

The Baptism of Power

A New Life in the Spirit's Power

Jesus actually told the first disciples "Don't leave home without this!" So important is this spiritual empowerment that even the followers who had been trained by Him in person, who had received saving faith and the indwelling Spirit on Easter evening, even these dedicated believers were told to stay in Jerusalem and pray to be "baptized with the Holy Spirit." If they needed it, don't we?

"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

Will You Ask for This?

Unlike the gift of the [indwelling presence](#) of the Holy Spirit, this baptism of power is not automatic, involuntary or unheralded. You have to desire it and ask for it, sometimes praying and waiting diligently for it to come. 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: They were told by Jesus to seek it through prayer. Why would we think it would be any different for us?



Why would anyone not go for this? I hope you never find out! Oh, you may one day say as I and countless others could, that it was this or that fear or offense which hindered us. But if you press in to receive it (as I hope you will) then there is that indefinable gift of grace within you carrying you past the many obstacles to receiving this blessing. In this regard it is similar to receiving salvation. There are plenty of obstacles in everyone's life turning them from the way of faith, but once you have been saved, you really can't imagine anyone refusing the offer!

The Surpassing Power

It is impossible to read the gospels and not be surprised and delighted by the supernatural events that seem so "natural" wherever Jesus goes. Miracles were happening around Him with breath-taking frequency. On at least two separate occasions He even sent His disciples out and they took part in it too. Just for the record, none of them had ever been to seminary or were previously trained as prophets or priests. They were regular people like you and me. It clearly surprised and delighted them that they were able to do many of the supernatural things that Jesus did, such as healing all manner of diseases and casting out demons.

Were these supernatural events only meant to happen through Jesus' earthly ministry? Evidently not! After His resurrection, Jesus carefully instructed His recently born-again disciples



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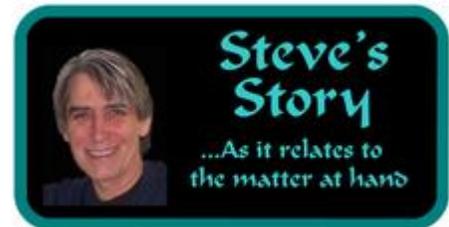


to wait for what He called “the promise of my Father.” They were to stay in Jerusalem until they could be “clothed with power from on high.” Did they just hang out, hoping it would show up? No, they sought it diligently, praying for it to come to them. Once it arrived, the supernatural flow of miracles broke forth all over again, along with extreme boldness in witnessing. The Book of Acts chronicles the way that this original band of regular folks became strong in the Word of the Lord and in deeds of power by the Holy Spirit.

Beyond the Book

Were these supernatural events only meant to happen through the ministry of the apostles? Definitely not! The Early Church for the first two centuries was characterized by miracles and deeds of power. These continued in sporadic outbreaks throughout the next 18 centuries, often through uniquely gifted individuals, rather than trained clergy. In fact healing miracles and supernatural deeds have always been one of the primary qualifications for bestowing the designation of “sainthood” by the Roman Catholic Church. The RC’s are not alone in this. Periods of revival, seasons of persecution, the birthing of new movements have also witnessed the supernatural workings of God through devoted individuals.

Since the Pentecostal/Charismatic movement began in the early 1900s, however, millions of people have been moving in the supernatural operations of the Holy Spirit for miracles, healings and demonic deliverance. “Birthing” the revelation of the baptism of power back into the church was both joy and battle for those early Pentecostals. Ironically, the movement was born in a stable at Azusa Street in Los Angeles, California (sound familiar?). For years it struggled to survive “outside the camp” due to the entrenched ridicule and hostility of the mainline denominations which rejected the truth of the revelation they had received. Now, it is the largest and fastest growing branch of Christianity in the world. You can be a part of it, too!



Why Don't We Get This Automatically?

Why didn't we get the baptism of power in the [Starter Kit](#)? That's a fair question. No explanation is given, though there are two kinds of facts which show us that it usually comes later: Biblical facts and the personal experience of Christians. The Biblical fact is that it came later for the disciples. They were born again in the Upper Room on the evening of the Resurrection and received the indwelling Spirit at that time. The baptism of power came 50 days later on the day of Pentecost, after praying and waiting for it as Jesus directed.

The early Pentecostal pioneers at the end of the 19th century were deliberately seeking this experience to be restored to the church. Ever since then, the majority of Christians who have received it, experienced it as coming after their salvation experience, not concurrent with it. For this reason, it has often been called the “second blessing,” though in reality there are no limits to the revelatory experiences Christians can have. These facts show us that it often comes later, but they don't tell us why.



A Possible Answer

Perhaps, although this is mere supposition, the Lord has intended for it 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 an 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?

These are observations based on general experience, so there are plenty of exceptions in real life. This is just to get you started in recognizing some of the benefits of this experiential encounter with the Holy Spirit. The best way to find out what the baptism in the Spirit is all about is to seek it wholeheartedly and then, when it comes your way, you will be able to explore it from the inside, not the outside!

1) A Greater Sensitivity to the Holy Spirit

Many Christians (not all) who only have the indwelling Spirit display very little practical awareness of the Holy Spirit's day to day operations in their lives. For them the Holy Spirit is indeed the "Mystery Person" of the Trinity. This is never the case for believers who have received the baptism of power. Not only do they know that they have met the Holy Spirit, they have a graced ability from that encounter to connect the dots of personal experience and recognize the Holy Spirit's presence and activity in all kinds of ways that they had previously attributed to other causes.

2) A Greater Ability to Comprehend the Scriptures

Unquestionably, there have always been pastors and teachers who could understand and communicate the Word of God, regardless of whether or not they received the baptism of power. Nevertheless, for the vast majority of Christians the Bible is a difficult book to penetrate and comprehend. Those who have been baptized in the Holy Spirit, however, universally report that they now have a much greater ability to read the scriptures and receive revelation directly from them. The answer to this riddle is easy: The Holy Spirit who wrote the scriptures is, in some significant way, more personally known and accessible to them.



3) A Greater Ability to Engage in Spiritual Warfare

The discerning of spirits is one of the nine manifestation gifts of the Spirit. Not everyone who is baptized in the Holy Spirit becomes a vessel for the full manifestation of this gift to operate, just as not all Christians are gifted at evangelism, but every Christian can share their faith. Similarly, few Spirit baptized believers see into the invisible realm, but most of them typically display a greater sensitivity to the presence of evil spirits as well as the Holy Spirit. They are willingly trained as spiritual warriors for intercession or for demonic deliverance. This does not guarantee the accuracy of their discernment, anymore than having sight guarantees you won't walk into a door jamb or slip stepping off a curb. But it does give you a practical advantage over an unsighted person.

4) A Greater Potential for Being Led by the Spirit

An enhanced ability comes with the empowerment to sense the leading, prompting, checking and grieving of the Holy Spirit. This does not mean that all individuals choose to submit to these overtures, but for those who do, a heightened awareness of and sensitivity to the Holy Spirit is indispensable for being guided by the Lord step by step through the day. Just look at the way Paul was [guided by the Holy Spirit](#). Certainly, he put a lot of stock in the Word of God, but he followed the path the Holy Spirit led him by within boundaries set by the Word. Jesus didn't give us only a Book to follow; He gave us His Holy Spirit to lead us as well.

5) A Greater Ability to Pray for Healings and Miracles

Without doubt God hears every prayer and heals at times in all denominations and churches. Unquestionably, His sovereign will is inscrutable. Every one of us experiences perplexing, heart-breaking times when prayers go unanswered. No one bats 100%. Even 5% would be a great average where dramatic, immediate answers to prayer for healing is concerned. Having said this, it is nevertheless a FACT of history that Pentecostalism was birthed—just like the Early Church was birthed—through vast occurrences of supernatural power for healings and deliverances. And it continues to this day.

If you want to see tremendous miracles and multitudes of healings you may have to travel to the Third World, but you will only find it being done there through Holy Spirit baptized and empowered individuals and churches. As a general rule, only Spirit baptized believers move in the manifestation or “power” gifts of the Holy Spirit: prophecy, wisdom, knowledge, discerning spirits, miracles, healing, faith, tongues and interpretation of tongues. Though these gifts have some counterparts in ordinary Christian life, as supernatural manifestations they have a unique character all their own.

6) A Greater Boldness for Spreading the Gospel

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—just as Jesus said there would be. Remember that His specific purpose in having his born again disciples pray for the “empowerment from on high” was for the purpose of world evangelism. Do not 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?

Maturity and true Christian character cannot be conveyed to us by any gift. They must be cultivated over time. The baptism of power is made available to empower us for witnessing to the Risen Christ, for deeds of power, and by enhancing our life in Christ with greater conscious connection to the Holy Spirit. Character and integrity are cultivated in us by the indwelling presence of the Holy Spirit—if we are attentive to His work in us. By convicting, convincing, and judging us where sin and righteousness are concerned, the Holy Spirit cleanses us of our old ways and enables us to live as New Creations.

The indwelling Spirit is essential for our being able to experience, cultivate and live filled with the fruit of the Spirit—peace, love, joy, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control. It is He who lifts us into new life and then flows through us, carrying us with peace and freedom from one moment to the next whenever we are released by faith-surrender to Jesus. You don't need to be baptized with power to experience this or excel at this. That's not what the baptism is about, though it certainly should bring enhancements to our ability to abide in Christ and live by the Spirit.

Sadly, however, many 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 does not guarantee spiritual growth. It 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! The truth is that with the proper combination of these two gifts any believer can become a valiant warrior who advances the Kingdom.

Next Wave of the Spirit to Catch

Praying in Tongues Do you have to? No, but you can if you want to and you just may want to. Paul did. In fact he was glad that he prayed in tongues more than the people to whom his letters were addressed. Since he also wrote more of the New Testament than anyone else, he ought to know why something this "scandalous" is so secretly good!

Nine Gifts of Power Jesus never intended for His church to be powerless or penniless. Just as the tithe is the Lord's provision for material supply, so the baptism in the Spirit is His provision for supernatural supply. Neither is forced on anyone, but when believers come into obedience, watch out! The "windows of heaven" open wide! Through the baptism in the Spirit, Jesus pours out gifts that will manifest as signs and wonders for the sake of ministry to someone in need.

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Holy Spirit Scriptures

And I tell you, ask, 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!" Luke 11:9-13 ESV

Then he opened their minds to understand the Scriptures, and said to them, "Thus it is written, that the Christ should suffer and on the third day rise from the dead, and that repentance and forgiveness of sins should be proclaimed in his name to all nations, beginning from Jerusalem. You are witnesses of these things. 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 24:45-49 ESV

And while staying with them he 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."... But you 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." Acts 1:4... 8 ESV

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

But Peter, standing with the eleven, lifted up his voice and addressed them, "Men of Judea and all who dwell in Jerusalem, let this be known to you, and give ear to my words. For these men are not drunk, as you suppose, since it is only the third hour of the day. But this is what was uttered through the prophet Joel: "And in the last days it shall be, God declares, that I will pour out my Spirit on all flesh, and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams; even on my male servants and female servants in those days I will pour out my Spirit, and they shall prophesy. Acts 2:14-18 ESV

As I began to speak, the Holy Spirit fell on them just as on us at the beginning. And I remembered the word of the Lord, how he said, 'John baptized with water, but you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit.' If then God gave the same gift to them as he gave to us when we believed in the Lord Jesus Christ, who was I that I could stand in God's way?" Acts 11:15-18 ESV

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. 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. 1 Corinthians 12:4-11 ESV

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For over a decade Steve Evans and [Healing Streams](#) have been helping people recover inner peace and freedom through the free eCourse for healing, [Matters of the Heart](#). 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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