

DISCOVER GRACE

DG202 – THE BAPTISM OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

I. THE GIFT OF THE HOLY SPIRIT AND HIS BAPTISM

- A. Christians are to be a people of both the Bible and the Spirit. There is a balance. Without this, we may end up in one of two extremes: (1) legalism or (2) theological relativism.

When he came to Nazareth, where he had been brought up, he went to the synagogue on the sabbath day, as was his custom. He stood up to read,¹⁷ and the scroll of the prophet Isaiah was given to him. He unrolled the scroll and found the place where it was written:¹⁸ “The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to bring good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim release to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to let the oppressed go free,¹⁹ to proclaim the year of the Lord’s favor” (Luke 4:18–19).¹

But the hour is coming, and is now here, when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth, for the Father seeks such as these to worship him.²⁴ God is spirit, and those who worship him must worship in spirit and truth” (John 4:23–24).

- B. Nearly all Christians agree that we have the Spirit by virtue of being born again. There is also a coherency of belief that believers are to experience a Spirit-filled life, walk in the Spirit, rely on the Spirit’s power in our daily lives, and be open to experiences from the Holy Spirit after our salvation. We desire to cultivate and enrich our daily dependence on God’s Spirit and understand our deep need for the activity of the Spirit in our lives for service, ministry, and character building.
- C. With that said, it is important that we do not get caught up in the semantics of it all (cf. 2 Tim 2:14). For instance, the words “revelation” or “inspiration” can mean different things to different people. Non-charismatics disagree with charismatics using these words to refer to something other than Scripture. Nonetheless, they do believe the Spirit of God can lead and be active in our daily lives. Thus, they believe in inspiration and revelation, they just choose not to use these terms to refer to the work of the Spirit in one’s life.
- D. The baptism of the Holy Spirit is one of the most debated subjects when it comes to the semantics used. But if we employ the phrase “conversion” and “filled with the Spirit” many times these hurdles can be overcome. Today’s most effective missions and evangelistic movements are on both sides of the debate. For instance, most Southern Baptists identify “the baptism of the Spirit” with one’s conversion, while most Pentecostals see it as a subsequent empowerment. It is important to identify this because God has used and continues to use those who have adopted either view.

¹ Unless noted otherwise, all scripture citations come from the New Revised Standard Version.

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- E. While discussing this subject, Craig S. Keener makes the observation that, “In light of God’s blessing on Christians with different views, it appears that actually being empowered by the Holy Spirit matters more than we think about *how* the Spirit empowers us... such an awareness puts the larger questions in perspective.”²
- F. As a side note, it is worth noting that cessationists believe the gifts of the Spirit have ceased (esp. prophecy and tongues). The main text they use to point to this comes from 1 Cor 13:8–10 (cf. Col 2:6–23; Rom 5:5; Gal 3:2–5).

Love never ends. But as for prophecies, they will come to an end; as for tongues, they will cease; as for knowledge, it will come to an end. ⁹ For we know only in part, and we prophesy only in part; ¹⁰ but when the complete comes, the partial will come to an end (1 Cor 13:8–10).

- G. The problem with this view is that Paul does not refer to the completion here as being the finalization of the NT, which is what cessationists believe. That said, there is nothing here to signal this is when the “complete” has come. If anything, the context points to the Day of the Lord and the resurrection of the saints as the time of completion (i.e., 1 Cor 12–15 clearly has the future hope of Jesus’s return in view). There are also the examples in the Book of Acts where believers experience deeper aspects of the Spirit after their conversion (2:4; 8:15–16; 9:17; 19:4–6).
- H. Building on some key texts concerning the Holy Spirit (Mark 1:7–8; John 14:16–17; Acts 8:15–17; 10:44–46; 19:5–6), John and Sonja Decker rightly identify that God’s Spirit is,

with us, drawing us to the savior prior to our salvation. When we came to the point of surrender and asked Jesus Christ to forgive us of our sins and to come into our lives, the Holy Spirit came within us, quickened our spirits, and made us alive unto God. We were born of the Spirit, born from above. We became God’s son or daughter. If we died, we would go to heaven. However, Scripture clearly demonstrates that there is a subsequent experience with the Holy Spirit where he comes upon us and baptizes us with power. That is what millions of believers have personally experienced.³

- I. Descriptions of the Spirit
1. The Holy Spirit is: God (Acts 5:3–4); our helper, counselor, and advocate (John 14:16–17, 23; 16:7); eternal (Heb 9:14); called Lord (2 Cor 3:17–18); God’s voice (Heb 3:7; 4:3).

² *Gift and Giver: The Holy Spirit for Today* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2020), 150.

³ John and Sonja Decker, *Doing What Jesus Did: Ministering in the Power of the Holy Spirit* (Lake Mary, FL: Creation House, 2015), 35.

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2. The Holy Spirit: glorifies Jesus (John 16:14); brings conviction (John 16:8); gives power for ministry (Acts 1:8; 1 Cor 12:7); heals the sick (1 Cor 12:7, 9); casts out demons (Matt 12:28); intercedes for believers (Rom 8:26–27); reveals mysteries (1 Cor 2:9–11); and helps our character mature (Gal 5:22–23).
 3. To live a Spirit-filled life, we are to (1) surrender to him (Rom 8:5; 12:1); (2) listen to him (John 10:27; 15:15)⁴; and (3) obey him (John 14:23; Luke 11:28).
- J. There are four evidences of the Holy Spirit
1. Fruit (Gal 5:22–23; cf. 1 Cor 14:1)

...the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, generosity, faithfulness,²³ gentleness, and self-control. There is no law against such things.²⁴ And those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires.²⁵ If we live by the Spirit, let us also be guided by the Spirit.²⁶ Let us not become conceited, competing against one another, envying one another (Gal 5:22–26).
 - a. Character is the foundation on which the gifts of the Spirit operate. Remember Jesus’s words in John 15:4, “...the branch cannot bear fruit by itself unless it abides in the vine.” Spiritual gifts, like salvation, are not given based upon our own merit.
 2. Power (John 14:12; Acts 1:8; 10:38)

But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth (Acts 1:8).
 3. Praise (Eph 5:19–20; cf. Acts 10:45–46)

The circumcised believers who had come with Peter were astounded that the gift of the Holy Spirit had been poured out even on the Gentiles,⁴⁶ for they heard them speaking in tongues and extolling (making great) God (Acts 10:45–46).
 4. Gifts (Rom 12:6–8; 1 Cor 12:7–11; 12:28; Eph 4:11)⁵
 - a. Manifestational Gifts (1 Cor 12:7–11; e.g., words of knowledge, prophecy, tongues, etc.)

⁴ The purpose of God’s voice is to delight over us (Zeph 3:17); give us instruction or warning (Acts 5:1–4); give direction (Luke 1:30–33); comfort us (1 Cor 14:3); and to strengthen us (Josh 1:9).

⁵ See *Doing What Jesus Did: Participant Guide* (Northwoods Church, 2021), 116–17.

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- b. Motivational gifts (Rom 12:6–8; e.g., ministry, teaching, compassion, etc.)
 - c. Positional gifts (Eph 4:11; 1 Cor 12:28; e.g., apostles, prophets, teachers, etc.)
- K. The Manifestational Gifts⁶
- 1. Words of Knowledge
 - 2. Words of Wisdom
 - 3. Faith
 - 4. Healing
 - 5. Miraculous Powers
 - 6. Prophecy
 - 7. Distinguishing Spirits
 - 8. Tongues
 - 9. Interpretation of Tongues
- L. No matter the gifts to which you are attracted, the key to maturing in the Holy Spirit is to be continually filled by his divine presence.

...be filled with the Spirit,¹⁹ as you sing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs among yourselves, singing and making melody to the Lord in your hearts,²⁰ giving thanks to God the Father at all times and for everything in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ (Eph 5:18–20).

- 1. Operating in the gifts is one way to do this, but praying, reading God’s word, meditating, journaling, fellowshiping with other believers, and engaging in spiritual conversations in small groups and with friends are also ways to be continually infilled by the Spirit in your lives.
- M. Misunderstandings concerning Baptism of the Holy Spirit⁷
- 1. Holy Spirit baptism is not a sign of someone’s spiritual depth. It is a gift, like salvation.
 - 2. It is not only signified by the gift of speaking tongues.

⁶ For a detailed discussion on each of these gifts, cf. Sam Storms, *The Beginners Guide to Spiritual Gifts* (Minneapolis: Bethany House, 2013), 41–198.

⁷ Deckers, *Doing What Jesus Did*, 56–58.

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3. It is primarily about relationship not power.

II. HOW DO I GROW IN THE GIFTS OF THE SPIRIT?

- A. Pray for the gifts that you desire to operate in your life.
 1. You have not because you ask not (James 4:2).
 2. Eagerly desire spiritual gifts (1 Cor 14:1).
 3. Great Bible scholars did not get there without studying the Word of God. The same is true of the gifts. If we want them, we need to pursue them.
- B. Practice using the gifts frequently.
 1. Practice, practice, practice!
- C. Study the gifts
 1. Learn as much as you can, especially the ones that interest you.
 2. Recommended resources
 - a. Sam Storms, *The Beginners Guide to Spiritual Gifts* (Minneapolis: Bethany House, 2013).
 - b. Jack Deere, *The Beginners Guide to the Gift of Prophecy* (Minneapolis: Chosen Books, 2008).
 - c. Craig S. Keener, *Gift and Giver: The Holy Spirit for Today* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2020).
- D. Build friendships with those who also desire to mature in the gifts.
 1. As Prov 27:17 states, iron sharpens iron.
Whoever walks with the wise becomes wise, but the companion of fools suffers harm (Prov 13:20).
- E. Attend meetings and other events that will continue to challenge and stretch you.