2:14-ff --- Peter quotes Joel and affirms that the outpouring of the Spirit at Pentecost was a fulfillment of that promise.
- d. We have also seen the gift of the Holy Spirit promised to believers who obey the gospel.
 - i. Acts 2:28-39
 - ii. Acts 5:32

2. Does the expression “Baptism of the Holy Spirit” occur in the scriptures?

- a. No.
- b. An electronic search of the ESV found zero occurrences for each of the following searches:
 - i. “Baptism of the Holy Spirit”
 - ii. “Baptism of the Spirit”
 - iii. “Baptism in the Holy Spirit”
 - iv. “Baptism in the Spirit”
- c. Ephesians 4:3-6 - **4** There is one body and one Spirit—just as you were called to the one hope that belongs to your call— **5** one Lord, one faith, one baptism, **6** one God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all.
 - i. The unity of the Spirit involves only “one baptism”.
 - ii. The “one baptism” can only be that commanded by Christ.
 - 1. Matt. 28:19; Mark 16:16 – everyone in the world
 - 2. Acts 2:28; 22:16 – for the remission of sins
 - 3. Acts 8:35-38; 10:47-48 – a baptism in water

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4. Titus 3:5; John 3:5 – a washing of regeneration and renewal by the Spirit, in which we are born again by water and the Spirit.

3. When it comes to any “baptism” involving the Spirit, we find only these phrases:

- a. Matt. 3:11-12 - [11](#) “I baptize you with water for repentance, but he who is coming after me is mightier than I, whose sandals I am not worthy to carry. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire. [12](#) His winnowing fork is in his hand, and he will clear his threshing floor and gather his wheat into the barn, but the chaff he will burn with unquenchable fire.”
 - i. Here is a promise that one is coming who will baptize with the Holy Spirit and fire.
 - ii. It is given as a promise, not as a command.
 - iii. Fire may have one of four meanings:
 1. On the day of Pentecost, when the apostles received the promised Holy Spirit, there appeared on them cloven tongues like fire.
 2. Fire refers to afflictions and trials that they would endure.
 3. Fire refers to judgment, as is indicated in verse 12 where the chaff is burned with fire.
 4. Some would receive the Holy Spirit, but those who did not believe and obey would receive fire.
 5. I prefer a combination of #3 and #4 above.
- b. Mark 1:7-8 - [7](#) And he preached, saying, “After me comes he who is mightier than I, the strap of whose sandals I am not worthy to stoop down and untie. [8](#) I have baptized you with water, but he will baptize you with the Holy Spirit.”
 - i. This is Mark’s account of the same statement made by John in Matthew 3:11.
 - ii. Mark does not include fire.
- c. Luke 3:15-16 – [15](#) As the people were in expectation, and all were questioning in their hearts concerning John, whether he might be the Christ, [16](#) John answered them all, saying, “I baptize you with water, but he who is mightier than I is coming, the strap of whose sandals I am not worthy to untie. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire.”
 - i. See notes for Matthew 3:11-12.
- d. John 1:24-28 - [24](#) (Now they had been sent from the Pharisees.) [25](#) They asked him, “Then why are you baptizing, if you are neither the

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Christ, nor Elijah, nor the Prophet?” [26](#) John answered them, “I baptize with water, but among you stands one you do not know, [27](#) even he who comes after me, the strap of whose sandal I am not worthy to untie.” [28](#) These things took place in Bethany across the Jordan, where John was baptizing.

- i. John continues in verse 33 that this one baptizes with the Holy Spirit.
- e. John 1:32-34 - [32](#) And John bore witness: “I saw the Spirit descend from heaven like a dove, and it remained on him. [33](#) I myself did not know him, but he who sent me to baptize with water said to me, ‘He on whom you see the Spirit descend and remain, this is he who baptizes with the Holy Spirit.’ [34](#) And I have seen and have borne witness that this is the Son of God.”
- f. Acts 1:4-5 - [4](#) And while staying with them he ordered them not to depart from Jerusalem, but to wait for the promise of the Father, which, he said, “you heard from me; [5](#) for John baptized with water, but you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days from now.”
 - i. The fulfillment of the promise is not many days after Jesus ascended into heaven.
- g. Acts 11:15-18 - [15](#) As I began to speak, the Holy Spirit fell on them just as on us at the beginning. [16](#) And I remembered the word of the Lord, how he said, ‘John baptized with water, but you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit.’ [17](#) If then God gave the same gift to them as he gave to us when we believed in the Lord Jesus Christ, who was I that I could stand in God’s way?” [18](#) When they heard these things they fell silent. And they glorified God, saying, “Then to the Gentiles also God has granted repentance that leads to life.”
 - i. From the response to Peter’s report, the Jewish brethren were convinced that the gospel is for Gentiles also.
 - ii. The falling of the Holy Spirit upon the Gentiles is the convincing sign.
- h. 1 Cor. 12:12-13 - [12](#) For just as the body is one and has many members, and all the members of the body, though many, are one body, so it is with Christ. [13](#) For in one Spirit we were all baptized into one body—Jews or Greeks, slaves or free—and all were made to drink of one Spirit.
 - i. Paul is saying that by one Spirit (through the Spirit’s message) those who are baptized are led to be immersed into Christ for the remission of sins.

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- ii. It is never recorded that the Spirit directed or led a person to be baptized; the spoken word is what led persons to be baptized. However the “words” spoken by the apostles were given by the Spirit.

1.1 Cor. 2:12-13 - **12** Now we have received not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is from God, that we might understand the things freely given us by God. **13 And we impart this in words not taught by human wisdom but taught by the Spirit**, interpreting spiritual truths to those who are spiritual.

- iii. 1 Cor. 12:1-11 - **4** Now there are varieties of gifts, but the same Spirit; **5** and there are varieties of service, but the same Lord; ... **8** For to one is given through the Spirit the utterance of wisdom, and to another the utterance of knowledge according to the same Spirit, **9** to another faith by the same Spirit, to another gifts of healing by the one Spirit, **10** to another the working of miracles, to another prophecy, to another the ability to distinguish between spirits, to another various kinds of tongues, to another the interpretation of tongues. **11 All these are empowered by one and the same Spirit, who apportions to each one individually as he wills.**

1. Key elements of Paul's message

- a. There are different spiritual gifts, but they all were given by the same Spirit
- b. The same Spirit who taught the words of the message to the apostles
- c. This message the Corinthians obeyed,
- d. Upon obedience were put into one body,
- e. The one body is composed of individual members
- f. The individual members have different purposes and different gifts.
- g. These gifts are not assigned by man, but by the will of the Holy Spirit.

4. The phrase “Baptism of the Holy Spirit” is not used in scripture, but phrases connected to the promise of Jesus baptizing with the Spirit include:

- a. Luke 24:44-49 - **44** Then he said to them, “These are my words that I spoke to you while I was still with you, that everything written about me in the Law of Moses and the Prophets and the Psalms must be fulfilled.” **45** Then he opened their minds to understand the Scriptures,

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[46](#) and said to them, “Thus it is written, that the Christ should suffer and on the third day rise from the dead, [47](#) and that repentance and forgiveness of sins should be proclaimed in his name to all nations, beginning from Jerusalem. [48](#) You are witnesses of these things. [49](#) And behold, **I am sending the promise of my Father upon you.** But stay in the city until you are clothed with power from on high.”

- i. Acts 1:4-5 - 4 And while staying with them he ordered them not to depart from Jerusalem, but to wait for the promise of the Father, which, he said, “you heard from me; 5 for John baptized with water, but you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days from now.”
- ii. The promise(s) of the Father are those that Jesus made in John 14, 15, and 16.
- iii. The instructions of Jesus are to wait for the promise in Jerusalem.
- b. Acts 2:17-18 - [17](#) ““And in the last days it shall be, God declares, that **I will pour out my Spirit on all flesh**, and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams; [18](#) even on my male servants and female servants in those days **I will pour out my Spirit**, and they shall prophesy.
 - i. When the promise came, Peter says that it is the fulfillment of what Joel prophesied in Joel 2:28-32.
- c. Acts 2:33 - [33](#) Being therefore exalted at the right hand of God, and having received from the Father the promise of the Holy Spirit, **he has poured out this** that you yourselves are seeing and hearing.
 - i. The crowd on Pentecost witnessed the promised outpouring of the Holy Spirit.
- d. Acts 10:44-45 - [44](#) While Peter was still saying these things, the Holy Spirit fell on all who heard the word. [45](#) And the believers from among the circumcised who had come with Peter were amazed, because **the gift of the Holy Spirit was poured out even on the Gentiles.**
 - i. Peter states that the same outpouring of the Spirit on Pentecost is happening again to the Gentiles.
- e. Titus 3:4-7 - [4](#) But when the goodness and loving kindness of God our Savior appeared, [5](#) he saved us, not because of works done by us in righteousness, but according to his own mercy, by the washing of regeneration and renewal of the Holy Spirit, [6](#) **whom he poured out on us richly through Jesus Christ our Savior**, [7](#) so that being

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justified by his grace we might become heirs according to the hope of eternal life.

- i. Paul's writing to Titus in these verses contain an outpouring of a different nature.
 1. Washing of regeneration – new birth
 2. Renewal of the Holy Spirit – the gift promised to those who were baptized on the day of Pentecost.
 3. It is done through Jesus Christ our Savior.

5. Who would administer Holy Spirit Baptism?

- a. In Acts 2, there was no human cause for the apostles to be filled with the Holy Spirit; It came from God as promised by Jesus.
- b. In Acts 2, the multitude was able to understand in their own language
- c. In Acts 10, Cornelius and his household received the Holy Spirit while Peter was speaking; there was no human cause.
- d. In 1 Corinthians 12, various gifts are given as the Holy Spirit wills, with no human cause.
- e. There is no case found where the outpouring of the Spirit results from human intervention.
- f. The conclusion based upon the promise stated by John the Baptist is that Jesus Christ is the cause of the outpouring of the Spirit.
 - i. This promise has been previously cited from Matt. 3:11-12, Mark 1:7-8, Luke 3:15-16, and John 1:24-34.

6. Commonly-held Views of the “Baptism of the Spirit”

- a. An event that occurred only a few times
 - i. On the day of Pentecost (Acts 2)
 1. Only upon the apostles
 2. For the purpose of equipping them for their work
 - ii. At the conversion of Cornelius and his household (Acts 10, 11)
 1. Not for the purpose of saving them
 2. But to show Peter and the Jewish brethren that Gentiles could also be saved
 3. Some use the term “Gentile Pentecost”
 - iii. Some would add a third occurrence, involving Saul of Tarsus at some time (Acts 9, Gal 1)
 1. Saul received the gospel through a revelation of Jesus Christ.
 2. To equip him for his work as an apostle
 - iv. Others would add what happened in Samaria and Ephesus (Acts 8, 19)

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1. When the Samaritans received the Spirit by the laying on of the hands of the apostles
 - a. Notice that they paid attention to Philip, believed, and were baptized before the apostles came.
2. When the disciples of John at Ephesus received the Spirit by the laying on of Paul's hands.
 - a. Also after they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus
 - v. *This view equates the "baptism" of the Spirit with the miraculous manifestations recorded in the passages cited, indicating an overwhelming measure of the Spirit*
- b. An event that occurs at every conversion
 - i. One group asserts the view that when a person is saved, they are, at that moment, "baptized with the Holy Spirit".
 1. Some assert that this occurs at the moment of faith, appealing to the case of Cornelius and his family.
 - a. Acts 10:44-48 – [44](#) While Peter was still saying these things, the Holy Spirit fell on all who heard the word. [45](#) And the believers from among the circumcised who had come with Peter were amazed, because the gift of the Holy Spirit was poured out even on the Gentiles. [46](#) For they were hearing them speaking in tongues and extolling God. Then Peter declared, [47](#) "Can anyone withhold water for baptizing these people, who have received the Holy Spirit just as we have?" [48](#) And he commanded them to be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ. Then they asked him to remain for some days
 - i. Peter had only begun to speak the words by which Cornelius and his household would be saved (Acts 10:22, 33, 48; 11:13-14).
 - ii. Peter and the Jewish brethren were amazed and convinced that the gospel was for Gentiles also.
 - b. Acts 11:12-15 – [12](#) And the Spirit told me to go with them, making no distinction. These six brothers also accompanied me, and we entered the man's house. [13](#) And he told us how he had seen the angel stand in his house and say, 'Send to

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Joppa and bring Simon who is called Peter; [14](#) he will declare to you a message by which you will be saved, you and all your household.’ [15](#) As I began to speak, the Holy Spirit fell on them just as on us at the beginning.

- i. The Spirit came upon them as Peter began to speak.
 - c. Acts 15:7-9 - [7](#) And after there had been much debate, Peter stood up and said to them, “Brothers, you know that in the early days God made a choice among you, that by my mouth the Gentiles should hear the word of the gospel and believe. [8](#) And God, who knows the heart, bore witness to them, by giving them the Holy Spirit just as he did to us, [9](#) and he made no distinction between us and them, having cleansed their hearts by faith.
 - d. The purpose was to show Peter and the Jewish brethren that to the Gentiles also God has granted repentance that leads to life.
- ii. A second group asserts that at the point of immersion in water the “baptism of the Holy Spirit” occurs.
 1. This suggests a simultaneous baptism in both water and Spirit (John 3:5).
 2. The washing of regeneration and renewal by the Spirit is also cited to occur simultaneously (Titus 3:5).
 3. 1 Cor. 12:13 cited in support of this idea.
 - a. [13](#) For in one Spirit we were all baptized into one body—Jews or Greeks, slaves or free—and all were made to drink of one Spirit.
 4. This view holds that no miraculous manifestation need be present when baptized in the Spirit.
- c. An Event That Occurs After Conversion
 - i. This view asserts that a “second work of grace” must be sought diligently after conversion.
 1. It asserts that the Spirit came upon the entire 120.
 - a. Acts 1:15 - [15](#) In those days Peter stood up among the brothers (the company of persons was in all about 120) and said, ...

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2. It asserts that the Samaritans, upon whom Peter and John laid hands, were seeking an extraordinary measure of the spirit after their conversion.
3. It asserts that the disciples of John at Ephesus, upon whom Paul laid hands, were seeking an extraordinary measure of the spirit after their conversion.
4. However, the case of Cornelius and his household runs contrary to the idea of a “second work of grace”.
 - ii. Many say that speaking in tongues is a sign of this “baptism of the spirit”, even to the point of saying it is necessary to truly be saved.
 - iii. This view equates “baptism of the Spirit” with miraculous signs.
 - iv. 1 Cor. 12:11 states that such miraculous gift come at the will of the Holy Spirit rather than by being sought by man.

7. Conclusion

- a. Among the things covered in this lesson are:
 - i. Neither the expression “baptism of the Holy Spirit” nor a similar equivalent is found in a search of the scriptures.
 - ii. Baptism involving the Holy Spirit was promised by John to be administered by Jesus Christ.
 - iii. Miraculous gifts of the Spirit are not given to every believer, and are not the expected outcome of obedience to the gospel.
 - iv. Miraculous gifts of the Holy Spirit were given at the will of the Holy Spirit, with no case being found in which human intervention might be the cause.
 - v. Claims that miraculous gifts of the Spirit, such as speaking in tongues, are essential to salvation cannot be substantiated from scripture.
 - vi. The fulfilled promise of the outpouring of the Holy Spirit has lasting benefits for all who believe, not just the few who witnessed miraculous gifts.
 1. The revelation of the gospel to the apostles
 2. The remembrance and teaching of the gospel by the apostles
 3. The regeneration and renewal of all at baptism
- b. Therefore, let us all seek to be led by and bear the fruit of the Spirit whom God has given to us.
- c. Being **filled with the Spirit** must be distinguished from being baptized with the Spirit. The apostle Paul carefully defines the

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baptism with the Spirit as that act of Christ by which He places believers into His body ([Rom. 6:4–6](#); [1 Cor. 12:13](#); [Gal. 3:27](#)). In contrast to much errant teaching today, the New Testament nowhere commands believers to seek the baptism with the Spirit. It is a sovereign, single, unrepeatable act on God's part, and is no more an experience than are its companions - justification and adoption.

- d. Although some wrongly view the baptism with the Spirit as the initiation into the ranks of the spiritual elite, nothing could be further from the truth. The purpose of the baptism with the Spirit is not to divide the body of Christ, but to unify it. As Paul wrote to the Corinthians, through the baptism with the Spirit “we were all baptized into one body” ([1 Cor. 12:13](#); cf. [Gal. 3:26–27](#); [Eph. 4:4–6](#)).
- e. Unlike the baptism with the Spirit, being filled with the Spirit is an experience and should be continuous. Although filled initially on the Day of Pentecost, Peter was filled again in [Acts 4:8](#). Many of the same people filled with the Spirit in Acts 2 were filled again in [Acts 4:31](#). [Acts 6:5](#) describes Stephen as a man “full of faith and the Holy Spirit,” yet [Acts 7:55](#) records his being filled again. Paul was filled with the Spirit in [Acts 9:17](#) and again in [Acts 13:9](#).
- f. While there is no command in Scripture to be baptized with the Spirit, believers are commanded to be filled with the Spirit ([Eph. 5:18](#)). The grammatical construction of that passage indicates believers are to be continuously being filled with the Spirit. Those who would be filled with the Spirit must first empty themselves. That involves confession of sin and dying to selfishness and self-will. To be filled with the Spirit is to consciously practice the presence of the Lord Jesus Christ and to have a mind saturated with the Word of God. [Colossians 3:16–25](#) delineates the results of “letting the word of Christ richly dwell” in us. They are the same ones that result from the filling of the Spirit ([Eph. 5:19–33](#)). As believers yield the moment by moment decisions of life to His control, they “walk by the Spirit” ([Gal. 5:16](#)).