

Promised Pentecostal Power: Baptism in the Holy Spirit

Reflecting on Jesus' earthly ministry, we see it was limited to only a few years. However, after the Resurrection and Pentecost, it was and continues to be multiplied through Spirit-empowered believers. Their ministries today, guided and equipped by the Holy Spirit, continue to proclaim the gospel of Jesus Christ and the future kingdom of God. These called and chosen ones declare the biblical truths concerning justification, sanctification and Spirit-empowered service.

Promised Empowerment With the Holy Spirit

Jesus is the prototype of the Spirit-filled, Spirit-empowered life (Matt. 4:23, Luke 4:14-19, Acts 10:38). Pastor Jack Hayford wrote: "The book of Acts is the story of the disciples receiving what Jesus received in order to do what Jesus did!"

As Jesus was about to embark on His public ministry, He sought out John the Baptist to align with his ministry of repentance and confession of sin as a necessity for entering the kingdom of God. After His immersion in water by John, Jesus received the Holy Spirit's anointing for public ministry in a miraculous display of our triune God: "As Jesus emerged from the water, the heavens were opened, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and settling on him. And a voice from heaven proclaimed, 'This is my dearly loved Son, who brings me great joy'" (Matt. 3:16-17, NLT).

Then, on the day of Jesus' ascension to heaven, He commanded the assembled disciples "not to depart from Jerusalem but to wait for the Promise of the Father ... for John truly baptized with water, but you shall be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days from now" (Acts 1:4-5, NKJV).

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Jesus promised His disciples Spirit-filled empowerment for kingdom service: “But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes upon you. And you will be my witnesses, telling people about me everywhere—in Jerusalem, throughout Judea, in Samaria, and to the ends of the earth” (Acts 1:8, NLT).

Notice that while the Holy Spirit draws us to Christ and is active in our repentance and conversion experience, this baptism “with” or “in” the Holy Spirit is a subsequent experience. It is received “when the Holy Spirit comes upon” us. We must be plugged in to our Pentecostal power source for effective living and ministry.

The clear purpose of the outpouring of the Spirit, as recorded in the Acts of the Apostles, is to empower believers for an invigorated living witness and each congregation for effective ministry.

Have You Been Baptized in the Holy Spirit Since You Believed?

The book of Acts relates six case-history accounts of people receiving the fullness or infilling of baptism in the Holy Spirit (Acts 2:4, 11; 4:27-31; 8:14-25; 9:17-20; 10:44-48; 19:1-7).

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Four of the six references specifically mention *glossolalia* (languages not formerly learned or known by the speaker). The term is coined from the Greek *glossa* (“tongue”) and *laleo* (“to speak”). In two accounts (Acts 4:27-31, 8:14-25;), *glossolalia* (tongues) is inferred by the hearers’ reactions.

Hayford's notes in the Spirit-Filled Life Bible at Acts 2:4 explain the phenomenon of "speaking with tongues" within the classical Pentecostal tradition and among some other contemporary Christians and many charismatics. Many within the classical Pentecostal viewpoints believe speaking in Holy-Spirit prompted tongues accompanies the occasion of a person's initial surrender to the fullness of the Holy Spirit. They might express this as "the initial physical evidence of the baptism with the Holy Spirit." Whereas others place less emphasis on the doctrinal terminology, they would still apply its fundamental implication in their continued exercise of tongue-speaking as a part of their private prayer language. (See 1 Cor. 14:1, 2, 4, 15, 39, 40).

In Acts 10, the Jewish believers traveling with Peter were astonished because "the gift of the Holy Spirit had been poured out on the Gentiles also, for they heard them speak with tongues and magnify God" (Acts 10:45b-46, NKJV).

Praying (or singing) in an unknown tongue is communicating sounds and syllables that are unknown to the one praying. These flow out of their innermost being and not their intellect. We are privately praying to and praising God with expressions from our hearts and spirits. This way, we can speak "mysteries" to God and edify ourselves (1 Cor. 14:1-5).

We can conclude where we began: Have you been baptized in the Holy Spirit since you believed? Let this Pentecost season be filled with a new desire to be filled (or refilled) with the Holy Spirit. Then, pray and sing to God with the spirit and with your understanding (1 Cor. 14:15) as the Spirit of God refreshes every fiber of your being. Amen!

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