

## Understanding the Baptism in the Holy Spirit:

The following is taken from *Small Group University* by Reverend Brad Lewis

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*“Peace be with you; as the Father has sent Me, I also send you.’ And when He had said this, He breathed on them and said to them, ‘Receive the Holy Spirit’” – John 20:21-22*

Now that the disciples’ salvation had been completed, the Holy Spirit could come and live *inside* of them. When you accept Jesus as Savior, the Holy Spirit comes to live *inside* of you too. This experience is called salvation. What a beautiful gift!

Shortly before Jesus had ascended into heaven, He gave some important instructions:

*“Gathering them together, He commanded them not to leave Jerusalem, but to wait for what the Father had promised, ‘Which,’ He said, ‘you heard of from Me; for John baptized with water, but you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days from now’” –Acts 1:4-5*

The coming of the Holy Spirit at salvation (described in the previous section) and the baptism in the Holy Spirit are separate and subsequent experiences. They can happen at virtually the same time. But, in the case of the first disciples, there was a 50-day gap between their salvation and their experience of Spirit baptism...

### **Acts 2—Jewish Christians wait at Pentecost**

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

- The fire and sound of wind were symbols that signified the Holy Spirit in the Old Testament. God used these so that the Jewish believers here would know what was happening—because it was the first time in history that it happened!
- The fire and the sound of wind have not been documented since this.
- Those who were baptized spoke in “other tongues.”

### **Acts 8—Simon and the Samaritans**

*“Then they began laying their hands on them, and they were receiving the Holy Spirit. Now when Simon saw that the Spirit was bestowed through the laying on of the apostles’ hands, he offered them money.” –Acts 8:17-18*

- These were Samaritans, not Jews. God was not playing favorites (Acts 2:39).
- Although the words “speaking in tongues” are not specifically stated, whatever Simon (a sorcerer) saw, he could tell it was the Holy Spirit being imparted and was impressed by it.
- Simon wanted only to benefit himself.
- Baptism in the Spirit is not something that can be bought! Jesus gives it as a free gift!

### **Acts 10—Cornelius’ Household**

*“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. For they were hearing them speaking with tongues and exalting God.” –Acts 10:45-46*

- Non-Jews were again receiving the gift.
- Cornelius’ entire household was experiencing salvation and the baptism in the Holy Spirit with the evidence of speaking in tongues!

### **Acts 19—Ephesian Believers**

*“And when Paul had laid his hands upon them, the Holy Spirit came on them, and they began speaking with tongues and prophesying.” –Acts 19:6*

- People are still being baptized in the Spirit twenty years after Pentecost!
- These were believers who loved Jesus and had previously received salvation.
- Paul prayed for these Ephesians and they began speaking in tongues and prophesying.

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One key message must be stressed: these instances involve the personal use of praying in tongues to God. The evidence of speaking in tongues in prayer, after being baptized in the Holy Spirit, is available to all Christ followers. This experience is distinct from the Spiritual gift of tongues, where the audience is other people, and it requires interpretation (1 Cor. 14:27). When I pray in English, my mind tells my mouth what to say. When I pray in tongues, the Holy Spirit tells my mouth what to pray.

Praying in tongues is an incredibly valuable tool. Paul summarizes this beautifully by saying,

*“In the same way the Spirit also helps our weakness; for we do not know how to pray as we should, but the Spirit Himself intercedes for us with groanings too deep for words.” –Rom. 8:26*

Most of us would agree that we don’t really know how to say the right prayer. In my life, instances happen every day where prayers from my intellect are terribly inadequate. The Spirit knows exactly what’s going on. He is all-knowing! You can pray in line with God’s will by praying what you know (in your own language) and then taking time to pray in tongues (your spiritual prayer language). You might also hear the phrase “praying in the Spirit,” which is used interchangeably with “praying in tongues” in Scripture (1 Cor. 14:14). This is effective because we don’t always know the details, but the Holy Spirit knows all the details!

Praying in tongues to God is not a one-time event (Paul later says, *“I speak in tongues more than you all” –1 Cor. 14:18*). It is a wonderful lifestyle of unbiased prayer and increasing passion for those who don’t know Christ. It is available to those who ask (Luke 11:13) and builds our faith (Jude 20). We encourage leaders to pursue the Baptism in the Holy Spirit and pray in the Spirit on a daily basis...

The baptism in the Holy Spirit is not a badge of honor. It is not a requirement for salvation. However, praying in tongues is a powerful tool that empowers us to reach our workplaces, campuses, and families more effectively for Christ.

*“...but you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be My witnesses both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and even to the remotest part of the earth” –Acts 1:8*