
The Baptism in the Holy Spirit: Have You Received Since You Believed?
A practical guide by Bishop Richard Farley, Capital District, Pentecostal Church of God

The purpose of this article is to dispel wrong teaching about the Holy Spirit, give you a desire for the baptism of the Holy Spirit and help you see that this powerful biblical experience is for you today. First, let me clarify that there is a difference between the "gift of tongues" (1 Corinthians 12:10; sharing a message for a congregation that is to be interpreted) and the prayer language that is the evidence of the baptism of the Holy Spirit.

I remember my 84-year-old grandmother arguing this point with me. She had spoken in tongues only about four or five times in her life. She believed that the only time a person who was baptized in the Holy Spirit spoke in tongues was at the time the anointing came for a message in a church service or Bible study. If this were true the apostle Paul would never have written 1 Corinthians 14. In this famous chapter he rebuked the Corinthian church for using the gift of tongues too much. In addition, he stated that he spoke in tongues (from the context, he meant that he prayed in the prayer language) more than all of them. To repeat, the gift of tongues for congregational messages is different than the prayer language given to you as the evidence of the baptism of the Holy Spirit.

Here are six reasons why you should want to receive the baptism of the Holy Spirit and pray in tongues . . .

1. Praying in tongues builds your faith. "But ye, beloved, building up yourselves on your most holy faith, praying in the Holy Ghost..." (Jude 20). Some think you have to be "spiritually up" and anointed to pray in tongues, but praying in the Spirit builds our faith. If you need victory, pray in tongues.
2. Praying in the prayer language brings you spiritual rest. "For with stammering lips and another tongue will he speak to this people. To whom he said, This is the rest wherewith ye may cause the weary to rest; and this is the refreshing..." (Isaiah 28:11, 12). When we are tired or upset we can pray in tongues and receive supernatural rest from God.
3. Praying in the Holy Spirit can help us better understand the truth of God's Word and His guidance. "Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak: and he will show you things to come" (John 16:13).
4. Praying in tongues, as the Spirit impresses us, can "take care of things" before they happen. Have you ever been awakened at 3 a.m. to pray and not known what to pray or how? Praying in the Spirit helps us in that circumstance. "Likewise the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities: for we know not what we should pray for as we ought: but the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered" (Romans 8:26). 1 Corinthians 14:2 says, "For he that speaketh in an unknown tongue speaketh not unto men, but unto God: for no man understandeth him; howbeit in the spirit he speaketh mysteries."
5. Praying in the prayer language gives us a "direct line" to God. "For he that speaketh in an unknown tongue speaketh not unto men, but unto God" (1 Corinthians 14:2.) God the Holy Spirit can talk to God the Father in ways we cannot.

6. Praying in the Spirit acclimates us to the realm of the gifts of the Spirit. I believe tongues is a stepping stone to the other gifts.

For these six reasons you can see that speaking in tongues is much more than just a sign of the Holy Spirit's baptism.

Some have asked me, "What do you say when you pray in the Spirit?" Acts 2:11 explains that when we pray in tongues we extol "the wonderful works of God." The Holy Spirit will only glorify God, so we don't have to worry about saying something wrong when we are praying in tongues.

There are five recorded instances in Acts of people receiving the baptism in the Holy Spirit:

1. The Day of Pentecost. Acts 2:4 says "And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance."

2. The people in the town of Samaria. "(For as yet he was fallen upon none of them: only they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus.) Then laid they their hands on them, and they received the Holy Ghost. And when Simon saw that through laying on of the apostles' hands the Holy Ghost was given, he offered them money..." (Acts 8:16-18). The Samaritan believers must have spoken in tongues or had some observable evidence of the baptism, because Simon the sorcerer wanted to buy the ability to impart the baptism of the Spirit to people by laying his hands on them. He must have heard and/or seen something that showed that these Samaritans had been baptized in the Spirit.

3. Apostle Paul was baptized in the Spirit. "And Ananias...putting his hands on him said, Brother Saul, the Lord, even Jesus, that appeared unto thee in the way as thou camest, hath sent me, that thou mightest receive thy sight, and be filled with the Holy Ghost" (Acts 9:17). Later, Paul wrote to certain believers, "I thank my God, I speak with tongues more than ye all" (1 Corinthians 14:18). It is reasonable to assume that he first began to speak in tongues when Ananias laid hands on him and he received the baptism of the Holy Spirit in Acts 9:17.

4. At Cornelius' House. "And they of the circumcision which believed were astonished, as many as came with Peter, because that on the Gentiles also was poured out the gift of the Holy Ghost. For they heard them speak with tongues, and magnify God" (Acts 10:45, 46).

5. The disciples of John the Baptist in Ephesus. Acts 19:1-6 says, "Paul having passed through the upper coasts came to Ephesus; and finding certain disciples, He said unto them, Have ye received the Holy Ghost since ye believed? And they said unto him, We have not so much as heard whether there be any Holy Ghost. And he said unto them, Unto what then were ye baptized? And they said, Unto John's baptism. Then said Paul, John verily baptized with the baptism of repentance, saying unto the people, that they should believe on him which should come after him, that is, on Christ Jesus. When they heard this, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. And when Paul had laid his hands upon them, the Holy Ghost came on them; and they spake with tongues, and prophesied."

Out of these five times we see that the Holy Spirit just fell on the receivers two times, but in the three other instances, believers received the baptism of the Holy Spirit through the laying on of hands. God can do it either way for you, too!

More Frequently-Asked-Questions...

How long do I have to tarry [pray and wait] for the baptism of the Holy Ghost?

Acts 2:1 says that the day of Pentecost "was fully come." Pentecost (also known as the Feast of Weeks) means "50." It was held 50 days after the Feast of Firstfruits. This is important because God would not pour out the Holy Ghost until that day. So Jesus commanded the disciples (in Acts 1:4) to wait in Jerusalem for the fulfillment of the Feast of Pentecost.

Pentecost was observed by the priest waving two loaves of bread baked with leaven; one for the Jews and one for the Gentiles. This symbolized that the Church was being formed of Jews and Gentiles joined together. The leaven showed that the Church would have sin in it.

Why did I explain this? To give you an understanding of Jesus' statements in Acts 1:4, 5 and 8. Jesus used the word "wait" to tell the disciples to stay in Jerusalem until the Holy Ghost would fall on them. Why? Because God would not destroy one of His types (symbols)—Pentecost was the Old Testament picture of His plan for the Church. After the day of Pentecost no one had to wait for a specified period after salvation to be baptized in the Holy Ghost; the believers in Samaria received instantly, Cornelius' household received instantly, and the disciples of John the Baptist in Ephesus received instantly. You can be baptized in the Holy Spirit now!

How do I receive the baptism of the Holy Spirit?

Realize that the baptism of the Holy Spirit comes by faith, just like salvation, healing or anything else received from God. God wants you to receive the baptism of the Holy Spirit. Jesus said in Luke 11:13, "If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children; how much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him?"

Let's go back to Acts 2:1-4 and read it very carefully. Who was "with one accord"? *They* were! The Holy Spirit filled the house where who was sitting? The house where *they* were. And tongues of fire appeared unto whom? *Them*. And it sat upon each of whom? *Them*. And who was filled with the Holy Ghost? *They* were. And who began to speak with other tongues? *They* did. The Word never said that the Holy Spirit spoke in tongues or took control of them and made them speak; He is a gentleman. It says they spoke as the Spirit gave them the utterance. This means He told them what to say or how to say it.

Praying in tongues is an act of faith. You must step out in faith after you have asked to receive the baptism of the Holy Spirit and begin to speak. No one can tell you what to say or lead you in a language.

Now let me explain something from 1 John 5:7, 8. The Word says that the spirit, the water and the blood work together to bear witness to the world that we are the children of God. The blood of Jesus, which we receive symbolically when we accept His death on our behalf and confess Him as our Savior, is our cleansing agent and a reminder of our covenant with God. The Book of Hebrews says that this blood is "enjoined unto you" (Hebrews 9:20). We are a kingdom of priests (Exodus 19:6; 1 Peter 2:9); one of the jobs of a priest in the Old Testament was the application of blood. As you "plead the blood of Jesus," you are calling upon God's covenant, asking Him to move heaven and earth to help you receive the baptism of the Spirit.

Personal instructions from Bishop Farley: At this point, I have everyone pray and ask God to baptize them in the Holy Spirit, and then just plead the blood until I can come to them and lay hands on them.

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