

Lesson 7

Your New Helper: The Holy Spirit Part Two

“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” (Acts 1:8).

In the same way that the Spirit helped Jesus in ministry, he helped the apostles and believers in the early church to fulfill the church’s mission. John identified Jesus as the Christ, the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world, the Son of God, the one who would carry out judgment, and the one who would baptize with the Holy Spirit (Mark 1:7-8; Luke 3:15-17; John 1:29-34). Jesus told his disciples that the gospel would be preached in his name to all nations, that he would send his Father’s promise, and that the Father would empower them (Luke 24:47-49). Luke links the promised gift of the Father with empowerment, the baptism of Holy Spirit, and the Great Commission (Acts 1:4-8).

On the Day of Pentecost the Holy Spirit filled all of the disciples, and they began to speak in other tongues (Acts 2:4). Pentecost fulfilled Joel’s prophecy (Acts 2:16-21). Peter remembered the words of Jesus: “For John baptized with water, but in a few days you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit” (Acts 1:5). Then he explained:

God has raised this Jesus to life, and we are all witnesses of the fact. 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. (Acts 2:32-33)

For Peter, Pentecost affirmed the resurrection, ascension to heaven, and lordship of Jesus (Acts 2:34-36). When the people heard, they wanted to know what to do (Acts 2:37).

Peter replied, “Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins. And you will receive 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 2:38-39)

The promised Holy Spirit is available to everyone who believes and repents of their sinful nature. When a person repents and believes, that individual is born of the Spirit (John 3:3-8). If you have repented and believe that Jesus is the Son of God, that he died for your sins, and that God has raised Jesus from the dead, then the Holy Spirit lives in you! We call this regeneration. The Holy Spirit has created new life in you.

On the evening of the resurrection Jesus met with the disciples. He breathed on them and told them to receive the Holy Spirit (John 20:19-22). Some Christians believe that this event anticipated what took place in Acts 2, and the Holy Spirit regenerated the disciples on the Day of Pentecost. However, most Pentecostals believe that the disciples were regenerated by the Holy Spirit on the evening of the resurrection. The disciples had already believed, and they were living in obedience to Jesus. But the provisions of the new covenant had not been made available until after the death and resurrection of Christ. Jesus did not wait one day past his resurrection. He wanted his disciples to experience the new birth of the Holy Spirit. That was a special and unique occasion. After that event, new believers would be regenerated by the Holy Spirit when they believed because the provisions of the new covenant were in place. The description of the events suggests that Jesus imparted something to the disciples when he breathed on them—regeneration.

What happened on Pentecost supplied the disciples with power for giving witness to the gospel. Jesus had returned to the Father and was baptizing believers in the Holy Spirit. As the Spirit had empowered Old Testament saints for special ministries, and as the Spirit had empowered Jesus Christ for ministry, now the Spirit would make a difference in the lives of the Apostles and believers in the early church. Pentecostals believe that the Spirit's work in regeneration and the baptism in the Holy Spirit are two separate experiences of the Spirit for the believer. They may at times seem to occur simultaneously (Acts 10:44-46), and at other times there may be a time interval between the experiences (Acts 19:1-7). It is more important to notice that there is a distinctive difference in the purpose of the two separate experiences. Regeneration creates new life in the believer. He or she becomes alive to the Spirit, and God lives in the believer by the Spirit. The believer begins to grow in his or her new life. The baptism in the Holy Spirit supplies the new believer with power for service. Do you think the baptism in the Holy Spirit made a difference in the lives of the early believers?

1. Compare Luke 22:54-62 with Acts 2:38-41. Explain the difference that the baptism in the Holy Spirit made in the apostle Peter. _____

We have seen that Jesus ministered by the power of the Spirit of God, and his authority was given to him by the anointing of the Holy Spirit. The apostles ministered in Jesus' name, or by the authority given to them by Jesus. Jesus baptized the early believers in the Holy Spirit, empowering them as he promised (Acts 1:4-8). Make your own observations on the following verses:

2. Acts 3:1-16 _____

Jesus mentioned that the Holy Spirit would help us know what to say when speaking for him (Matthew 10:17-20; John 14:26; 16:12-14).

3. How did Peter give such powerful witness (Acts 4:5-13)? _____.

4. What effect did the infilling of the Spirit have upon the early believers (Acts 4:31)?
_____.

Read Acts 5:17-42.

The power and joy that the Holy Spirit supplied in the lives of the believers in Jerusalem could not be silenced by persecution or threats. Perhaps you have been persecuted or threatened for your faith in Jesus Christ. You need the power of the Holy Spirit to help you. Take particular note of 5:41: "The apostles left the Sanhedrin, rejoicing because they had been counted worthy of suffering disgrace for the Name."

Now, read Acts 7:1-59.

5. How could Stephen preach with such power, face death with such courage, and forgive his persecutors? (See Acts 6:5; 7:55.) _____.

Missionaries have documented the necessity of the baptism in the Holy Spirits for converts from Islam. Converts often face persecution, isolation, and physical danger. Those who have not received God's available power through the baptism in the Holy Spirit have often reverted to Islam because of extreme pressure. The Spirit helps people just as he helped believers in the book of Acts.

Persecution broke out against the church in Jerusalem (Acts 8:1). The believers, except for the apostles, were scattered throughout Judea and Samaria. Philip preached the word in a certain city in Samaria, and many believed and were baptized. The apostles in Jerusalem sent Peter and John to them, and when they arrived they prayed for them to receive the Holy Spirit. By this time the apostles felt that it was necessary for all believers to receive the same experience that they received on the Day of Pentecost.

Describe the events of the following passages:

6. Acts 2:1-4 _____.

7. Acts 10:44-46; 11:15-16 _____.

8. Acts 19:1-7 _____.

9. What occurred in all three instances where people were baptized in the Holy Spirit?
_____.

In Acts 8:15-17, Peter and John prayed and laid hands on the disciples in Samaria, and they received the Holy Spirit. There is no mention that they spoke in tongues. But something visible did occur. It was so demonstrative that Simon attempted to purchase the ability to dispense the Holy Spirit. The passage does not describe what that was, but from the other three instances it seems obvious.

10. What do you think happened in Samaria? _____.

Acts 9:1-19 gives an account of Saul's conversion and baptism. Acts 13:9 tells us that Saul was also called Paul. Chapter 9 does not mention that Paul spoke in tongues. Actually, there is no description of what happened when he was filled with the Spirit. Should we believe that Paul did not speak in tongues when he was filled with the Spirit?

11. Note what Paul said to the Corinthians (1 Corinthians 14:18): _____

The baptism in the Holy Spirit empowers believers for ministry. In Lesson 9 you will learn about gifts that the Spirit has to help you in your ministry. In Lesson 10 you will learn about spiritual weapons to do battle against the enemy of your soul.

12. Memory Verses:

And afterward, I will pour out my Spirit on all people. Your sons and daughters will prophesy, your old men will dream dreams, your young men will see visions. Even on my servants, both men and women, I will pour out my Spirit in those days. (Joel 2:28-29)

“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.” (Acts 1:8)

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. (Acts 2:1-4)

13. Action:

Every believer needs to be baptized in the Holy Spirit. You need your new Helper. You have seen what the Helper did for Jesus, the apostles, and the early believers. He still helps believers today, and he wants to fill you and help you in your Christian life. Remember, the baptism is the gift of God. You can ask for this gift because you are a follower of Jesus Christ. Receive it by faith. As you pray and ask Jesus to baptize you in the Holy Spirit, just begin to worship, praise God, and exalt Jesus Christ.

When the Holy Spirit fills you, you will begin to speak and praise God in an unknown language. Do not be afraid of this phenomenon. Neither should you be so concerned with speaking in tongues that you seek the experience of tongues. Seek the baptizer, Jesus Christ. Just allow waves of praise and joy to fill you and overflow. You will be filled with inexpressible joy, and you will begin to experience power in your life that you need in order to be an effective witness for Jesus Christ. If you have already experienced the baptism in the Holy Spirit, now would be an appropriate time to thank God and allow him to bless you again with his holy presence.

14. Rethink the Lesson:

- The Holy Spirit supplies power for believers to complete the church's mission.
- In Lesson 5 we noted that the baptism in the Holy Spirit was predicted by the Old Testament prophet Joel, by John the Baptist, and by Jesus himself.
- The baptism in the Holy Spirit is a separate experience from regeneration.
- The baptism in the Holy Spirit helped believers by giving them power and courage in the face of persecution and even martyrdom.
- The apostles felt that it was important that every believer be filled with the Holy Spirit.
- As believers are baptized in the Holy Spirit they praise God in unlearned languages.

Answers to Lesson 7:

1. Your answer.
2. When we minister in Jesus' name, we minister under his authority. He gave the Holy Spirit to empower disciples. Ministering in the authority of Jesus is ministering with the anointing of the Holy Spirit.
3. Verse 8 says that he was filled with the Holy Spirit.
4. He spoke the word of God boldly where before they were timid.
5. Stephen was full of the Holy Spirit.
6. All were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in tongues.
7. The Holy Spirit came on all who heard the message. Peter and the others knew that the Holy Spirit had come upon them because they heard the Gentiles speaking in tongues just as the Spirit had come on them in the beginning.
8. After these disciples were baptized in water, Paul laid his hands on them. The Spirit came on them, and they spoke in tongues and prophesied.
9. They all spoke in tongues.
10. Your answer.
11. Paul thanked God that he spoke in tongues more than all of the Corinthians.