

Spiritual Gifts #1:

Holy Spirit Baptism

INTRODUCTION

1. The Holy Spirit is a person, not a force or an influence. He is revealed in Scripture as God, co-equal with the Father and Son.
2. The Holy Spirit is shown in numerous New Testament texts to be the one who applies to our lives the benefits of Jesus's atoning death on the cross. The Holy Spirit works God's salvation in us and through us for the benefit of others.
3. The Holy Spirit desires to manifest spiritual gifts through every believer for the edification of the church and the evangelization of those not yet saved.
 - 1 Corinthians 12:1, 4–11 (ESV) *Now concerning spiritual gifts, brothers, I do not want you to be uninformed... Now there are varieties of gifts, but the same Spirit; and there are varieties of service, but the same Lord; and there are varieties of activities, but it is the same God who empowers them all in everyone. To each is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good. For to one is given through the Spirit the utterance of wisdom, and to another the utterance of knowledge according to the same Spirit, to another faith by the same Spirit, to another gifts of healing by the one Spirit, to another the working of miracles, to another prophecy, to another the ability to distinguish between spirits, to another various kinds of tongues, to another the interpretation of tongues. All these are empowered by one and the same Spirit, who apportions to each one individually as he wills.*
4. We should eagerly desire spiritual gifts and use them according to the grace we have received.
 - 1 Corinthians 14:1 (ESV) *Pursue love, and earnestly desire the spiritual gifts...*

- Romans 12:4–8 (ESV) *For as in one body we have many members, and the members do not all have the same function, so we, though many, are one body in Christ, and individually members one of another. Having gifts that differ according to the grace given to us, let us use them: if prophecy, in proportion to our faith; if service, in our serving; the one who teaches, in his teaching; the one who exhorts, in his exhortation; the one who contributes, in generosity; the one who leads, with zeal; the one who does acts of mercy, with cheerfulness.*

HOLY SPIRIT BAPTISM

1. The manifestation of the Spirit's power through us is especially released as a consequence of being baptized in the Holy Spirit.
 - Acts 1:4–5, 8 (ESV) *And while staying with them (Jesus) ordered them not to depart from Jerusalem, but to wait for the promise of the Father, which, he said, "you heard from me; for John baptized with water, but you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days from now." "[Y]ou will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth."*
2. There are five accounts recorded in the Book of Acts of believers being initially baptized in the Holy Spirit.
 - The Day of Pentecost. Acts 2:4 (ESV) *And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues as the Spirit gave them utterance.*
 - Samaria. Acts 8:14–17 (ESV) *Now when the apostles at Jerusalem heard that Samaria had received the word of God, they sent to them Peter and John, who came down and prayed for them that they might receive the Holy Spirit, for he had not yet fallen on any of them, but they had only been baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. Then they laid their hands on them and they received the Holy Spirit.*
 - Saul of Tarsus. Acts 9:17–18 (ESV) *So Ananias departed and entered the house. And laying his hands on him he said, "Brother Saul, the Lord Jesus who appeared to you on the road by which you came has sent me so that you may regain your sight and be filled with the Holy Spirit." And immediately something like scales*

fell from his eyes, and he regained his sight. Then he rose and was baptized...

- Cornelius. Acts 10:44–48 (ESV) *[T]he Holy Spirit fell on all who heard the word. And the believers from among the circumcised who had come with Peter were amazed, because the gift of the Holy Spirit was poured out even on the Gentiles. For they were hearing them speaking in tongues and extolling God.*
 - The Ephesian Disciples. Acts 19:5–6 (ESV) *On hearing this, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. And when Paul had laid his hands on them, the Holy Spirit came on them, and they began speaking in tongues and prophesying.*
3. The overall biblical evidence suggests that being baptized in the Holy Spirit was an experience typically distinct from conversion when the Holy Spirit initially indwells a repentant believer.
 4. The overall biblical evidence suggests that speaking in tongues was a customary benefit experienced by believers baptized in the Spirit.

RECEIVING THE BAPTISM IN THE HOLY SPIRIT

1. Everyone who repents and believes the Gospel should be water baptized and expect to receive God’s gift of being baptized in the Holy Spirit.
 - Acts 2:38–39 (ESV) *And Peter said to them, “Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins, and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. For the promise is for you and for your children and for all who are far off, everyone whom the Lord our God calls to himself.”*
2. A repentant believer should ask the Father to baptize them in the Holy Spirit and expect him to do so. Jesus taught that we should persevere in prayer for God’s good gift.
 - Luke 11:9–13 (ESV) *“[A]sk, 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 the one who seeks finds, and to the one who knocks it will be opened. What father among you, if his son asks for a fish, will instead of a fish give him a serpent; or if he asks for an egg, will give him 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!"

3. A repentant believer receives God's gift of being baptized in the Spirit by simply believing God's promise, not by trying to earn it.
 - Galatians 3:2, 5 (ESV) *Did you receive the Spirit by works of the law or by hearing with faith?... Does he who supplies the Spirit to you and works miracles among you do so by works of the law, or by hearing with faith— just as Abraham "believed God, and it was counted to him as righteousness"?*
4. The biblical evidence suggests that the most common way repentant believers were baptized in the Holy Spirit was by other Spirit-baptized believers laying hands upon them and praying for them.
5. Spiritual hunger for God's presence and power is typically a foundational requirement to being baptized in God's Spirit.
 - John 7:37–39 (ESV) *Jesus stood up and cried out, "If anyone thirsts, let him come to me and drink. Whoever believes in me, as the Scripture has said, 'Out of his heart will flow rivers of living water.' " Now this he said about the Spirit, whom those who believed in him were to receive, for as yet the Spirit had not been given, because Jesus was not yet glorified.*
6. Being filled with God's presence and power is not a one-time experience. Scripture records believers being repeatedly filled with the Holy Spirit; (e.g., Acts 2:1-4; 4:8, 23-31).
 - Ephesians 5:18 (ESV) *And do not get drunk with wine, for that is debauchery, but be filled with the Spirit...*

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Have you been baptized in the Holy Spirit? Describe your experience.
2. Have you prayed for others to be Spirit baptized? How did it go?
3. What kinds of theological or experiential misgivings do people have about being baptized in the Holy Spirit? Have you had any?

HOMEWORK

1. Read the appendix: Cessationism.
2. Read through all of the biblical texts cited in this lesson and write down the main things you learned.

APPENDIX A: CESSATIONISM

Cessationism is the view that the miraculous gifts of the Holy Spirit ceased after the age of the Apostles. A primary biblical text used to substantiate this is in 1 Corinthians 13.

1 Corinthians 13:8–12 (ESV) Love never ends. As for prophecies, they will pass away; as for tongues, they will cease; as for knowledge, it will pass away. For we know in part and we prophesy in part, but when the perfect comes, the partial will pass away. When I was a child, I spoke like a child, I thought like a child, I reasoned like a child. When I became a man, I gave up childish ways. For now we see in a mirror dimly, but then face to face. Now I know in part; then I shall know fully, even as I have been fully known.

It is maintained by some cessationists that the perfection referred to in this passage refers to the establishment of the canon of Scripture. Once the New Testament canon was completed, there was no longer any need for miraculous spiritual gifts.

While we deeply respect our brothers and sisters who hold this view, the context of this passage makes no mention of the canon of Scripture. Instead, the perfection which leads to the cessation of spiritual gifts is described as a time when we shall see God “face to face” and when we shall “know fully, even as (we) have been fully known.” This can only refer to either our dying and going to heaven or Jesus’s return to the earth.

Thus, the text does speak of the cessation of spiritual gifts, but actually indicates that they are intended to be in operation until Jesus returns from heaven. This makes sense, since the church continues to be in need of edification and the church continues to need the aid of the Holy Spirit’s miraculous power to carry out the mission of spreading the Gospel throughout the world and making disciples of all nations.

If someone wants to argue about such things, it is better to avoid unnecessary division and instead love the person and focus on our unity in Christ. Nevertheless, in our own churches and campus ministries we want to teach and encourage believers to be baptized in the Holy Spirit and to eagerly seek spiritual gifts.