

Foundations Lesson #5

The Baptism in the Holy Spirit

I want to start this lesson by reviewing briefly something we covered in the previous lesson. On the day of Pentecost after Peter had finished preaching his message, the people were cut to the heart and said to him and the other apostles, “Brothers, what shall we do?” Peter replied by telling them three things were necessary: repent, be baptized, and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. It's still God's design and desire today, for people who want to escape the kingdom of darkness and get right with God to do these three things to **begin** their walk with the Lord: repent (or get saved – which we covered in lesson 3), be baptized (which we covered in lesson 4), and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit (also called the baptism in the Holy Spirit, which we are covering in this lesson). Salvation deals with people entering into the Kingdom of God; water baptism is the public initiation confirming citizenship in the Kingdom of God; and the baptism in the Holy Spirit is the empowerment for service in the Kingdom of God.

So with that in mind, let's look at our outline, where it says *the baptism in the Holy Spirit is an experience whereby God the Father and God the Son bestow upon the believer an infilling of the Holy Spirit. The five instances in Scripture that give an account of this experience are:* and then the outline lists those five instances, all found in the book of Acts. Let's go over each one, highlighting some important aspects of what happened on those occasions.

The first one, recorded in Acts chapter two, describes what happened on the day of Pentecost, but in order to understand that one better, we need to get some background information. Jesus, after he had risen from the dead and before he was taken up into heaven, said to his followers, “*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.*” You can read that in Luke's gospel, chapter 24 and verse 49. Apparently, Jesus didn't want his followers to go out and minister until they had the power to do so. Then, in Acts chapter one, we read the following account, starting in verse 4:

Ac. 1:4-8

On one occasion, while he [Jesus] was eating with them, he gave them this command: “Do not leave Jerusalem, but wait for the gift my Father promised, which you have heard me speak about. For John baptized with water, but in a few days you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit.”

[Skipping to verse 8, Jesus says] 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.”

So to summarize, before the day of Pentecost took place Jesus had told his followers that they were to stay in the city and wait for the promise of the Father. This promise was identified as being baptized with (or in) the Holy Spirit, and that as a result they would be empowered from on high. I say being baptized “with” or “in” the Holy Spirit because the preposition used in the original Greek text can be translated either “with” or “in.” It's also important to point out that Jesus had, after he rose from the dead, breathed on his disciples and said, “Receive the Holy Spirit.” You can see that in John's gospel, chapter 20 and verse 22. So even though many of them had already *received* the Holy Spirit when Jesus breathed on them, they were yet to be **baptized**, which means immersed or drenched, in the Holy Spirit, and that baptism would then enable them to minister in power. So that's what his followers knew in advance.

Now, turning to Acts chapter 2, some things happened which I imagine surprised the daylights out of Jesus' disciples. Verse 2 tells us that suddenly, a sound **like** the blowing of a violent wind came from heaven and filled the whole house where they were sitting. You may have seen footage of Florida hurricanes where the tops of palm trees are almost touching the ground as they are being blown over. If a sound like that filled your apartment but not a piece of paper was moving anywhere,

you might just get a little freaked out. Then, the Scripture records that the believers present saw what seemed to be tongues of fire that separated and came to rest on each of them. I don't know about you, but I've never seen tongues made of fire, never mind ones that separate and come to rest on people's heads. In the midst of all this wild and unusual stuff happening, verse 4 tells us that all of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues (or languages) as the Spirit enabled them. So we now see that this was the fulfillment of Jesus' words that his followers were going to receive the gift promised by the Father, namely being baptized with (or in) the Holy Spirit.

And, sure enough, the power that had been promised accompanied the Holy Spirit baptism. Not only did the believers speak in languages they'd never learned, but Peter preached with such authority that at the end of his message his hearers were under deep conviction. The Scripture says that they were "cut to the heart." So the promised power had arrived.

Verses 8 through 11 list about fifteen foreign languages that were represented, because Jews from all over the world had come to Jerusalem to celebrate Pentecost. They all heard these newly Spirit-filled believers declaring the wonders of God in their own tongues, and they were amazed and perplexed. I think I would have been, too.

Peter then gets up and addresses the crowd. He starts off by explaining that what was happening was a fulfillment of what had been written in the Scriptures, and he quotes the second chapter of the book of Joel, saying that God had said he would pour out of his Spirit on all people. More happens on that day, but let's jump over to the next incident from Acts chapter 8.

Here in Acts 8, Philip, a man who two chapters earlier had been chosen to help make sure all the widows in Jerusalem were being properly fed, goes down to a city in Samaria and preaches Christ. A number of things happen there. Verse 12 tells us that they believed Philip as he preached the good news of the kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ. Not only did they become believers, but they were also baptized, both men and women. But here the Scripture also makes special mention, several times, that Philip's ministry included the supernatural. Verse 6: "When the crowds heard Philip and **saw the miraculous signs he did**," Verse 7: "With shrieks, evil spirits came out of many, and many paralytics and cripples were healed. Verse 13: And he [that is, Simon the Sorcerer] followed Philip everywhere, astonished **by the great signs and miracles he saw**."

Then, starting to read in verse 14, it says:

Ac. 8:14-20

¹⁴When the apostles in Jerusalem heard that Samaria had accepted the word of God, they sent Peter and John to them. ¹⁵When they arrived, they prayed for them that they might receive the Holy Spirit, ¹⁶because the Holy Spirit had not yet come upon any of them; they had simply been baptized into the name of the Lord Jesus. ¹⁷Then Peter and John placed their hands on them, and they received the Holy Spirit.

¹⁸When Simon [the sorcerer] saw that the Spirit was given at the laying on of the apostles' hands, he offered them money ¹⁹and said, "Give me also this ability so that everyone on whom I lay my hands may receive the Holy Spirit."

²⁰Peter answered: "May your money perish with you, because you thought you could buy the gift of God with money!"

When Peter and John placed their hands on the Samaritan disciples, they received the Holy Spirit. The Bible does not tell us specifically what happened as these believers received the Holy Spirit, but whatever it was, it made such a huge impact on Simon the Sorcerer that he offered Peter and John money so that he could also have this power. We know Philip did miraculous signs, delivered people from evil spirits, and saw many healed under his ministry. We know from verse 13 that Simon was astonished by the great signs and miracles he saw under Philip's ministry. But Simon never offered Philip any money to do any of **those** things. What was it that Simon witnessed? By far the best explanation I can think of is that he saw his friends, relatives, and acquaintances speaking in tongues when the apostles laid their hands on them. That would certainly explain the events as they are recorded in Scripture.

Going on to the next passage in the Bible, in Acts chapter 9 we read about a young man who at

that point in his life was called Saul. Verse 1 tells us that Saul was breathing out murderous threats against the Lord's disciples. Verse 2 tells us that Saul was headed to Damascus to arrest the Christians there and bring them back to Jerusalem as prisoners. Starting to read at verse 3, it says:

Ac. 9:3-9

³As he neared Damascus on his journey, suddenly a light from heaven flashed around him. ⁴He fell to the ground and heard a voice say to him, "Saul, Saul, why do you persecute me?"

⁵"Who are you, Lord?" Saul asked.

"I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting," he replied. ⁶"Now get up and go into the city, and you will be told what you must do."

⁷The men traveling with Saul stood there speechless; they heard the sound but did not see anyone. ⁸Saul got up from the ground, but when he opened his eyes he could see nothing. So they led him by the hand into Damascus. ⁹For three days he was blind, and did not eat or drink anything.

I believe we can safely state that Saul got saved on the road to Damascus. When Saul later related this story in Acts chapter 22, he gives the detail that after Jesus had identified himself to Saul, he asked Jesus, "What shall I do, Lord?" Calling Jesus Lord, and meaning it, certainly qualifies for salvation. There was also a dramatic change in Saul's life from this point on, which confirms our conclusion. Then, God commissioned a disciple named Ananias to go place his hands on Saul so that he may see again and be filled with the Holy Spirit. Picking up the reading in verse 17, it says:

Ac. 9:17-19

¹⁷Then Ananias went to the house and entered it. Placing his hands on Saul, he said, "Brother Saul, the Lord – Jesus, who appeared to you on the road as you were coming here – has sent me so that you may see again and be filled with the Holy Spirit." ¹⁸Immediately, something like scales fell from Saul's eyes, and he could see again. He got up and was baptized, ¹⁹and after taking some food, he regained his strength.

In these verses we see that Saul was filled with the Spirit three days after he called Jesus Lord on the road to Damascus. The infilling of the Spirit that he received was accommodated by the laying on of hands by a disciple named Ananias, and at the same time "something like scales fell from Saul's eyes and he could see again." After this experience, Saul wasted no time in getting water baptized.

The fourth incident in the Bible that describes the baptism in the Holy Spirit is a story of what happened at the house of Cornelius the centurion in Caesarea. Again, some background explanation is necessary. Under the Old Testament, if a Gentile (which is a term meaning a non-Jewish person) wanted to have a living relationship with the God who created the universe, he would have needed to believe God as he had revealed himself to Abraham and others, and his faith would be evidenced by his being circumcised and then obeying the Law of Moses. Such people were called "proselytes" or "converts to Judaism." That was **the** way Gentiles were saved. In our story, Cornelius the centurion was a Roman, a Gentile. So under the Old Testament, if Cornelius had believed God, he would have had to get circumcised and obey the Law of Moses as evidence of his faith.

The incident in Acts 10 took place maybe about 5 to 10 years after Jesus had risen from the dead. Up to this time, **the only people** who had accepted Jesus as Savior and Lord had been Jews; no Gentiles had gotten saved yet. Cornelius is visited by an angel who tells him to send for a man named Peter who would bring him a message through which he and all his household would be saved. I invite you to read the entire 10th chapter of Acts which gives the full story. It's a great account.

Peter arrives and preaches. With that background in mind, I'll begin reading in verse 44:

Ac. 10:44-48

⁴⁴While Peter was still speaking these words, the Holy Spirit came on all who heard the message. ⁴⁵The circumcised believers [that is, Jews] who had come with Peter were astonished that the gift of the Holy Spirit had been poured out even on the Gentiles. ⁴⁶For they

heard them speaking in tongues and praising God.

Then Peter said, ⁴⁷“Can anyone keep these people from being baptized with water? They have received the Holy Spirit just as we have.” ⁴⁸So he ordered that they be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ. Then they asked Peter to stay with them for a few days.

Apparently, at this point in church history, the followers of Jesus, who were all Jewish, had **no idea** that it was even possible for any non-Jews (Gentiles) to get saved without first getting circumcised and then pledging themselves to obey all the Law of Moses. So in this incident, God was not only bringing non-Jewish people into his family by grace through faith for the first time ever, he was also showing the Jewish believers that Gentiles could get saved without having to obey the Law of Moses, which admittedly was quite hard for them to swallow. God did this by filling the Gentiles with his Holy Spirit **as they believed the message of salvation through Jesus Christ**. Peter and the other Jews with him heard them speaking in tongues and correctly concluded that since they had received the gift of the Holy Spirit, God must have saved them. If they were saved, then they needed to be water baptized. So that happened next.

The last of the five incidents listed on our outline takes place as Paul is ministering in Ephesus. I'm reading from Acts chapter 19 beginning in verse 1:

Ac. 19:1-7

¹While Apollos was at Corinth, Paul took the road through the interior and arrived at Ephesus. There he found some disciples ²and asked them, “Did you receive the Holy Spirit when you believed?”

They answered, “No, we have not even heard that there is a Holy Spirit.”

³So Paul asked, “Then what baptism did you receive?”

“John's baptism,” they replied.

⁴Paul said, “John's baptism was a baptism of repentance. He told the people to believe in the one coming after him, that is, in Jesus.” ⁵On hearing this, they were baptized into the name of the Lord Jesus. ⁶When Paul placed his hands on them, the Holy Spirit came on them, and they spoke in tongues and prophesied. ⁷There were about twelve men in all.

So we read in verse one that Apollos was now in Corinth. We'll talk more about him in just a minute. Then the end of verse one tells us that Paul found some disciples. Now I have read many commentators who claim that these disciples were actually disciples of John the Baptist. With all due respect to those students of Scripture, I want to point out that this view is incorrect. Luke, the author of the book of Acts, uses the word “disciple(s)” simply to mean “Christian(s)”. He is very consistent in doing that. For example, Acts 11:26 says, “The disciples were called Christians first at Antioch.” Vocabulary has a way of changing over time. In the days of the early church, they used the term “The Way” to mean the same thing as what we mean today when we say “Christianity.” Similarly, when we use the word “Christian”, they would have used the word “disciple” to express the same idea. If you are interested in studying this further, I invite you to go to the **Additional Resources** section of this web page and download the document on “The Word Disciple(s) Used in the Book of Acts.” You are welcome to read that document and reach your own conclusions.

So as Paul is talking with these disciples, these Christians, he asks them, “Did you receive the Holy Spirit when you believed?” That question alone tells us a whole lot. For one thing, it shows us that their **believing** was something that had already happened. It was an act of the past. His question also shows us that if the disciples had received the Holy Spirit when they believed, they would have known it. They would have been able to answer his question. But there's something else that's very significant that this question shows us. If you bought a car, and someone asked you, “Did you receive a sun roof when you bought your car?” that would be a reasonable question. Why? Because some cars come with a sun roof and some cars don't. But if someone asked you, “Did you receive a steering wheel when you bought your car?” that would not be a reasonable question. Why? Because every car you can buy has a steering wheel. So asking that question would have no purpose; it wouldn't make any sense. Here Paul is **not** asking the disciples a question that doesn't

make any sense. He's asking a reasonable question. That means that it must be possible to "receive" or not to "receive" the Holy Spirit when someone believes – at least in the way Paul is here using the word "receive". In other words, Paul's question itself shows that there is a "receiving" of the Holy Spirit which is available to all believers which may or may not come at salvation.

Now before we go any further I have to clarify. Paul himself wrote in the book of Romans chapter 8 and verse 9 that "if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he does not belong to Christ." That tells us that the moment anyone, by grace through faith, accepts Jesus to be their Lord and Savior, at that very moment the Holy Spirit comes into their life. We call this the indwelling of the Holy Spirit. It always accompanies true salvation. But Scripture makes a big difference between the indwelling of the Holy Spirit at salvation and the infilling of the Holy Spirit. More about that later.

So if Paul had been interested in pristine theological accuracy when he asked the Ephesian disciples if they had received the Holy Spirit, he might have asked, "Did you receive the infilling of the Holy Spirit when you believed?" I suspect he was much more concerned about practical matters, so he shortened the question a bit. At any rate, they tell him that they had not heard that there was a Holy Spirit, and that they had received John's baptism. In order to understand this statement, we need to back up to the previous chapter of the book of Acts, chapter 18, starting in verse 24. There it tells us that Apollos came to Ephesus. He was a learned man with a thorough knowledge of the Scriptures, and he taught about Jesus accurately, though he knew only the baptism of John. So apparently the disciples here in Acts 19 had been saved, instructed, or both under Apollos' ministry, since they knew only the baptism of John. Paul tells them about New Testament baptism, and they are baptized into the name of the Lord Jesus. Then, after they are water baptized, verse 6 tells us that "when Paul placed his hands on them, the Holy Spirit came on them, and they spoke in tongues and prophesied." So now we have an overview of the five instances in Scripture where the baptism in the Holy Spirit takes place.

Foundations Lesson #5

The Baptism in the Holy Spirit, Part Two

Continuing with our outline, Roman Numeral number one: the background of the baptism in the Holy Spirit. It is foreshadowed in the Old Testament. Isaiah says,

Is. 44:3 For I will pour water on the thirsty land, and streams on the dry ground; I will pour out my Spirit on your offspring, and my blessing on your descendants.

Isaiah doesn't provide an explanation or any detail, he just says that God will pour out his Spirit on the people's offspring. Ezekiel says,

Ez. 36:26-27 I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit in you; I will remove from you your heart of stone and give you a heart of flesh. And I will put my Spirit in you and move you to follow my decrees and be careful to keep my laws.

So Ezekiel mentions a result, namely obedience to God, that proceeds from God putting his Spirit on people. And Joel declares,

Jo. 2:28-29 "And afterward, I will pour out my Spirit on all people. Your sons and daughters will prophesy, your old men will dream dreams, your young men will see visions. Even on my servants, both men and women, I will pour out my Spirit in those days.

Joel here gives us a tad more of a picture as to what will be happening. He uses the term “pour out” to describe the giving of the Spirit, just as Isaiah had done. But he also lets us know that people of low social-economic standing, servants, will not be passed over. And he is the first to show us that the supernatural realm will be involved – that there will be prophesy, dreams and visions. So the baptism in the Holy Spirit is foreshadowed in the Old Testament, but then it's also spoken of in advance in the New Testament.

Mt. 3:11 [John the Baptist speaking] “I baptize you with water for repentance. But after me will come one who is more powerful than I, whose sandals I am not fit to carry. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and with fire.

Luke's gospel puts it this way,

Lk. 3:15-16 The people were waiting expectantly and were all wondering in their hearts if John might possibly be the Christ. John answered them all, “I baptize you with water. But one more powerful than I will come, the thongs of whose sandals I am not worthy to untie. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire.

Jesus himself, after he had risen from the dead, told his disciples to stay in the city until they had been clothed with power from on high. He also told them,

Ac. 1:5 For John baptized with water, but in a few days you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit.”

So in the New Testament, before the baptism in the Spirit took place, it was foretold.

Then Peter, as he is preaching on the Day of Pentecost just **after** the baptism in the Holy Spirit had taken place for the first time, quotes Joel to give explanation and to calm the reservations of some who thought the disciples had gotten themselves a little tipsy. He tells his hearers that God had spoken prophetically hundreds of years earlier that this was going to take place, and that this prophecy of Joel's was being fulfilled before their eyes. Then, later that same day, he lets his hearers know that they – and future generations – may also receive the baptism in the Holy Spirit. He says,

Ac. 2:38b-39 “And 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.”

Anyone who has been called into the Kingdom of God and who has accepted that call by getting saved may receive the baptism in the Holy Spirit. Why? Because, as Peter said, God has made that promise. It's not just for a select few.

So that gives us the Biblical background to the Baptism in the Holy Spirit. Next, Roman Numeral number two, we see the prerequisite for receiving the baptism in the Holy Spirit, which is salvation. As we mentioned earlier, when an unbeliever accepts Jesus Christ as their Savior and Lord, the Holy Spirit comes to **live in**, or **dwell in**, that new believer.

Ro. 8:9 You, however, are controlled not by the sinful nature but by the Spirit, if the Spirit of God **lives in** you. And if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he does not belong to Christ.

Eph. 3:17 ...so that Christ may **dwell in** your hearts through faith.

When the baptism in the Holy Spirit takes place, the Spirit, who is already living inside the believer, **fills** that believer.

Ac. 2:4 All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues as the Spirit enabled them.

Ac. 9:17 Then Ananias went to the house and entered it. Placing his hands on Saul, he said, “Brother Saul, the Lord – Jesus, who appeared to you on the road as you were coming here – has sent me so that you may see again and be filled with the Holy Spirit.”

Salvation is a matter of a spiritually dead person becoming alive. The baptism in the Holy Spirit is a matter of a spiritually live person being filled with power. Both involve the working of the Holy Spirit, but they are different.

I was once challenged by a brother who told me quite strongly that he believed that when people got saved God filled them with the Spirit right then and there so there was no need for a believer to seek any further infilling of the Spirit. I didn't agree, but I thought, “let's study the Scripture on that matter to see exactly what God has to say.” After all, all doctrine has to come from Scripture, not personal opinion. So I studied. I found every place in the Bible that uses the phrase “filled with the spirit” or “full of the spirit” so that I would know in detail what God had revealed on that subject. Not one of those places refers to salvation. Not one. By the way, there are 19 of them. Being filled with the Spirit is different from being saved, and the command to be filled with the Spirit is given to Christians, not unbelievers. If you're interested in checking out my research on “filled with” or “full of” the Spirit, it's available in the **Additional Resources** section of this web page.

Research aside, I believe it's a great mistake for any one of us to say that we don't need any more of God or any more of the Holy Spirit. God is infinite. His resources never run dry; they're inexhaustible. And he is a lavish giver of gifts; he is extraordinarily generous; he loves to pour out good things upon his sons and his daughters. We have to meet the conditions; we have to meet the requirements, but he loves to bless. And, all of us are in desperate need of God, whether we realize it or not. Those who say they don't need any more of God or any more of his Spirit are being proud – and God resists the proud. Besides, we read in Acts 4:31,

Ac. 4:31 After they had prayed, the place where they were meeting was shaken. And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and spoke the word of God boldly.

It's important to note that at least some of the people who were filled with the Holy Spirit here in Acts 4:31, had already “received” the Holy Spirit when Jesus breathed on them **and then** they had **also** already been filled with the Spirit in Acts 2:4. So they received the Spirit as Jesus breathed on them, then they were filled with the Spirit and spoke in tongues in Acts 2:4, and then they were again filled with the spirit here in Acts 4:31. Some preachers have pondered how someone who has been filled with the Spirit can be filled with the Spirit again. I've heard some say it's because they leak – that it's difficult for us not to have the effects of living in a fallen world rub off on us. Others have said it's because people grow in consecration to God and the less of self we have the more God can fill us. Still others maintain that it was because of the specific event in Acts 4 – that God was pleased with how the believers were handling their adversity and how they prayed. Of course, the Bible doesn't tell us **how** someone can be filled with the Spirit in Acts 2:4 and again in Acts 4:31; it just tells us that it happened. Perhaps all three possibilities have some merit. But I'd like to point out that what's true in the natural realm may not always be true in the spiritual realm. In the natural realm, when you fill a glass of water to the very brim, you can't fill it any more. That may or may not hold true in the unseen, spiritual realm. Either way, I believe God is pleased if we carry the attitude that says, “there's more available, and I want to please God so I'm going to ask him and trust him for all he has for me to receive.” Remember, there's always more of God that's available. It is good to hunger and thirst for more of God and more of his Holy Spirit. David declared,

Ps. 63:1 O God, you are my God, earnestly I seek you; my soul thirsts for you, my body

longs for you, in a dry and weary land where there is no water.

The godly men and women of the past always had a deep passion to know God, to love God, to please God, to hunger and thirst after God, and to reveal God. There's a song we used to sing years ago. I love the last phrase of the song. The words are:

I want more of Jesus, more and more and more
I want more of Jesus than I've ever had before.
I want more of his great love, so rich and full and free.
I want more of Jesus, so I'll give him more of me.

Being more submitted to the Lord is a sure and reliable way for us to get more of him. Hallelujah.

So we see in Scripture that the experiences of salvation and the baptism in the Holy Spirit are distinct doctrinally, but they are also distinct experientially. What I mean is that in the five instances from the book of Acts where the baptism in the Spirit takes place, in four of them there is a clear separation of time between the two experiences. In Acts 2 it was believers, saved people, who received in infilling of the Spirit. Granted, this was a unique event because it was the birthday of the church, but there was some period of time – who knows how long – between when they accepted the truth of the gospel and when they were filled with the Spirit and spoke in tongues. In Acts 8, the people of the city in Samaria where Philip preached were saved under his ministry. We read that in verse 12. But they didn't receive the Holy Spirit until after the news of their accepting the gospel reached the apostles in Jerusalem who sent Peter and John to them. We don't know how long it was between their getting saved and being filled with the Spirit. Maybe two weeks? Maybe two months? More? Less? We don't know, but we do know that these two distinct experiences were separated by time.

In Acts 9 we know there was a time lapse of three days. Saul accepted Jesus on the road to Damascus and three days later he received the baptism in the Spirit when Ananias laid his hands on him. In Acts 19 we don't know how long it was, but the Ephesian disciples, Christians, were already saved – perhaps under the ministry of Apollos – by the time Paul ministered to them. They didn't receive the baptism in the Spirit until after Paul had talked to them for a bit, baptized them in water and then laid his hands on them. Again, the two distinct experiences were separated by time.

The exception to this is found in Acts 10. The Gentiles in Cornelius' house heard the message of salvation from the mouth of Peter. Apparently, as soon as they believed the message, God filled them with the Holy Spirit and they spoke in tongues. God is certainly able to save people and fill them with the Spirit at the same time.

Moving along on our outline, Roman Numeral number three deals with the purpose of the baptism in the Holy Spirit. Two purposes are listed: the first is power to witness. We've already read these Scriptures. Jesus said, “you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses...” and “stay in the city until you have been clothed with power from on high.” You've probably had the experience of talking to someone who has no interest in what you're saying. Maybe they're fidgeting, or staring off into space, or tapping their fingers. But once in a great while, you may have encountered someone who is listening to you so intently, with such focus, that they are eager to hear and soak in everything you're telling them. The power of the Holy Spirit is designed to help us make an impact. I'm not claiming that once you get baptized in the Holy Spirit everyone will listen intently every time you share the good news of salvation. But once you get baptized in the Spirit, you now have power to make much more of a difference in the lives of others.

When I was growing up, when we needed to drill a hole we got out the drill, and we manually turned the crank on the drill in order to make the drill bit spin around. Nowadays, we just pull the trigger and the battery does the work for us. The difference between having to turn the crank around and around, and just needing to pull the trigger, is the power. With the power, more gets done faster; the impact is greater. With the power of the Holy Spirit, the impact is greater; more gets done in the Kingdom of God.

Another purpose of the baptism in the Holy Spirit is that it opens up the supernatural realm to the believer to a much greater extent. We've already read from the book of Joel how the outpouring of the Spirit would result in sons and daughters prophesying, old men dreaming dreams and young men seeing visions. In I Corinthians 12, the apostle Paul writes,

I Co. 12:7-11

Now to each one the manifestation of the Spirit is given for the common good.

To one there is given through the Spirit the message of wisdom, to another the message of knowledge by means of the same Spirit, to another faith by the same Spirit, to another gifts of healing by that one Spirit, to another miraculous powers, to another prophecy, to another distinguishing between spirits, to another speaking in different kinds of tongues, and to still another the interpretation of tongues. All these are the work of one and the same Spirit, and he gives them to each one, just as he determines.

The nine manifestations of the Spirit listed here are given to believers so that they have grace and equipment from God with which to be a blessing to others. Experience has shown clearly that those who have received the baptism in the Holy Spirit tend to be much more prolific in experiencing one or more of these nine manifestations than those who haven't yet received. The baptism in the Spirit does open up the realm of the supernatural to the believer in a greater way.

And I'd like to point out that according to the Scripture, we can expect such things as tongues and prophecy to be active in the church today. I've heard some people claim that tongues or prophecy are no longer for today or they died with the apostles or they were phased out once the New Testament canon was established. History shows us that these gifts diminished over time, even though they never passed away entirely, but the New Testament itself says quite clearly when such giftings will no longer be in operation. Let me read you from I Corinthians 13, verses 8-12.

I Co. 13:8-12

⁸Love never fails. But where there are prophecies, they will cease; where there are tongues, they will be stilled; where there is knowledge, it will pass away. ⁹For we know in part and we prophesy in part, ¹⁰but when perfection comes, the imperfect disappears. ¹¹When I was a child, I talked like a child, I thought like a child, I reasoned like a child. When I became a man, I put childish ways behind me. ¹²Now we see but a poor reflection as in a mirror; then we shall see face to face. Now I know in part; then I shall know fully, even as I am fully known.

This whole passage is a contrast between two times, which are identified as being **“now”** and **“then”**. In the **Additional Resources** section of this web page, you can download a document where all the aspects of the verses we just read are in column form, which makes it easier to grasp. I invite you to pause this recording now and download that document. Regarding the time identified as **“now”**, the passage says we know in part, we prophesy in part, we see but a poor reflection as in a mirror, and **“now”** is compared to being a child, in talking, thinking and reasoning. The time identified as **“then”** is compared to being an adult and putting childish ways behind. It's also identified as a time when prophecies will cease, tongues will be stilled, knowledge will pass away, perfection will have come, the imperfect will have disappeared; it's a time when we will see face to face, and we shall know fully even as we are fully known. Now I've never heard of anyone claim that we live in a time when perfection has come and the imperfect has disappeared, but I believe it's quite clear that when we look at the full list of what happens **“now”** and what happens **“then”**, we can see that **“now”** refers to life on earth and **“then”** refers to life in heaven. In heaven, perfection will have arrived and the imperfect will have disappeared. In heaven we will see the Lord face to face, and we shall know fully, even as we are fully known. And therefore prophecies will cease, tongues will be stilled, and earthly knowledge will have passed away, and we will have grown up from our childish, earthly ways. So, since prophecies won't cease and tongues won't be stilled until we get to heaven, we can still expect God to be moving in these ways upon his children today.

Roman Numeral number four on our outline says, “the evidence of the baptism in the Holy Spirit.” This section addresses a very important question, namely “How can I know that I've received the

baptism in the Holy Spirit?” In other words, “What happens so that I can know for certain if I have or haven't received this Holy Spirit baptism?” Understandably, people want to know if they have been clothed with power from on high according to what God has made available to all believers. I've never heard a believer say that they didn't want to be empowered by God to spread the good news and to see the Kingdom of God grow. So knowing where we fit in on this experience is really important. So let's look at the Scriptures.

In the very first instance of the baptism in the Spirit, Acts 2, Scripture says, “all of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues as the Spirit enabled them.” So this verse tells us that on that occasion, the result of these believers having received the baptism in the Spirit was that they started speaking in tongues. In Acts chapter 10 it says,

Ac. 10:44b-46 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 the Gentiles. For they heard them speaking in tongues and praising God.

Again, tongues were present, even to the extent that Peter recognized that what was happening in the room before his eyes was the same working of God as what he and the others had received on the day of Pentecost.

In Acts chapter 19 when the Ephesian disciples received the baptism in the Spirit, it says, “When Paul placed his hands on them, the Holy Spirit came on them, and they spoke in tongues and prophesied. So again, tongues were clearly present.

In Acts chapter 8, Peter and John placed their hands on the Samaritan believers, who then received the Holy Spirit. Here the Scripture doesn't tell us exactly what happened, but whatever did occur was so profoundly supernatural that Simon the Sorcerer offered money to Peter and John to buy this ability. Simon never did that when he was astonished at the great signs and miracles he saw under Philip's ministry earlier. As it has already been mentioned, the only conclusion that makes any sense to me is that Simon saw the people he knew and lived with start speaking in tongues when they received the baptism in the Holy Spirit. That's by far the best explanation I've ever come across.

Then in Acts 9, Saul is filled with the Holy Spirit when Ananias places his hands on him. At that moment, something like scales fall from Saul's eyes, and he is healed of blindness. Nothing else is mentioned, but the Bible does not give us every detail of what happened in each incident that is written. Scripture tells us all we ***need to know in order to please God***, but it doesn't tell us everything that happened. Even John's gospel says that if everything Jesus did were written down, the whole world wouldn't have room for the books that would be written. So is it possible that Saul spoke in tongues when Ananias placed his hands on him and was filled with the Holy Spirit? Sure it is! We certainly know from Scripture that Saul, who later became the apostle Paul, spoke in tongues. When he wrote his first letter to the church in Corinth, he said,

I Co. 14:18 I thank God that I speak in tongues more than all of you.

That's a whole lot of speaking in tongues. So we see that in each one of the five instances where the baptism in the Holy Spirit takes place, tongues is represented in one way or another. It's the common thread that's woven through the experiences in Scripture that describe people being baptized in the Spirit. So, when we help people to receive the Holy Spirit baptism, we tell them that the way they can be certain that they have been filled with power from heaven is that they will speak in tongues – that speaking in tongues is the initial physical evidence of the baptism in the Holy Spirit.

Amazing testimonies have come from those who work with the deaf. Dennis & Rita Bennett give the following anecdote:

QUOTE People who are totally deaf, and have never spoken a word, when receiving the Holy Spirit will speak fluently in tongues! Mrs. Wendell Mason of LaVerne, California, who works with the deaf, says: “I have seen and prayed with at least twenty deaf persons to receive

the Holy Spirit, and heard them begin to speak fluently in a heavenly language to God, then return to their sign language when communicating with me. I have seen two deaf-mute persons receive the Holy Spirit and speak in tongues.” Similar testimony comes from many others who work with the deaf. It would be absolutely impossible for these handicapped people to imitate a language, or to be speaking words remembered from their “unconscious” mind (as some skeptics have said in trying to explain away speaking in tongues) since they have never heard a word in their lives!

taken from The Holy Spirit And You by: Dennis & Rita Bennett, page 60

John Sherrill writes the following incident:

QUOTE

One day a young man from New Jersey, Clifford Tonnensen, had attended a camp meeting in Michigan. In the course of the meeting Clifford received the baptism in the Holy Spirit and began to speak in tongues.

A lady standing nearby grew extremely excited. Clifford was speaking German, she said. A fluent, beautiful High German.

But this alone was not what excited the lady. It was the fact that she *knew* he could not be speaking the language by any natural means. He could not even speak his own language, English. Clifford was a deaf-mute who had not heard a sound since a disease destroyed his hearing at the age of two months!

taken from They Speak With Other Tongues by: John L. Sherrill, pages 94-5

When a believer receives the baptism in the Holy Spirit, God, in his wonderful sovereignty, takes the most unruly member of our body, the tongue, and captivates it in a special way. No *man* can tame the tongue, but the Holy Spirit can.

So what does it mean to speak in tongues? It's simply a language that the Holy Spirit gives the believer, which the believer does not understand with his/her mind.

I Co. 14:14

For if I pray in a tongue, my spirit prays, but my mind is unfruitful.

Although some who have spoken in tongues have had the language they spoke identified, God is not restricted to bestowing a human language.

I Co. 13:1

If I speak in the tongues of men and of angels...

So the language given by the Holy Spirit could be a recognized human language, but that's not the only possibility. God is not limited. Because God loves every one of us, whatever language you may receive as you are filled with the Spirit will be perfect for you. God is good.

Foundations Lesson #5

The Baptism in the Holy Spirit, Part Three

Continuing on to page two of our outline, the blessings of the baptism in the Holy Spirit: Once a believer is baptized in the Holy Spirit, they have the blessing of being able to use their new language in prayer. Speaking in tongues is, first and foremost, a wonderful tool of communication between the believer and God. It's designed to be a relational blessing. Some people tend to focus on the language being spoken, but God's emphasis is always relational. When we are communing with God

in prayer, whether our heart is full of worship, praise, adoration, burden for a lost soul, sorrow, or anything else, we can talk to **The Almighty** in the language given by the Holy Spirit, which expresses our hearts with perfect, heavenly vocabulary, and you can't beat that!

Another blessing we receive is the greater fullness in God that he pours out on us. After all, twice the term "filled with" the Spirit is used to describe the Holy Spirit baptism. What believer wouldn't want to be filled with more of God? I can't think of any greater blessing for a believer to receive.

And as we have already mentioned, various gifts of the Spirit could possibly be received. It's good to remember that gifts from the Lord are designed to help us be a blessing to **others**. Everything in the Kingdom of God is a matter of God first, others second, and self last. Gifts from the Lord are no exception. But being able to bless others, being able to see them somehow prosper and grow in the Lord, to become all they have been created to be, is in itself a huge blessing.

Then it's also necessary to mention that there's been opposition to the baptism in the Holy Spirit – which is Roman Numeral six on our outline. Historically there seem to be two primary reasons for this opposition. Whether we like it or not, the experience of someone speaking in a language they don't understand isn't natural. How many friends or acquaintances do you have who have walked down the sidewalk speaking in a language they don't understand? Some folks consider that just plain **weird**. And because some folks consider that weird, some Christians may initially feel like they're being weird. So as believers, we have to be careful to embrace God's value system instead of the world's value system.

1 Co. 1:27-29 But God chose the foolish things of the world to shame the wise; God chose the weak things of the world to shame the strong. He chose the lowly things of this world and the despised things – and the things that are not – to nullify the things that are, so that no one may boast before him.

As one preacher has said, "There's good weird and there's bad weird. This is good weird." We can chuckle at that statement, but nothing God has done or ever will do can be improved upon. Nothing. So if he has decided that his followers get to speak in languages they don't understand, then that's best for everyone. Period. By the way, the more you and I grow in God, the more we may have to learn to embrace the uncomfortable. That's part of our curriculum in getting to know God better and better. We have to be careful not to make an idol out of being comfortable.

Those people who care more about being comfortable than they do about pleasing God, they're not going to want to speak in tongues. Then, because they care more about their own comfort than they do about submitting to God, they will persecute those believers who are submitted to God. Those speaking in tongues will, **by their actions**, testify to their own consciences that that's what they should be doing, too. So that's where the opposition comes from.

When I was a brand new believer – I think I had gotten saved maybe two weeks earlier – I was reading a book that included a prayer to receive the baptism in the Holy Spirit. As I was reading that prayer – now mind you, I was not **praying** the prayer, I was simply **reading** it – I felt something welling up inside of me ready to come out. So I slammed the book shut and said, "No. I'm not ready for that." Handling it that way was, of course, a huge mistake. Resisting God is **never** a good idea. Graciously, about a week later, God did still baptize me in the Holy Spirit. His love endures forever and his mercies are new every morning. But the greatest way we can please God is simply to submit to whatever he wants – to provide **The Almighty** with zero resistance, whether we are comfortable with what he wants or not.

Another reason that there has been opposition to the baptism in the Holy Spirit is that the kingdom of darkness opposes the power of God being manifested. You would think that when Jesus raised Lazarus from the dead, that people would have been convinced that he was from God. You would think that they would have acknowledged that it could only have been God's power that brought a man back to life who had been dead for four days. You would think that they would have been much more ready to support him, believe him, and follow him. Some did, but others opposed and persecuted him more fiercely, more intensely than ever before. Why? Because the kingdom of

darkness hates the power of God being manifested. God's power is a threat to the devil. The more God's power flows through us to help a lost and dying world, the more opposition we will face from the kingdom of darkness.

Then, Roman Numeral seven on our outline deals with the importance of the baptism in the Holy Spirit. We've already seen in Acts chapter 8 that when the apostles in Jerusalem heard that Samaria had accepted the word of God, they sent Peter and John to them. The next verse tells us that when Peter and John arrived, they prayed for the newly saved Samaritans to receive the baptism in the Holy Spirit. The Bible doesn't tell us specifically why the apostles sent Peter and John, but it certainly could have been because they wanted to make sure that these new believers had been properly clothed with power from on high. That **is** important. Ephesians 5:18 says,

Eph. 5:18 Do not get drunk on wine, which leads to debauchery. Instead, be filled with the Spirit.

Here the Bible makes it plain that we are to be filled with the Spirit, and we are being commanded to do so, which means we have responsibility in making sure that it gets done. I'd also like to point out that the verb tense in the original Greek language is that of a continuous action in the present. What that means is that the idea conveyed is that of our needing to be continuously filled. Again, I'd like to mention that no matter how much you have received from the Lord, there's more available. You and I have to meet the requirements to receive the more, but there is more available.

Next we see that the baptism in the Holy Spirit can be received through the laying on of hands or it can be received sovereignly, without the laying on of hands. In Acts 8, Peter and John prayed for the Samaritan believers, placed their hands on them, and they received the Holy Spirit. In Acts 9, a disciple named Ananias placed his hands on Saul so that he might see again and be filled with the Holy Spirit. In Acts 19, after the twelve disciples in Ephesus had been water baptized, Paul placed his hands on them and the Holy Spirit came on them. So we see that God will, at times, be pleased to have Spirit-filled believers minister to others, helping them to receive the baptism in the Spirit. But God is not restricted to using that method. He is God. He does whatever pleases him. On the day of Pentecost in Acts chapter 2, no one laid hands on the 120 believers in the upper room when they were filled with the Spirit in verse 4. And at Cornelius' house in Acts 10 no one laid hands on the Gentiles when the Holy Spirit came on them, when they believed the message Peter was preaching. So God has shown us in his word that believers can receive the Holy Spirit baptism either way.

Lastly on our outline, the preparation for receiving the baptism in the Holy Spirit, which is Roman Numeral number nine. In this section, I'm trying to help anyone who has not yet received the baptism in the Holy Spirit to receive this gift that the Father has promised, to be clothed with power from on high. Most Christians I have ever met really do want to please God. They want to serve God and know God better. And if there is anything that God has for them that would help them live for the Lord better, they want it! And I want to help them. So let's take a look at the outline.

First, anyone who wants to be baptized in the Holy Spirit has to be saved first. I think we've already covered that.

Next, having a strong desire to know God, love God, and please God is important. Some Christians are, unfortunately, still worldly. Even the apostle Paul had to address such people in First Corinthians chapter 3, the first three verses. He writes,

I Co. 3:1-3 Brothers, I could not address you as spiritual but as worldly – mere infants in Christ. I gave you milk, not solid food, for you were not yet ready for it. Indeed, you are still not ready. You are still worldly. For since there is jealousy and quarreling among you, are you not worldly? Are you not acting like mere men?

Worldliness is simply a matter of focusing so completely on the realm that is **seen**, that it does not consider the realm that is **unseen**. In other words, it focuses so completely on the physical realm, that it does not consider the spiritual realm. As a result, worldliness simply leaves God out of the

picture. Its real passion and priority is on the things of this life, the things of this world, not the things of eternity. And the book of James tells us that worldliness is a hindrance to prayer.

Jas. 4:3-4 When you ask, you do not receive, because you ask with wrong motives, that you may spend what you get on your pleasures.

You adulterous people, don't you know that friendship with the world is hatred toward God? Anyone who chooses to be a friend of the world becomes an enemy of God.

So this is a good time for us to check our motives. Do we want more of God so that we can be more successful in business? more popular? more comfortable? more respected? Or, do we want more of God in order to please him? in order to advance his kingdom? in order to bring glory and honor to his name? As the book of James tells us, having godly motives helps us receive.

Then, it's also a good idea to renounce any past involvement in the occult or the demonic realm. All supernatural activity is either of the kingdom of God or it is of the kingdom of darkness. So if some activity is supernatural but not connected to Jesus Christ, it is of the kingdom of darkness. This includes such things as seances, playing with ouija boards, casting spells, seeking guidance from horoscopes, psychics or mediums, and playing with tarot cards, to name a few. Anyone who has engaged in such activity in the past should tell God they are sorry and renounce their involvement in those things.

Next, please understand that the Holy Spirit will not **force** you to speak in tongues. Some well-meaning believers just wait for God to overpower them as with a bolt of lightning. Very, very rarely will God overpower someone. Almost always, he is looking for our submission and our cooperation. When I received the baptism in the Holy Spirit, I'd come to the place of mind and heart where I believed that the promise was for me, and I believed that God would fill me if I asked him to. I strongly believed that if I went upstairs to my dorm room, locked the door behind me, sat in the chair at my desk, opened the book I had, and read the prayer to receive, that God would fill me and that I would speak in tongues. I was convinced that God would do his part if I did my part, and it happened just as I believed it would. I had to open my mouth to speak, but God provided the words.

Also, I'd like to encourage you not to speak in English, or whatever your main language is. It is impossible to be speaking two languages at the same time.

Ps. 81:10 I am the LORD your God, who brought you up out of Egypt. Open wide your mouth and I will fill it.

Speaking in tongues, like everything else in the kingdom of God, is a matter of faith. Our part is to have the inner conviction, the firm belief, that God will fill our mouth with the words that only he can provide. So, believing, we open our mouth to speak. God does the rest. But when we open our mouth, we can't be speaking a known language, because it's not possible to be speaking two languages simultaneously.

Please also realize that strong emotions may or may not be involved. I encourage you to leave that up to God. Some people have great emotional experiences when they get filled with the Spirit. Others just go off and do their laundry or something. In the kingdom of God we live by faith, not by feelings.

I would also like to encourage you that sometimes, perseverance is necessary. In a perfect world, everybody receives the blessings of God immediately when they ask. Experience, however, shows us that it doesn't always happen that way. Even Jesus taught us that we should not give up when we pray.

Lk. 18:1 Then Jesus told his disciples a parable to show them that they should always pray and not give up.

Jesus would not have taught us to be persistent in prayer if it were never necessary. Some

people wonder, “Why?” That’s a good question, and there may be a great variety of possible reasons, but in Christ, it’s better to focus on the solution than the problem. The solution in this case is simple: keep on seeking, keep on trusting, and keep on asking until the answer comes.

There was a couple we knew years ago. She had a strong desire to receive the baptism in the Spirit. So she would often go up front in church to get prayed for when there was a call to be filled with the Spirit. I believe it was about two months that went by like that, and she would agonize about why she hadn’t received yet. Finally, one day in her house she got down on the floor and said, “God, I’m not getting up from this spot until you fill me with your Spirit.” That was around noon. At 2:30, she remembered that she had committed herself to some responsibility at 3:00pm. So she said, “God, we’ve only got 30 more minutes here.” At 2:55pm, God filled her with his Spirit, and she spoke in tongues, rejoicing.

Not long after that, her husband decided that he really needed to be filled with the Spirit, so he went up front at church after a Sunday evening message to get prayed for. Just a minute or two later, he came back to his wife in the pew smiling because he had received the baptism. His wife told us later, jokingly, that she told God, “That’s not fair!” Why did she have to struggle and agonize but for him the blessing came effortlessly? I don’t know. But I do know that her perseverance was rewarded.

A man named Mike was prayed for several times to receive the Holy Spirit baptism, but nothing ever happened. Then one day as he was driving home from work in his truck – and he wasn’t even praying or anything – the Holy Spirit came upon him in power, and he started speaking in tongues. When it happens that emphatically, you might want to pull over to the side of the road like Mike did so you don’t get into an accident. Another man was also prayed for several times with the laying on of hands, but he had not received. One night at midnight he woke himself up out of a sound sleep because he was speaking in tongues. For him, the tongues lasted about an hour.

About three days before I received the baptism in the Spirit, some well-meaning believers had me sit in a chair and laid hands on me to receive. Nothing happened. In my case, being very distracted with what was happening probably had something to do with my not receiving. Either way, I didn’t lose hope, kept on asking and trusting God, and he did fill me just a few days later.

So I encourage you to ask God; to pray; and to believe. You can and will be filled with the Spirit, because God is faithful, and his promises are always reliable. Relax and be confident. It will happen. Trust the Lord. He is trustworthy.

At the bottom of page two on the outline, I’ve included a sample prayer you can use to receive the baptism in the Holy Spirit. Feel free to use it or, instead, to use your own words, whatever works best for you.

Before ending this lesson, I would like to read three passages of Scripture to encourage you.

Mk. 16:17 [Jesus speaking] And these signs will accompany those who believe: In my name they will drive out demons; they will speak in new tongues:

Ac. 2:38b-39 [Peter preaching] And 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.”

Lk. 11:9-13 [Jesus speaking] “So I say to you: Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you. For everyone who asks receives; he who seeks finds; and to him who knocks, the door will be opened.

“Which of you fathers, if your son asks for a fish, will give him a snake instead? Or if he asks for an egg, will give him a scorpion? If you then, though you are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, **how much more** will your Father in heaven give the Holy Spirit to those who ask him!”

Amen. God bless you all.