

Power From On High

by
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The Holy Spirit is the person of God who nurtures us individually and corporately from infancy as born-again “babes” in Christ unto that manifested glory as mature and perfected sons of God.

My wife, Nancy, and I sat in the living room of a young married couple who were hungering for more of the Lord than their tradition had taught or allowed. We were debating the issue of the baptism in the Holy Spirit. The husband argued his church’s doctrine that opposed the baptism in the Holy Spirit and I was giving all the reasons I knew favoring it. We were in a doctrinal gridlock.

After several failed attempts to get our attention, Nancy pushed through her question. She compassionately eyed him face to face and asked, “Given the understanding you have of baptism—being completely immersed in the water—wouldn’t you like to be totally immersed, soaked, saturated in the precious Holy Spirit of God?” Her question changed the entire mood in the room and in him. It was an “argument stopper” for both of us. “Of course,” he meekly answered. “Who wouldn’t want to be?”

He and I approached the subject as though it was a thing to perform or a doctrine to be believed or rejected. The “baptism” part is, grammatically speaking, an *it*, but the Holy Spirit is a person. We are to be filled, immersed, soaked, and saturated in the person of God’s Holy Spirit! How glorious is that? Think of us as being a sponge completely submerged in water, squeezed, and filled.

The person of the Holy Spirit has also been called the Comforter. The Greek word for Comforter is *parakletos*, one who is summoned, appointed to stand by one’s side; to plead for another before a judge; a counsel for the defense; an intercessor. The Holy Spirit as the Comforter pleads with God the Father to pardon our sins. John 15:26.

The Baptism of John

We begin this narrative with a man who was the son of a priestly family; probably born into privilege, named John, who was the son of Zacharias. The word of God had come to him, compelling him to go about all the regions around the Jordan, preaching a baptism of repentance.

John’s preaching and baptizing at this time in history was the fulfillment

of the word spoken by Isaiah the prophet, saying, “The voice of one crying in the wilderness, Prepare the way of the Lord. Make His paths straight. Every valley shall be filled and every mountain and hill brought low. The crooked places shall be made straight and the rough ways smooth. And all flesh shall see the salvation of God.” Isaiah 40:3-5.

Jews came from all over the region to hear John’s preaching and to be baptized by him in water. The crowd asked him if he was the Messiah. John answered, “I indeed baptize you with water; but One mightier than I is coming, whose sandal strap I am not worthy to loose. He will baptize you in the Holy Spirit and fire. His winnowing fan is in His hand, and He will thoroughly clean out His threshing floor, and gather the wheat into His barn; but the chaff He will burn with unquenchable fire.” Luke 3:15-17.

Surely the people had to wonder, “What does it mean to be baptized in the Holy Spirit?” Had they heard of such? The Jews practiced a ritual in water called Mikva for the purification of their souls. Many still do so today. Here, however, is the first recorded mention of the baptism (immersion) in the Holy Spirit. This term is repeated multiple times throughout the New Testament.

Though many Christians today believe the baptism in water and the baptism in the Holy Spirit are the same, it is clear that John made a distinction between the two.

Three baptisms are spoken of by John: the baptism in water for the remission of sin, the baptism in the Holy Spirit, and the baptism in fire. The case could be made that the baptism in fire is part of what it means to be baptized in the Holy Spirit. Many think that the fire is like being “fired up for Jesus.” The fire is the purging and purifying work of the Holy Spirit intended to conform us into the image of Christ. Philippians 3:10; Galatians 4:19.

“He will sit as a refiner and a purifier of silver; He will purify the sons of Levi, and purge them as gold and silver, that they may offer to the Lord an offering in righteousness.” Malachi 3:3.

Baptism in water is not the same as the baptism in the Holy Spirit and fire. Conversely, the baptism in the Holy Spirit and fire are not the same as being baptized in water.

Many Christian traditions argue that we can no longer receive the baptism in the Holy Spirit, believing it passed away when the New Testament scriptures were given. Some simply don’t know about it because it has never been preached or taught. Others are outright hostile toward this experience and tread dangerously close to blaspheming the Holy Spirit.

The Baptism in the Holy Spirit

Baptism - it's important to clarify the meaning of this New Testament word. The New Testament was written in Greek. Baptize comes from the Greek word, *baptizo*. It means to dip, immerse, or submerge in a manner that produces a permanent change. *Baptizo* does not mean to sprinkle or pour. The Greek word for pour is *ekcheo*. The Greek word for sprinkle is *rhantizo*.

Words convey thought forms. We say elephant and we picture an elephant. We do not picture a donkey. Therefore, it is vital that we get our terminology correct. Prepositions are no exception. Most translations read, "baptism *with* the Holy Spirit." This is misleading. It is not the "baptism *with* the Holy Spirit." Nor is it the "baptism *by* the Holy Spirit." It is the "baptism *in* the Holy Spirit." The preposition used here and elsewhere in the New Testament in the Greek is *en*. It can be translated *in*, *by*, or *with*. However, in keeping with the meaning of baptism it has to be *in* and not *by* or *with*. We could use those terms if baptism meant to sprinkle or pour, but it does not. The Holy Spirit is not sprinkled or poured upon us. We are immersed into Him.

These kinds of translation mishaps are possibly made to conciliate our traditions when our traditions should be shaped by the accuracy of scripture.

The Holy Spirit is the power of Christ's Lordship

The Holy Spirit in our lives is the power of Christ's Lordship. We get His life when we are born again. We get His power when we are baptized in the Holy Spirit. "And, behold, I send the promise of My Father upon you: but tarry in the city of Jerusalem, until you are endued (clothed) with power from on high." Luke 24:49.

We can confess Jesus as Lord and still lack the power of His Lordship in our lives. I lived my Christian life from my youth professing the Lordship of Jesus Christ, but I did not have the power to back it up. I only knew about God from an intellectual point of view. I never received revelation. I never saw miracles. I never had the scriptures to come alive to me. I had no evidence that the Holy Spirit was doing a work in me. I never had any power over sin. The power just wasn't there. Consequently, due to the lack of His power and the deceitfulness of sin in my life, I eventually drifted into atheism.

All of this changed for Nancy and me when we were converted in 1978 and accepted the invitation to be baptized (immersed) in God's Holy Spirit. From that day to this, I saw the evidence. We spoke in tongues. Nancy received the gift of wisdom and discernment. I received the gift of knowledge, discerning of spirits, and prophecy. We witnessed deliverance from demons. We witnessed healings and miracles. Insights from scriptures began to jump off the page with one "Aha!" after another. Moreover, we experienced the cleansing and sanctifying (separating) work of the Holy Spirit that began to change us from the very core of our

beings. We had the power of Christ's Lordship in our lives. I feel kept by His Holy Spirit to this day.

Jesus baptizes us in the Holy Spirit

Many church traditions state that only the clergy are qualified to baptize people in water. There is no scriptural proof for this. Believers baptize believers in water. Jesus baptizes us in His Holy Spirit. John, speaking of Jesus said, "I indeed baptized you with water, but He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit." Mark 1:8. John also said, "I did not know Him, but He who sent me to baptize with water said to me, 'Upon whom you see the Spirit descending, and remaining on Him, this is He who baptizes in the Holy Spirit.'" John 1:33 NKJV.

We shall see in some scripture references below that believers who had already received the baptism in the Holy Spirit imparted the Spirit with the laying on of hands on others to receive. Nevertheless, it is not the believers who do the baptizing in the Holy Spirit. It is the Lord Jesus.

John baptizes Jesus

Back to that eventful day when John was preaching and baptizing in the Jordan. Jesus walked into the river toward him. John tried to prevent Him from being baptized by him saying, "I need to be baptized by You, and are You coming to me?"

There is no scriptural evidence that Jesus had anything from which to repent. He simply explained to John that it was fitting for John to baptize Him to fulfill all righteousness (right standing). All that Jesus did was necessary that He might be in right standing with the Father; that He might be presented as the perfect sacrificial Lamb of God; that through faith in Him we would be reconciled unto God, the Father.

When Jesus came up out of the water, "the heavens opened to Him and He saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and alighting upon Him. Suddenly a voice came from heaven, saying, 'This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.'" Matthew 3:13-22.

We witness two baptisms here. First, Jesus was baptized in water to fulfill all righteousness. Second, the Holy Spirit descended upon Him and the Father affirmed His Sonship. One was in the water. The other was coming up out of the water.

Jesus' baptism in fire

Immediately after Jesus' baptism in the Jordan, the Holy Spirit led Him into the wilderness to be tempted of the devil. This was the beginning of His baptism in fire. He was put into the kiln of trials.

Notice in Luke 4:1, we read that, "Jesus being full of the Holy Spirit returned from Jordan, and was led by the Spirit into the wilderness."

Then, in verse 14, it says that after being tempted by the devil for forty days, He returned in the power of the Spirit into Galilee: and His fame went out through all the region round about. He was led into the wilderness by the Holy Spirit and came out in the power of the Spirit.

By this time, we see that Jesus had experienced all three baptisms: the baptism in water, the baptism in the Holy Spirit, and the baptism in fire. He is the pattern Son, the prototype. We are those who are patterned after the Son to be the sons of God. We must go through all three baptisms in our journey from faith to faith and glory to glory.

The Spirit upon Jesus

Jesus departed from the Jordan and returned to Nazareth where He had been brought up. He customarily went into the synagogue on the Sabbath and stood up to read. Someone handed Him the book of the prophet, Isaiah. He opened it and read the following Messianic passage, "The Spirit of the Lord is upon Me because He has anointed Me to preach the gospel to the poor; He has sent Me to heal the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to set at liberty those who are oppressed; to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord." They were fascinated by Him. That is, until He dared to say, "This day is this scripture fulfilled in your ears." Their fascination suddenly turned to wrath. They drove Him out of the city and tried to throw Him over a cliff. Instead, He turned and passed through the middle of them and went His way. Luke 4:16-30.

The Holy Spirit was upon Him, anointed Him, empowered Him, sent Him, and led Him. Jesus could not have made this Messianic claim except by the knowledge of the Holy Spirit. Everything Jesus did from that time on was in the Spirit and by the Spirit. He was totally immersed in the precious Holy Spirit of the Father. He had the Spirit without measure (limit). Much more has been written about the work of the Holy Spirit in the life and ministry of Jesus. However, in keeping with the specific purpose of this writing, let us focus on the promise of the Spirit in the lives of His followers.

The Work of the Spirit in Believers

It is expected that Jesus, the Son of God, the Messiah, would have the Holy Spirit without measure, but what about His followers, those who believed in Him? Can we have the Spirit as well? We not only can, but it is God's desire and promise that we have the power of His Holy Spirit at work within us. The same Holy Spirit that empowered Jesus, has been sent to empower His followers, the sons of God.

Jesus said, "So I say to you, ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you. For everyone who asks receives, and he who seeks finds, and to him who knocks it will be opened. If a son asks for bread from any father among you, will he give

him a stone? If he asks for a fish, will he give him a serpent instead of a fish? If he asks for an egg, will he offer him a scorpion? 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!*" Luke 11:9-13. [italics mine]

We receive the Holy Spirit when we are born again

We receive a measure (or portion) of the Holy Spirit when we are born again, but that is not the same as being baptized in the Holy Spirit. After His crucifixion, but before He ascended into heaven, Jesus breathed on His disciples, and said to them, "Receive the Holy Spirit." John 20:22. We know this is not the same as being baptized in the Holy Spirit because Jesus had promised them that they would later receive power when the Holy Spirit had come upon them. Acts 1:8. They received the Holy Spirit, but were not yet baptized in the Holy Spirit. They were all filled, baptized in the Holy Spirit on the Day of Pentecost.

Nonetheless, when Jesus breathed on them and said, "Receive the Holy Spirit," they were born again. He could not have done this before His crucifixion. He had to first pay the price of their redemption upon the cross.

This is a difference in measure (or portion). We receive the Holy Spirit when we are born again and given His life. We are filled with the Holy Spirit when we are baptized in the Holy Spirit and given His power. Jesus had the Spirit without measure. John 3:34.

The purpose of the Holy Spirit

In the general sense, we are given the Holy Spirit that we might be empowered to give back to God what He wants for Himself that His ultimate purposes might be accomplished.

We have not been given the Holy Spirit to frolic in the manifestations of the gifts of the Spirit (mentioned later in this writing). We have not been given the Holy Spirit to make superstars of some who have been given extraordinary gifts as it has been with those who are especially gifted. We have not been given the gifts for the charismatic thrill we feel in praise and worship. In the past pride and arrogance among many who received the gift of the Holy Spirit brought division and defensiveness into the body of Christ. They misunderstood the purpose for the gifts of the Spirit.

The opening paragraph to this study speaks of this purpose. It states:

The Holy Spirit is the person of God who nurtures us individually and corporately from infancy as born again babes in Christ unto that manifested glory as mature and perfected sons of God.

The Holy Spirit has been given to us for the following specific reasons.

To teach us all things

The anointing of the Holy Spirit teaches all that God intends for us to know. “But you have an anointing from the Holy One, and you know all things.” 1 John 2:20. “...the anointing which you have received from Him abides in you, and you do not need that anyone teach you; but as the same anointing teaches you concerning all things, and is true, and is not a lie, and just as it has taught you, you will abide in Him.” 1 John 2:27.

God has appointed that some should be teachers. We can and should be open to hearing from God through others. We grow in Him that way. Nevertheless, the Holy Spirit must give us eyes to see and ears to hear. Otherwise, it is mere head knowledge. We can lose it as quickly as we gained it. Always pray for revelation and truth.

To bring all things to our remembrance

“But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My name, He will teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all things that I said to you.” John 14:26.

To testify of Jesus

“But when the Helper comes, whom I shall send to you from the Father, the Spirit of truth who proceeds from the Father, He will testify of Me. And you also will bear witness, because you have been with Me from the beginning.” John 15:26-27.

To convict the world of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment

“It is to your advantage that I go away; for if I do not go away, the Helper will not come to you; but if I depart, I will send Him to you. And when He has come, He will convict the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment: of sin, because they do not believe in Me; of righteousness, because I go to My Father and you see Me no more; of judgment, because the ruler of this world is judged.” John 16:7-11.

To guide us into all Truth

However, when He, the Spirit of truth, has come, He will guide you into all truth...“For He will not speak on His own authority, but whatever He hears He will speak.” John 16:13.

Jesus often said, "I tell you the truth...." He told the truth because He was Truth. "Out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks." The Holy Spirit can only reveal Truth because He is God and He only does what He sees the Son doing. John 16:13-15. When we receive the baptism in the Holy Spirit, we likewise receive the Spirit of Truth who will guide us into Truth.

We confuse Truth with facts. While the existence of Jesus is a fact, beyond that, He is Truth. He doesn't just tell the truth; He is Truth. He is the Way and the Truth and the Life. John 14:1. The Holy Spirit reveals that Truth. He reveals the reality of Jesus Christ and the Father.

The Holy Spirit will expose a lie or falsehood when needed. In the days immediately following Pentecost when the new believers had all things in common, Ananias and his wife Sapphira sold a possession and lied about the part they held back for themselves. Peter, through the knowledge given to him by the Holy Spirit, exposed the lie. Ananias and his wife denied their lie and, as a result, died. The end of this story reports that great fear came upon all the assembly and upon all who heard these things. Acts 5:5-11. Not a good idea to lie to the Spirit of Truth!

Not only does the Holy Spirit guide us into all truth, He also guides us in all things. The Holy Spirit is given to guide us; therefore, we are to be led by the Spirit. This is how we know we are sons of God. "For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, these are sons of God." Romans 8:14.

To tell of things to come

"He will tell you things to come." John 16:13.

Moreover, in the face of trials and persecution, when they deliver us up, we are not to worry about what we should say. His Holy Spirit will give us what we are to speak in that hour. Matthew. 10:19.

To glorify Jesus

"He will glorify Me, for He will take of what is Mine and declare it to you. All things that the Father has are Mine. Therefore, I said that He will take of Mine and declare it to you." John 16:14.

The Holy Spirit makes Jesus look good. If we should ever receive anything we think might be from the Holy Spirit and it does not glorify Jesus, it is not the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit will always point to Jesus. "For the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy." Revelation 19:10.

To mature us

Receiving the Holy Spirit is not the end goal, but God's means toward the end.

One aspect of the Holy Spirit's job is to make us all more functional ministers of the gospel that we may edify, strengthen, encourage, and exhort one another and even more so as that day approaches. Hebrews 10:25.

Moreover, He empowers those who are called as apostles, prophets, evangelists, shepherds, and teachers to build us up into the image of Christ and to bring us into fullness and maturity as sons of God. "Till we all come to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a perfect man, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ." Ephesians 4:13.

The Promise of the Holy Spirit

Jesus promised His followers that He would send the Holy Spirit after His ascension. He said to them on the last day of the great feast, "If anyone thirsts, let him come to Me and drink. He who believes in Me, as the Scripture has said, out of his heart will flow rivers of living water. But this He spoke concerning the Spirit, whom those believing in Him would receive; for the Holy Spirit was not yet given, because Jesus was not yet glorified." John 7:37-39

Later, Jesus said, "And I will pray the Father, and He will give you another Helper, that He may abide with you forever—the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees Him nor knows Him; but you know Him, for He dwells with you and will be in you. I will not leave you orphans; I will come to you." John 14:16-18.

We note here the difference before Pentecost (baptism in the Holy Spirit) and after Pentecost. Before Pentecost, the Holy Spirit was *with* them. Afterward, the Holy Spirit would dwell *within* them—"will be in you."

Luke reported Jesus saying, "Behold, I send the promise of My Father upon you; but tarry in the city of Jerusalem until you are endued (clothed) with power from on high." Luke 24:49. Luke wrote both the gospel of Luke and the book of Acts. Acts is the continuing story of Jesus through the Holy Spirit. Some have said that instead of calling it, "The Acts of the Apostles," it should be called, "The Acts of the Holy Spirit."

Luke restates Jesus' command in Acts 1:4-8. While they were assembled together with Him, "He commanded them not to depart from Jerusalem, but to wait for the promise of the Father which He said, "you have heard from Me; for John truly baptized in water, but you shall be baptized in the Holy Spirit not many days from now...But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be witnesses to Me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth." [Emphasis mine]

We do not miss the opportunity to note in these scriptures that Jesus made a distinction between water baptism and the baptism in the Holy Spirit.

The Promise fulfilled

Acts, chapter two tells the story. “When the Day of Pentecost had fully come, they were all with one accord in one place. And suddenly there came a sound from heaven, as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled the whole house where they were sitting. Then, there appeared to them divided tongues, as of fire, and one sat upon each of them. And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance.

“And there were dwelling in Jerusalem Jews, devout men, from every nation under heaven. And when this sound occurred, the multitude came together, and was confused because everyone heard them speak in his own language. Then they were all amazed and marveled, saying to one another, ‘Look, are not all these who speak Galileans? And how is it that we hear, each in our own language in which we were born?

Parthians and Medes and Elamites, those dwelling in Mesopotamia, Judea and Cappadocia, Pontus and Asia, Phrygia and Pamphylia, Egypt and the parts of Libya adjoining Cyrene, visitors from Rome, both Jews and proselytes, Cretans and Arabs—we hear them speaking in our own tongues the wonderful works of God.’ So they were all amazed and perplexed, saying to one another, ‘Whatever could this mean?’ Others mocking said, ‘They are full of new wine.’

“Peter, standing up with the eleven, raised his voice and said to them, ‘Men of Judea and all who dwell in Jerusalem, let this be known to you, and heed my words. For these are not drunk, as you suppose, since it is only the third hour of the day. But this is what was spoken by the prophet Joel: And it shall come to pass in the last days, says God, that I will pour out of My Spirit on all flesh; Your sons and your daughters shall prophesy. Your young men shall see visions. Your old men shall dream dreams. And on My menservants and on My maidservants I will pour out My Spirit in those days; and they shall prophesy.’

“After saying many other things, Peter concluded his message. When they heard this, they were cut to the heart, and said to Peter and the rest of the apostles, ‘Men and brethren, what shall we do?’

“Then Peter said to them, ‘Repent, and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. For the promise is to you and to your children, and to all who are afar off, as many as the Lord our God will call.’”

See again the distinction is made between water baptism and the promise of the gift of the Spirit. John preached repentance and baptized for the remission of sins. Peter likewise preached that they should repent and be baptized for the remission of sins.

“Then those who gladly received his word were baptized [in water]; and that day about three thousand souls were added to them.”

What, then, must we do? Repent! Be baptized! Receive the gift of the Holy Spirit! This appeal was in the context of the great outpouring of the Spirit on the day of Pentecost. Therefore, can we not conclude that this appeal to receive the gift of the Holy Spirit was anything other than the baptism in the Holy Spirit?

The Holy Spirit in Acts

We continue to learn about the work of the Holy Spirit in Acts and how the baptism in the Holy Spirit is separate from water baptism.

Stephen, the Martyr Acts 6-7

Stephen had been elected a deacon and was doing great wonders and signs among the people. He was challenged by some who were of the Synagogue of the Freedmen and accused of blasphemy. He recited Israel's history with God and ended with a rather harsh accusation. "You stiff-necked and uncircumcised in heart and ears! You always resist the Holy Spirit; as your fathers did, so do you."

"When they heard these things they were cut to the heart, and they gnashed at him with their teeth. But he, being full of the Holy Spirit, gazed into heaven and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing at the right hand of God, and said, 'Look! I see the heavens opened and the Son of Man standing at the right hand of God!' Then they cried out with a loud voice, stopped their ears, and ran at him with one accord; and they cast him out of the city and stoned him. And the witnesses laid down their clothes at the feet of a young man named Saul [later Paul, the apostle]. And they stoned Stephen as he was calling on God and saying, 'Lord Jesus, receive my spirit.' Then he knelt down and cried out with a loud voice, 'Lord, do not charge them with this sin.' And when he had said this, he fell asleep."

Stephen did wonders and signs by the power of the Holy Spirit. Moreover, he could have not endured this kind of martyrdom and at the same time be so forgiving of his persecutors without the power of the Holy Spirit at work within him.

Peter in Caesarea Acts 10

Cornelius was a centurion in Caesarea who believed in God. An angel came to him in a vision and told him to send for Simon whose surname was Peter. After receiving a vision from heaven, Peter went to Cornelius and, while preaching the gospel of the Kingdom to him and his household, the Holy Spirit fell upon them. "Those of the circumcision [Jewish believers] who believed were astonished, as many as came with

Peter, 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. Then Peter answered, 'Can anyone forbid water, that these should not be baptized who have received the Holy Spirit just as we have?' And he commanded them to be baptized in the name of the Lord. Then they asked him to stay a few days."

We note here that the baptism in the Holy Spirit came first. After which, Peter commanded them to be baptized in water in the name of Jesus.

Peter's testimony in Jerusalem Acts 11: 15-18

Peter went to Jerusalem and to the apostles and brethren to explain to them how he was told in a vision to eat animals that were considered by Jews to be unclean. Peter understood this to be a sign that he was to take the gospel to the Gentiles. He told how he had been sent to Caesarea and how he had shared the gospel. He said, "The Holy Spirit fell upon them, as upon us at the beginning. Then I remembered the word of the Lord, how He said, 'John indeed baptized in water, but you shall be baptized in the Holy Spirit.' If therefore God gave them the same gift as He gave us when we believed on the Lord Jesus Christ, who was I that I could withstand God?"

Peter referred to the baptism in the Holy Spirit as a gift from God.

Simon, the Sorcerer Acts 8:9-25

We read about a man called Simon, "who previously practiced sorcery in the city and astonished the people of Samaria, claiming that he was someone great, to whom they all gave heed, from the least to the greatest, saying, 'This man is the great power of God.' And they heeded him because he had astonished them with his sorceries for a long time.

But when they believed Philip as he preached the things concerning the kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ, both men and women were baptized. Then Simon himself also believed; and when he was baptized he continued with Philip, and was amazed, seeing the miracles and signs that were done.

"Now when the apostles who were at Jerusalem heard that Samaria had received the word of God, they sent Peter and John to them, who, when they had come down, prayed for them that they might receive the Holy Spirit. For, as yet, He had fallen upon none of them. They had only been baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. Then they laid hands on them, and they received the Holy Spirit."

Here, again, we see the distinction made between water baptism and the baptism in the Holy Spirit. Also, that the Holy Spirit was imparted through the laying on of hands.

“And when Simon saw that through the laying on of the apostles’ hands the Holy Spirit was given, he offered them money, saying, ‘Give me this power also, that anyone on whom I lay hands may receive the Holy Spirit.’ But Peter said to him, ‘Your money perish with you, because you thought that the gift of God could be purchased with money! You have neither part nor portion in this matter, for your heart is not right in the sight of God. Repent therefore of this your wickedness, and pray God if perhaps the thought of your heart may be forgiven you. For I see that you are poisoned by bitterness and bound by iniquity.’

“Then Simon answered and said, ‘Pray to the Lord for me, that none of the things which you have spoken may come upon me.’”

Saul (Paul) filled with the Spirit

Acts 9:10-17

We read that “there was a certain disciple at Damascus named Ananias; and to him the Lord said in a vision, ‘Ananias.’ And he said, ‘Here I am, Lord.’

“So the Lord said to him, ‘Arise and go to the street called Straight, and inquire at the house of Judas for one called Saul of Tarsus, for behold, he is praying. And in a vision he has seen a man named Ananias coming in and putting his hand on him, so that he might receive his sight.’

“Then Ananias answered, ‘Lord, I have heard from many about this man, how much harm he has done to Your saints in Jerusalem. And here he has authority from the chief priests to bind all who call on Your name.’ But the Lord said to him, ‘Go, for he is a chosen vessel of Mine to bear My name before Gentiles, kings, and the children of Israel. For I will show him how many things he must suffer for My name’s sake.’

“And Ananias went his way and entered the house; and laying his hands on him he said, ‘Brother Saul, the Lord Jesus, who appeared to you on the road as you came, has sent me that you may receive your sight and be filled with the Holy Spirit.’ Immediately there fell from his eyes something like scales, and he received his sight at once; and he arose and was baptized.”

Here again, The Holy Spirit was imparted by the laying on of hands. This time, however, Paul was water baptized after receiving the Holy Spirit. We also note that his sight was restored to him through the laying on of hands.

Paul at Ephesus

Acts 19:1-6

“And it happened, while Apollos was at Corinth, that Paul, having passed through the upper regions, came to Ephesus. And finding some disciples he said to them, ‘Did you receive the Holy Spirit when you believed?’ So they said to him, ‘We have not so much as heard whether

there is a Holy Spirit.’ And he said to them, ‘Into what then were you baptized?’ So they said, ‘Into John’s baptism.’

“Then Paul said, ‘John indeed baptized with a baptism of repentance, saying to the people that they should believe on Him who would come after him, that is, on Christ Jesus.’ When they heard this, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. And when Paul had laid hands on them, the Holy Spirit came upon them, and they spoke with tongues and prophesied.”

Here we see that they were first baptized in water. Then, Paul laid hands on them to receive the Holy Spirit. They spoke with other tongues and prophesied.

Moreover, a distinction is made not only between water baptism and the baptism in the Holy Spirit, but with John’s baptism in water. John’s baptism was a baptism of repentance for the remission of sins, but it was John’s baptism. Believer’s baptism is likewise a call to repent and be water baptized for the remission of sins, but it is in the name of the Lord—in Jesus’ name.

The Gifts of the Holy Spirit

The Holy Spirit is the source of the gifts of the Spirit. He mentions nine gifts in the following passage.

In 1 Corinthians 12: 1-11 Paul wrote, “Now concerning spiritual gifts, brethren, I do not want you to be ignorant: You know that you were Gentiles, carried away to these dumb idols, however you were led. Therefore I make known to you that no one speaking by the Spirit of God calls Jesus accursed, and no one can say that Jesus is Lord except by the Holy Spirit. There are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit. There are differences of ministries, but the same Lord. And there are diversities of activities, but it is the same God who works all in all. But the manifestation of the Spirit is given to each one for the profit of all: for to one is given the word of wisdom through the Spirit, to another the word of knowledge through the same Spirit, to another faith by the same Spirit, to another gifts of healings by the same Spirit, to another the working of miracles, to another prophecy, to another discerning of spirits, to another different kinds of tongues, to another the interpretation of tongues. But one and the same Spirit works all these things, distributing to each one individually as He wills.”

The Ministries of the Holy Spirit

The Holy Spirit is the source of the ministries of the Spirit.

In Ephesians 4:11-16 Paul wrote, “And He Himself gave some to be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers.

Paul explains that these ministries are given to “equip the saints for the work of ministry, for the edifying (building up) of the body of Christ.”

These ministries are to continue until “we all come to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a perfect man, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ;” with the view “that we should no longer be children, tossed to and fro and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the trickery of men, in the cunning craftiness of deceitful plotting.” Rather, we are to speak the truth in love that “we may grow up in all things into Him who is the head—Christ—from whom the whole body, joined and knit together by what every joint supplies, according to the effective working by which every part does its share, causes growth of the body for the edifying of itself in love.”

The Fruit of the Holy Spirit

The Holy Spirit is the source of the fruit of the Spirit.

Paul wrote in Galatians 5:22, “But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering (patience), kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control.”

We do not have to be baptized in the Holy Spirit to bear the fruit of the Spirit; however, any genuine fruit of the Spirit is the produce of the Spirit. Certainly, if we are baptized in the Holy Spirit, we should expect to bear the fruit of the Spirit.

He added, “Against such there is no law.” This spiritual fruit is produced by believers because they have the inner life and power of the Holy Spirit. The fruit come from the inner life of the tree. Though we often try, we cannot legislate fruit behavior.

What about speaking in tongues?

Do I *have* to speak in tongues? No, you *get* to speak in tongues. Why would you not want to speak in tongues? It is a gift from God. It is one of the nine manifestations of the Spirit listed in 1 Corinthians 12.

Paul, while comparing tongues with prophecies in 1 Corinthians 14, sheds much light on the need and place for tongues. (Some believers today also refer to speaking in tongues as their prayer language). Many people who read this passage of scripture dismiss tongues because they say it is the “lesser gift.”

Paul begins by calling on us to pursue love and desire the spiritual gifts, but especially that we may prophesy. He continues by instructing the Corinthians regarding the place of speaking in tongues when they are assembled. This was necessary because most Spirit baptized believers can use their prayer language (tongues) at will. Rather than reviewing Paul’s comparison between tongues and prophecy, let us highlight everything he had to say about tongues. It is quite revealing.

For he who speaks in a tongue speaks to God.

In the spirit he speaks mysteries.

He who speaks in a tongue edifies himself.

I wish you all spoke with tongues.

Therefore let him who speaks in a tongue pray that he may interpret.

For if I pray in a tongue, my spirit prays.

I will pray with the spirit.

I will sing with the spirit.

I will bless with the spirit.

I [Paul] thank my God I speak with tongues more than you all.

Therefore tongues are for a sign...to unbelievers.

How is it then, brethren? Whenever you come together, each of you has... a tongue....

If anyone speaks in a tongue, let there be two or at the most three, each in turn, and let one interpret. But if there is no interpreter, let him keep silent in the assembly, and let him speak to himself and to God.

We might be speaking in the tongues of men or of angels. 1 Corinthians 13:1.

Jude adds this: "But you, beloved, building yourselves up on your most holy faith, praying in the Holy Spirit." Jude 1:20.

Sometimes we do not know how to pray in certain situations so we do what we know to do. We pray in tongues and call upon the Holy Spirit to intercede. "Likewise the Spirit also helps in our weaknesses. For we do not know what we should pray for as we ought, but the Spirit Himself makes intercession for us with groaning which cannot be uttered. Now He who searches the hearts knows what the mind of the Spirit is, because He makes intercession for the saints according to the will of God." Romans 8:26-27.

Some people in the body of Christ believe one has not been baptized in the Holy Spirit if he does not speak in tongues. I know a young lady who asked to be prayed with to receive the Holy Spirit. She did not receive tongues for years afterwards. She was given the gift of wisdom. Her devotion to the Lord likewise greatly increased. Decades later she is still fervent for the Lord. Speaking in tongues is just one evidence that we have the gift of the Holy Spirit.

Conclusion

We conclude that the baptism in the Holy Spirit is separate from being baptized in water;

That He is for all believers today who ask for Him;

That the Holy Spirit is given to us that we might have the power of Christ's Lordship;

That we might be conformed into the image of Christ.

The Holy Spirit is God's provision for us to relate to Him through His Son, Jesus Christ. Jesus said, "Nevertheless I tell you the truth. It is to your advantage that I go away; for if I do not go away, the Helper (Comforter) will not come to you; but if I depart, I will send Him to you." John 16:7. When we have the Holy Spirit, we have Jesus. When we have Jesus, we have the Father. That is God's plan for us. Why would we want it any other way?

Do you want to be soaked, saturated, immersed in God's precious Holy Spirit? Earnestly desire Him and ask for Him. He will not give you a stone or a fish.

"Now may the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that you may abound in hope by the power of the Holy Spirit." Romans. 15:13.