

CHRISTIAN PRINCIPLES COURSE PAPER 4

BAPTISM IN HOLY SPIRIT

Bible Memory Verses: Acts 2:1-4

"When the day of Pentecost came, they were all together in one place. Suddenly a sound like the blowing of a violent wind came from heaven and filled the whole house where they were sitting. They saw what seemed to be tongues of fire that separated and came to rest on each of them. All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues as the Spirit enabled them."

A further part of the blessings of our salvation is the baptism in the Holy Spirit, which is God's means of bringing us into the realm of spiritual power. He wants us not only to enjoy the new life He has given us, but also to be effective messengers in transmitting the Gospel to others.

John 1:33 – "...The man on whom you see the Spirit come down and remain is He who will baptise with the Holy Spirit."

Acts 1:8 - "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."

Let us look at five questions which will help us to understand the scripture and lead us into the blessing.

Who is to be baptised?

This blessing is not just for a select few, but for all believers. God has promised, "I will pour out my Spirit on all people." (Acts 2:17) Peter clearly proclaimed concerning the gift of the Holy Spirit, "The promise is for you and your children and for all who are far off - for all whom the Lord our God will call." (Acts 2:39)

Besides, if all God's children are to be His witnesses, and if it is impossible to be an effective witness without the baptism in the Holy Spirit, then ALL God's children should expect to receive Him.

Why be baptised in the Holy Spirit?

a) Through the baptism in the Holy Spirit we receive power (Acts 1:8) and ability (Acts 9:17-22)

b) We are enabled to pray in the Spirit and sing praises in the Spirit, as distinct from normal prayer and praise expressed in ordinary language. (See Romans 8:26-27 and 1 Corinthians 14:15)

c) Our own spirit becomes sensitive to the 'voice' of God's Spirit (see Acts 13:2, Mark 13:11 and Acts 1:2)

d) We become eligible for the gifts of the Spirit (Acts 19:6) and a new level of God's power in our lives (1 Corinthians 14;1 Corinthians 1:5-7, Acts 1:8)

e) We begin to live our daily lives 'in the Spirit', by the Spirit's power and should be constantly being filled with the Spirit. (Ephesians 5:18 and Colossians 3;16)

How do we receive the baptism in the Holy Spirit?

Sometimes God baptises believers in the Spirit by a sovereign act. This is what happened to the disciples on the day of Pentecost (Acts 2), and to the household of Cornelius in Acts 10. At other times, it is received by the laying on of hands, as in Samaria. (Acts 8, Acts 19:6). Individually, however, we receive the Holy Spirit baptism in the same way we receive all the blessings of God...by faith. Acts 2:38 "...receive the gift..." Hebrews 11:6 "...must believe..."

What did Jesus say in Luke 11:13?

So we see that it is important that we ask Him for the gift of the Holy Spirit. Having prayed, and believing God has heard our prayer we begin to praise God and worship Him with thanksgiving. This is a powerful means of drawing near to His presence to receive the Holy Spirit. "Come near to God and He will come near to you." (James 4:8).

As we become aware of the presence of the Holy Spirit, there is a breaking within us and our spirit springs up to respond to the Spirit of God. At this point, an anointed servant of God may lay hands upon us to impart the Holy Spirit, just as Paul in Acts 19:6, but this is not always necessary.

Must those who receive the baptism in the Holy Spirit ALWAYS speak in tongues?

This is a wrong question! In 1 Corinthians 14:5 Paul says, "I would like every one of you to speak in tongues, but I would rather have you to prophesy." What he is in fact saying is that we should both speak in tongues and also prophesy.

When you receive the baptism in the Holy Spirit, you can speak in tongues, you should expect to speak in tongues, you will speak in tongues, provided you do not let prejudice or fear hinder the flow of the Holy Spirit.

According to James 3:8 the tongue is the hardest member of the body to tame, and God wants to demonstrate His mighty power in the toughest member first. So expect to speak in tongues when you are baptised in the Holy Spirit... expect also to prophesy.

As the Holy Spirit rests upon us, He stimulates us to praise the Lord, and our own words seem inadequate to praise God as we should. The Holy Spirit then leads and encourages us, but never forces us, to speak in tongues, enabling our organs of speech to form strange words and syllables as we yield to His prompting.

Once we begin, we should expect the language to be spontaneous and fluent. We will not understand the words we are saying, nor should we expect to, "For anyone who speaks in a tongue does not speak to men but to God. Indeed no one understands him because he utters mysteries in the Spirit." (1 Corinthians 14:2)

There will then be no doubt, either to ourselves or to others, as to whether or not we are filled with the Holy Spirit.

Have you received the Holy Spirit since you believed?

Since it is within every believer's power to cleanse their conscience before God and men, and to ask for the gift of the Holy Spirit, we believe that a candidate for membership of the Church should experience Holy Spirit baptism. Opportunity will be provided for you to be ministered to if this is necessary and IF YOU SO DESIRE!