

cfc RESOURCES

Baptism in the Holy Spirit

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THE BIBLICAL BASIS FOR THE EXPERIENCE

My Personal Journey

It seems like only yesterday when I received the mighty Baptism in the Holy Spirit.” I had come to Christ quite powerfully, just a few months earlier in 1971, during the Jesus revolution; and so I was no stranger to having a life-changing encounter with God. I knew I was born again and that the Holy Spirit indwelt me. However, I wanted all that God was offering and the fullness of the Holy Spirit’s influence and power was my constant desire.

Jesus was true to His Word and I will never forget that morning, when at around 4.00am, after pouring my heart out to God in prayer, I received and experienced for myself, what the first Christians also experienced on the day of Pentecost (Acts 2:1-12). For over two hours, lying on my bed and walking around in my room, I worshipped Jesus like I never knew how. The gift of tongues simply poured out of me like a river that had just burst its dam. I felt like I was in a spiritual sauna, as I was immersed in a blanket of holy heat from head to toe. It was a Baptism in the Holy Spirit with powerful tongues and purifying fire. I now knew what John the Baptist was referring to as he was introducing Jesus Christ.

‘I baptise 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 baptise you with the Holy Spirit and with fire. His winnowing fork is in his hand, and he will clear his threshing floor, gathering his wheat into the barn and burning up the chaff with unquenchable fire.’ - Matthew 3:11-12

My life seemed purged. A little later, when I was seeking God with prayer and fasting for His long-term direction in my life, the Lord clearly spoke to me about going into full-time ministry. I was barely nineteen as these spiritually momentous events were setting the course of my life.

By twenty-two years of age, I had been involved in two revivals, (in both high school and university) and was now in full-time evangelistic and pastoral ministry.

I simply can’t deny that the Baptism in the Holy Spirit, soon after my conversion, was a great facilitator to outworking God’s purposes and will for my life and ministry. It is my prayer that the Lord will use this book, to help you receive this radical and life changing experience He has clearly promised in His Word.

Before sharing on how to receive this free gift from God, we need to look at some foundational truths from God's Word. The experience of the Baptism in the Holy Spirit must be based upon the clear and unmistakable evidence of Scripture. Open your Bible and let’s examine this most important empowering experience that Jesus wants you to receive.

KNOWING CHRIST AS SAVIOUR FIRST

The great prerequisite is first to have believed on Jesus Christ and to have personally received Him as one's Saviour and Lord. Jesus states it clearly and unambiguously in John 1:12-13 - 'Yet to all who received him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God - children born not of natural descent, nor of human decision or a husband's will, but born of God.'

To experience God's salvation, we have to believe that Jesus Christ died on the Cross for our sins, and was raised from the dead to bring us to God.

Paul and Peter explain the Gospel of Christ in the following Scriptures.

'Now, brothers, I want to remind you of the gospel I preached to you, which you received and on which you have taken your stand. By this gospel you are saved, if you hold firmly to the word I preached to you. Otherwise, you have believed in vain. For what I received I passed on to you as of first importance: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures, and that he appeared to Peter, and then to the Twelve.'

- 1 Corinthians 15:1-5

'He was delivered over to death for our sins and was raised to life for our justification. Therefore, since we have been justified through faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have gained access by faith into this grace in which we now stand.'

- Romans 4:25 - 5:2

'For Christ died for sins once for all, the righteous for the unrighteous, to bring you to God. He was put to death in the body but made alive by the Spirit'

- 1 Peter 3:18

'He himself bore our sins in his body on the tree, so that we might die to sins and live for righteousness; by his wounds you have been healed.'

- 1 Peter 2:24

To be saved requires us to believe the right things about Jesus and His great rescue mission. Right believing or faith, will lead us to invite Jesus to take control of our life and destiny.

Jesus said in Mark 1:14-15, that we personally must 'Repent' *and* 'Believe', if we are to embrace His Salvation. Repentance involves a conscious decision to change our thinking and turn from our sinful, independent lifestyle and go God's way (Ezekiel 33:10-11; 2 Peter 3:9). True repentance occurs when we fully acknowledge our guilt before God. It is being sorry enough over our sins to want to change our way of life. This will naturally result in us confessing all of our sins to God. When we wholeheartedly embrace repentance, we receive forgiveness and cleansing from Jesus (2 Corinthians 7:10; 1 John 1:8-2:2).

To believe involves placing our total trust in Jesus Christ for everything that pertains to our Salvation. We look only to Christ and lean fully upon Him as our Saviour. Jesus Christ is the only one who can rescue us from the penalty of sin and deliver us from the power of sin.

The normal biblical sequence to enter God's kingdom is 'Saved' - then 'Baptised in Water' - then 'Baptised in the Spirit'. The Apostle Peter states this quite emphatically in his first message In Acts.

'Repent and be baptised, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins. 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.'

- Acts 2:38-39

The story of Cornelius, however, is an exception where water baptism came last (Acts 10:44-48). Any person seeking the Baptism in the Holy Spirit must understand that a born again believer is no stranger to the Holy Spirit, as they have already received His regenerative work. John 3:3-8; Galatians 4:4-7; 2:20; 1 Corinthians 12:13; 6:17.

Though the Baptism in the Holy Spirit may coincide with conversion (Acts 10 - The Story of Cornelius), it is not the same as the conversion experience. The New Testament teaches that the Baptism in the Holy Spirit is separate and quite distinct from salvation/conversion.

The following passages highlight this distinction:

- John the Baptist introduces Jesus as the Saviour (John 1:29) before declaring that He will also be the Baptiser with the Holy Spirit (John 1:33)
- Jesus likened His saving work to drinking water to quench one's thirst (John 4:14), whereas He likens the Baptism in the Spirit as a release of powerful streams from within (John 7:37-39)
- Jesus alluded to salvation when He said that the Holy Spirit lives with you (John 14:16-17a), and to the Baptism in the Spirit when He went on to say that the Holy Spirit will be in you (John 14:17)
- The people of Samaria were saved and baptised in water (Acts 8:4-13), prior to receiving the Baptism in the Holy Spirit. This secondary experience occurred when Peter and John were sent to investigate this unexpected revival (Acts 8:14-17)

- The first Christians were genuinely reborn men and women who were not strangers to the saving work of the Holy Spirit prior to the day of Pentecost (John 20:19-30). Only people possessing God's Spirit can 'worship' and 'pray' to Jesus (Luke 24:52-53; Acts 1:14). It was these 120 prayerful, worshipping and dedicated disciples of Jesus who were powerfully Baptised in the Holy Spirit (Acts 2:1-4)
- The Ephesian Christians, (even with limited knowledge) and who needed further clarification, showed evidence of saving faith in Jesus (Acts 19:1-5), before being prayed for to receive the Baptism in the Holy Spirit (Acts 19:6-7).

In summary, if you have received Jesus Christ as your personal Saviour and Lord (John 1:12), then by God's grace you are totally acceptable to God (Romans 5:1, 8:1). There is no divine reason why you cannot be Baptised in the Holy Spirit if you are genuinely born again. The free grace of God in Christ is extended towards all.

You also need to know that our Heavenly Father has promised in His Word that every believer can be Baptised in the Holy Spirit... and this promise includes you.

'How much more will your Father in heaven give the Holy Spirit to those who ask Him?'
- Luke 11:11-13.

'The promise is for you and your children and for all who are far off - for all whom the Lord our God will call.'
- Acts 2:38-39.

THE PURPOSE OF THE BAPTISM IN THE HOLY SPIRIT

The Baptism in the Spirit is primarily for service, so that you will be able to serve Jesus with greater effectiveness. The Greek word for power is 'dunamis' which literally means 'dynamic or energy, or power to achieve, or ability', (Luke 24:49; Acts 1:5, 8). It is a promise of dynamic power to be given to born again Christians, (who are already regenerate), with a view of equipping them to serve God in the manner we find in the Book of Acts.

You also need to know, that our Heavenly Father wants to baptise you in the Holy Spirit, so that you can be spiritually empowered to more effectively live and love like Jesus. What the Holy Spirit has begun in you at the time of your conversion, He will now greatly accelerate, (Titus 3:4-6).

Jesus' Holiness in and through you can be increased in your experience

Matthew. 3:11-12; Romans 8:12-13; 1 Peter 1:2; 2 Thessalonians 2:13

Jesus' Love in and through you can be increased in your experience

Romans 5:5; Galatians 5:22; 2 Timothy 1:7

Jesus' Power in and through you can be increased in your experience

Acts 1:8; 1 Corinthians 12:7; Ephesians 3:16; 2 Timothy 1:7

The Baptism in the Spirit will make spiritual realities so much more real for you. All that we are and have in Christ becomes magnified in us. It focuses us to see our true potential in Christ. There is only one way that our spiritual potential in Christ (Ephesians 1:3) can be fully outworked in and through us. It happens as we allow the Holy Spirit to continually fill us (Ephesians 5:17-20), and as we yield and trust in Him when we pray (Ephesians 6:18).

- Christ in you becomes so much more real

Colossians 1:27; Galatians 2:20; 1 Corinthians 6:17; Ephesians 1:15-23; 3:14-21

- Prayer becomes more intimate

Philippians 3:10; Ephesians 6:18-19; 1 Thessalonians 5:16-20

- Great joy is released

1 Peter 1:8; Romans 14:17; Galatians 5:22

- The Word becomes clearer

Ephesians 5:17; 2 Timothy 3:16-17

- Witnessing becomes bolder and more dynamic
Acts 4:29-31, 5:32
- The nine gifts of the Holy Spirit become more operative
1 Corinthians 12:4-11
- Temptation and spiritual opposition become more acute
Luke 4:1-14

THE EVIDENCE OF THE BAPTISM IN THE HOLY SPIRIT

You need to humbly accept that the normal, initial, Biblical evidence is spoken utterance, in particular, speaking in tongues (glossolalia).

Acts 2:1-13, Acts 10:44-48 and Acts 19:1-6 show clearly that speaking in tongues was the normal Biblical evidence of the Baptism in the Holy Spirit. From Jerusalem, Caesarea and Ephesus, the pattern of the historical record is crystal clear. Speaking in tongues naturally followed when people sought God for the Baptism in the Holy Spirit. Both Peter and Paul, the two main leaders of the early church, were involved in each of these cities, so we must take note of their experience.

The Samaritan experience also strongly infers the gift of tongues, when they received the Baptism in the Holy Spirit through Peter's visit, which caught Simon Magus' attention (Acts 8:14-19). This impressed him even more than the miracles he witnessed through Philip's earlier ministry (Acts 8:12-13).

When Paul was prayed for by Ananias to receive the Baptism in the Holy Spirit (some time after his conversion on the Damascus road), the text does not say that he spoke in tongues (Acts 9:17). However, in the light of Paul's clear statement about his experience of speaking in tongues (1 Corinthians 14:18), we can infer that it was in consequence to Ananias' ministry to him. I think the overall Acts record is overwhelmingly positive.

Let me give you some reasons why speaking in tongues is seen as a most appropriate evidence:

A unique sign

It is the only spiritual gift not mentioned in the Old Testament. All the other eight gifts listed in 1 Corinthians 12:7-11 were evidenced at various times in the Hebrew Bible. Speaking in tongues heralded the fullness of the ministry of God's Spirit in a most distinctive way. Now the Holy Spirit is given to mark a brand new era. This is why Pentecostals have such a high view of this important gift. It is not the be all and end all, but the initial evidence of something great that is now available for all believers in Christ. This gift needs to be appropriated to release the power potential of the Holy Spirit in and through our lives. I will come back to this most important point later in this book.

The great Old Testament prophetic statements of Moses (Numbers 11:24-29), Ezekiel (Ezekiel 36:24-26), and Joel (Joel 2:28-29) are now fulfilled. The New Testament writers clearly apply these great promises to both the work of the Holy Spirit in converting the hearts of people, and to then empowering them to serve God with seemingly limitless power. They were all referring to a time when the Holy Spirit would be given to all believers and not to just a select few.

In Acts 2:16 Peter is saying that this new special prayer language is what the prophet Joel was prophesying about. It is the evidence that the age of the Holy Spirit's outpouring had commenced. In this age of limitless grace (John 1:14), through the life, death, resurrection, and ongoing ministry of Christ, we need the limitless power of the Holy Spirit (Acts 1:8).

This is the only way we can make the good news about Jesus known throughout our world until His return.

A personal gift

It is the only gift of the Spirit mentioned in 1 Corinthians 12:7-11 that can become permanently ours and can be continually exercised in our private devotional life with God (1 Corinthians 14:4, 14-15, 18, 39). All the other eight listed gifts of the Holy Spirit are to be exercised in an orderly manner in the community of the church (1 Corinthians 14:26-40). They are given to equip and empower believers to reach the unchurched with God's grace and power. (Acts 1:8; Acts 5:32). The book of Acts vividly illustrates just how this is possible, and its timeless principles are relevant for every age, including our own.

The gift of tongues greatly helps us in developing spiritual intimacy with the Lord. As our inner spirit is now united with God's Spirit (1 Corinthians 6:17; Ephesians 2:18; Romans 8:16), we now have a divine, supernatural means to help us better communicate with God (1 Corinthians 14:2).

It really is the God-directed cry of the human spirit that is now in intimate union with God (Romans 8:26-27). The Holy Spirit through this gift can take the finest words of the thousands of languages both known and unknown, for the purpose of our adoration of God (1 Corinthians 13:1; 14:2).

An encouragement to our faith

It really encourages and enlivens our faith as we can see the fulfillment of prophecy in our lives (Joel 2:28-29; Acts 1:1-8; 2:37-39). To think that we can experience the very thing that the first Christians experienced is mind-blowing. This gift authenticates and reinforces our salvation experience. That's why Paul said that having the Holy Spirit indwell us is like being marked with a seal (Ephesians 1:13-14). It is a sign that guarantees our eternal future. It gives us something tangible in the realm of our physical senses.

We really can experience the continual life of God and feel His abiding presence through this gift. This compliments beautifully Jesus' great commandment (Matthew 22:37-39), whereby we are to love God, both with our minds (rationally) and with our hearts (emotionally). We must have the immovable foundation of God's Word to secure our faith. We also need the invigorating presence of God's indwelling Spirit to continually refresh and empower us in our walk and service with Jesus.

A means to help us give over control

It signifies the total control of the Holy Spirit over a person's life, in that the most unruly member of our body, (the tongue), comes under the control of the Holy Spirit (James 3:2-12; Matthew 12:36-37; Proverbs 12:13; 18:21).

To speak in tongues, a person has to relax the control of their own minds in the area of what they are saying. I am not inferring that we lose control of our minds, but that we give over control of what we speak for a time. Speaking in tongues is always under the full control of our wills, with our minds in an active, rather than a passive state. It's just that we do not understand what we are saying, as it is our spirit that is praying (1 Corinthians 14:14-15).

Though speaking in tongues bypasses the channel of the mind, our thinking faculties are in complete control. That's why we can be speaking in tongues while we are driving our cars in busy traffic. We don't go into a hypnotic, trance-like state where we lose touch with reality. We merely stop speaking our own thoughts and allow the Holy Spirit to inspire and enable us to speak the right words to God for the occasion. It is giving priority to the Holy Spirit so that what we say is well pleasing to God (Acts 2:11).

Our focus is on Jesus as we praise, worship or intercede under the Holy Spirit's impulse. If the Lord can control our tongues, then surely nothing is too hard for Him to accomplish in our lives (Romans 8:1-27).

This gift continually reminds us of the need to always be yielding to Jesus in all areas of our lives. This principle of yieldedness is stressed by Jesus in the Lord's Prayer (Matthew 6:9-10).

HOW TO RECEIVE THIS EXPERIENCE

1. Personal Preparation

The person receiving needs to understand that the gift is not based on personal worthiness.

It's a gift that cannot be earned. Our Heavenly Father has promised that every Christian can be blessed with this experience (Acts 2:38-39). However, wilful sin or disobedience may well be a hindrance. This hindrance can be removed by genuinely repenting. Admit and confess your sins to God and receive Christ's forgiveness and cleansing (1 John 1:8-2:2). An attitude of humble submission to God is an important prerequisite.

The person receiving needs to simply accept that this experience became possible for all Christians to receive from the day of Pentecost onwards Acts 2:1-9.

We need only to prepare ourselves to receive this special gift, just like the first Christians did. These early believers had an attitude of submission to God's Word and yieldedness of mind to the express will of Jesus.

The person receiving needs to have an attitude of faith.

They must have confidence that they will receive after they pray. When you pray in Jesus' name, (John 14:13-14; John 16:23-24) you have access to our gracious and merciful Heavenly Father and all His blessings. This is because Christ is our mediator and we can approach a perfectly holy, just and loving God because of Jesus' worthiness. You can be very confident in talking to our Father in heaven and can really expect that your request will be granted when you go through Jesus Christ (Hebrews 4:14-16).

The person receiving needs to remember that God does not usually violate the dignity of human will.

The seeker himself has his finger on the control button. Acts 2:4 says, 'they began to speak in other tongues'. God doesn't speak for us... He does the filling; we do the speaking. Therefore we must take action ... remember, 'faith without corresponding actions is dead' (James 2:17).

Read the following stories on how people used their faith in Bible times.

- The widow and the oil - 2 Kings 4:1-7
- Peter walking on the water - Matthew 14:22-33
- The sick woman who touched Jesus' garment - Mark 5:25- 34.

In each case the people concerned had to commit themselves to some action by faith, before they saw a miracle. This is a universal principle in the operation of all the gifts of the Holy Spirit (1 Corinthians 12:7-11). So it is with the Baptism in the Holy Spirit - sooner or later you must take a faith initiative, eg. by speaking words that may initially sound strange to you, after you ask for the experience.

God will always honour genuine faith -

'Without faith it is impossible to please God. He rewards those who earnestly seek Him.'
Hebrews 11:6

The two best scriptural definitions of faith are found in:

'Now faith is being sure of what we hope for and certain of what we do not see.'
Hebrews 11:1

'Therefore I tell you, whatever you ask for in prayer, believe that you have received it, and it will be yours.'
Mark 11:24

This is the kind of faith you need to have operating if you are to be personally prepared to receive.

2. Praying to Receive

Be as relaxed and tension free as possible. You can receive on your own, or you may want help by having a friend or two praying with you for encouragement. Others find it much easier to be in a special worship gathering, where speaking and singing in tongues is occurring. The important thing is to forget what is happening around you and to fix your mind on Jesus Christ, as He is the mighty Baptiser in the Holy Spirit.

What is the *Prayer of Faith* in this context? ... Before you ask you will not be able to speak in tongues. After you ask and receive you will be able to speak in tongues. It's as simple as that.

Sincerely Desire

Matthew 5:6; Psalm 42:1-2; Acts 1:14.

You should not be half-hearted with God. The Lord loves to see sincerity linked with a strong desire, when people seek Him for His blessings. May the promises regarding God's power, love, holiness etc., stir and excite your faith to receive all that Jesus offers you through this life transforming encounter with the Holy Spirit.

Ask the Father

Luke 11:11-13

You need to pray and remember that God our loving Heavenly Father answers prayer. You cannot receive unless you ask (James 1:3-5). Whether you ask and receive the first time or you are required to seek God on several occasions, make it your priority to seek God fervently with your whole heart.

Believe - that He wants you to have it.

Matthew 7:11, Psalm 84:11.

Have confidence that God will do what you are asking of Him. God grants what is in His will, and He wills all to experience Jesus Christ as both Saviour from sin and Baptiser in the Holy Spirit. John 1:29-34; 1 John 5:14-15.

Receive by faith

Hebrews 11:1, Mark 11:24

There comes a moment when you just know and trust that you have received this precious gift. It is at this spiritually illuminating occasion, when you should stop asking and take it, for it's now yours. God has given but you must receive.

Thank Him

Psalm 100:4, Philippians 4:6

Don't keep on asking. Rather praise and thank God for the gift. Thank and praise Him out loud. Hebrews 3:15. Get used to hearing your own voice. Break out of your natural inhibitions, but rest assured that the Lord will not force you to do anything that runs contrary to your own personality and temperament.

I have seen hundreds upon hundreds respond to God's overwhelming presence in various ways. Some weep, others laugh; some are very quiet, others loud and raucous; some are on their knees, worshipping with outstretched arms, others seated with little outward worship expression; some feel great heat, others feel cold, others still remain the same; some feel pins and needles and quivering of their bodies and eyelids etc., others have no physiological response like this.

It seems that people respond to God and sometimes even react unconsciously, according to their own personality type. The most important thing however, is that they all, under the Holy Spirit's influence, speak in a brand new prayer language.

Stop thanking in English

1 Corinthians 14:14-15, 39.

When you go beyond the limits of English to give praise, determine to speak in tongues - Step out of the boat like Peter, launch out with a burst of faith.

The Spirit of God will empower you

Acts 2:4; John 7:37

He does the filling - we do the speaking. That's why we must take action. The Holy Spirit will not force you but He will empower and enable you when you commence speaking in your new prayer language. Remember it is your voice that speaks even when we speak in tongues. James 2:17 says, 'Faith without corresponding action is dead'.

Once you start, allow the Holy Spirit to release you fully with the gift of tongues, so that it really gushes, rather than just being a trickle.

In my own experience, I continued for nearly two hours, worshipping in this marvellous prayer language. I knew that Jesus was doing something wonderful in and through me, so I was in no hurry for this initial experience to come to an end.

3. Practice Daily

Now that you have received, this does not mean that you have arrived. In fact, you have just started on the Spirit-filled road. We are commanded to keep on being filled with the Holy Spirit and to always be praying in the Spirit (Ephesians 5:17-20; 6:18). It is one of God's key ways for us to be built up in our faith; (Jude 20; 1 Corinthians 14:2,4) and become more effective witnesses of Jesus. (Acts 1:8; 2:14; 4:31).

It is very important that we develop the habit of utilising this precious gift of tongues on a daily basis. The more we yield to God and constantly depend on Him, the more the Spirit of God can flow through our lives and ministry in an unhindered way. Though you receive this gift on a particular occasion, it is required of all obedient Christians, to keep on being filled with the Holy Spirit.

4. Balanced Discipleship

The Baptism in the Holy Spirit needs to be seen in the context of the other discipleship truths that all New Testament Christians must embrace, if they are to grow properly and serve Jesus effectively. Bible Reading and Study; Prayer; Fellowship; Worship; Church Attendance; Witnessing and Ministry involvement, though not our topic in this book, are equally important if we are going to be true disciples of Jesus Christ. Luke describes the balanced spiritual life of the very first church soon after they received the mighty Baptism in the Holy Spirit.

*'They devoted themselves to the apostles' **teaching** and to the **fellowship**, to the **breaking of bread** and to **prayer**. Everyone was filled with awe, and many wonders and miraculous signs were done by the apostles. All the believers **were together** and had **everything in common**. Selling their possessions and goods, **they gave** to anyone as he had need. **Every day** they continued to **meet together in the temple courts**. **The broke bread in their homes** and ate together with glad and sincere hearts, **praising** God and enjoying the favour of all the people. And the Lord **added to their number** daily those who were being saved.'* - Acts 2:42-47

We need to follow their example.

This is the New Testament way, whereby all the gifts, graces and fruit of Jesus, can be built into us and flow through us to others. This is how we truly glorify God and extend the influence of His great Kingdom.



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