

Lesson 5

HOLY SPIRIT IN THE LIFE OF THE BELIEVER

The Baptism of the Holy Spirit



The Holy Spirit is a wonderful person, just as God the Father and God the Son are. When Jesus came to earth, he showed man what God is like. He told his disciples, "If you have seen me, you have seen the Father." However Jesus promised that when he left he would send someone just like him, and that person is the Holy Spirit. When someone turns to God and repents of their sin, and puts their faith in Jesus to save them, the Holy Spirit comes to live in that person – they are born again by the Spirit.

We have seen the ways in which the Holy Spirit helps us. He also begins to work in our lives to set us free and change us to become like Jesus. However Jesus also wants to fill, baptise and overflow our lives by his Spirit so we have the same power he did, and will be able to continue his work here on earth.

John 14:12, 13 *"I tell you the truth, anyone who has faith in me will do what I have been doing. He will do even greater things than these, because I am going to the Father."*

How is this possible? It is only possible if we know and live in the power of the Holy Spirit. We receive this power through the baptism of the Spirit.

Acts 1:5 *"For John baptised with water, but in a few days you will be baptised with the Holy Spirit."*

Acts 1:8 *"But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you, and you will be my witnesses."*

1. WHAT IS THE BAPTISM OF THE SPIRIT?

The same word, 'baptise', is used for water baptism and the baptism of the Holy Spirit. In the Greek language the word baptise means 'to be totally immersed.' So if a person is baptised in water it literally means they are immersed in water, and if they are baptised in the Spirit it means they are immersed by the Spirit. This is also described in other ways:

Acts 2:4 *'filled with the Holy Spirit'*

Luke 24:49 *'clothed with power from on high'*

2. WHO IS THE BAPTISM OF THE SPIRIT FOR?

The baptism of the Spirit is for believers. Those gathered in the Upper Room on the Day of Pentecost believed Jesus was the Son of God. In fact Jesus had already breathed the Spirit on them.

John 20:22 *'And with that he (Jesus) breathed on them and said, "Receive the Holy Spirit."'*

However it was on the Day of Pentecost that the Holy Spirit filled them with power. Peter said this was for everyone who believed.

Acts 2:39 *"The promise is for you and your children and for all who are far off – for all whom the Lord our God will call."*

Is a person automatically baptised in the Spirit when they are born again? This can happen, just as it did in the life of Cornelius in Acts 10. Cornelius was not a Jew, but he was God fearing man. God spoke to him in a

vision and told him to invite Peter to his house. When Peter came he preached the message about Jesus, and while he was speaking the Holy Spirit came upon Cornelius and the others.

Acts 10:44, 46 *'While Peter was still speaking the Holy Spirit came on all who heard the message ... they heard them speaking in tongues and praising God.'*

Often though, new believers don't know that Jesus wants to baptise them in the Spirit. Perhaps they were never taught or perhaps they did not fully yield to the Spirit. In Acts 8 we read how Philip had gone to Samaria to preach about Jesus. Many turned to Christ. Later Peter and John came down to pray that these new believers would receive the Spirit.

3. WHAT HAPPENS WHEN YOU ARE BAPTISED IN THE SPIRIT?

If the Holy Spirit fills a persons' life and they receive his power, they will know! Let's see what happened in the book of Acts when the Holy Spirit came.

Acts 2:4 *'All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues as the Spirit enabled them.'*

The result of the disciples' experience was that they were empowered to preach and witness boldly. Not only that, their ministry was marked with healings, signs and wonders, just as Jesus' had been. What about the Apostle Paul?

Acts 9:17 Ananias prayed for Saul/Paul to be filled with the Holy Spirit. It does not tell us exactly what happened, but we know that Paul also spoke in tongues, preached in the power of the Spirit and used the gifts of the Holy Spirit in his ministry.

Acts 10:46 When the Holy Spirit came on Cornelius and those with him, they began speaking in tongues and praising God.

Acts 19:6 In Ephesus when Paul prayed for the Spirit to come on the believers, they spoke in tongues and prophesied. As a result of the power of God touching their lives, everyone in that area heard the gospel.

When a person is filled with the Holy Spirit, there is an overflow from their lives. They can speak in tongues and the gifts of the Spirit are released in their lives. They are empowered to witness for the Lord Jesus.

4. HOW CAN YOU BE BAPTISED IN THE SPIRIT?

(a.) Come to Jesus

Who baptises a person in the Holy Spirit? Do you need to be prayed for by someone special? It is Jesus who baptises you in the Spirit, not a person or a priest. This is what John the Baptist said, and so did Jesus himself.

Luke 3:16 *"But one more powerful than I will come ... He will baptise you with the Holy Spirit and fire."*
John 7:37-38 *Jesus said, "If anyone is thirsty, let him come to me and drink. Whoever believes in me, as the Scripture has said, streams of living water will flow from within him." By this he meant the Spirit.*

Sometimes it is helpful to have someone who knows the power of God in their own life, and has the faith to pray for you, to lay hands on you, just as Peter and John laid hands on the believers in Samaria, and Ananias

prayed for Paul. However you can receive the baptism of the Spirit from Jesus yourself just as the early disciples did, and later those in the house of Cornelius.

(b.) Repent

Before Jesus can fill you with his Spirit you need to make sure your life is clean. Any sin needs to be confessed and if you have unforgiveness in your heart you need to put it right. God won't listen to your prayer if sin is in your heart. On the Day of Pentecost Peter told the people to repent. A clean heart prepares the way for the Spirit to fill our lives.

Acts 2:38 *"Repent and be baptised and you will receive the gift of the Spirit."*

(c.) Ask

Some people think that if God wants to give them his power and gifts then he will and we don't need to ask. However that is not what Jesus said!

Luke 11:9-13 *"So I say to you: Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you. . . how much more will your Father in heaven give the Holy Spirit to those who ask him."*

(d.) Believe

When we ask the Father for the Spirit we are to come with faith and expectancy that he will answer our prayer. We don't need to be afraid that we will receive the wrong spirit as Jesus promised to give us his Spirit.

Galatians 3:14 *'..so that by faith we might receive the promise of the Spirit.'*
Luke 11:11-13 *"Which of you fathers, if your son asks for a fish, will give him a snake instead? Or if he asks for an egg, will give him a scorpion? If you then, though you are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father in heaven give the Holy Spirit to those who ask him!"*

(e.) Desire

If you offer someone a cup of water and they are not thirsty, they may not drink. However if someone has walked in the hot sun, they quickly take the cup and drink. They are thirsty! Jesus said that if we come to him we need to be thirsty for his Spirit. He often used the picture of water for the Holy Spirit.

John 7:37 *Jesus said, "If anyone is thirsty ..."*

(f.) Receive

Our thirst is only satisfied when we drink! It is the same with the Holy Spirit. When we are thirsty the only way to be satisfied is to 'drink' and we do that by yielding to the Spirit and receiving by faith. There is no need to be afraid as he is holy and good. Jesus said that once we receive, rivers of living water will flow out from us.

John 7:37 *"If anyone is thirsty, let him come to me and drink ... streams of living water will flow from within him."*

Conclusion

Have you been 'born again by the Spirit'? If so the Holy Spirit lives within you! He has come to teach and counsel you, to help you in your daily life, so that you can live in a way that pleases your Heavenly Father. Not only that, he wants to empower and anoint you so that you can fulfil God's purpose for your life. Allow him to fill your life to overflowing – not just once, but every day. Just ask and he will!