

Why God Wants to Baptize You With His Holy Spirit

After Jesus died, was buried, rose from the grave, and then returned to earth, He gave His disciples some final instructions. Right before He ascended to heaven, Jesus told them to wait for the promise of the Father. The very last thing someone says before they leave is important. The last thing Jesus said was, “Guys, don’t go *anywhere* until you’ve been baptized with the Holy Spirit.”

Now why would that be? Jesus went on to explain that this experience would give them power to be His witnesses. “But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit comes upon you. And you shall be My witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth” (Acts 1:8).

What?

Power is awesome, but power for what? *To be witnesses*. Christians often think of witnessing as something we do with our mouths; yet most people associate the word “witness” with vision. That’s the dictionary definition: we personally see something; we are onlookers who observe. *Eyewitness News* shows us the story from the perspective of someone who saw the event firsthand. If we are called as a witness in a courtroom, we saw a crime or an accident take place. Or if we “witness history in the making” it’s because the commentator believes we saw an extraordinary feat happen right before our eyes. In order to be a witness, we must be an observer and a seer.

Who?

So what are we watching or whom are we observing? *Jesus*. Well, how can we see Him if He’s on His way to heaven? That’s where the power of the Holy Spirit comes in. Holy Spirit baptism enables us to fix our eyes on Jesus and look at the unseen

(Heb. 12:2, 2 Cor. 4:18). We receive Holy Spirit's power to be witnesses of Jesus. We're anointed to be seers and watchers and observers of Him. Jesus wants a witness to His life – the one He's living right now.

In the beginning, the Garden of Eden was like heaven on earth. No sin, no sickness or death. Satan had no authority (until we gave it to him), and there was perfect fellowship with God. Likewise, if we fast forward to the book of Revelation we know it speaks of these same characteristics of our heavenly home—no tears and no pain (Rev. 21:4).

Heaven is just too good for us to wait around until we die to experience it. And Jesus said we don't have to! He instructed His disciples to pray in this way, "Your kingdom come; Your will be done on earth, as it is in heaven" (Matt. 6:10).

When?

So when does Acts 1:8 say we become witnesses and observers and watchers of Jesus? Well, Jesus only walked the earth as a man for around 33 years, so if we were going to see Him as a man in the natural world, it would have needed to have happened a couple thousand years ago.

But Jesus said you *will be* witnesses and watchers, which places this entire promise about Holy Spirit's power to observe Him in the future, that is, after Jesus was resurrected and ascended. It's not about watching Jesus working miracles in Israel way back when; it's about what He's been up to every day since, and what He's doing right now.

Where?

When Jesus lived as a human being in the physical world, He actually had a fairly small area of ministry. His outreach included Jerusalem, Judea, and even Samaria, but not a whole lot farther out than that. In fact, Jesus only ever traveled about 200 miles from where He was born.

Yet where does Acts 1:8 talk about seeing Him? In the remotest part of the earth. The ends and the uttermost. This confirms the witnessing and seeing Him must be in the future, because Jesus never made it to the ends of the earth when He was here as a man.

Again, Jesus is explaining how we can see Him, how we can watch Him, observe Him and be a witness of Him as He currently lives and actively works and delivers and teaches and heals in Buffalo and Beijing and Buenos Aires. The farthest parts of the earth.

Why?

Because the invitation is still the same. Jesus is still calling us now just as He did then with a simple "Follow Me."

This is not an impersonal, cold religion or pile of doctrines and theology. It's a relationship. That is what we were created for and all God has ever wanted. It's just us who have been sidetracked with rules and laws and boxes to live inside.

Just as children learn by imitating their father or big brother, we are seeing our heavenly Father and we're imitating Him. We're watching our elder brother, Jesus, and we're modeling Him. Our faith must be easy enough for a child to participate in, and we understand now how simple it really is. We spend time with Jesus and play follow the leader.

How?

To be a witness means to be a seer and it is the baptism of the Holy Spirit that anoints us with the power to be witnesses. Current and real-time watchers and lookers and observers of Jesus.

Holy Spirit baptism opens the eyes of our hearts and gives us the power to look into the supernatural realm, see what Jesus is doing and follow His lead. Holy Spirit is the one who anoints us to be present-tense witnesses of Jesus so we are

able to see what He's up to and join Him. Work and minister and play alongside Him. Do life together with Him.

How can we be in relationship with someone we can't see or hear? Intimate friendship is the desire of God's heart.

That is the great invitation. {eo}

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