

## CAN YOU BELIEVE IT?

### The Baptism in the Holy Spirit

**Doctrinal Statements (summarized):** *All believers are entitled to and should ardently expect and earnestly seek the promise of the Father, the baptism in the Holy Spirit and fire, according to the command of our Lord Jesus Christ. This experience is distinct from and subsequent to the experience of the new birth (Acts 8:12-17; 10:44-46; 11:14-16; 15:7-9).*

*The baptism of believers in the Holy Spirit is witnessed by the initial physical sign of speaking with other tongues as the Spirit of God gives them utterance (Acts 2:4).*

#### A. Basic Truths about the Baptism in the Holy Spirit

1. The Holy Spirit is a person of the Trinity, who allows believers to have a relationship with him.

John 14:16-18

And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Counselor to be with you forever— 17 the Spirit of truth. The world cannot accept him, because it neither sees him nor knows him. But you know him, for he lives with you and will be in you.

The Holy Spirit is not a “force” or a thing. He is a person.

The Bible speaks of him having intellect, emotions, and will.

It ascribes to Him the acts we would expect of someone who was not just a force, but a real person.

He speaks (Rev. 2:7; Acts 13:2)

He intercedes (Rom. 8:26)

He testifies (John 15:26)

He leads (Acts 8:29; Rom. 8:29)

He commands (Acts 16:6-7)

He Guides (John 16:13)

He can be lied to (Acts 5:3-4)

He can be blasphemed (Matt. 12:31-32)

He can be grieved (Eph. 4:30)

All of these emotions and acts are characteristics of a person.

2. The baptism in the Holy Spirit is a separate and subsequent experience from the coming of the Holy Spirit at salvation.

- In Acts 5:1, Jesus promises his followers that they would be baptized in the Holy Spirit. John the Baptist prophesies that Jesus would baptize “with the Holy Spirit and with fire” in Luke 3:16.

Acts uses four additional phrases to refer to this experience:

- Believers were filled with the Holy Spirit (2:4; 4:31; 9:17)
- Jesus had poured out the Spirit (2:17-18, 33; 10:45)
- Believers could receive the Holy Spirit (2:38; 8:15-17; 10:47; 19:2)
- The Holy Spirit came on them (10:44; 11:15; 19:6)
- There are events recorded in Acts that help emphasize the difference between the Holy Spirit coming at Salvation and the baptism in the Holy Spirit. They are:

- The Samaritans who had already believed (Acts 8:14-17)

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

- Paul’s encounter with the believers in Ephesus (Acts 19:2-6)  
“Did you receive the Holy Spirit when (after) you believed?” They answered, “No, we have not even heard that there is a Holy Spirit.”

<sup>3</sup> So Paul asked, "Then what baptism did you receive?"  
"John's baptism," they replied.

<sup>4</sup> Paul 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." <sup>5</sup> On hearing this, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. <sup>6</sup> When Paul placed his hands on them, the Holy Spirit came on them, and they spoke in tongues and prophesied.

3. The Old Testament promised the outpouring of the Holy Spirit as a gift for all believers.

Isaiah 44:3

I will pour out my Spirit on your offspring,  
and my blessing on your descendants.

Joel 2:28

I will pour out my Spirit upon all people.  
Your sons and daughters will prophesy.  
Your old men will dream dreams,  
and your young men will see visions.

4. The Baptism in the Holy Spirit empowers believers for service.

**Acts 1:8**

<sup>8</sup> 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."

Acts 4:33

With great power the apostles continued to testify to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus. And God's grace was so powerfully at work in them all

Acts 6:8

Now Stephen, a man full of God's grace and power, performed great wonders and signs among the people.

1 Cor. 2:4

My message and my preaching were not with wise and persuasive words, but with a demonstration of the Spirit's power.

## B. The Evidence of the Baptism in the Holy Spirit

1. The first outward sign of the baptism in the Holy Spirit is speaking in tongues.

A physical observable sign that confirms a believer has been baptized in the Holy spirit. It is evidence that allows the believer to know he/she has been baptized and when others have been baptized.

2. There is a pattern in the book of Acts that points to speaking in tongues as the initial physical evidence of the baptism in the Holy Spirit.

- On the Day of Pentecost (Acts 2:1-4)
- At Samaria (Acts 8:4-25)
- At Saul's Conversion (Acts 9:17)
- At the House of Cornelius (Acts 10:44-46)
- At Ephesus (Acts 19:1-7)

3. Speaking in tongues is sometimes misunderstood because it serves three functions in the church:

- The initial physical evidence of the baptism in the Holy Spirit (Acts 2:4)
- Praying in private for personal growth (1 Cor. 14:2-4)
- Public use of tongues as one of the nine gifts of the Spirit (1 Cor. 12-7-10)

## C. Receiving the Baptism in the Holy Spirit

1. There is no set formula for a believer to follow to receive the baptism in the Holy Spirit, but the following steps help prepare a believer to do so:
  - Repent of any known sin.
  - Believe that the gift of the Holy Spirit is for all Christians.
  - Ask Jesus to baptize you in the Holy Spirit.
  - Audibly worship and praise Jesus.
  - Step out in faith and receive.
  
2. Speaking in tongues offers four benefits to the believer:
  - It builds us up spiritually. (1 Cor. 14:2-5)
  - It helps us intercede for others. (Romans 8:26)
  - It can be a step toward other spiritual gifts.
  - It can serve as a sign to unbelievers that something supernatural is happening. (1 Cor. 14:22)
  
3. According to Ephesians 5:18 the baptism in the Holy Spirit is something needed by all believers who should be filled with the Holy Spirit on an ongoing basis.