

TRUE SAVING FAITH AND GOD THE HOLY SPIRIT!
ACTS CH8:9-25

ILLUSTRATION

Infant School and “Peter and Paul” the two birds!

We cannot understand the power of the Holy Spirit apart from the life of Jesus. There’s no example of what it means to live a ***Spirit-empowered life*** unless we look at the life of Jesus. Jesus lived by the power of the Holy Spirit. He lives without sin, He dies for our sin, He rises for our sin, He evidences it for forty days, and He tells his people, “Don’t go do ministry yet. Wait. You need power. The Holy Spirit’s coming to cause you to be like me.” That’s why the former Book, Luke’s Gospel and the latter book, Acts, go together.

So, in the Book of Luke, what is the relationship between Jesus and the Holy Spirit?

1. Jesus was ***conceived by the power of the Holy Spirit*** in His mother, Mary. Jesus’ conception, His entrance into human history as a man, was by the power of the Holy Spirit. (Luke Ch1:35)
2. At Jesus’ baptism, God the Father speaks from heaven. The whole Trinity is there. “This is my Son, in whom I am well pleased.” Here’s Jesus, the Son of God, the second member of the Trinity coming up out of the water. Who descends on Jesus? ***The Holy Spirit in the form of a dove***. This is to show publicly that Jesus is anointed by the Holy Spirit, that He’s indwelt by the Holy Spirit, that He’s filled by the Holy Spirit, that He’s empowered by the Holy Spirit, that His whole life is by the power of the Holy Spirit. That’s why this was public, so everybody could see it. See, Jesus already knew it. This wasn’t for Jesus’ understanding; this was for our understanding. (Luke Ch3:21-22)
3. The Book of Luke, then, goes on to say that Jesus was ***“full of the Holy Spirit.”*** How many of you have heard, “You should live a Spirit-filled life.” That’s true. You know what that looks like? Jesus. Any time we lift someone else up and say, “Well, there’s the Spirit-filled person, be like them,” wrong person. None of us sinners are perfectly, continually full of the Holy Spirit. ***We resist (Acts Ch7:51), grieve (Eph Ch4:30), we quench (1st Thess Ch5:19), and we insult the Holy Spirit at times (Hebrews Ch10:29). But Jesus was, “full of the Holy Spirit”—continually, perfectly.*** (Luke Ch4:1)
4. The Gospel of Luke says that He was ***“led by the Spirit.”*** So, Jesus goes here because that’s where the Spirit is directing Him. He teaches these people, He leads these people, He casts out these demons, He prays over this crowd. Why? Because He’s led by the Holy Spirit. (Luke Ch4:1)
5. We read in the Gospel of Luke that He came ***“in the power of the Spirit.”*** How did He teach? In the power of the Holy Spirit. How did He cast out demons? In the power of the Holy Spirit. How were those who were blind given sight? Because He was empowered by the Holy Spirit. He came with, by, for, through the power of the Holy Spirit. See, ministry has programs, but it does nothing without power. (Luke Ch4:14)
6. The Gospel of Luke says that He ***“rejoiced in the Holy Spirit.”*** When He had joy, when He celebrated, it was because the joy of the Lord was His strength. It was the Holy Spirit in Him, causing Him to glorify, to worship, to enjoy, to adore, to thank, to bless God the Father. (Luke Ch10:21))
7. Early on in His ministry, He walks into a synagogue, He opens the Book of Isaiah, Isaiah 61:1–2, and He reads it. Do you remember what He reads? He reads this: ***“The Spirit of the Lord is upon me to preach good news and to set captives***

free.” And then He closed it up, and He said this: “Today, this Scripture is fulfilled in your hearing.” Isaiah wrote seven hundred years prior and said, “There’s one who is coming, and the Spirit of the Lord will reside on Him so that He could preach good news and set captives free from sin and death. **”And Jesus says, “I’m here. That’s me. I’m the one you’ve all been waiting for, and the Spirit of the Lord is upon me.”** (Luke Ch4:16-21)

What is the essence of being baptized with the Holy Spirit? Is it the sound of wind, the tongues of fire, the other languages, the words of praise, the prophecies and dreams and visions? Can we get at the essence of what it means to be baptized with the Holy Spirit, or does it have to include all these things?

I think the essence of being baptized with the Holy Spirit is ***when a person, who is already a believer, receives extraordinary spiritual power for Christ-exalting.*** There are good reasons for believing that initially the disciples were already born again and converted and had the Holy Spirit dwelling in them (John Ch13:10; Ch15:3; Romans Ch8:9). ***But even more important than that is the fact that the issue of the new birth and conversion of the disciples is simply not in view at all in Acts Ch1 + Ch2.*** Jesus doesn’t say, “Wait in Jerusalem until you are born again or converted or put into the body of Christ.” He says, “But you will receive power....” He doesn’t say, “You shall receive membership in the body of Christ when the Holy Spirit has come upon you.” He says, “But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you.”

So filling with the “Spirit” is a special empowering for ministry that is described as “.....baptised with the Holy Spirit.” and this idea of “baptism” is almost always associated with this extraordinary power for ministry in the Book of Acts. Notice that when the baptism with the Spirit happens in Acts Ch2:4, Luke says, “All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit” The effect of that filling was a powerful and even miraculous testimony to the truth of Christ that resulted in 3,000 people being converted (Acts Ch2:41).

THE AMAZING SIMON! V9-12

What are we told about Simon?

1. He was a Samaritan v9
2. He had previously practised magic v9
3. He had amazed people with his magic v9
4. He proclaimed to be someone great v9
5. All people paid attention to him v10
6. The people claimed that Simon “had the power of God and was great.” v10
7. They were amazed at his magic v11
8. Simon believed and was baptised v13

So was Simon truly saved, contrast v13 with 21? Were the Samaritans true believers before they received the gift of God The Holy Spirit (v17)? The following would suggest that the Samaritans, and not Simon, were indeed true believers, before receiving God the Holy Spirit and power v17-v19:

1. In verse 6 it says that “with one accord paid attention to what was being said by Philip.”
2. In verse 8 it says they were experiencing much joy, like the Ethiopian eunuch after his conversion (Ch8:39).

3. In verse 12a it says they "believed Philip as he preached the good news about the kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ."
4. In verse 14 it says that Samaria had received the word of God.
5. In verse 16 it says that they were baptized in the name of Jesus. And when the apostles came down to lay hands on them, there is no mention that they baptized them again, even though Paul re-baptized the disciples who only knew the baptism of John in Acts Ch19:5.

All this suggests that the Samaritans were true believers when Peter and John came down to lay hands on them to receive the Holy Spirit.

THE AMAZED SIMON! V13-17

How is receiving the Holy Spirit recorded in the Book of Acts? In the Book of Acts everywhere the receiving of the Holy Spirit is described, it is ***experiential***. It's not just a logical conclusion that you know. Instead, it has effects that are clearly seen and heard. In the Book of Acts a person knows when they receive the Holy Spirit, because it is always portrayed as ***experiential!***

It is an experience with effects you can point to, as the following six stories or instances in the Book of Acts reveal:

1. At Pentecost there was speaking in tongues and praising the mighty works of God and power to witness (Ch1:8; Ch2:4, 11);
2. In Acts Ch5:32 Luke says that God "gave the Holy Spirit to everyone who is obeying him." So obedience to God is a mark of his presence;
3. In Samaria there is something so obvious in experience that Simon saw it and is amazed and wants to buy the power to make it happen (Ch8:18);
4. At Paul's conversion there is extraordinary boldness and empowering to witness (Ch9:17, 22);
5. In Caesarea at the house of Cornelius there was speaking in tongues and praising God (Ch10:46);
6. In Ephesus where Paul found the disciples of John the Baptist there was speaking in tongues and prophesying (Ch19:6).

When Luke describes the coming of the Holy Spirit, there are seven words or phrases he uses :

- The Holy Spirit being given to people as a gift — Ch2:39; Ch5:32; Ch8:18; Ch10:45; Ch11:17; Ch15:8.
- The Holy Spirit falling upon people — Ch8:16; Ch10:44; Ch11:15.
- The Holy Spirit coming upon people — Ch1:8; Ch19:6.
- The Holy Spirit being poured out on people — Ch2:17; Ch10:45.
- People receiving the Holy Spirit — Ch2:38; Ch8:15,17; Ch10:47.
- Being baptized in the Holy Spirit — Ch1:5; Ch11:16.
- Being filled with the Holy Spirit — Ch2:4; Ch9:17.

So in every case of the Holy Spirit's coming or being received in the Book of Acts there are definite effects that one can point to as evidence that the Spirit has been received!

Peter and John, the apostles, lay hands on and pray for the Samaritans, and the Samaritans quickly receive God the Holy Spirit v17! Simon, however, is only amazed at the power of God the Holy Spirit, and wants the power only v19!

THE AMAZINGLY NOT RIGHT WITH GOD, SIMON! V18-25

Can a person believe in Jesus, and yet not be right with God, because they do not have saving faith? Luke Ch8:4-15 – the four soils and in particular “The Rocky Place” who are people who initially believe for a while but in time of testing, they fall away. Or in the Gospel of John Ch2:23-25, apparently many Jews who believed because of the signs, but Jesus would not entrust Himself to them. Why? Because they did not have saving faith!

Peter rebukes and corrects Simon because despite Simon believing and being baptised and hanging around Philip (v13) he is not born again, he does not have saving faith! So Peter instructs him as to what to do in v20-23. Peter makes it clear that “your heart is not right before God”, urging Simon to repent of his wickedness! The really sad thing is that we do not see this happening! Instead, Luke records for us in v24, Simon asking Peter to pray for him! The reason that this is so sad, is that it is not Peter that needs to pray, although he can, it is Simon that needs to turn to Jesus in prayer, to confess his wickedness and to ask Jesus for forgiveness and a new heart.

There will be times when people will say they believe and be baptised but their hearts are still wrong with Jesus and where that is the case we can pray and should pray for them, but most importantly, we must urge them to seek Christ themselves!

APPLICATION

- 1. Perhaps you are so clear that you have received the gift of the Holy Spirit, God bless you.*
- 2. Perhaps you can't recognise in your own life, the words of this morning, because you have not believed yet, I would urge you to trust in Jesus and believe!*
- 3. Perhaps there has been some delay or blockage, please keep praying and asking Jesus for His Spirit!*
- 4. Perhaps you just need to be encouraged because the Spirit has been working clearly in you life, through praising God, or reading and prayer, or a deeper sense of His present, or a greater sense of peace and joy, but you just need to be encouraged!*

*Pentecostalism emerged in the early 20th Century among radical adherents of the holiness movement who were energized by revivalism and expectation for the imminent second coming of Christ. Believing that they were living in the end times they expected God to spiritually renew the Christian Church, thereby bringing to pass the restoration of spiritual gifts and the evangelization of the world. In 1900, **Charles Parham**, an American evangelist and faith healer, began teaching that speaking in tongues was the **Bible evidence of Spirit baptism**.*

The three year long Azusa Street revival in Los Angeles, California, resulted in the spread of Pentecostalism, throughout the United States and the rest of the World, as visitors carried the Pentecostal experience. With the spread of Pentecostalism that began in 1901 and the widespread influence of the charismatic movement in the 1960's – 1970's, the remarkable growth of the Pentecostal and charismatic churches from 1970 to the present,

the question of a “Baptism in the Holy Spirit” distinct from regeneration, has come into increasing prominence.

Many Christians say that they have experienced a “baptism in the Holy Spirit” that came after they became Christians and that brought great blessing in their lives. They claim that prayer and Bible Study have become much more meaningful and effective, that they discovered new joy in worship, and they often say that they have received new spiritual gifts (especially the gift of speaking in tongues).

The traditional Pentecostal or charismatic position is supported by Scripture in the following way:

- 1. JESUS' disciples were born again believers long before the day of Pentecost, perhaps during JESUS' life and ministry, but certainly by the time that JESUS, after His resurrection, “and with that he breathed on them and said, receive the Holy Spirit” (John Ch20:22).*
- 2. JESUS nevertheless commanded His disciples “..... do not leave Jerusalem, but wait for the gift my Father promised ...” (Acts Ch1:4), telling them, “in a few days you will be baptised with the Holy Spirit” (Acts Ch1:5). He told them, “but you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you” (Acts Ch1:8). The disciples then obeyed JESUS' commands and waited in Jerusalem for the Holy Spirit to come upon them so that they would **receive new empowering for witness and ministry.***
- 3. When the disciples had waited for 10 days, the day of Pentecost came, tongues of fire rested above their head, “all of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues as the Spirit enabled them” (Acts Ch2:4). This clearly shows that they received a baptism **in (or with) the Holy Spirit.** Although the disciples were born again long before Pentecost, at Pentecost they received a “baptism with the Holy Spirit” (Acts Ch1:5, Ch11:16 refer to it this way) that was subsequent to conversion and resulted in great empowering for ministry as well as speaking in tongues.*
- 4. Christian's today, like the apostles, should ask JESUS for a “baptism in the Holy Spirit” and thus follow the pattern of the disciples lives. **If we receive this baptism of the Holy Spirit it will result in much more power for ministry for our own lives,** just as it did in the lives of the disciples, and will often (always, according to some teachers) result in speaking in tongues as well.*
- 5. Support for this pattern – in which people are first born again and then later are baptised in the Holy Spirit – is seen in several other instances in the Book of Acts. It is seen, for example, in Acts 8, where the people of Samaria first became Christians but when they believed Philip as he preached the good news of the Kingdom of God and the name of JESUS CHRIST” (Acts Ch8:12), but only later received the Holy Spirit when the apostles Peter and John came from Jerusalem and prayed for them (Acts Ch8:14-17). Another example is found in Acts Ch19, where Paul came and found “some disciples” at Ephesus (Acts Ch19:1). But, “when Paul placed his his hands on them, the Holy Spirit came on them, and they spoke in tongues and prophesied”(Acts Ch19:6). All of these examples (Acts 2, 8, 10, 19) are cited by Pentecostals in order to show that a “Baptism in the Holy Spirit” subsequent to conversion was a very common occurrence for New Testament*

Christians.

Therefore, they reason, if it was common for Christians in Acts to have this second experience sometime after conversion, should it not be common for us today?

We can understand this issue of the baptism in the Holy Spirit by asking three question;

1. What does the phrase “baptism in the Holy Spirit” mean in the New Testament?

There are only 7 passages in the New Testament where we read of someone being baptised in the Holy Spirit.

Matthew Ch3:11

Mark Ch1:8

Luke Ch3:16

John Ch1:33

It is hard to draw any conclusions from these four passages with respect to what baptism in the Holy Spirit really is. **We discover that JESUS** is the one who will carry out the baptism and He will baptise His followers.

Acts Ch1:5

Acts Ch11:16

These two passages show us that whatever we may understand baptism in the Holy Spirit to be, it certainly happened at the day of Pentecost, as recorded in Acts with great power where they spoke in tongues and about three thousand people were converted (Acts Ch2:14+41).

It is important to realise that in all six cases the same exact word in the Greek is used!

The only remaining reference in the New Testament is:

1st Corinthians Ch12:13”For we were all baptised by one Spirit into one body ...”

Now the question is whether this verse refers to the same activity as the other six verses. In the Greek **en henī pneumati ebaptisthemēn** – in one Spirit we were baptised. The only difference is that Paul uses one Spirit rather than the Holy Spirit. It is hard to deny that the original readers would have seen this phrase as referring to the same thing as the other six verses because for them the same words were used.

What shall we say about the phrase “baptism in the Holy Spirit”? It is a phrase that the New Testament authors use to speak of coming into the new covenant power of the Holy Spirit. It happened at Pentecost for the disciples, but it happened at conversion for the Corinthians and us.

It is not a phrase the New Testament authors would use to speak of any post-conversion experience of empowering by the Holy Spirit.

2. How should we understand the “second experiences” that came to born again

believers in the Book of Acts?

But even if we have correctly understood the experience of the disciples at Pentecost as recorded in Acts 2, are there not other examples of people who had a second experience of empowering of the Holy Spirit after conversion, such as those in Acts 8 (Samaria), Acts 10 (Cornelius' household), and Acts 19 (the Ephesian Disciples)?

These are not really convincing examples to prove the Pentecostal doctrine of baptism in the Holy Spirit. First the expression “baptism in the Holy Spirit” is not used to refer to these events, and this should give us some hesitation in applying this phrase to them and secondly a closer look at each case shows more clearly what was happening.

- 3. Are there other Biblical expressions such as “filling with the Holy Spirit” that are better suited to describe an empowering with the Holy Spirit that comes after conversion?*

Yes! Empowering for ministry! Paul tells the Ephesian Church “Do not get drunk on wine which leads to debauchery. Instead be filled with the Spirit” (Eph Ch5:18).

He uses a present tense imperative verb that could be more explicitly translated “Be continually filled by the Holy Spirit”. Therefore it is important to understand that filling is not a one-time event, but as an event that can occur over and over again.

DEFINITION OF TONGUES

When the New Testament uses the word “TONGUES” it is referring to other languages, both earthly and heavenly. The New Testament identifies three ways that the gift of tongues can be expressed:

Firstly, ***as a private prayer language.*** This is talking to GOD, 1 Corinthians Ch14:2, praying in a language that GOD has given, 1 Corinthians Ch12:11+18, and expressing all types of praise, thanks, adoration, confession and supplication (requests) to Him. But being Biblical, it is for private use! Using it publicly, with other Christians present, can show a lack of love and maturity towards the other members of Christ's body.

Secondly, ***as a Missionary Gift to share the Gospel.*** This gift of tongues is given to Christians so that they can share the Gospel in foreign languages, so that people can understand and respond to the Gospel. On the day of Pentecost for example, Acts Ch2:4, GOD the HOLY SPIRIT blessed the Apostles to speak in foreign languages to the Jewish people who had travelled to Jerusalem, and were able to hear the Gospel in their own language and dialect. In doing so they were able to understand and respond to the Gospel and 3000 people were saved on that day!

Thirdly, ***as a revelatory language.*** There is a heavenly language in heaven, as GOD speaks to his Angels, He will use a heavenly language, and on occasions those Angels have delivered those messages for God. In the same way imagine a leader of a foreign country having a message for the United Nations, that message would need an interpreter, as the message was proclaimed. This is why in 1 Corinthians Ch12:10, Paul identifies the “gift of interpreting tongues”.

As a Church do we believe in the gift of tongues? Yes, Paul says in 1st Corinthians Ch14:5

“I would like everyone of you to speak in tongues...” and that he has that gift, “I thank GOD that I speak in tongues more than all of you” (1 Cor Ch14:18). Tongues is a New Testament gift, given by GOD to His people to carry out specific tasks and works for Him!