

BAPTISM IN THE HOLY SPIRIT

BY KAJ MARTIN

WHY SHOULD I SEEK IT?

1. It was commanded by Jesus for His followers to wait for: Luke 24:49 and Acts 1:4-5
2. It is a gift from Jesus for His children: Mt 3:11
3. It is a promise of power for *all* believers: Acts 1:8

WHO CAN BE BAPTIZED (IMMERSED) IN THE SPIRIT?

1. Everyone who has received Jesus Christ as their personal Lord and Savior: Acts 4:29
Jews: Acts 2:4 Gentiles: Acts 10:44-46 Samaritans (Jew/Gentile): Acts 8:17

DID I RECEIVE THE BAPTISM IN THE SPIRIT WHEN I FIRST RECEIVED CHRIST?

CONVERSION: When a person surrenders their life to Christ, the Spirit of God comes and dwells in them. Their sins are as far as the east is from the west (Psalm 103:12) and they have a personal relationship with the Lord of the universe (Romans 8:15-17 and Titus 3:4-7). The person at this point is regenerated (i.e. their spirit brought back to life) by the work of the Holy Spirit and is redeemed from the dominion of the devil into the kingdom of the Lord. Everything needed for life beyond the grave as well as peace and communion with the Lord is established with the saint.

CHRIST'S IMMERSION OF HIS SAINT IN THE HOLY SPIRIT: To be "baptized in the Holy Spirit" is a secondary work after a person is converted to Christ. It can happen almost instantaneously after the person's conversion experience but its purpose is not redemption but releasing God (through the person of the Holy Spirit) to work fully through His chosen vessel. Again I emphasize, being baptized in the Holy Spirit does not have anything to do with a person's salvation (Eph 2:8-10 and 2 Cor. 5:14-17) yet its purpose is to empower Christians for world evangelism (Acts 1:8, 2:4) and to edify or build up the believer (Jude 20). The Bible shows that "baptized" and "filled" can be used synonymously (Acts 1:5 and 2:4).

BIBLICAL EXAMPLES OF THIS "SECONDARY WORK" OR BLESSING OF THE SPIRIT FOR THE CHRISTIAN

1. *THE DISCIPLES:* In John 20:22 the disciples were regenerated by the Holy Spirit (saved) and later on the day of Pentecost they received the empowering of the Spirit for world evangelism, which happened around 50 days later.
2. *SAMARIA:* In Acts 8:4-17 the Bible clearly shows the Samaritans believing in Christ as their Lord and Savior, having a believer's baptism in water and after these events having the Holy Spirit fall upon them. Phillip would not have baptized anyone who did not believe in the Father, Son and Holy Spirit as their personal God. God shows His stamp of approval on the Samaritans through the power from on high falling upon the people that the apostles hated with a passion only months earlier (Luke 9:51-55). No longer could the Jews look upon the Samaritans with contempt because the experience that had empowered them for the Great Commission empowered the Samaritans as well. Also in Acts 2:4, 10:44-46 and 19:1-6 Jesus baptizes (or fills) believers in the Holy Spirit after their initial conversion.
3. *THE APOSTLE THOMAS:* He confessed with his mouth that Jesus was His Lord and God after the resurrection (John 20:28) and according to Romans 10:9, "If you confess with your mouth and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you will be saved." The resurrected Christ is standing in front of Thomas so it is fairly easy to assume that he believed that Christ had been resurrected. This means, Thomas was saved. About fifty days later, Thomas was one of the

120 that were in the Upper Room (Acts 1:13) who received the experience of the baptism in the Spirit. This “baptism” clearly is a secondary experience to salvation.

HOW DO I KNOW THAT I HAVE BEEN BAPTIZED IN THE HOLY SPIRIT?

1. There must be evidence in which the apostles and other early believers could point to and see that a person had been empowered to spread the gospel throughout the world. In Acts 10:44-46 the Holy Spirit falls upon the Gentile believers while the Jews that came with Peter were amazed. The reason they were amazed was due to the fact that God had blessed the Gentiles as He had the Jews with the baptism in the Spirit (Acts 11:15). They (the Jews) *knew* that the Gentiles had been baptized in the Spirit, “for they heard them speaking in tongues and praising God” (Acts 10:46). In Acts 11:17, Peter explains himself to the Jews in Jerusalem and they receive his testimony because God sovereignly accepted the Gentiles as equals in the body of Christ. This is without them being circumcised or water baptized, the only prerequisite to being baptized with the Spirit is salvation through faith, which had come through Peter’s message.
2. In 3 out of 5 times that it mentions a person being initially filled or baptized in the Spirit the evidence is speaking in tongues. What about the other two times that people were baptized with Spirit? The other two references include Saul (who later became the Apostle Paul) with Ananias in Damascus (Acts 9:17), as well as the Samaritan believers (Acts 8:4-18). As for Saul of Tarsus / the Apostle Paul it is clear from the passage that he was filled with the Spirit when Ananias prayed for him but does not explain how Saul or Ananias knew that he indeed was filled with the Spirit. As for tongues, Saul / Paul spoke in tongues...a lot (1 Cor. 14:18). In the case of the Samaritans, we can see that they also clearly received the Holy Spirit (Acts 8:17) and it was so attractive to the eye that Simon wanted to purchase this gift. Obviously, the evidence of this gift was physical and observable to all who were around. The initial experience of tongues and watching a person have the Spirit of God come on someone for the first time fits this description perfectly!

DIDN’T SPEAKING IN TONGUES STOP OR CEASE WITH THE APOSTLES?

1. The “Church Age” that began with the apostles in Jerusalem had a call to share the gospel with the whole world. That mission is still incomplete, not every tribe and tongue has heard the gospel (Rev. 7:9). To think that Christ does not thirst to touch the billions of souls in the world who do not know Him is ridiculous (2 Peter 3:9). He promised power (Acts 1:4-5); we need power to carry out the commands of Mark 16:16-18. Why wouldn’t His promise still be valid for the exact same call to evangelize the world that the early Church received from Christ?
2. In 1999 Vinson Synan, a renown Church historian from Regent University, said that there were 530 million Charismatics and Pentecostals in the world, which is compared to 59.6 million Baptists, 57.7 million Lutherans and 33 million Methodists worldwide.¹ David Barrett, another highly regarded Church historian, states that there have been 795 million people that been involved in this Holy Spirit revival since 1900.²
3. There is no place in the Scriptures that would even hint to the effect that tongues would cease until the Second Coming of Christ for His Church. Some use 1 Cor. 13:8 as a proof text but the context would point to a time still to come in which Jesus will reign over the Earth for a 1,000 years.³
4. Historically, speaking in other tongues was a gift demonstrated amongst believers clear into the second and third centuries. Some also trace it throughout Church history within a remnant of the body until the 20th century outpouring.

¹ Synan, Vinson. *The Century of the Holy Spirit: 100 Years of the Pentecostal Charismatic Movement*. Thomas Nelson, Inc. 2001, 372.

² *Ibid.*, 383.

³ For further study on the issue of cessation of gifts read Jack Deere’s book *Surprised by the Power of the Spirit*.

BUT THERE MUST BE AN INTERPRETATION IF YOU ARE GOING TO SPEAK IN TONGUES... RIGHT?

This question is usually asked in fear and is answered when a person understands that there is more than one purpose for “tongues” in a Christian’s life. It is much like the word “faith” in the Scriptures. In 1 Corinthians 12:8-10 the gift of faith is only given to some in the body. The confusing thing though is that we all must have faith in Christ to be saved. For this to be true we can see that there are differing purposes for the word “faith” in the Scriptures. The same is true of tongues. The following section will break down some of their differing functions.

IN WHAT WAYS DOES THE BIBLE SAY TONGUES CAN AND SHOULD BE USED?

I like to use a 3-Lane highway to illustrate the use of tongues with the on-ramp being the initial experience of speaking in tongues as the Lord gives the saint the words to speak. Each lane has a distinct purpose for believers but they can be used together to meet multiple purposes all at once (straddling the line). An example of this might be a person singing in a service and he/she begins to sing out prophetically for the body in tongues. This would be a singing in tongues, a sign to an unbeliever and depending on the circumstance, may need to be interpreted.

PURPOSE	SCRIPTURAL REFERENCES	EXPLANATION
“On Ramp” INITIAL EXPERIENCE OF JESUS IMMERSING A PERSON IN THE SPIRIT	Acts 2:4, 10:44-46, 19:1-6	This is when the Holy Spirit baptizes/fills a person and they begin to verbally utter a language, which they have never learned. This can be some current world language (Acts 2:6-11), an ancient language, or a heavenly language (1 Cor 13:1). No interpretation is needed and this is exemplified in Acts 2 when all 120 are baptized and no one ever brought an interpretation. Some heard people praising God in their own languages but to the rest of those assembled the language would have remained completely foreign.
Lane #1 PRAYER & WORSHIP	<i>Prayer:</i> 1 Cor 14:2, 4, 18; Eph 6:18 <i>Worship:</i> 1 Cor 14:15; Eph 5:18-19	Again this is when the Holy Spirit flows forth out of a person in a language that the person has never learned. It bypasses the mind of the individual and flows out of the individual’s mouth, bringing glory and praise to the Father out of the person’s spirit. No interpretation is needed because it is <u>intended</u> for the Lord and not the body as a whole.
Lane #2 INTERPRETATI ON FOR THE CHURCH FAMILY	1 Cor 12:10; 14:5, 12-13,28	Some people lump all the uses of tongues into this one function. This message is <u>clearly directed</u> to the congregation when a person intends the message for the body. There must be an interpretation of the tongue for the edification (building up) of the body. ⁴ The interpretation must be in the common language of the congregation and line up with the Scriptures 100%. Paul limits this function of tongues in the corporate body to 2-3 in a sequence (1 Cor. 14:27)
Lane #3 SIGN FOR UNBELIEVERS	1 Cor 14:20-25	Unbelievers will walk into the midst of a body and be amazed at the power of God to deliver a message through a person and then have it interpreted by another individual or the person giving the message in tongues. Supernatural power displayed and defended by the Spirit of God will bring sinners and backsliders alike to their knees in repentance.

HOW CAN I RECEIVE THE BAPTISM IN THE HOLY SPIRIT?

⁴ Remember that an interpretation is not the same thing as a translation of a message. This means that the interpretation could be shorter or longer than the message given in tongues

1. Seek the Lord God and ask Him for the promise of the Father (Acts 1:4-5) to be poured out of you.
2. Ask out of a pure heart, motivated by a love for the Lord to be empowered to fulfill the Great Commission on earth.
3. Confess all your sin and walk in holiness before the Lord.
4. Seek earnestly while you retain the peace that comes in personally knowing your Savior.
5. Just ask and receive the outpouring. Start with praises to the Lord and allow Him to speak through you. Know that you have to open your mouth for the Spirit to fill you to overflowing.
6. Have a Spirit filled believer pray over you.

THINGS TO REMEMBER

1. According to James 3 the rudder of the ship (your body) is your tongue. Out of it, people offer praises and curses. It is fitting for the baptism, which truly means to be immersed, to have the initial evidence of tongues. The baptism happens when the ship is sunk into God's presence and the tongue utters praises and mysteries in languages that they have never learned. Once the rudder is under the water and the ship "baptized," the Spirit of God can use you in ways that you once thought impossible!!
2. Know that it is the Spirit praying through you. He knows what He wants to say.
3. Tongues are a "spirit thing" and your mind will not understand the language you are speaking.

REFERENCES TO LOOK AT FOR MORE UNDERSTANDING

The Glorious Disturbance by Ernest Gentile

Beauty of a Spiritual Language by Jack Hayford

Baptism in the Spirit by Derek Prince

Nine O'clock in the Morning by Dennis Bennett

The Baptism in the Holy Spirit: The Initial Experience and Continuing Evidences of the Spirit-Filled Life- Positional Paper by the Assemblies of God (www.ag.org)

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