

THE BAPTISM IN THE HOLY SPIRIT

ACCORDING TO GOD'S WORD

What it is and why you need it

HAVE YOU RECEIVED THE HOLY GHOST SINCE YOU BELIEVED?

The apostle Paul asked this very important question of twelve saved disciples of Christ, at Ephesus. (Acts 19:2) They were startled by the question and answered, "We have not so much as heard whether there be any Holy Ghost." Later in Acts 19:6 when they prayed together, "The Holy Ghost came on them; and they spoke with tongues, and prophesied." This should have been expected since in all four gospels we are told that Jesus will baptize with the Holy Ghost.

WHAT IS IT FOR?

Power for service, "But ye shall receive power after that the Holy Ghost has come upon you." (Acts 1:8) Power in witnessing, not only in words but in claiming healing, deliverance, in prayer, in understanding the Word and power to overcome sin and live a victorious life. (Romans 8:26; John 16:14; Luke 24:49; Acts 9:17-20) Even Jesus healed because He was filled with the

Holy Spirit. (Acts 10:38) It is the power for your specific ministry.

MUST I SPEAK IN TONGUES?

Yes this is important! This is a gift from God, why would you refuse it? To refuse tongues is to refuse to yield yourself completely to God. If you will not yield completely, you cannot be used completely. It is important that you speak in tongues.

WHO IS IT FOR?

Only for the 'born again' Christians. The Holy Spirit is not available to the world (the unsaved). (John 14:16-17) If you are not sure you are born again, be sure, before you seek the baptism. When you have truly become one of God's children, then "Your heavenly Father will give the Holy Spirit to them that ask Him." (Luke 11:13)

It is not only for the apostles, or Jews, or people who lived in the days of the apostles, but for all saved people in every age. (Acts 2:38,39) It is for all Christians that want a righteous life. "Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness: for they shall be filled." (Matthew 5:6)

A WORD OF ADVICE

Do not seek baptism of the Holy Spirit if you do not honestly in your heart wish to be obedient to God and want Him to guide your life.

Once we learn to tune in to the leading of the Holy Spirit, we become a target for Satan, and he may try to confuse us by supernatural leadings. Most people have had some contact with the occult, that is, fortune telling, horoscopes, magic practices and games, spiritism, or false religious teachings. This occult involvement breaks the first commandment, is an abomination unto God and gives Satan legal access to our lives.
(Deuteronomy 18:10-12)

Anytime one seeks supernatural answers without going through Jesus Christ, Satan has the right to answer. If one seeks the baptism in the Holy Spirit without first renouncing the entire occult involvement, he opens his life, further to mental, physical and spiritual oppression.

If you are seeking the baptism in the Holy Spirit it is vital that you confess your faith in Jesus, confess all involvement in occult sins, and promise to destroy all books and objects of the occult. (Acts 19:19) Renounce Satan and all his works in your life and command him to depart in Jesus' name.

We must pray for discernment, become educated in Satan's tactics, and realize that all things supernatural do not come from God. First John 4:1 tells us to "believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God". Many persons have fallen to this deception as they in ignorance thought themselves immune to attacks because of the baptism. First Peter 5:8 written to Spirit filled Christians tells us to "Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about seeking whom he may devour".

We do not state this to discourage anyone. We have no need to fear, simply be alert to resist Satan and he will flee. (James 4:7) We also have the assurance of God's word in Luke 11:11-13 that if God is your heavenly Father (you are born again), you will not receive anything evil when you ask of Him, but He will give you the Holy Spirit.

HOW TO RECIEVE

You may wish to have Spirit filled Christians lay hands on you as Paul did in Acts 19:6 to the twelve believers at Ephesus, or you may wish to wait upon the Lord as the 120 did on the day of Pentecost in Acts 2, or just listen as Cornelius did in Acts 10:44-46. Praise God for His variety!

Raise your hands to the Lord, close your eyes and let your mind dwell on Jesus, be happy in Jesus, as you ask your Father in heaven for what He has promised you. Start praising His name, raise your voice to Him. He will not force you to speak in tongues. As the Lord places a strange word in your mind, speak it out boldly, your lips may stammer, but as you boldly repeat the words, the Spirit will give you more words. Sometimes only a few words come initially, but as you continue to speak forth in faith the Lord will give you a complete vocabulary with which to praise God.

THE NEW LANGUAGE

The new language which the Spirit has given us is not only a sign of the initial reception of the gift of the Spirit, but also of His continuing presence. You do not have to wait for a special anointing' or sense of presence of the Holy Spirit to pray in tongues. It can be used at will and should be used continually to build yourself up. God's gifts are given for a purpose. It is very important to pray in tongues. Practice this new language of the Spirit until it becomes as natural as breathing. As you do, you will experience a new peace and joy of knowing the presence of the Lord.

God's Word tells us that praying in the Spirit 'edifies' us, or builds us up in the Lord. (First Corinthians 14:4) God's Word tells us also that we build up our faith by praying in the Holy Ghost.

(Jude 20) You will later find this is one of your weapons in repelling the attacks of Satan.

THE GIFTS OF THE SPIRIT

St. Paul list in First Corinthians 12, nine gifts or manifestations of the Spirit. These are the supernatural tools or equipment for Christians service. Any Spirit filled Christian can manifest any of these gifts as the Spirit directs.

1. The Word of Wisdom is a supernaturally given revelation of God's direction and guidance for a specific situation. It tells us what God wants us to do about the situation.

2. The Word of Knowledge is a revelation of a piece of information which cannot be broken in a natural way. It is God's diagnosis of a problem, a sickness, or other situation.

3. The Gift of Faith is an instantaneous complete assurance of God's willingness and ability to act in a given situation. Faith cancels doubt and this is essential to the gifts of healing and working of miracles.

4. Gifts of Healing are special anointings of the Holy Spirit which enables us to bring God's healing power to those who are sick.

5. The Working of Miracles is a special momentary gift of authority which enables us to perform miracles in the name of Jesus Christ.

6. Discerning of Spirits is a supernatural gift which enables us to discern the difference between the Holy Spirit, the human spirit, and evil spirits. It is not the discerning of character nor of faults.

7. The Gift of Prophecy is an anointing of the Holy Spirit to speak the words of God. It is always for our direction, upbuilding and encouragement. Sometimes it may be for predicting future events, if God wants us to know them.

8. The Gift of Tongues is a supernatural means of God's communication with His people. It is a message given in a language unknown to the speaker and is always used in conjunction with the gift of interpretation. The gift of tongues is not to be confused with the use of tongues as the sign of the Baptism in the Holy Spirit, or with tongues used in private prayer and intercession, or with some foreign language used as a means of communication between people.

9. The Gift of Interpretation of Tongues gives back in one's own language the meaning of what was said in the gift of tongues. These two gifts operating together are equivalent to prophecy.

The exercise of any of these gifts require cooperation between us and the Holy Spirit. He gives the gifts as He wills. He lets people know in a variety of ways when they are to exercise one of them. For the spoken gifts He will sometimes put in our minds the first few words. In the case of healing often the hands begin to feel anointed. To heal, work miracles, or cast out demons we must be willing to lay on hands, speak a word of command, or do anything else as He directs us.

THE FRUIT OF THE SPIRIT

Immediately when we receive the gift of the Spirit He begins some house cleaning in our lives. Things which used to bother us no longer do so. Fears, irritations and resentments begin to fall away. We begin to see people differently, more as God sees them.

The Spirit will also show us some more obstinate wrongs in our lives, some sins we hardly realized were there. When He does this we have two alternatives. We can put up a fight, making life miserable for us, or we can turn these things over to Him to be removed and replaced with better things. If we choose the latter, He will continue this process with one thing at a time, just as fast as we will let Him, until we become mature persons, made over into His image.

We do not try to make ourselves over. We have already tried that unsuccessfully all our lives. The Holy Spirit is in the sanctifying business. He is the one who can clean up our lives. All we have to do is let Him.

OUR PROPER RESPONSE TO GOD'S LOVE

1. To accept for ourselves these manifestations of His love; forgiveness for our sins, healing for our bodies, minds, and spirits and deliverance from all forces of evil.

2. To act as His agents in bringing these manifestations of His love to others.

3. To love God in return, to praise Him in the Spirit as commanded by Christ, "God is a Spirit and they that worship Him must worship Him in Spirit and in Truth." (John 4:24) Use your tongues to praise Him daily in your spirit which now has a language to express it's love of Him.

The Gifts are tools for manifesting the love of God. But on the other hand, love is necessary for the proper use of the gifts. St. Paul emphasizes this in First Corinthians 13 by saying that if we speak "with tongues of men and angels" and exhibit many of the other gifts, such as prophecy, word of knowledge, faith, miracles, etc., but do not use these in love (to edify or help our neighbor) our ministry is worthless.

God's gifts can be used or abused. We fulfill all of God's commandment to us when we use spiritual gifts to the glory of God and for the benefit of His creatures.