



**Who's Afraid of the Holy Spirit? - Part 14**  
**Various Scriptures**  
**GCSP - 05/15/2010**

Let's pray.

Last week we began to wrap up our study on the Holy Spirit by seeing what the Bible says concerning the baptism with the Holy Spirit. I posed five questions and we worked through two of them last time. Here are the five questions once again:

1. What is the baptism with the Holy Spirit?
2. What are the results of baptism with the Holy Spirit?
3. Who needs to be baptized with the Holy Spirit?
4. Who can be baptized with the Holy Spirit?
5. How do you obtain the baptism with the Holy Spirit?

Some of what we covered included that the baptism with the Holy Spirit is a definite experience, meaning you will know when it happens based upon the gifts of the Holy Spirit being manifest in your life.

We saw that the baptism with the Holy Spirit is distinct from and in addition to receiving the Holy Spirit at the point of salvation, although we saw one instance in Scripture where the gift of the Holy Spirit at salvation and the baptism with the Holy Spirit happened almost simultaneously.

We then saw that the baptism with the Holy Spirit, according to every incident recorded in Scripture, is connected with and for the primary purpose of testimony and/or service. The purpose for being filled with the Holy Spirit is to proclaim the gospel message as His witnesses and to minister to the Body of Christ through the use of the Spiritual gifts the Holy Spirit distributes as He sees fit.

Lastly, and maybe most importantly, we saw that the results of the baptism with the Holy Spirit could be summed up with one word: Power. When you are baptized with or filled with the Holy Spirit you will have the power of the Holy Spirit being manifest in your life; again, for the purpose of testimony and/or service.

We saw how the baptism with the Holy Spirit was manifest in several different ways. We saw incidents of speaking in tongues, we saw incidents of prophesying, we saw the sound of a mighty rushing wind, we saw an earthquake, and we even saw incidents where absolutely nothing happened.

We then quickly worked our way through several verses in **1 Corinthians 12**, and saw the many varieties of gifts the Spirit gives to us as we are filled with or baptized with Him; gifts that He chooses to distribute as He wills not as we will. We were able to conclude that any manifestation of any Spiritual gift is evidence of being filled with or baptized with the Holy Spirit, not just the gift of tongues as many try to assert. We made this conclusion from Scripture by the mere fact that baptism with the Holy Spirit is every Christian's Spiritual birthright and Paul is infinitely clear in **1 Corinthians 12:27-30** that not every Christian

receives the gift of tongues, just like not every Christian receives the gift of prophecy, teaching, healing, etc.

One of the problems we all see within the universal Body of Christ is how we tend to separate ourselves from one another. We create all manner of denominations and churches and subgroups of Christianity based upon certain things we believe or don't believe.

I see this all the time. One church believes that you must speak in tongues as evidence of your salvation, or you must speak in tongues as evidence of the baptism with the Holy Spirit. Another church has its focus on prophecy to the point that if you do not prophesy you do not belong. Still other churches do not want you in their midst if you do not believe in healing for fear that your lack of faith will grieve the Holy Spirit and cause all healings to cease.

And even if it is not verbalized, these individual beliefs exclude brothers and sisters in Christ from the love and fellowship we are commanded to show to one another. We have created a class structure or a hierarchy of Christians based upon our individual experiences with the gifts of the Spirit, forgetting the undeniable fact that the Holy Spirit chooses which gifts He distributes to which people – you and I have no say in the matter or no choice in the matter. So we create these class structures within the Body of Christ as if we are somehow better than or more spiritual than those who do not possess a certain gift of the Spirit. How ridiculous and how arrogant is that?

Oh, how careful we must be. We can so easily pervert God's Word and abuse the gifts He gives and the intention He has for those gifts.

And before some of you get too puffed up, this problem goes both ways. Those who do not have, and thus maybe do not believe in, certain gifts of the Spirit are just as arrogant and just as sinful in their attitudes toward those who have these gifts and believe in these gifts. It's like we have our own version of the Hatfield's and McCoy's within the Body of Christ, and beloved that should never be!

Why in the world do we fuss and fight over the gifts of the Holy Spirit? We are so blessed and so privileged and so honored to have the Holy Spirit within us, and now we are going to make the rules for how He works in our lives? We are like spoiled little rich kids who have inherited everything our heart could imagine yet we determine to walk all over people instead of using this blessing for the good of others.

Beloved, I want you to know, I'm tired of it. I'm tired of letting Satan divert our attention away from the task at hand to give testimony for Christ to a lost and dying world and to edify one another within the Body of Christ for the glory of God. I'm tired of the Holy Spirit wars within the Body of Christ and want to move on to the Spiritual battle against the lies of Satan!

The Bible is clear that our focus is testimony and service, not making sure every brother and sister has the same spiritual gift as you do or I do. God is sovereign, not you and me!

Well, I got a little off track there, but that covered the first two questions I posed last week: What is the baptism with the Holy Spirit and what are the results of baptism with the Holy

Spirit. Let's attempt to cover the next two this evening: Who needs the baptism with the Holy Spirit and who can have the baptism with the Holy Spirit.

Turn with me in your Bibles to the Gospel of **Luke**.

### **Luke 24:44-49**

#### Who Needs the Baptism with the Holy Spirit?

The quick answer to our question is anyone who is called to tell others about Jesus; and that includes every believer from the moment the Lord snatches them out of the darkness of Satan's world and places them into His kingdom of glorious light. There are no exceptions, no excuses, and no qualifications other than being a genuine believer. So if you are a genuine believer, you need the baptism with the Holy Spirit, plain and simple.

Now as we touched on briefly last week, most Christians do not want the baptism with the Holy Spirit. Whether they are afraid because of the misguided teaching that they would have to speak in tongues, whether they have the right teaching and do not want to fulfill their calling to go into all the world and make disciples and to edify one another, or whether they simply choose to live life by their own set of rules and do not want the commands of Scripture to cramp their style, it's hard to say. But most Christians do not want the baptism with the Holy Spirit even though it is a command of God's Word and thus a sin to avoid it.

Regardless of the reasoning, the clear teaching of Scripture is there are no exception and no excuse for not being baptized with or filled with the Holy Spirit.

But notice in **verse 49**, Jesus tells them to wait; He tells them that they are not yet prepared to carry out their mission and purpose until they are **clothed with power from on high**. And as we saw in one of the earlier sermons in this series, this passage in Luke is repeated in **Acts 1** and the **power from on high** in Luke is the same as **the baptism with the Holy Spirit** in **Acts**.

I think one of the great mistakes of the church is placing people in the ministry or even in the service of the church without ensuring that those who are being assigned for a particular ministry have been empowered by the Holy Spirit to do that ministry. Instead we tend to look on the outside or at the natural talents and abilities a person has to determine if they are prepared and ready. We sometimes look at what so-and-so may have done or been involved with in a previous church and make the leap that they are qualified just based on that information. Who's to say that this person was placed in that previous position with no gifting or empowerment of the Holy Spirit in the first place?

Jesus said wait; wait for the filling of the Holy Spirit. And the implication is you will fail miserably if you don't wait. But nobody likes to wait anymore. We have grown accustomed to picking up a phone and talking to someone a thousand miles away instantly. We expect instant access to the Internet so we can do anything and have everything at our fingertips. We want our food served up fresh and hot at a moment's notice.

You wonder how our great-grandparents got by in this world without phones and computers and televisions and radios and drive through restaurants and microwave dinners.

Jesus said wait. But before He told them to wait, **verse 45** tells us, “**He opened their minds to understand the Scriptures.**” Specifically He opened their minds to understand what the Scriptures said about Him and how He had to die and be raised again. But I think it goes beyond just that. I believe this mind-opening experience was to be able to clearly see and understand their purpose, their responsibility, their calling, and their duty once they received this infinite power that is the Holy Spirit.

We probably miss this aspect of being Spirit-filled. If we do not have our minds opened to understand the Scripture and we still receive this power of the Holy Spirit we will inevitably abuse the power and somehow take credit for the power. On the other hand, if we do not have our minds opened to understand the Scripture we may deny the power or ignore the power and never apply it.

Turn with me in your Bibles to the Book of **Acts**.

### **Acts 10:38**

To what event is Peter referring to when he mentions Jesus being anointed with the Holy Spirit and with power?

Turn with me in your Bibles again to the Gospel of **Luke**.

### **Luke 3:21-22; 4:1; 14-21**

There is a lot here that we could focus on, but the focus for the present is that even Jesus had to wait until after He was filled with and empowered by the Holy Spirit before He could move on to doing ministry (and notice that Jesus didn't speak in tongues after He was filled with the Holy Spirit).

So if Jesus needed to wait for the baptism with the Holy Spirit before He began to teach and to preach the gospel and to cast out demons and to open blind eyes, etc, why in the world do we turn people loose for ministry or attempt to do ministry on our own apart from the filling of the Holy Spirit? Why do we ever attempt to do spiritual things in our own power?

R. A. Torrey said, “*...every child of God is under the most solemn obligation to see to it that he or she definitely receives the Holy Spirit, not merely as a regenerating power and as an indwelling presence, but as a definite (filling) with power, before he or she undertakes service of any kind for God.*”

And he's right. And let me further state that this filling with power is not a one time occurrence. We see in **Acts 2:4** that Peter was filled with the Holy Spirit and then we again see in **Acts 4:8** that Peter was filled with the Holy Spirit again. In **Acts 4:31** many disciples were gathered and it says, “**When they had prayed, the place where they had gathered together was shaken, and they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak the word of God with boldness.**” The tense of the Greek verb in both of these last two passages in Acts shows conclusively that the filling spoken of here was a new filling that took place right then and there.

We can rightly conclude that for every new act of service we are called to we will also need a new filling of the Holy Spirit to accomplish that new act of service; even if it is the same act of service but at a different time. I can't depend on a previous filling of the Holy Spirit in which I was gifted to preach God's message a month ago to carry me through tonight. As I

mentioned last week, it is easy for both you and me to know when I am preaching in the power of the Holy Spirit and when I am preaching in the power of Al Smith. It is unmistakable. You won't learn spiritual truth when I preach in my own power; my power can't do that.

Some call the baptism with the Holy Spirit, the Second Blessing. Beloved, there better be a third and a fourth and a fifth and a hundredth and a thousandth for as long as God is still using you. You need to receive the filling of or the baptism with the Holy Spirit for each new mission God calls you to as you go throughout your day. Don't make the terrible mistake of trying to depend on a previous filling to accomplish God's calling today.

And may I remind you that according to **Luke 11:13** you receive this filling simply by praying for it. Don't neglect asking God for the filling of the Holy Spirit at each and every ministry opportunity that is presented to you. But also don't use this as an excuse to go home and pray about whether or not you should take advantage of the ministry opportunity. If God presents something to you, pray for Holy Spirit power and get involved as He directs!

So many opportunities to be involved with God in His work are cast aside in the name of going home to pray about it. I'm not saying that you are to be involved in every ministry and every activity of the church, but beloved, we must be sensitive to His calling, pray for the Spirit to fill us, and bless God be doers of the Word and not hearers only! If God is at work and He grants you the ability to see that He is at work, that is your invitation to join Him not to run off!

So who needs the baptism with the Holy Spirit? – Every genuine believer in Jesus Christ if he or she is going to be obedient to His calling to testimony and service.

#### Who Can Have the Baptism with the Holy Spirit?

The answer to this question may seem obvious based on what we just studied, but I want to initially approach this in a more general sense.

Many churches and denominations view the baptism with the Holy Spirit as a different thing than the filling of the Holy Spirit, even though, as we have already studied several times, the Scriptural evidence shows they are indeed the same. But because of this faulty understanding, many teach that the baptism with the Holy Spirit was only for the Twelve Apostles, and then from that position they make the jump to teach that many of the gifts of the Holy Spirit were only for them as well.

As a side note, if God is the same yesterday, today and forever, why do we conveniently deny the power of God as being the same yesterday, today, and forever? And that is exactly what well-meaning Christians do when they claim the Holy Spirit is operating within us at a diminished capacity as compared to how He operated in the Apostles and others in the early church.

Turn with me in your Bibles to the Book of **Acts** once again.

#### Acts 2:38-39

The term, "**the gift of the Holy Spirit**" is yet another way to refer to the filling of or baptism with the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit indwells us from the moment of salvation but the gift of

the Holy Spirit refers to His power being manifest in your life – what we have been talking about already.

How do I make this determination that **the gift of the Holy Spirit** is referring to the baptism with the Holy Spirit? – Because in **verse 39** Peter also calls it **the promise**; the same terminology Luke used in **Luke 24:49** which is undeniably talking about the filling or baptism with the Holy Spirit.

**Verse 39** also makes it abundantly clear then that this gift is for everyone who comes to Christ in repentance. And when Peter speaks of **children** in this verse also receiving **the promise** we should be careful to thinking the Holy Spirit's gifting and power is only for adult believers – God can and will use believers of any age as they are willing and as they pray for the Holy Spirit's filling and power in their life.

The baptism with the Holy Spirit is for every child of God, regardless of their physical age, and it is for every generation of the church not just the church in the Book of Acts. As I stated last week, the baptism with the Holy Spirit is the birthright of every genuine, repentant believer in Jesus Christ. It is for **as many as the Lord our God will call to Himself**.

It is true that not every believer has claimed this birthright, and it is also true that many others have claimed it but on a very limited basis, but it is nonetheless his or hers for the asking. It is God's promise to you and me.

So if you have never experienced this promise, this gift, this power, it isn't God's fault, it's yours. And if you go even a single day apart from this promise from this point on in your life, it won't be God's fault, but yours alone.

At a pastor's conference in Chicago many years ago, this same teaching was presented at Moody Bible Institute. A pastor from Texas approached the preacher and said, "The church I belong to has always taught this baptism was only for the Apostles."

The minister replied, "I don't care what your church has taught, what does the Bible teach?" To which he then opened his Bible again and asked the pastor from Texas to re-read **Acts 2:39** out loud.

He then asked the pastor from Texas if that promise was for him, to which he replied, "If it says so in the Bible, it must be."

Over the ensuing months and years this pastor kept in touch with the minister and reported how much God was now blessing the ministry in Texas in ways he had never experienced before.

The promise is for you too, and the blessings awaiting you and Grace Church are beyond imagination if all of us will just accept the Bible's teaching and will ask.

Let's pray.