

Receiving the Gift of the Holy Spirit

Prior to this lesson, the student should have read “The Purpose of the Father”, which is available on the website. “The Purpose of the Father” has a full explanation of the Holy Spirit as the Spirit of Truth and the need for us to be baptized in or with the Holy Spirit. This lesson is to help one by baptized with the Holy Spirit—Art Nelson.

As with most things of the Lord, we have made receiving the Holy Spirit more difficult than necessary. The basic approach is simply to ask for the Holy Spirit. If we do that the Father will give us the Holy Spirit.

Luke 11:13 NASB

(13) "If you then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask Him?"

It is simple—ask the Father, because the Holy Spirit is the promise of the Father. Jesus is the baptizer with the Holy Spirit¹. Just as a believer baptizes a new convert in water, Jesus baptizes a believer in the Holy Spirit. In the first case, water is the media into which you are immersed; in the second case, the Holy Spirit is the media into which you are immersed.

Peter, on the day of Pentecost, gave us the procedural steps necessary for us to move into the fullness of what God has for us. Jesus had told Peter that He was giving him the keys to the kingdom² and Pentecost was the first occasion for Peter to present the keys.

Acts 2:38 NASB

(38) Peter *said* to them, "Repent, and each of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins; and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.

Peter gave three keys, three procedural steps: 1) repent, 2) be baptized, and 3) you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. You have to have completed the first two steps before going to the third. That is why the verb tense on the third is future—it occurs after the first two. Most of us have been told that we get it all when we receive Jesus. That is not true according to Peter. We have to use all three keys.

Peter went on to extend the promise of the Father, the Holy Spirit, to all of them and to all of their children and then to all that the Lord would call to Himself.

Acts 2:39 NASB

(39) "For the promise is for you and your children and for all who are far off, as many as the Lord our God will call to Himself."

This extends the promise of the Holy Spirit across time and space. It extends it even to us. If God has called you to Himself, then the promise is to you.

1 Mark 1:8; John 1:33

2 Matthew 16:19

Let us look at the examples in the scriptures of the various instances of people receiving the Holy Spirit.

Pentecost

As we saw in our earlier scriptures, the Lord told the disciples to wait in Jerusalem until they received the promise of the Father and that the Holy Spirit would give them the power to witness. On the day of Pentecost they were together in an upper room and the Holy Spirit came in fulfillment of Jesus' promise. This is the first instance of being filled with the Holy Spirit.

Acts 2:1-4 NASB

- (1) When the day of Pentecost had come, they were all together in one place.
- (2) And suddenly there came from heaven a noise like a violent rushing wind, and it filled the whole house where they were sitting.
- (3) And there appeared to them tongues as of fire distributing themselves, and they rested on each one of them.
- (4) And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit was giving them utterance.

As we look at these instances of receiving the Holy Spirit we need to also look at the manifestations mentioned as the Holy Spirit came.

1. Tongues of fire upon each head
2. They began to speak with other tongues

House of Cornelius

On the day of Pentecost the Holy Spirit was poured out on the Jews that had come to Jerusalem for the Pentecost observance. The gentiles were not included. The Lord took several steps to arrange for the gentiles to also receive the Holy Spirit. This occurred at the house of Cornelius where Peter spoke to them as directed by the Lord.

Acts 10:44-48 NASB

- (44) While Peter was still speaking these words, the Holy Spirit fell upon all those who were listening to the message.
- (45) All the circumcised believers who came with Peter were amazed, because the gift of the Holy Spirit had been poured out on the Gentiles also.
- (46) For they were hearing them speaking with tongues and exalting God. Then Peter answered,
- (47) "Surely no one can refuse the water for these to be baptized who have received the Holy Spirit just as we *did*, can he?"
- (48) And he ordered them to be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ. Then they asked him to stay on for a few days.

It was an astounding thing to the Jews that gentiles could receive the Holy Spirit³. It just didn't fit into their traditional theology. However, the manifestations that they saw was conclusive proof that the gentiles received the Holy Spirit just like they did. There are two manifestations listed:

³ Acts 11:15-18

1. They were speaking with tongues
2. They were exalting God.

This was conclusive enough that Peter said that they could be baptized in water as real believers in the Lord Jesus.

These two instances, Pentecost and the house of Cornelius, are instances where the Holy Spirit came as a sovereign act of God. Both of these instances were important because they were “firsts”--Pentecost for the Jews and Cornelius's house for the gentiles.

Samaria

The clearest example of the baptism in the Holy Spirit (being filled with the Spirit) as a separate experience from salvation is the story of the people of Samaria. Philip went to Samaria to preach Christ. The people saw and heard the signs that he performed. People were delivered from demons and many lame and paralyzed were healed. As a result of all of this the Samaritans believed Philip concerning Jesus.

Acts 8:12 NASB

- (12) But when they believed Philip preaching the good news about the kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ, they were being baptized, men and women alike.

After believing Philip about Jesus and the Kingdom of God, they were baptized. In other words, they became Christians. They did exactly what people do today—they believed and were baptized. But that is not the end of the story.

Acts 8:14-18 NASB

- (14) Now when the apostles in Jerusalem heard that Samaria had received the word of God, they sent them Peter and John,
(15) who came down and prayed for them that they might receive the Holy Spirit.
(16) For He had not yet fallen upon any of them; they had simply been baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus.
(17) Then they *began* laying their hands on them, and they were receiving the Holy Spirit.
(18) Now when Simon saw that the Spirit was bestowed through the laying on of the apostles' hands, he offered them money,

When the apostles at Jerusalem heard that Samaria had new believers, they sent Peter and John to minister to them. They laid hands on the believers and prayed for them to receive the Holy Spirit. They had become believers and had been baptized (we would say that they had been “born again”) but they had not received the Holy Spirit.

The scriptures don't give the details about the type of manifestations that occurred but we know that something visible happened because Simon the magician saw it and wanted to buy from the apostles the power to give the Holy Spirit. This must have been something that Simon had never seen before and he had seen the miracles, healings, and deliverances performed by Philip previously.

Disciples at Ephesus

On this occasion Paul went to Ephesus and found 12 disciples. His first question reveals how important he thought receiving the Holy Spirit was if you were a believer.

Acts 19:1-6 NASB

- (1) It happened that while Apollos was at Corinth, Paul passed through the upper country and came to Ephesus, and found some disciples.
- (2) He said to them, "Did you receive the Holy Spirit when you believed?" And they *said* to him, "No, we have not even heard whether there is a Holy Spirit."
- (3) And he said, "Into what then were you baptized?" And they said, "Into John's baptism."
- (4) Paul said, "John baptized with the baptism of repentance, telling the people to believe in Him who was coming after him, that is, in Jesus."
- (5) When they heard this, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus.
- (6) And when Paul had laid his hands upon them, the Holy Spirit came on them, and they *began* speaking with tongues and prophesying.

After further questioning, Paul found out that they weren't full believers. They were disciples of John the Baptist. Paul told them of Jesus and when they believed, he baptized them in water. Once they were full-fledged believers, he laid hands on them to receive the Holy Spirit.

Receiving the Holy Spirit was accompanied by two manifestations.

1. Speaking with tongues
2. Prophesying

Apostle Paul

During Paul's encounter with Jesus on the road to Damascus, Jesus told him to go into the city and he would be told what to do. For three days Paul waited without eating or drinking. The Lord also told Ananias to go to Paul and pray for him to regain his sight and be filled with the Holy Spirit.

Acts 9:17 NASB

- (17) So Ananias departed and entered the house, and after laying his hands on him said, "Brother Saul, the Lord Jesus, who appeared to you on the road by which you were coming, has sent me so that you may regain your sight and be filled with the Holy Spirit."

1 Corinthians 14:18 NASB

- (18) I thank God, I speak in tongues more than you all;

Notice that it was not an apostle that laid hands on Saul (Paul) to receive the Holy Spirit but only a certain disciple named Ananias. While no detail is given of Paul's experience of being filled with the Spirit, Paul later told the Corinthians that he spoke with tongues more than they did. Based on our previous scriptures, it is logical to assume that Paul spoke in tongues when he received the Holy Spirit.

Let's recap these five occasions in a table so that we can compare the manifestations of receiving the Holy Spirit.

<i>Occasion</i>	<i>Reference</i>	<i>Manifestation</i>
Pentecost	Acts 2:1-4	Tongues of Fire Speaking in Tongues
House of Cornelius	Acts 10:44-48	Speaking in Tongues Exalting God
Samaria	Acts 8:12-18	Not specified but visible to others
Disciples at Ephesus	Acts 19:1-6	Speaking in Tongues Prophesying
Apostle Paul	Acts 9:17; I Cor. 14:18	Speaking in Tongues

In four of these five instances the initial manifestation or evidence of the Holy Spirit included speaking in tongues. On the fifth occasion the evidence is not specified but it was visible to others. Based on the other four occasions, it is logical to conclude that the visible evidence that enticed Simon the magician to offer money was speaking in tongues.

Can a person be baptized with the Holy Spirit and not speak in tongues? Of course he can. However, anyone filled with the Holy Spirit can speak in tongues if they will only do so. The Holy Spirit does not “possess” us or force us to do anything. We must cooperate with the Holy Spirit in faith in order to speak in tongues.

If one does not speak in tongues, there is always an element of doubt that the Enemy plays on to say that we have not received since tongues is one of the primary scriptural evidences of being baptized with the Holy Spirit. If we don't utilize tongues, we eliminate from our experience a powerful prayer resource that has specific purposes in the pursuit of our calling in the plans of God.

Steps to Receiving

1. Ask the Father for Jesus to baptize you with the Holy Spirit.
2. Ask in faith, we receive Jesus by faith, we receive the Holy Spirit by faith, we receive tongues by faith.
3. Open your heart and receive what the Lord is giving until you are full to overflowing.
4. Open your mouth and begin to speak, glorifying God in your natural language and in the language which the Holy Spirit gives.

For further study concerning tongues, see the teaching, “Tongues: Purpose and Use” available on the website.