

Chapter 3

HOLY SPIRIT 2

BAPTISM IN THE HOLY SPIRIT

- I. In the previous lesson we discussed the Three-Fold Ministry of the Holy Spirit to the believer. The Holy Spirit is **WITH US** to guide us to Christ, **WITHIN US** to give us new life in Christ, and desires to come **UPON US** to empower us to serve God's purpose and live the Christian life. The experience in which the Holy Spirit begins to come **UPON US** is often referred to as being Filled with or Baptized in the Holy Spirit.
 - A. Jesus, John the Baptist, and Peter all referred to the experience of being filled or baptized in the Holy Spirit. We use the term "Baptism in the Holy Spirit" because John the Baptist said of Jesus that *"..He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and with fire."* This experience is referred to as Baptism In..., Of..., or With the Holy Spirit. It is called a baptism because for many people it is an experience of being completely overwhelmed by or "immersed in" God's Spirit. (Matthew 3:11; Acts 1:5; Acts 11:15-16)
 - B. This experience can also be referred to as being "filled with the Spirit," being "sealed with the Spirit," and "the gift of the Holy Spirit." We can feel free to use any of these biblical terms to refer to Baptism in the Holy Spirit. The important thing is that we do not become distracted or confused by the technical term we apply to this important work of God's Holy Spirit and therefore miss the reality and blessing of receiving all that God has for us as believers. (Acts 2:1-4; Acts 2:38; Ephesians 1:13)
 - C. Here are some of the instances recorded in the Book of Acts where believers were filled with the Holy Spirit:
 1. On the day of Pentecost, all the waiting believers (120 people - Acts 1:15) were filled or baptized in the Holy Spirit. On this occasion there were outward manifestations which included sound (Like the blowing of a violent wind) and sight (They saw what seemed to be tongues of fire that separated and came to rest on each of them.) They each experienced being filled with the Holy Spirit and they all had the experience of speaking in tongues or languages they had not learned and did not know. (Acts 2:1-4)
 2. When Peter and John were brought before the Jewish rulers for preaching in the name of Jesus, Peter was filled with the Holy Spirit when he began to answer the charges against them. The Holy Spirit gave Peter and John courage and empowered Peter to speak profound truth. (Acts 4:8)
 3. After Peter and John were released from jail and returned to meet with the church, they prayed together with the other disciples and again the power of God was displayed in shaking the meeting place and all the disciples who had gathered were filled with the Holy Spirit and with courage. (Acts 4:31)

4. When it was time to choose deacons to oversee the administrative affairs of the church one of the requirements for deacons was that they be known to be full of the Holy Spirit. (Acts 6:3)
5. Stephen, who was chosen as one of the first deacons was full of the Holy Spirit. However, when he was about to be martyred for his testimony of Jesus, he was filled with the Holy Spirit and had the experience of seeing Jesus waiting to receive him into the presence of God. (Acts 6:5; Acts 7:55)
6. Saul of Tarsus was filled with the Holy Spirit after his conversion to faith in Jesus Christ when Ananias laid his hands on him. Some years later he was filled with the Holy Spirit while confronting a sorcerer in Cyprus. (Acts 9:17; Acts 13:9)
7. Acts 10:44-46 tells of Gentile believers being baptized in the Holy Spirit at the house of Cornelius and Acts 19:1-7 tells of a group of Ephesian believers being baptized in the Holy Spirit many years later.

II. The New Testament has much to say about the purpose of Holy Spirit Baptism. Some of the benefits and blessings of being baptized or filled with the Holy Spirit are:

- A. We receive the power and authority to witness and minister to others. (Acts 1:8)
- B. We receive inspiration for true worship. (John 4:24; Philippians 3:3)
- C. We experience power in prayer. (Romans 8:26-27)
- D. Our minds and hearts are opened to a greater understanding of the Scripture. (1 Corinthians 2:12; John 16:13)
- E. We have access to guidance and direction from God. (Acts 13:2; Mark 13:11; Acts 1:2)
- F. We may receive spiritual gifts and the ability to use them in service to God's purpose and to other people. (Acts 1:8; 1 Corinthians 1:5-7; 1 Corinthians 14:1)
- G. We are enabled to develop the fruits of the Spirit in our lives. (Galatians 5:16-25)
- H. We may receive a spiritual language, also called speaking in tongues, with which to pray, give praise to God, and edify or build ourselves up spiritually. (Acts 2:4; 1 Corinthians 14:2-4, 14-15; Jude 20)

III. Who can receive the Baptism in the Holy Spirit? Is this experience limited to only certain people who are more spiritual than others or who are especially favored by God?

- A. All believers can receive the Baptism in the Holy Spirit. Throughout the book of Acts we find accounts of individuals and groups of people who received the Baptism in the Holy Spirit at different points or stages in their Christian experience. (Acts 2:38-39)
 1. On the day of Pentecost, the Holy Spirit was sovereignly poured out on the waiting believers. (Acts 2:1-4)

2. The believers in Samaria had believed in Jesus, had been baptized in water, and then they later received the Baptism in the Holy Spirit when Peter and John laid their hands on them. (Acts 8:14-17)
 3. Saul of Tarsus received the Baptism in the Holy Spirit three days after his conversion and then was immediately baptized in water. (Acts 9:17-18)
 4. The Gentiles at Cornelius' house received the Baptism in the Holy Spirit while Peter was preaching to them and then were baptized in water. (Acts 10:47-48)
 5. The Ephesian believers were baptized in water and after Paul laid his hands on them they received the Baptism in the Holy Spirit. (Acts 19:5-6)
- B. Not everyone experiences the same kind of feelings or outward manifestations upon being baptized in the Holy Spirit or being filled with the Holy Spirit. For some people it is a profound experience that involves falling to the ground or shaking and trembling. For some people it may involve laughter or tears. Others may feel a kind of warmth or a feeling of great peace and joy. We should not judge our experience by that of others or judge others' experience by our own. Many or even most people may experience speaking in tongues or praising God in a language they haven't learned.
- C. One does not have to be "Baptized in the Holy Spirit" or speak in tongues to be born again or saved. In fact, one cannot receive the Baptism in the Holy Spirit until one has been born again or saved. Any doctrine that says one must speak in tongues to be a Christian is divisive and cannot be supported by the letter or spirit of scripture.
- D. While the Baptism in the Holy Spirit is a one-time experience for each believer, one can be "filled with the Spirit" on many occasions. We may see the Baptism in the Holy Spirit as an introduction into a new realm of spiritual experience. After we have received the fullness of the Holy Spirit, we may be "filled with the Spirit" in times of testing, in times of great need, in times of opportunity for ministry, and in times of joy and rejoicing.
- E. Much of the misunderstanding and disagreement among believers concerning the work of the Holy Spirit involves attempting to make an academic science out of a spiritual experience. The Baptism in the Holy Spirit is to be believed and received, not analyzed and dissected.
- IV. Not every Christian believer has received the Baptism in the Holy Spirit. In the case of the Ephesian believers in Acts 19:1-7, they had not even heard that there was a Holy Spirit. When they understood the blessing that could be theirs through the fullness of the Holy Spirit, they eagerly received Him and were Baptized or filled with the Holy Spirit. Here are some practical insights on how to receive the Baptism in the Holy Spirit:
- A. We must first come to a place of faith in order to receive the Gift of the Holy Spirit or Baptism in the Holy Spirit. One must be a believer who has repented of sin, confessed that sin to God, and received forgiveness and cleansing from sin by the blood of Jesus Christ. Peter instructed the believers on the day of Pentecost to repent and be baptized. People receive the Baptism in the Holy Spirit before, after, or even during water baptism. (Luke 11:13; Acts 2:38-39; Acts 9:17)

- B. Jesus instructed His disciples to ask for the Holy Spirit. If we desire to receive the Baptism in the Holy Spirit, we should ask our heavenly Father to Baptize or fill us with the Holy Spirit. (Luke 11:13)
 - C. We then receive by faith that which we have asked for and God has promised to us. (Matthew 21:22; Mark 11:24; John 20:22)
 - D. Whatever pattern we are following to receive the Holy Spirit we must allow God to be God. Sometimes God sovereignly pours out His Spirit on people. This can happen when they are hearing God's word preached, when they are praying, or during times of praise and worship. When God chooses to act sovereignly, we should rejoice with those He so blesses. (Acts 2:2-4; Acts 10:44)
 - E. The Holy Spirit can be received through the laying on of hands. In cases where believers are having difficulty in receiving the Baptism in the Holy Spirit, usually because of confusion due to wrong teaching or because they have no scriptural knowledge concerning the Holy Spirit, the gift of the Holy Spirit can be imparted through the laying on of hands of others who are appropriately gifted. (Acts 8:14-19; Acts 9:17-18; Acts 19:6)
- V. What about Speaking in Tongues? How is Speaking in Tongues related to the Baptism in the Holy Spirit? Are they the same thing? Does everyone who is baptized in the Holy Spirit speak in tongues?
- A. Speaking in Tongues is a sign of having received the gift of the Holy Spirit. In each instance in the book of Acts where a sign or evidence is mentioned, speaking in tongues is mentioned. (Acts 2:4; Acts 10:44,46; Acts 19:6)
 - B. Speaking in Tongues can be an on-going experience in the life of the spirit-filled believer. It is not intended to be only a one-time ecstatic experience, but can be a spiritual exercise that one practices regularly. (1 Corinthians 14:18)
 - C. Speaking in tongues can be used for prayer and worship in the spirit. Paul says that when a spirit-filled believer prays or praises God in tongues that he or she is speaking mysteries that only God and the Spirit understand. (1 Corinthians 14:14-17)
 - D. Speaking in tongues or praying in the spirit is a means of personal edification and upbuilding. Jude exhorts the believers to continually use this means of building themselves up in faith and in spirit. (1 Corinthians 14:4; Jude 20)
 - E. When a person is speaking in tongues as an exercise of private devotion, prayer, or praise, Paul says that he or she is speaking to God and not to other people. When Speaking in tongues is used in open meeting, there should be accompanying interpretation so that all can benefit from the message. (1 Corinthians 14:2; 1 Corinthians 14:27-28)

QUESTIONS FOR STUDY AND DISCUSSION

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1. How would you explain the Baptism in the Holy Spirit to someone who has just become a Christian believer? How would you explain the Baptism in the Holy Spirit to someone who has been a Christian for some time but has never experienced being filled with the Holy Spirit? Do you think it is more difficult for people to receive the Baptism in the Holy Spirit if they have been taught wrongly about it or if they have never heard of the Baptism in the Holy Spirit?
2. How would you explain the role or purpose of Speaking in Tongues to someone who is interested in receiving the Baptism in the Holy Spirit? How would you help someone prepare to receive the Baptism in the Holy Spirit? What would you do to lead a person into this experience?