

# Receiving the Gift of the Holy Spirit

## by Carl Toti

Hebrews 6:1-3 (NIV) Introduces the theme of "Baptisms."

The three essential baptisms in the New Testament: Baptism into Christ, baptism in water and the Baptism of the Holy Spirit.

1 Cor. 10:2 (TLB)

This might be called their "baptism"--baptized both in sea and cloud! --as followers of Moses--their commitment to him as their leader.

The "sea" represents the new birth - the "cloud" the baptism of the Holy Spirit (BHS- Baptism of the Holy Spirit).

There are seven New Testament references to the BHS.

Four in the Gospels

(1) Matt. 3:11

(2) Mark 1:8

(3) Luke 3:16

(4) John 1:33

(5) Acts 1:5 (ASV) "For John indeed baptized with water; but ye shall be baptized in the Holy Spirit not many days hence. "

(6) Acts 11:16

(7) 1 Cor. 12:13

In Acts 8 the new believers in Samaria were born again and then received the Baptism into the Holy Spirit.

Paul asked certain disciples that he met in Ephesus:

**Acts 19:2 (KJV) "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."**

In all the passages we have looked at "to drink of the Holy Spirit," "to be filled with the Holy Spirit" and "to receive the Holy Spirit" suggests an experience in which the believer receives the fullness of the Holy Spirit in his/her innermost being.

To be baptized means to be immersed or dipped. So for a believer to be "baptized into the Holy Spirit" depicts the believer's whole being (spirit, soul, and even body) is immersed, surrounded and enveloped in the person of the Holy Spirit coming on, in and through.

You can be immersed in water two different ways. Go down into the water below the surface until completely emerged under the water, or you could walk under a waterfall being immersed

from above. The latter example is descriptive of what happens to a believer when they are baptized into the Holy Spirit.

And without exception in every place in the book of Acts where the baptism in the Holy Spirit is mentioned the language used indicates the Holy Spirit coming “upon” the believer.

**Matthew 3:16 (KJV)**

**16 And Jesus, when he was baptized, went up straightway out of the water: and, lo, the heavens were opened unto him, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove, and lighting upon him:**

**Acts 2:17 (KJV)**

**And it shall come to pass in the last days, saith God, I will pour out of my Spirit upon all flesh...**

**Acts 8:16 “falling upon.”**

**Acts 10:44 - 45 (NKJV)**

**“the Holy Spirit fell upon all those who heard the Word.” 45 “the gift of the Holy Spirit had been poured out on the Gentiles also.”**

**Acts 11:15 (NKJV)**

**“the Holy Spirit fell upon them, as upon us at the beginning.”**

**Acts 19:6 (NKJV) “the Holy Spirit came upon them.”**

To “come upon” or “fall upon” are similar.

3 Glorious Realities

1. The experience discussed is both inward and outward.
2. Outwardly, the invisible presence of the Holy Spirit comes down from above upon the believer.
3. Inwardly, the believer drinks in or is filled with the Holy Spirit to such an extent that he begins to overflow with the Holy Spirit in the likeness of a river flowing out of her/her innermost being.

Like the new birth, this is a supernatural experience. The image of water being poured out and coming from within can be best illustrated by the flood of Noah’s day. The rain came down and the fountains of the deep burst open. Immersion came from above and from within. In the baptism of the Holy Spirit, you are both filled with the Holy Spirit from within and immersed from without.

**What is the outward evidence?** Is there a “manifestation” of the Holy Spirit?

**1 Corinthians 12:7 (KJV)**

**7 But the manifestation of the Spirit is given to every man to profit withal.**

Since the Holy Spirit is invisible in Scripture He is compared to the wind.

**John 3:8 (NLT)**

**8 The wind blows wherever it wants. Just as you can hear the wind but can't tell where it comes from or where it is going, so you can't explain how people are born of the Spirit."**

We know what wind is here in West Texas. The effects of wind can be seen and heard.

This is what occurred on the Day of Pentecost.

**Acts 2:33 (NLT)**

**33 Now he is exalted to the place of highest honor in heaven, at God's right hand. And the Father, as he had promised, gave him the Holy Spirit to pour out upon us, just as you see and hear today.**

On Pentecost, the effects of the Holy Spirit could be both seen and heard.

The working of the Holy Spirit is described by Paul in these words:

**1 Corinthians 2:4 (KJV)**

**4 And my speech and my preaching was not with enticing words of man's wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power:**

And once again:

**1 Cor. 12:7 (KJV)**

**But the manifestation of the Spirit is given to every man to profit withal.**

"Demonstration" and "Manifestation," are both defined as the outward visible effects of the Holy Spirit.

What are some pieces of evidence of the Holy Spirit in our lives?

**2 Cor. 13:1 (NASB)**

**This is the third time I am coming to you. Every FACT IS TO BE CONFIRMED BY THE TESTIMONY OF TWO OR THREE WITNESSES.**

In three of the four occurrences in the New Testament, we are told what transpired when people were baptized in the Holy Spirit.

### **1) On the Day of Pentecost**

**Acts 2:2-4 (NIV)**

**Suddenly a sound like the blowing of a violent wind came from heaven and filled the whole house where they were sitting. [3] They saw what seemed to be tongues of fire that separated and came to rest on each of them. [4] All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues as the Spirit enabled them.**

## **2) At the home of Cornelius**

**Acts 10:44-46 (KJV)**

**While Peter yet spake these words, the Holy Ghost fell on all them which heard the word. [45] 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. [46] For they heard them speak with tongues, and magnify God. Then answered Peter,**

## **3) New believers at Ephesus**

**Acts 19:6 (NIV)**

**When Paul placed his hands on them, the Holy Spirit came on them, and they spoke in tongues and prophesied.**

As we look at all three occurrences we have striking similarities. All three times believers were involved and in each instance, we find the vocal gift of praying in a heavenly language operating.

Other supernatural manifestations are also mentioned, but only once. On Pentecost, there was a sound of a rushing wind heard along with visible tongues of fire seen. At Ephesus the new converts also prophesied. Yet in all three places we see speaking in a heavenly prayer language.

At the home of Cornelius what evidence confirmed to Peter that indeed the Gentiles had received the same Holy Spirit that fell on the Day of Pentecost?

**Acts 10:45-46 (TLB)**

**The Jews who came with Peter were amazed that the gift of the Holy Spirit would be given to Gentiles too! [46] But there could be no doubt about it, for they heard them speaking in tongues and praising God...**

When Peter was called on the carpet by the church leaders in Jerusalem for preaching to a Gentile in a Gentile home he said, **“And as I began to speak, the Holy Spirit fell upon them, as upon us at the beginning (Acts 11:15 ESV).**

Peter with precise precision compares what happened at Pentecost to the Jewish believers with what occurred at the home of Cornelius. Yet, at the home of Cornelius, there was no rushing wind or cloven tongues as of fire seen.

**IN OTHER WORDS PETER DEFENDS WHAT HAPPENED AT A GENTILE’S HOME BY SAYING, “...AS UPON US AT THE BEGINNING.” THE POINT OF COMPARISON WAS NOT THE WIND/FIRE BUT THE SPEAKING IN A HEAVENLY LANGUAGE.**

Peter didn’t say, “Well we know they received the same Holy Spirit because I heard the same rushing wind, or because I saw tongues of fire descending from heaven, or they all had smiles on their faces or...or...or...”

1. The Apostle Peter saw this as the evidence.
2. The early church accepted this as evidence based on Peter's argument.
3. No other alternative evidence is offered in the New Testament.

## **Receiving the Holy Spirit—**

Resurrection Sunday and Pentecost Sunday; the two Sunday's that would forever change the world.

On Resurrection Sunday Jesus appeared to the apostles in a group for the first time after His resurrection and...

**"Again Jesus said, "Peace be with you! As the Father has sent me, I am sending you." [22] And with that he breathed on them and said, "Receive the Holy Spirit. " (John 20:21-22 NIV)**

The tense of the imperative form "receive" indicates that the receiving was a single, complete experience which took place the moment Christ uttered those words. The disciples could "receive the Holy Spirit" because for all practical and theological purposes they were now saved under the New Testament interpretation of salvation.

This experience stands as a model for all to enter into the new birth. There are two elements, a personal revelation of Christ as resurrected Lord and Savior and the receiving of the Holy Spirit as divine, eternal life.

Even though the disciples had "received the Holy Spirit" when He breathed on them, Jesus said there is more to come.

**Luke 24:49 (KJV)**

**And, behold, I send the promise of my Father upon you: but tarry ye in the city of Jerusalem, until ye be endued with power from on high.**

**Acts 1:5 (ASV)**

**For John indeed baptized with water; but ye shall be baptized in the Holy Spirit not many days hence.**

**Acts 1:8 (NIV)**

**But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth."**

On resurrection Sunday the apostles received the inbreathed Spirit from Christ and thus entered into salvation and the new birth. Yet, it wasn't until Pentecost Sunday, seven weeks later, that they were baptized in or filled with the Holy Spirit. This explains how the at salvation you "receive the Holy Spirit" and how at the baptism in the Holy Spirit you "receive the Holy Spirit."

On Pentecost Sunday, Peter explained that what has just occurred was the result of Christ following through on His guarantee that if He goes, the Comforter will come.

Acts 2:33 (NIV)

Exalted to the right hand of God, he has received from the Father the promised Holy Spirit and has poured out what you now see and hear.

On Resurrection Sunday: The resurrected Christ gave salvation.

Believers received the inbreathed Holy Spirit and were born again.

On Pentecost Sunday: The ascended Christ gave the gift of the Holy Spirit.

This is a key point: is there a subsequent experience with the Holy Spirit separate from the new birth?

(Acts 8:14-17) Phillip preached in Samaria. They were saved and then filled with the Holy Spirit.

Acts 19 Paul passing through the upper regions of Ephesus runs into some “disciples” whom he assumes are followers of Jesus. The first question He asked them, **“Have you received the Holy Spirit when you believed?” (Acts 19:2 NIV)**. It is unreasonable for us to think Paul would ask such a ridiculous question unless of course there was a subsequent working of the Holy Spirit in the lives of believers. They hadn’t even heard of the Holy Spirit. They were saved/baptized then verse 6, **“Paul laid hands on them, the Holy Spirit came upon them, and they spoke with tongues and prophesied.”**

## **What Exactly is Speaking in Tongues?**

It is a form of prayer, not the only form of prayer but one among many in the Bible. According to Paul when you pray in a heavenly language you are not speaking to men but to God, (1 Cor. 14:2). In verse 4 Paul also mentions that it “edifies” the believer. In verse 14, your natural mind is unfruitful but your spirit is praying.

When we go to the book of Ephesians these are the believers who were ministered to by the Apostle Paul to whom this epistle was now being written to.

**Ephes. 1:13 (KJV)**

**In whom ye also trusted, after that ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation: in whom also after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that holy Spirit of promise,**

Notice the stages: 1) they heard the gospel; 2) they believed in Christ; 3) they were sealed with the Holy Spirit. This corroborates with the historical record in Acts 19. The disciples first believed were baptized and then received the promised Holy Spirit.

1. At the new birth, you receive the Holy Spirit but there is a subsequent work of the Holy Spirit which occurs at the baptism in the Holy Spirit.
2. The New Testament examples of the infilling of the Holy Spirit were praying in the Spirit.
3. Have you received since you believed?

## **How Can I Be Filled With The Spirit**

### **1. Repent Of Your Sins**

**Acts 2:38 (NLT)**

**38 Peter replied, "Each of you must repent of your sins, turn to God, and be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ to show that you have received forgiveness for your sins. Then you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.**

### **2. Ask God To Fill You With The Spirit**

**Luke 11:11-13 (NLT)**

**11 "You fathers—if your children ask for a fish, do you give them a snake instead? 12 Or if they ask for an egg, do you give them a scorpion? Of course not! 13 So if you sinful people know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask him."**

**3. Ask For The Gift of Praying In A Heavenly Language.** If you would like to receive the gift of tongues ask. Then begin to praise God in a language other than English.

**Psalm 81:10 (NLT)**

**10 For it was I, the LORD your God, who rescued you from the land of Egypt. Open your mouth wide, and I will fill it with good things.**

**Acts 2:4 (NLT)**

**4 And everyone present was filled with the Holy Spirit and began speaking in other languages, as the Holy Spirit gave them this ability.**

**1 Corinthians 14:39 (NLT)**

**39 So, my dear brothers and sisters, be eager to prophesy, and don't forbid speaking in tongues.**

**Mark 16:17 (NKJV)**

**17 And these signs will follow those who believe: In My name they will cast out demons; they will speak with new tongues;**

### **4. Believe You Have Received**

**Mark 11:24 (NKJV)**

**24 Therefore I say to you, whatever things you ask when you pray, believe that you receive them, and you will have them.**

## **5. Persevere**

**2 Timothy 1:6 (NKJV)**

**6 Therefore I remind you to stir up the gift of God which is in you through the laying on of my hands.**

## **6. Ask For Other Gifts**

**1 Corinthians 14:1 (NKJV)**

**1 Pursue love, and desire spiritual gifts, but especially that you may prophesy.**

## **7. Be Thankful Always**

**Ephesians 5:18-21 (NKJV)**

**18 And do not be drunk with wine, in which is dissipation; but be filled with the Spirit, 19 speaking to one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord, 20 giving thanks always for all things to God the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, 21 submitting to one another in the fear of God.**

A Prayer to Receive the Holy Spirit.

(First, be sure you have been born again.) Dear God in heaven, I know that I am a sinner in need of a Savior and there is only one Savior; His name is Jesus Christ. Dear Lord Jesus, I ask you now to come into my heart, be my Lord and Savior. I turn from sin to the true and living God. I receive His love, grace, and forgiveness. Dear God in heaven, I am now your child. Fill me with your Holy Spirit and give me strength to serve you and live for you all the days of my life beginning today for the rest of eternity.

Father now that I am a Christian, I humbly and prayerfully ask for the promised baptism of the Holy Spirit. Holy Spirit, Jesus said, "I would receive power after the Holy Spirit has come upon me." I receive your mighty filling. Come upon me now. Fill me to the overflowing, in Jesus name. I also receive by faith, my heavenly prayer language as promised in Scripture. Amen!

Now begin to praise God and thank God and let it come from your heart, not your head. It will be a divine language that doesn't make sense to the natural man because it is a spiritual language.

**1 Corinthians 14:2 (NKJV)**

**2 For he who speaks in a tongue does not speak to men but to God, for no one understands him; however, in the spirit he speaks mysteries.**

**1 Corinthians 14:4 (NKJV)**

**4 He who speaks in a tongue edifies himself, but he who prophesies edifies the church.**



**1 Corinthians 14:5 (NKJV)**

**5 I wish you all spoke with tongues, but even more that you prophesied; for he who prophesies is greater than he who speaks with tongues, unless indeed he interprets, that the church may receive edification.**

**1 Corinthians 14:18 (NKJV)**

**18 I thank my God I speak with tongues more than you all;**

Never be discouraged if you didn't speak in a heavenly language yet! Begin to exercise or "stir up the gift" within you. Many times this gift is present but dormant. Our fears or inhibitions can hinder it manifesting. Press in – you've got this!

Keep Growing in HIM! I love you!

Pastor Carl