



Who Is the Holy Spirit? pt.2 (And What Is He Doing upon Me?)

<http://blog.forerunners4him.org/holyspiritpart2>

Funny, isn't it, just how much meaning can turn on something as simple as a preposition? Did you put the ice cream *on* the fridge or *in* it? Makes quite a difference doesn't it? Especially as time goes on...

In [an earlier article](#), "Who Is the Holy Spirit? (And What Is He Doing inside Me?)," I wrote about the indwelling of the Holy Spirit, trying my level best to lift the veil surrounding the "Mystery Person" of the Trinity who dwells so silently and secretly with us on the inside.

Here, I'm focusing on the equally amazing work of the Holy Spirit upon us. There is little that is silent or secretive about that! Please note, however, that unlike indwelling us, this is a work the Holy Spirit *desires* to do, but may not be allowed (by us) to do. With our own little wills, we can resist the Mighty One from empowering us. But that's not why you're reading this, is it? You want to receive from God all He desires to give!

Then, let us begin the journey by looking over some "unfinished business" of the Old Covenant. The real weight of our understanding about the Holy Spirit does not rest on two prepositions, but upon two promises. These promises, given by the Father, describe two very different works of the Holy Spirit intended to correct deficiencies which hindered Israel in their walk with Him.



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Two Tremendous Promises

Throughout the history of Israel, the Holy Spirit was present with them in powerful ways. However, the Spirit was never permanently present with anyone, nor was His power available to all. Certain select individuals were singled out by God as priests, prophets, kings. These were anointed with oil as a visible sign of the anointing of the Holy Spirit being poured upon them for the work they were called to do. In a similar way craftsmen and others were gifted by the Spirit in unique ways and for specific purposes. Even so, the Holy Spirit would come and go like the wind, lifting them to heights of supernatural giftedness and plunging them back into depths of their own depravity. Saul and Samson come readily to mind.

With hindsight we can see that this was an unsatisfactory arrangement, but I suspect that it never really occurred to them to question if something more could be done. What they were already receiving by way of the Holy Spirit's presence and power far exceeded anything their neighbors were experiencing. Nevertheless, God had a much better plan in mind for them and for us. Through His prophets He promised that things would dramatically change in the future: A day would come when His Spirit would be placed within and also poured out upon His believing people. These two promises point toward vastly different purposes.

1st Promise: Inward Life

Ezekiel proclaimed the promise of an indwelling presence: God would one day give us a "new heart" and put a "new spirit" within us. From our perspective in the New Covenant we can easily see how this takes place. God gives us a new heart which enables us to know and love Him. He also places His Spirit inside of us which enables us to live for Him and through Him.

All this happens when we are born again even if we aren't aware of it in the slightest. It's called regeneration and it means quite literally that we are brought out of a living death into spiritual life. We are regenerated (reborn) by having our spiritually dead spirit superseded by the new spirit He places within us. That new spirit in turn is united to God's Holy Spirit at a depth far beyond our knowing.

Confused? Mystified? No one could blame you. It is one thing to repeat the words which describe it; another entirely to comprehend this deep working of God. Perhaps I'm simply confessing my ignorance, but I have read volumes on the subject and still can't fit these concepts into nicely tied off theological boxes. It must have been completely bumfuzzling for Ezekiel's readers. Nevertheless, it is clear even in this prophetic passage God's purpose in doing this was to cleanse us from sin and restore us to faithful living by empowering us from within. The focus is on the inward life of the believer and their spiritual growth.

"I will sprinkle clean water on you, and you shall be clean from all your uncleannesses, and from all your idols I will cleanse you. And I will give you a new heart, and a new spirit I will put within you. And I will remove the heart of stone from your flesh and give you a heart of flesh. And I will put my Spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes and be careful to obey my rules. You shall dwell in the



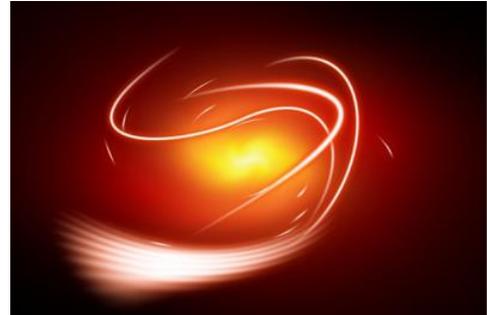
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land that I gave to your fathers, and you shall be my people, and I will be your God.”
Ezekiel 36:25-28 ESV

2nd Promise: Supernatural Power

Through Joel the Father gives us something else entirely. Here the promise is all about empowerment for ministry to others. In that future day God would pour out His Spirit upon “all flesh” and every believer would move in a supernatural anointing previously reserved only for prophets and other hand-picked leaders. Dreams, visions and prophecy are mentioned by name, but more is implied since those who moved in the prophetic gifts also performed healings and other supernatural miracles. It certainly cannot mean less than that. What is promised under the New Covenant is superior in every way to what was given under the Old.



We might well imagine the profound sense of wonder such a promise cast upon those who heard it. Everyone? Yes, everyone! Regardless of age, or gender, or social status, everyone would be raised to unimagined heights of supernatural empowerment. As the Spirit descends in divine outpouring, the whole company of God’s faithful people would be raised up. Visionary encounters (dreams, visions, prophecy) would certainly enhance each believer own walk with God, but that’s not the end game. Taking the prophets as the operative model, this future outpouring points towards a supernaturally empowered ministry. The focus is on visionary experience and societal impact. That’s just what happened when the promise came through.

“And it shall come to pass afterward, that I will pour out my Spirit on all flesh; your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your old men shall dream dreams, and your young men shall see visions. Even on the male and female servants in those days I will pour out my Spirit.” Joel 2:28-29 ESV

[LIFE SUPPORT: I’ve prepared a 5-chapter PDF download, [Living in the Spirit](#), to help you learn more about our incomparable Guest and how to grow your relationship with Him. It’s free—download here.]



The Promises Fulfilled

How and when were these promises fulfilled? Curiously, they were both fulfilled in the same Upper Room in Jerusalem, though these great events were separated in time by 50 days.

God fulfilled the first promise on the evening of the Resurrection. Jesus entered the Upper Room and breathed the Holy Spirit breath of new life into the disciples. According to His command and under His direct leadership, all of the disciples present received the Holy Spirit



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right along with saving faith in Jesus as their Risen Lord and Savior. You can't get any more born again than that! This fulfilled the promise given through Ezekiel of a new heart, a new spirit and His own Spirit being placed within believers.

Jesus said to them again, "Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, even so I am sending you." And when he had said this, he breathed on them and said to them, "Receive the Holy Spirit. If you forgive the sins of anyone, they are forgiven; if you withhold forgiveness from anyone, it is withheld." John 20:21-22 ESV

This first "giving" of the Holy Spirit marks the birth of the Church. Some sections of today's church celebrate the giving of the Spirit at Pentecost as the "birthday of the Church," but that clearly isn't the case. What happened at Pentecost was a second and entirely different giving of the Spirit than what takes place when new believers are born again.



It's true that many new converts were made after Peter's sermon, but those new fish were hauled into the arc of salvation by disciples whose own conversion was now 50 days old. Naturally enough, these new converts received the gift of the indwelling Spirit for that comes automatically with the gift of saving faith. However, what marks the giving of the Spirit at Pentecost is not what happened for the new converts, but what happened to the already converted disciples which enabled them to become so successful at "fishing for men."

Remember, Jesus set all of this in motion Easter Sunday. On that evening when saving faith came and the indwelling Spirit was first given, Jesus looked at His band of brothers and saw they were still missing something. He had just told them that His intention was to send them out with the same equipping the Father had given Him. Stage one of that is being born of the Spirit, just as Jesus Himself was conceived by the Holy Spirit. This He immediately accomplished there in the Upper Room.

Stage two hadn't arrived yet. Jesus had been sent out, not only baptized in water (as they already were), but baptized by the Holy Spirit. It was in the power of the Spirit that Jesus did all of His supernaturally gifted works. In Luke's account of this same evening Jesus closed by instructing the disciples to pray and wait for that second "promise of the Father"—power from on high.

"And behold, I am sending the promise of my Father upon you. But stay in the city until you are clothed with power from on high." Luke 24:49 ESV

God fulfilled His second promise in the Upper Room on the morning of Pentecost 50 days later. In the meantime, the disciples diligently obeyed Jesus's command to seek this empowerment, though they hardly knew what it would be like or how it would come. One thing is certain, they weren't just hanging around, hoping it would show up. Apparently, the intentional seeking of this gift is necessary. Then, ten days after the Ascension, these same disciples and more—120 in all—received a divine outpouring that would ultimately raise them into the same kind of supernaturally gifted ministry as that of Jesus. This fulfilled the promise of empowerment given through Joel, a fact not lost on Peter who specifically identified the passage from Joel as being fulfilled in their midst.

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Something else was different too. The giving of the indwelling Spirit takes place so secretly and silently within us that few people even realize it's happening. However, this outpouring of the Spirit was so extraordinary to the disciples that they poured out their praises. Their celebration was so boisterous that it drew a large crowd. There simply was no mistaking that God was up to something grand!



When the day of Pentecost arrived, they were all together in one place. And suddenly there came from heaven a sound like a mighty rushing wind, and it filled the entire house where they were sitting. And divided tongues as of fire appeared to them and rested on each one of them. And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues as the Spirit gave them utterance. Acts 2:1-4 ESV



Two Ways to Receive the Gift of the Spirit

This tells us is that there are two distinctly different ways that the Holy Spirit can be given to Christian believers. These gifts equip us in different ways for different purposes.

1) Every Christian receives the gift of the Holy Spirit as an indwelling presence within them. This comes through faith-conversion when we repent and turn to Jesus as our Savior. God immediately gives us two extraordinary gifts: a) the forgiveness of our sins through what Jesus did for us at the cross and b) a new life empowered by the Holy Spirit who is united to us on the inside. Through this gift of the Spirit, we all now have God on the inside helping us learn the new way of life that comes to us as we trust Jesus enough to put Him first and follow Him.

2) Any Christian who desires it can also receive the gift of the outpouring of the Holy Spirit upon them. This baptism (full immersion) is the source of our empowerment for the supernatural workings of the Holy Spirit. This readies us for Jesus to do His deeds of power through us by His Spirit. Although it doesn't come automatically at conversion, being baptized with "power from on high" is available to everyone. All that's needed is faith in the Risen Lord and a willingness to seek this further blessing of empowerment.

Since I have already written at length on the Spirit *within us*, the rest of this article will be devoted to the Spirit *upon us*.



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Will You Ask for This?

The Lord is such a respecter of our free wills! We ask for forgiveness and a new life with Him and boy, does He give it to us. Because the new life and saving faith are intimately tied to the Holy Spirit, the indwelling of God comes as an unheralded part of that package. With the baptism of power, it's quite different. I've met people who received it at conversion, a rare few who seem to have received it prior to conversion (that will mess with your theology), but by far and away, most everyone has had to do what Jesus said to do: stay and pray.

For reasons best known to God, you have to desire it, ask for it and seek it, sometimes praying and waiting diligently for it to come. I've known people who pursued this gift for years, and dissolved into grateful tears when it finally arrived. On the other hand, it can just as easily show up with the first prayer uttered, but rarely does this empowerment come upon a person who isn't looking for it. That's how it was with the first disciples: Jesus told (commanded) them to seek it through prayer. *Why would we think it would be any different for us?*

Sadly, I have known many who refused the invitation, but why would someone not go for this? Let's hope you never find out! Oh, you might confess (as I and many others could), that it was this or that fear or offense which tried to hinder you. But if you press in to receive it (as I hope you will), then you'll thank God that He somehow carried you past the many obstacles to receiving this blessing. Can you see a similarity in this to receiving salvation? There certainly are plenty of obstacles that keep people from seeking Jesus for salvation, but if you're the one who's been saved, you really can't imagine why anyone would refuse the offer!



The Surpassing Power

With Jesus the supernatural seems so natural. The gospels are saturated with the accounts of the healings, miracles and prophetic insights that seemed to pour out of Him wherever He went. And He never broke a sweat! What was His "secret"?

Jesus was anointed by the Holy Spirit for these works. The Spirit came down upon Him at His baptism and did the works through Him. Just as He never acted on His own, but always looked to see what the Father was directing Him to do, so He never did anything in His own strength, but relied upon the Holy Spirit to furnish the power. For our sake He had to become and remain fully human. We know through Paul's word in Philippians that Jesus set His divine side aside in order to completely enter into the conditions of our humanity. By this He was able to become our true representative at the cross. By this also He became our perfect Example for how to live faithfully and do ministry supernaturally.

It is the same for us. The Holy Spirit within us connects us to Jesus so that we can follow Him, just as He followed the Father. The Holy Spirit upon us (if we have received Him in that way),



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stands ready to work through us, just as He did for Jesus. The nine supernaturally empowered gifts cannot take place without the Holy Spirit's active involvement. As the Son of Man, Jesus entirely depended upon the Spirit to empower His works. As sons of God through faith in Christ, it is the same for us.

We have seen how the disciples weren't trained for the supernatural by studying the scriptures, but by direct encounter with the Person of the Holy Spirit. It was being baptized in the Spirit, not being born again, that launched them on their miracle-working journeys in the Book of Acts. Although the scriptures and spiritual birth necessarily came first, what needed to come second was the empowerment they received at Pentecost. From then on wherever they went signs and wonders followed.

Was this supernatural ministry confined to the first few apostles? Absolutely not! For the first two centuries the Early Church was known by miracles and deeds of power. Some have called it "power evangelism" for it is evident, both in scripture and from the historical record, that the tremendous drawing power of healings and demonic deliverances accelerated the growth of Christianity wherever the gospel was carried. Much of this died down as Christianity became "watered down" once it became the official religion of the Roman Empire in the fourth century. Nevertheless, the miraculous never ceased entirely.

Healings, deliverances and other miracles continued down through the centuries in sporadic outbreaks or through uniquely gifted individuals. Such deeds have always been regarded by the Roman Catholics as a primary qualification for sainthood. Still, it must be admitted that the baptism in the Spirit and deeds of power fell on hard times for many long neglected centuries. Ask yourself: If you were the devil, wouldn't you want to crush it? Sadly, many in the church began preaching and teaching that the miraculous is no longer needed or available, thereby enshrining our failed experience as if it were doctrine.

Fortunately, this apparent death of the baptism of power was overturned by an astonishing round of events. In the late 1800s devoted believers in the United States began seeking God for a return of the power Jesus promised. In response the Lord restored the gift of tongues to the Church during meetings held in Topeka, Kansas in 1901. Then in 1906, in a stable (!) in Azusa Street in Los Angeles the modern Pentecostal movement began with the baptism of power, tongues, and signs and wonders. Since then, millions of Christians world-wide have sought and received this "second blessing," making Pentecostalism and the Charismatic movement the fastest growing branches of Christianity in the world. You can be a part of it too!



Why Don't We Get this Automatically?

Why didn't the Lord give this to us at the beginning? That's fair to ask. Lots of things came with the Starter Kit, things we never asked for or expected to receive. We were only looking to meet Jesus, or get ourselves rescued from sin, death and hell. Still, God poured in lots of other gifts (see "Saved by the Free Gift"). Why was this withheld?



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I can't give you an explanation, because none is given, but I can offer two kinds of facts. Both the Bible and the personal experience of Christians demonstrate the fact that the baptism of power comes later. Clearly, it came later for the disciples. Fact One: the disciples were born again in the Upper Room on Easter evening and baptized in the Spirit fifty days later on Pentecost. That's a Biblical fact. Fact Two: since the baptism of power was restored, the vast majority of Christians who have received it, experienced it as coming, not concurrent with salvation, but afterward—usually after a season of praying for it and seeking it. That is an undeniable fact of present experience. This demonstrates that it usually comes later, but doesn't tell us why.

Let me hazard a guess. Perhaps, though this is mere supposition, the Lord intended for the two to be separate in order that the beauty and power of the baptism in the Spirit would not overshadow the beauty and power of having the Holy Spirit dwelling secretly and silently within us. The indwelling presence of the Holy Spirit is united to us—it doesn't come and go as the manifestation of the Holy Spirit does when the gifts of power are in operation. It is certainly good for us to know that salvation and the indwelling Spirit go hand in hand. That way our salvation-confidence can be based upon our faith in what the unchanging Word of God says that Christ has done for us, regardless of our feelings.

With the baptism of the Spirit feeling and experience rise to the forefront. Moving in the power gifts requires attentiveness to the manifest presence of the Holy Spirit. The anointing of His presence comes and goes like the wind, and so does our sense of His leading or directions. That's no foundation for confidence about our eternal position in Christ! From this standpoint it is an extremely good thing that our salvation doesn't depend upon sensing the Holy Spirit, but in believing God's Word alone.



What Comes with It?

This next section is observational. As a missionary, priest, chaplain to the homeless, and extremely curious seeker, I have talked with and observed countless Christians. I paid special attention to things that often seem to come with the Spirit baptism. The following six characteristics aren't guaranteed to come your way if you're baptized in the Spirit, but there's a good chance they will. Naturally, the best way to find out the difference it will make in your own life, is to seek it whole-heartedly, just as Jesus "recommends." Then, you can start your own list by exploring this wonderful gift from the inside, not the outside only.

1) Tongues. The very first thing that comes is the gift of tongues for personal edification and worship. This is what came to the disciples in the Upper Room on Pentecost. Along with the tongues can come a whole host of sensations or impressions of the manifest presence of the Holy Spirit. Many would say, myself included, that the personal prayer language is not the most important thing about the baptism of power, but it is invariably



the first thing given. Tongues is a subject in itself and if you'd like to learn more (as I hope you will), follow this link to Prayer in Tongues at our website.

2) Sensitivity. You can expect to enjoy greater sensitivity to the Holy Spirit. Just as being born again introduces us to Jesus and opens the way to recognize His way of being present with us, so too, the Spirit baptism sensitizes us to the presence of the Holy Spirit. It would appear that out of the initial encounter flows a graced ability to “connect the dots” of personal experience with the way the Holy Spirit is uniquely present to us. No longer is the Holy Spirit the Mystery Person of the Trinity! I have met many Christians who haven't been Spirit baptized, who readily confess that they have little practical awareness of the Holy Spirit's day to day operations in their lives. This is never the case with those who have been baptized in the Spirit.

3) Scripture. You will likely experience a greater ability to comprehend the scriptures. Without question, any Christian can become sensitive to the Holy Spirit's presence and grow greatly at understanding the scriptures. Nevertheless, it seems that for the majority of Christians the Bible is a difficult book to penetrate, just as the Holy Spirit's presence is an elusive concept to grasp. These walls come down with the Spirit baptism. Almost universally, those who have been baptized in the Spirit report a greater ability to receive revelation and comprehension when they read the scriptures. This makes perfect sense, since the Holy Spirit is the One who authored the Word of God and the baptism aids our awareness of our Teacher's presence.

4) Discerning. I have often noted a greater ability and willingness to engage in spiritual warfare among those who have been spirit baptized. The discerning of spirits is one of the nine power gifts of the Spirit made available through a personal Pentecost. Not everyone receives this gift in its fullest form, but many share in it to lesser degrees. Just as they display a greater sensitivity to the presence of the Holy Spirit, they also evidence an enhanced awareness of the unholy spirits. Not only that but they are willingly trained as spiritual warriors for intercession or for demonic deliverance. None of this guarantees the accuracy of their discernment, any more than having sight guarantees you won't slip stepping off a curb. But it does give you a practical advantage over a unsighted person.

5) Guidance. There is a greater potential both for being led by the Holy Spirit and for being misled. Let me explain. An enhanced ability comes with the empowerment to sense the leading, prompting, checking and grieving of the Holy Spirit. Not everyone submits to these overtures, of course, but for those who do, a heightened awareness of the Holy Spirit is indispensable for walking closely with the Lord through the events of each day. Because of this, believers who have been Spirit baptized rightly place a high value on being guided by the Spirit. Sadly, this leads some to set common sense or Biblical guidelines aside, when their “spiritual sense” points them towards doing something downright goofy or wrong.

6) The Supernatural. With the Holy Spirit baptism comes a greater ability to pray effectively for healings and miracles. God listens to the prayers of every Christian and He oversees healing in all of the denominations. Nevertheless, it is a FACT of history that Pentecostalism was birthed—just like the Early Church was birthed—through tremendous outpourings of supernatural power for healings and deliverances. This isn't a question of being holy, or more deserving, or being more loved. It has everything to do



with the obedience of seeking what Jesus commanded us to seek as “power from on high.” That power alone is what accomplishes the healings and miracles.

7) Boldness. The baptism in the Spirit brings with it a greater boldness for spreading the gospel. It was that way in the beginning. Indeed, Jesus told His disciples that they would be His effective witnesses once they received the power He desired to send. Because of the qualities listed above and because of the enabling power of the Holy Spirit baptism, there is often more boldness and success in spreading the gospel. Don't think of this simply as sharing faith and preaching the word. The truly powerful combination then, as now, is signs and wonders (healings and miracles) *accompanying* the Word.



What Doesn't Come?

This gift is good, extremely good, but it isn't a silver bullet. There are some important things, like Christian character, integrity and maturity, which cannot be conveyed to us by any gift. Rats! But we knew there had to be a catch in there somewhere, right? As it stands, spiritual growth and character development are the work of the indwelling Spirit and are therefore, available to any Christian who wants to die to self in order to follow Jesus.

The baptism of power and the power gifts that come with it seem like they should increase our character, but they don't. They can even be used to work against our growth, on the principle that the Enemy can turn any blessing into a curse, if we don't take care to submit it to Christ. Think of it this way. A lot more horse power under the hood doesn't make anyone a better driver, but it practically guarantees you'll get into trouble (a lot faster) if you don't learn how to handle it. Just knowing what you're riding with presents a whole new set of temptations, not least of which is pride. That said, the greater sensitivity to the Holy Spirit that comes with this gift, can tremendously enhance our ability to listen and obey, if we want it to.

You need to know, though, that many (not all) who have been baptized in the Spirit fail to cultivate the fruit of the Spirit in their lives. ***Please, guard against this!*** The baptism of power is not a short cut to maturity, the fruit of the Spirit, real holiness, integrity or character. You can be baptized in the Spirit and display none of these essential elements of a faithful believer. Don't let that be you. Press in to the Lord through faithful, cross-bearing discipleship and the indwelling Spirit will help you grow the fruit you are intended to display. Then, with the proper combination of these two gifts, you can become ***a valiant warrior who advances the Kingdom.***



Prayer to Receive the Baptism



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The Lord says to seek Him where He can be found. Where the baptism in the Spirit is concerned, this often means going to a church or conference where the Spirit baptism is being taught and where the power gifts are being put into practice. For most people, a worship gathering or prayer group provides that extra boost to faith and receptivity that are needed. The disciples, for instance, received it in a group setting after an extended season of prayer.

Don't despair, however, if you don't have ready access to such a group, or if you haven't received it after your first few prayers. Persevere! The Lord knows how to find you, as well as lead you. If you need a group, and you're willing to go, He'll get you to one. If not, He is perfectly able to come to you. I know a person who received the baptism and gift of tongues while in the shower. I'm reasonably sure she was alone at the time...

In the meantime, be offering up your heart and your prayers. No formula exists, but here are some elements from my own praying.

Dear Jesus, You said that we should seek to receive this power from on high. I want You to know that today I am asking for this gift. Send whatever You desire to send into my life and prepare me to be wide open to receive it, however it may come. Forgive me for any time when I may have disparaged this gift or shrank from receiving it. I cast down all past fear or pride that may be in my way. I humble myself before You and Your Word and confess that if You want Your Church to receive this gift, then I certainly need to welcome it.

Holy Spirit, please come. Baptize me to overflowing fullness. Enable me to speak in tongues. Empower me to serve others with any of the nine gifts that You would appoint for me. Empower me to boldness in my witness of who Jesus is and all He has done. Draw me closer into union with Yourself, and pour out upon me this mighty blessing!

About the Author: Steve Evans



For over a decade Steve Evans and [Healing Streams](http://www.healingstreamsusa.org) have been helping people recover inner peace and freedom. Through Forerunners4Him he has been showing how we can be saved for heaven and teaching the way to live a Spirit filled life on earth. Go now to receive a completely free primer, [Getting to Heaven](#) and/or an introduction to [Living in the Spirit](#) at our website.



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