

What Is the Baptism of the Holy Spirit?

Dear enquirer, before we begin to address the question of how to be filled with the Holy Spirit, it would be imperative to provide a brief explanation of what it means exactly.

The word *baptism* comes from a Greek word meaning to *immerse*. This is why we see followers of Jesus in the New Testament going down under water for water baptism.

Therefore, we can conclude, the Baptism of the Holy Spirit is a full immersion in the Third Person of the Holy Trinity.

The term is first mentioned in the New Testament by John the Baptist. In describing the difference between his own mission and that of the Lord Jesus he said:

I baptize you with water for repentance, but one who is more powerful than I is coming after me; I am not worthy to carry his sandals. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire.

(Matthew 3:11-12)

How it Differs from the New Birth

The Bible describes a definite work of the Holy Spirit in the New Birth, but it is distinct from what John speaks of above, in both experience and purpose.

The Baptism of the Holy Spirit differs in experience because at salvation the Lord comes to dwell within the hidden sanctuary of our being. In the second case, He takes complete possession of the one whom He inhabits.

The Baptism of the Holy Spirit differs with regards to purpose because at salvation the Holy Spirit imparts His life to the believer's heart for regeneration, whereas in the latter He equips the believer for service.

There are numerous biblical examples to support this. Below we include just one to help you see the distinction. Speaking of the Holy Spirit in the believer's salvation, Jesus says:

Everyone who drinks of this water will be thirsty again, but those who drink of the water that I will give them will never be thirsty. The water that I will give will become in them a spring of water gushing up to eternal life.

(John 4:13-15)

But when the Lord speaks of the Baptism in the Holy Ghost for service He says:

Let anyone who is thirsty come to me, and let the one who believes in me drink. As the scripture has said, "Out of the believer's heart shall flow rivers of living water."

Now he said this about the Spirit, which believers in him were to receive; for as yet there was no Spirit because Jesus was not yet glorified.

(John 7:37-40)

The difference here in the Gospel of John is not difficult to see from the imagery used. The WATER in both passages is a metaphor for the Holy Spirit.

However, in the first there is a SPRING, but in the second there are RIVERS. And the spring *gushes up*, and thus blesses the believer. But the rivers *flow out*, and so bless others!

These outflowing rivers of power for witness are what Jesus spoke of a few times after His Resurrection. In Acts, we read that He ordered His Disciples not to leave Jerusalem, but to wait there for the Promise.

They were focused on the establishment of His earthly reign, but Jesus was more concerned with making people ready for it! He said:

It is not for you to know the times or periods that the Father has set by his own authority. But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.

(Acts 1:7-9)

How to Receive or Assist Others

Having established these significant biblical truths, we can now address the main question. The following information will inform the reader what is most important to understand when seeking the Baptism of the Holy Ghost. The information provided will be especially helpful also for anyone seeking to assist others that have not yet received. To begin, you need to see the Gift was given to the Church once and for all at Pentecost. This means that your prayer should not be for God to give, but help you “*receive.*”

Before we continue, with regards helping others, always show them the Scripture passage to support what you teach, and allow the individual as much time needed to read it himself and ask questions.

Second, it is important to know one does not have to first become perfect. You only need to be saved, to be in submission to the Lord, and to believe that what you have asked for will be granted:

So I tell you, whatever you ask for in prayer, believe that you have received it, and it will be yours.

(Mark 11:24:25)

Third, you need to know one does not have to tarry. Neither does he need a mediator. On the contrary, you can receive the Baptism in the Holy Spirit in the same way you received salvation – immediately, and directly from the Lord!

That being said, for the sake of your faith, it can be helpful to allow a church leader, or church member, to pray with you, or guide you through Scripture, or both. Jesus said:

Truly I tell you, if two of you agree on earth about anything you ask, it will be done for you by my Father in heaven.

For where two or three are gathered in my name, I am there among them.

(Matthew 18:19-21)

Another important point necessary for seekers to know is that people are often fearful they might receive an evil spirit, especially through the laying on of hands. If that is your worry, or the concern of someone you may be helping out, the following Scripture will turn that fear into faith. Jesus promised:

Is there anyone among you who, if your child asks for a fish, will give a snake instead of a fish? Or if the child asks for an egg, will give a scorpion?

If you then, who are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will the heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask him!

(Luke 11:11-14)

Last, whether for yourself, or assisting another, it would be better to avoid having more than one person giving instructions, and laying on hands, as such would cause distraction and confusion. If a group is present, they can pray in accord away from the candidate.

In addition, you should make it clear there is no power coming from you; the laying on of your hands is a simple act of faith, because God always responds to faith!

Know What to Expect

The Bible describes the Baptism of the Holy Spirit as an experience so real, and so tangible, that the believer may have absolutely no doubts that he has received it. And the clearest evidence is that you will speak in other tongues. The Book of Acts is full of examples. The first appears in chapter two:

All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other languages, as the Spirit gave them ability.

(Acts 2:4-5)

There are also other manifestations of the Spirit's infilling, that vary from person to person. Some Christians feel immense joy and energy flow through them. It is very probable the Disciples at Pentecost exhibited such happiness, most likely adding to the reason people thought they were drunk!