

BIBLE STUDY

The Baptism of the Holy Spirit

The New Covenant

The New Covenant is the Covenant of the outpouring, indwelling, and ministry of the Holy Spirit in a new spiritual creation, the born-again believer. It is the covenant of the Holy Spirit. **He has made us competent as ministers of a new covenant - not of the letter but of the Spirit. For the letter kills, but the Spirit gives life. (2 Corinthians 3:6)** God solemnly announced that he would pour out his spirit on all flesh. The consequence of men and women filled with the Holy Spirit is that they prophesy. **And it shall come to pass afterward that I will pour out my spirit on all flesh. Your sons and your daughters shall prophesy. (Joel 2:28)**

The indwelling of the Holy Spirit was not possible under the Old Covenant because people could not be born again. They lived before the cross where Jesus paid for our sins and removed them. God had to create new spiritual people first. That is precisely what happens in the new birth. **Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. Old things have passed away. Behold, all things have become new. (2 Corinthians 5:17)** In the new birth, we pass from darkness to light¹ and from sinner to saint². We receive a new spiritual nature. We become the righteousness of God in Christ Jesus. **For he made him who knew no sin to be sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in him. (2 Corinthians 5:21)** We receive a new spiritual vessel, the new inner man, which qualifies us to receive the infilling of the Holy Spirit.

The essence of the New Covenant is that God pours out his Holy Spirit on new righteous people and lives in them (indwells them). The Holy Spirit will then start to minister to and through the believer - if we yield to him. The inner working of the Holy Spirit is the work of transformation and sanctification. The outer work of the Holy Spirit is ministry towards others. Because of the indwelling of the Holy Spirit, men and women will prophesy. They will speak and act under the direction of the Holy Spirit who lives in and manifests through them.

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John the Baptist announced Jesus as the Baptizer with the Holy Spirit and fire: **"As for me, I baptize you with water; but one is coming who is mightier than I He will baptize you**

1) **For he rescued us from the domain of darkness, and transferred us to the kingdom of his beloved son. (Colossians 1:13)**

2) **... and many of the saints I shut up in prison ... (Acts 26:10)**

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with the Holy Spirit and fire." (Luke 3:16) Baptizing new believers with the Holy Spirit is an integral part of who Jesus is and what he came to do under the New Covenant.

The baptism of the Holy Spirit is a promise of the Father (Joel 2:28) and a command. Jesus instructed his disciples not to leave Jerusalem until they had received the baptism of the Holy Spirit: "I am going to send you what my Father has promised; but stay in the city until you have been clothed with power from on high." (Luke 24:49); "Do not leave Jerusalem, but wait for the gift my Father promised, which you have heard me speak about." (Acts 1:4)

That promise came on the men and women at Pentecost. All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues as the Spirit enabled them. (Acts 2:4) This was the first fulfillment of Joel 2:28: ... this is what was spoken by the prophet Joel. In the last days, God says, I will pour out my Spirit on all people (Acts 2:16+17) Peter makes it clear that the baptism of the Holy Spirit is for all believers in all coming generations: "... you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. The promise is for you and your children and for all who are far off - for all whom the Lord our God will call." (Acts 2:38+39)

The baptism of the Holy Spirit gives the disciple power for ministry. Without that power, the believer cannot do the works of Jesus. Jesus said, "But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth." (Acts 1:8) The Greek word for power here is *dunamis* (STRONGS G1411). It means: miraculous power, usually by implication a miracle itself, ability, abundance, meaning, might, mighty deed, worker of miracles, power, strength, violence, mighty wonderful work.

It is this divine power that enables the believer to obey the command of Jesus: "And as you go, preach, saying, 'The Kingdom of Heaven is at hand.' Heal the sick, raise the dead, cleanse the lepers, cast out demons. Freely you received, freely give." (Matthew 10:7+8) And with great power (*dunamis*) the apostles were giving testimony to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus, and abundant grace was upon them all. (Acts 4:33) The *dunamis* power the apostles operated in is the power of the Holy Spirit. It is the exact same power (*dunamis*) that Jesus walked in: ... how God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and with power (*dunamis*) - who went about doing good and healing all who were oppressed by the devil, for God was with him. (Acts 10:38) It is the exact same Holy Spirit that Jesus was anointed with. This anointing and power of the Holy Spirit comes into the Christian believer when he or she gets baptized (immersed) into the Holy Spirit.

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The New Birth and the Baptism of the Holy Spirit

The new birth, water baptism, and Holy Spirit baptism are three separate experiences. The baptism of the Holy Spirit can but does not automatically happen at the time of the new birth. The following two independent accounts from Samaria and Ephesus make clear that when a person is born again, they do not automatically receive the baptism of the Holy Spirit:

Now when the apostles in Jerusalem heard that **Samaria had received the word of God, they sent them Peter and John who came down and prayed for them that they might receive the Holy Spirit. For he had not yet fallen on any of them;** they had simply been (water) baptized in the name of Jesus Christ. Then they began laying their hands on them, and they were receiving the Holy Spirit. (Acts 8:14-17)

Paul passed through the upper country, came to Ephesus, and **found some disciples.** He said to them, "**Did you receive the Holy Spirit when you believed?**" And they said to him, "**On the contrary, we have not even heard if there is a Holy Spirit.**" ... And when Paul had laid hands upon them, the Holy Spirit came on them, and they began speaking with tongues and prophesying. (Acts 19:1,2+6)

The baptism of the Holy Spirit is of utmost importance. It is a promise, a gift, and a command for every believer. The apostles Paul, Peter, and John **verified** whether the new converts had received it. If not, the apostles laid hands on the new believers, and Jesus baptized them in the Holy Spirit.

Jesus taught about the new birth and the baptism of the Holy Spirit. He told his disciples about two different experiences. They received the Holy Spirit in one instance and received him again later for a second time. When Jesus appeared to them after his resurrection, he breathed on them and said, "**Receive the Holy Spirit.**" (John 20:22) This was the moment of their new birth. They could not be born again before Jesus died for their sins and rose again. It is impossible to receive a new nature without the removal of the old sinful nature which happened at the cross. This is the reason why Jesus said that the least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than John the Baptist (Matthew 11:11). John the Baptist could not be born again because he was murdered before the cross. When Jesus breathed on the disciples, they instantly received the Holy Spirit for salvation.

However, Jesus still commanded them to wait in Jerusalem until the Holy Spirit came on them again, "**Do not leave Jerusalem, but wait for the gift my Father promised, which you**

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have heard me speak about." (Acts 1:4) The gift the Father promised in Joel 2:28-29 is the outpouring of the Holy Spirit on all believers. Jesus himself called it the baptism of the Holy Spirit, "For John baptized with water, but **you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days from now.**" (Acts 1:5) With this baptism, the disciples received power, "**But you will receive power³ when the Holy Spirit comes on you.**" (Acts 1:8) After already having received the Holy Spirit in the new birth, Jesus now commands them to wait until they have received the Holy Spirit a second time. This second time, they were to receive the infilling (or baptism) of the Holy Spirit, the promise of the Father.

The Holy Spirit is a person. He is God and co-equal with the Father and the Son Jesus Christ. He cannot be split into parts, but he does fulfill different functions in the life of the believer. In the new birth, the believer receives the Holy Spirit for the very first time. He or she receives a new spiritual vase, a new cup, a new spiritual vessel that has the very nature of God. In the baptism of the Holy Spirit, the believer receives the Holy Spirit again. This time, the Holy Spirit brings the infilling of the believer, also known as the baptism of the Holy Spirit. It is the filling of the new spiritual cup with the Holy Spirit until the cup overflows.

At that point, and only at that point, will the rivers of living water flow from our innermost being. Jesus said, "**The one who believes in me, as the Scripture said, from his innermost being will flow rivers of living water.**" But this he said in reference to the Spirit whom those who believed in him were to receive. For the Spirit was not yet given because Jesus was not yet glorified. (John 7:38-39)

The new birth is a miracle. It happens when a person repents of their sin and believes in Jesus for the first time. **Whoever calls on the name of the Lord shall be saved (Romans 10:13).** It is the Holy Spirit who convicts a person of sin (John 16:8). And **no one can (genuinely) say that Jesus is Lord except by the Holy Spirit. (1 Corinthians 12:3)**

After conversion (the new birth), two things must happen: water baptism by physical immersion under water and Holy Spirit baptism by spiritual immersion. Water baptism is a picture of Holy Spirit baptism - only that the believer is immersed (covered and surrounded by) the Spirit of God, not physical water. Neither water baptism nor Holy Spirit baptism saves, but both are commands and vital for a healthy and fully functioning

3) power = dunamis (STRONGS G1411): **miraculous power, usually by implication a miracle itself,** ability, abundance, meaning, might, mighty deed, worker of miracles, power, strength, violence, mighty wonderful work

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Christian.

Water baptism is also a public full-body testimony that a person is now a follower of Jesus. As such it has spiritual significance and power because **they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony (Revelation 12:11)**. Holy Spirit baptism is the infilling of the believer with the Holy Spirit and his or her anointing with the miracle-working dunamis power of God: **But you shall receive power (dunamis) when the Holy Spirit has come upon you ... (Acts 1:8)**.

Speaking in Tongues

Speaking in tongues is evidence of the baptism of the Holy Spirit: **While Peter was still speaking these words, the Holy Spirit came on all who heard the message. The circumcised believers who had come with Peter were astonished that the gift of the Holy Spirit had been poured out even on Gentiles. For they heard them speaking in tongues and praising God. (Acts 10:44-46) And when Paul had laid hands upon them, the Holy Spirit came on them, and they began speaking with tongues and prophesying. (Acts 19:6)** Scripture mentions three different gifts of tongues.

I. Tongues for Personal Edification

The first manifestation of tongues is the personal prayer language of the believer for self-edification. **For anyone who speaks in a tongue does not speak to people but to God. Indeed, no one understands them; they utter mysteries by the Spirit. ... Anyone who speaks in a tongue edifies himself ... (1 Corinthians 14:2+4)**. Speaking in tongues also allows the Holy Spirit to impart revelation to the believer: **For to us God revealed them (the mysteries of the kingdom) through the Spirit; for the Spirit searches all things, even the depths of God (1 Corinthians 2:10)**. The believer praying in tongues does not understand what he or she is praying in tongues. **For if I pray in a tongue, my spirit prays, but my mind is unfruitful. (1 Corinthians 14:14)**

This first kind of tongue is not part of the ministry gifts listed in 1 Corinthians 12:8-11. The nine gifts of the spirit listed in 1 Corinthians 12 are **for the common good (1 Corinthians 12:7)**. They are for the church. The gift of tongues for self-edification is not for the church but for the believer. It is the only manifestation of tongues that a believer can flow in at any time he or she wishes. It is God's will that all believers receive this gift of tongues which comes with the baptism of the Holy Spirit: **"... you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. The promise is for you and your children and for all who are far off - for**

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all whom the Lord our God will call." (Acts 2:38+39) The apostle Paul spoke in tongues extensively because he knew how important this gift is, "I thank my God I speak with tongues more than you all." (1 Corinthians 14:18)

2. Tongues with Interpretation for the Church

The second manifestation of tongues is one of the nine spiritual gifts given for the edification of the church. It is a prophetic gift of the Holy Spirit. The prophecy is given in tongues. Tongues are a heavenly language, not a natural language. The prophecy in tongues must then be interpreted into a natural language: **But to each one is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good. ... to another various kinds of tongues, and to another the interpretation of tongues.** (1 Corinthians 12:7+10) Contrary to speaking in tongues for self-edification, this second manifestation cannot be voluntarily turned on by the believer. **But one and the same Spirit works all these things, distributing to each one individually as he (the Holy Spirit) wills.** (1 Corinthians 12:11) The Holy Spirit determines what kind of spiritual gift flows through which believer at any given time. That is why Paul asks in 1 Corinthians 12:30, "Do all speak in tongues? Do all interpret?" The (implicit) answer is no. Not all believers operate in the spiritual gifts of tongues or the interpretation of tongues, but all are called by God to speak in tongues for personal edification.

3. Tongues as a Sign for Unbelievers

The third manifestation is tongues as a sign to the unbeliever: **So then, tongues are for a sign not to those who believe but to unbelievers.** (1 Corinthians 14:22) This is what happened on the day of Pentecost. **And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak with different tongues as the Spirit was giving them ability to speak out.** (Acts 2:4) The 120 believers spoke in different natural languages they had never learned. Now there were Jews residing in Jerusalem, devout men from every language under heaven. And when this sound occurred, the crowd came together and they were bewildered because **each one of them was hearing them speak in his own language.** They were amazed and astonished, saying, "Why - are not all these who are speaking Galileans? **And how is it that we each hear them in our own language to which we were born?** Parthians, Medes, and Elamites, and residents of Mesopotamia, Judea, and Cappadocia, Pontus and Asia, Phrygia and Pamphylia, Egypt, and the parts of Libya around Cyrene, and visitors from Rome, both Jews and proselytes, Cretans and Arabs - **we hear them speaking in our own tongues of the mighty deeds of God.**" (Acts 2:5-11)

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The manifestation of tongues that came down on Pentecost was not for self-edification but for evangelism. It was a sign to the unbelievers. Men and women from Galilee praised God in at least fifteen natural languages they had never learned. This fourth manifestation of tongues empowers a believer to testify, teach, and preach in a natural language of which the believer has no previous knowledge. It is usually used in a public setting.

Intercession Too Deep for Words

Romans 8:26 is sometimes classified as a fourth manifestation of tongues. It speaks of deep intercessional groaning. It does not mention speaking in tongues. **Now in the same way the Spirit also helps our weakness, for we do not know what to pray for as we should. But the Spirit himself intercedes for us with groanings too deep for words.** Spiritual groaning is a gift of the Spirit for deep intercession. Groaning in the flesh must not be confounded with genuine spiritual groaning which empowers the believer to intercede according to the will of God. The intercession is made in spiritual groanings too deep for words. The believer may or may not know who or what he or she is contending for. This type of birthing intercession usually occurs during personal prayer or corporate intercession time.