

Baptism in the HOLY SPIRIT?

- How will I know when it happens to me?
- What is praying in tongues?
- Must I pray in tongues to be saved?



These and similar questions are answered in this topical booklet, specifically designed for those seeking to know more about God and looking for answers to some of the deeper questions of life and eternity.

Introduction – A DISTINCT SPIRITUAL EXPERIENCE

The Bible speaks clearly of a **distinct spiritual experience** which is separate to, and follows on from, conversion called the 'Baptism in the Holy Spirit'.

"I baptise 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 baptise you with the Holy Spirit and with fire" (Matt 3:11)

When Jesus was thirty years of age He stood in the waters of the Jordan river and was baptised by John. The Spirit of God descended upon Him like a dove, mightily filling and empowering Him for His supernatural ministry (Luke 3:21-23).

This experience of the Lord's can, and should, be duplicated in the lives of all who believe in Him. Jesus encouraged us to ask the Father for the Holy Spirit (Luke 11:9-13). The Holy Spirit is given as an abiding, personal presence.

Jesus spoke of the Holy Spirit as a **PERSON**, never simply an 'influence'. He is an equal member of the Godhead to be worshipped, honoured and respected as such:

See the Gospel of John 14:16,26; 15:26; 16:8,13-15

When we are baptised in the Holy Spirit we will hunger after righteousness in a way not before experienced. This supernatural baptism does not make us perfect, nor does it automatically give us all the answers to life that we may seek. Rather it is a well of living water (John 7:37-39) springing up inside us. We just have to avail ourselves of its power to be victorious Christians living lives unstained by the world.

The Baptism in the Holy Spirit is spoken of in several different ways, each describing an aspect of this wonderful experience:

- **Baptism in the Spirit (John 1:33):** which means to be completely immersed in the Holy Spirit.
- **Gifts of the Spirit (1 Cor 12):** emphasising the gifts of the Holy Spirit available to all believers, especially those who have been baptised in the Spirit.
- **Receiving the Spirit (Acts 19:2):** refers to the actual moment when a believer receives the Holy Spirit baptism for the first time.
- **Filled with the Spirit (Acts 2:4):** suggests something being poured into a person, or someone being filled to overflowing with the Holy Spirit of God. We are encouraged to be continually filled with the Spirit, Eph 5:18) as opposed to using other forms of artificially induced stimuli, such as drugs or alcohol.

Put simply, the baptism in the Holy Spirit is something every believer should experience. It is supported by Scripture and testified to in many, if not all denominations of the Christian Church worldwide. The

baptism in the Holy Spirit is separate to and distinct from salvation; though it can (and sometimes does) happen at the same time a person is born-again.

John the Baptist foretold of one who would baptise “*with the Holy Spirit and fire*” (Matt 3:11), and Jesus told His disciples in Acts 1:5, “***You shall be baptised with the Holy Spirit not many days from now***”.

First Recorded Experience

This experience was first recorded was in Acts 2:1-4. It gave dynamic impetus to the fledgling church - fearful disciples became bold; empty words became charged with power; and wherever they went from that time forth, in the power of the Spirit, signs and wonders followed them.

Paul says his message and preaching were not in persuasive words of wisdom, but “*in demonstration of the Spirit and of power*” (1 Cor 2:4). Peter described Jesus as being “*anointed with the Holy Spirit and with power*” (Acts 10:38).

If salvation fills you with the Spirit of God, then baptism of the Holy Spirit causes Him to overflow into and transform your life! It is a distinct experience many people claim was the turning point of their life and ministry.

Signs and Manifestations

The baptism in the Holy Spirit is essential for living a supernatural Christian life, and every believer should be encouraged to experience it for themselves. It is the key to effective, powerful, dynamic and joy filled, victorious Christian living.

The Holy Spirit was not given just to make us feel good, or that we might enjoy dynamic excesses and manifestations, although these can be a legitimate expression of what the Holy Spirit may be doing in a person's life. Throughout history, from the experiences of the first disciples in Acts 2:1-4 to today, wherever the Holy Spirit moves with power and anointing, unusual and often unexplainable and miraculous things can occur - and often do!

For the disciples it was the tongues of fire and the mighty wind, and the gift of tongues which heralded in the present Church era. These were supernatural occurrences which caught the attention of the whole of Jerusalem and saw thousands of souls won for the kingdom that day. Today it can be the same. God is not restricted by our limitations or ideas about how He should act at different times. He remains a supernatural God and continues to surprise and amaze us with His power, His grace, His forgiveness and His awesome ability to reach hearts.

The essence of this baptism is **power**, especially power to witness. Not just an “*ability*” to witness, but an anointing which makes witnessing effective.

“You shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you shall be my witnesses ...” (Acts 1:8)

THE PURPOSE OF THE BAPTISM IN THE HOLY SPIRIT

1. Jesus, in his own earthly ministry, conclusively proved the need for a Spirit-filled life. When He submitted to water baptism the Holy Spirit “*descended upon Him like a dove*”, and from this point in time His earthly ministry began (Luke 3:22). If Jesus, born without sin, needed the power of the Holy Spirit in his own life, how much more do we?
2. To fulfil the promise of Scripture: Is 32:15; Is 59:20-60:1; Zec 10:1; Hos 6:3; Ezek 34:26; Joel 2:28.
3. The Holy Spirit is essential to fulfilling God's purposes in our lives. Without the ‘power from on high’ it is not possible to live a supernatural Christian life and fulfil our destiny as children of the kingdom (Acts 1:8-9).
4. Jesus Christ has promised us many wonderful things when we receive the Holy Spirit after we believe. Here are some biblical examples:
 - We can be assured of our salvation. We were never meant to function in our Christian walk without the power and confidence available through the Holy Spirit (John 14:16,20; 17:21-22; 1 John 3:24).

- We can enjoy the same access to the Father as Jesus has, and have the same power in prayer (John 16:7,23-24; Rom 8:26-27).
- We can bring forth much fruit for the glory of God (John 15).
- We can enjoy divine, supernatural power to accomplish the miracles of God within our own and other people's lives (John 14:12-14).
- The "power from on high" (Acts 1:8) available to us quickens our physical, mental, moral and spiritual being beyond measure.

When baptised in the Holy Spirit you will discover a hunger after righteousness and desire for His Word in a way not before experienced.

DO ALL SPEAK IN TONGUES?

There is no greater confusion among Christians when it comes to understanding the baptism in the Holy Spirit than the matter of speaking in unknown tongues.

Speaking in tongues happened when the disciples first received this experience:

"When the day of Pentecost came, they were all together in one place. Suddenly a sound like the blowing of a violent wind came from heaven and filled the whole house where they were sitting. They saw what seemed to be tongues of fire that separated and came to rest on each of them. All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues as the Spirit enabled them" (Acts 2:1-4)

It also happened during many of the documented instances recorded in the book of Acts (10:45-47; 19:4-6) and although it's not mentioned when Paul was prayed for by Ananias to receive his sight and be filled with the Spirit (Acts 9:17), Paul declares later, in his letter to the Corinthian church: ***"I thank God, I speak in tongues more than you all"*** (1 Cor 14:18). He also commands the church not to forbid speaking in tongues (1 Cor 14:39). It's pretty hard to argue a case against speaking in tongues with this kind of hard biblical evidence.

Paul also warns that in the last days men will arise who *"hold to a form of godliness but deny its power"* (2 Tim 3:1-5). He even goes so far as to say, *"avoid such men as these"*.

The Initial Evidence

How do we know when we have been baptised in the Holy Spirit? If you ask anyone who has had this experience you will find that they just know they have received it. There is often such a dramatic change in their lives that the adjustment to this new life "in the Spirit" is nothing short of extraordinary! The Lord graciously endows the newly baptised person with a positive sense of His presence and a hunger for a deeper walk with Him.

It can be confusing to say tongues are the "initial evidence" without explanation. Both biblically and experientially for the vast majority of people baptised in the Holy Spirit, the ability to pray in tongues is one of the first and most obvious sign that happens to them. Prophecy is another. Paul wanted all believers to pray in tongues and prophesy (1 Cor 14:5). There is also great reading to be found in 1 Cor 12-14 regarding the gifts and various manifestations of the Holy Spirit.

A Very Personal Experience

To live effectively for Jesus we must make the Holy Spirit welcome in our lives and allow Him to take possession of every area of our being as we yield ourselves to Him. When Jesus baptises us in the Spirit He does so in a very personal way, a way that seems to suit our individual needs and personalities. Some receive following the laying on of hands. Sometimes God acts sovereignly. This experience is as relevant and necessary today as it was for the early church.

Jesus left us a succinct description of how the fullness of the Holy Spirit occurs (John 7:37-39). There must be a deep thirsting - a definite desire - for the things of God. The person who thirsts in such a way is invited to come to Jesus and partake of the rivers of living water that He makes available to all believers.

