

# The Ministry and Work of the Holy Spirit

by Marlene Panell

The Baptism of the Holy Spirit is something that is misunderstood by many people in churches today. Many times “speaking in tongues” is equated with spiritual superiority. I can remember when I took a group of children from the church we were attending to a park. A lady approached me and wanted to know if I had received the baptism of the Holy Spirit.

I was a Christian, but I was offended by this woman's approach. She was not concerned if I was saved. She just wanted to know if I had “**the gift.**”

I'm not exactly sure if she knew why there was even such a gift. It certainly wasn't to make her a better witness!! Now, I was saved at the time, but did not believe in the gift of speaking in tongues. I believe that she felt she was superior to me because she had **the gift**, and I didn't. Unfortunately, there are some people who go after the experience and not **The Person Who** has given all spiritual gifts.

The following are some scriptures and some things that God has shown me in His Word about the Holy Spirit and the gifts and reasons for these gifts. This is my journey to understanding a little better why we were given the Holy Spirit after Christ ascended into heaven. If you have not made this journey, read along, and see what God may be saying to you.

## God promises the Holy Spirit

Proverbs 1:23 Promises the Holy Spirit.

Isaiah 32:15 Promises an outpouring of the Holy Spirit.

Joel 2:28 Promises that the Holy Spirit will be poured out or given to all. "And it shall come to pass afterward that I will pour out My Spirit on all flesh; your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your old men shall dream dreams, your young men shall see visions."

Matthew 3:11 says that Jesus will baptize with the Holy Spirit.

Mark 1:8 says that Jesus will baptize with the Holy Spirit.

## Jesus is baptized and empowered by the Holy Spirit

Matthew 3:16, 17; Mark 1:9-11; John 1:32, 33 All describe when Jesus received the baptism or empowering of the Holy Spirit.

## The Holy Spirit gives guidance

Matthew 4:1; Mark 1:12; Luke 4:1 Jesus was led or guided by the Holy Spirit.

Matthew 12:18; Isaiah 42:1; Luke 4:18; Declares that Jesus had the Holy Spirit – and a promise in John 3:34 that we also would have Him.

### **The Holy Spirit will speak through us**

Matthew 10:19, 20; Luke 12:12; Acts 4:7-12; 2 Corinthians 13:2, 3 Tells us that the Holy Spirit will speak through us.

### **More promises of the Holy Spirit are found in:**

John 7:38-39 – rivers of living water  
John 14:16, 17 – a Helper  
John 14:26 – Helper will teach  
John 15:26 – Helper will bear witness  
John 16:7 – Helper will be sent  
Acts 1:4, 5 – baptism of Holy Spirit  
Acts 2:17 – Spirit will be poured out  
Acts 2:38, 39 – Holy Spirit is a gift  
Galatians 3:14 – promise of Holy Spirit – faith  
Ephesians 1:13 – sealed by Holy Spirit

### **We are told to receive the baptism of the Holy Spirit or to be filled with the Holy Spirit in several places.**

John 1:16 – Jesus' fullness, we have received  
John 20:21, 22 – receive Holy Spirit  
Galatians 3:14 – Gentiles receive the promise  
Ephesians 3:10 – filled to all fullness of God  
Ephesians 5:18-20 – be filled with Holy Spirit  
Colossians 2:9, 10 - all fullness dwells in Christ, who has now made us complete.

### **We need to ask for the Holy Spirit**

Luke 11:13 tells us that God will give us the Holy Spirit when we ask for Him.

### **The Holy Spirit gives gifts to each member of the Body of Christ**

“There are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit. There are differences of ministries, but the same Lord. And there are diversities of activities, but it is the same God who works all in all. But the manifestation of the Spirit is given to each one for the profit *of all*:

“for to one is given the word of wisdom through the Spirit, to another the word of knowledge through the same Spirit, to another faith by the same Spirit, to another gifts of healings by the same Spirit, to another the working of miracles, to another prophecy, to another discerning of spirits, to another *different* kinds of tongues, to another the interpretation of tongues.

“But one and the same Spirit works all these things, distributing to each one individually as He wills.” (1 Corinthians 12:4-11)

This passage is sometimes used as an argument against speaking in tongues, because it says that not all speak in tongues. Again, this is the Gift of Tongues; which is a gift that is given to be used in the church, but given as the Holy Spirit wills.

This is not the private tongues or prayer language that Paul says he wishes we all used, and he more than all. “I thank my God I speak with tongues more than you all; yet in the church I would rather speak five words with my understanding, that I may teach others also, than ten thousand words in a tongue.” (1 Corinthians 14:18, 19)

So, since Paul used tongues “more than you all,” where did he use them? He says he did not use them in the church, so he must have used it in his personal prayer life – so that he could have that edifying or building up that empowered him to do all of the things that he did for God.

### **The Gift of Tongues and the Baptism of the Holy Spirit**

Mark 16:15-18 tells us that those who follow Jesus will speak in new languages or tongues.

Acts 2:4 states that when the 120 in the upper room were filled with the Holy Spirit that they spoke with new languages or tongues.

In Acts 2:39, Peter states that this was available to **all** who believe, their children, and **all** who are afar off.

In Acts 10:46 the Holy Spirit came upon the Gentiles, and they spoke in other tongues.

In Acts 19:6 Paul laid hands on the men at Ephesus, and they spoke in other tongues.

In Acts 9:17, Paul received the Holy Spirit, three days after he was saved on the road to Damascus. It does not state that he spoke in tongues in this passage, but Paul himself states that he spoke in tongues in 1 Corinthians 14:18.

In Acts 8:5-13, we read of the Samaritans – the half Jews – being saved through the evangelist Phillip. In Acts 8:15-17, it tells of the apostles then coming down and the Samaritans then receiving the Holy Spirit.

This again does not tell us that they spoke in tongues – but Acts 8:18, 19 tells us that when they received the Holy Spirit it was something that could be seen because Simon the sorcerer wanted to buy the power or ability to lay hands on people and have them receive the Holy Spirit. He obviously saw something he wanted to be able to do!!

In Acts 2:4 – The day of Pentecost – all 120 believers present (men and women) spoke in tongues.

In 1 Corinthians 14:18, Paul states that he spoke in tongues more than all. "I thank my God I speak with tongues more than you all..."

In 1 Corinthians 14:5, Paul wanted **all** to speak in tongues. "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." (In the church – tongues and interpretation is equivalent to prophecy.)

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

It is a release of God's Spirit within you. 1 Corinthians 14:2 states that you speak unto God when you pray in tongues. Verse 14 says it is the spirit (yours) praying.

Speaking in tongues is an evidence of being filled with the Holy Spirit. (Acts 10:46; Acts 11:17, 18) Afterwards the believers had the ability to speak in tongues as the Holy Spirit gave them utterance. (1 Corinthians 14:15)

Tongues are a sign for the unbeliever. (1 Corinthians 14:21, 22)

Used in daily, private devotions; it is for personal edification (1 Corinthians 14:15; 1 Corinthians 14:4).

When you are praying "in the Spirit," you are praying in tongues. (1 Corinthians 14:2; 1 Corinthians 14:14, 15) The same term is again used by Paul in Ephesians 6:18. "But you, beloved, building yourselves up on your most holy faith, praying in the Holy Spirit..." (Jude 20)

Praying in tongues is devotional, a tongue of prayer and praise to God. "He who speaks in a tongue edifies himself, but he who prophesies edifies the church." (1 Corinthians 14:4)

Speaking in tongues is a release of that power that was promised in Acts 1:8. "But you shall receive **power** when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be witnesses to Me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth."

Praying in the Spirit is mentioned in Ephesians 5:18-20; Ephesians 6:13-18; Philippians 3:1-3; Colossians 3:16; Romans 8:26, 27; 1 Peter 4:6-11; 1 Corinthians 14:14, 15; 1 Corinthians 14:26; 1 Corinthians 14:39; Jude 20.

### **Speaking in tongues does not mean you are perfect or have "arrived!"**

Receiving the baptism of the Holy Spirit and speaking in tongues does not make anyone perfect. It also does not mean that anyone has "arrived." Philippians 3:12 and Ephesians 5:18 says to continue to be filled. It is continual process.

Paul tells us to be imitators of him – to follow his pattern. 1 Corinthians 4:16; 1 Corinthians 11:1; Philippians 3:17-19; Philippians 4:19; 1 Thessalonians 1:6, 7. What was Paul's pattern? Acts 9:17-20; Acts 19:1-6; 2 Timothy 1:6.

## **Is it from God?**

We are also told to test the spirits. Yes, Satan does have his counterfeits. There are definite steps to follow in testing the spirits. 1 Corinthians 12:3; 1 John 4:1-3. We are to follow God's plan and not make up our own.

We are also told not to quench the Holy Spirit. 1 Thessalonians 5:19, 20. Could we not quench by questioning what God has done through tongues or prophecy in our lives or someone else's life? We are told not to judge someone else. We are also not to grieve the Holy Spirit. Ephesians 4:30

I am afraid that many well-meaning Christians come close to grieving the Holy Spirit when they do not believe in the Gift of Tongues for today and try to discourage others from desiring or asking for this gift. "Therefore, brethren, desire earnestly to prophesy, and do not forbid to speak with tongues." (1 Corinthians 14:39)

As a young teenager, I grew up in such a church. In a meeting of our youth group, my Pastor was trying to show us that the Gift of Tongues was not for today. He knew that I had been exposed to people who spoke in tongues because a neighbor of mine was Pentecostal, and I went to a lot of meetings at their church.

The Pastor tried to get me to imitate what it sounded like when someone spoke in tongues. I felt very uncomfortable with this. I was not able to do what the Pastor asked, even though I agreed with him about the gift of tongues. I believe that God was preventing me from making fun of this gift and possibly grieving the Holy Spirit.

## **Why the confusion about tongues?**

There are different types of tongues. Much misunderstanding comes when it is not realized that there is a public Gift of Tongues and a private tongues. The public Gift of Tongues is for the building up or edifying of the Body of Christ (the church). This **must** have an interpretation or it is scripturally wrong. (1 Corinthians 14:27)

The private use of tongues is for an individual's own building up or edification. This does not need an interpretation since you are speaking mysteries to God. (1 Corinthians 14:2)

What is the difference between the Gift of Tongues with Interpretation and Prophecy? Part of tongues is intercession for our needs, or in this case, the needs of the group. Prophecy, in itself, is not intercession. Tongues may include prophecy. When you see tongues with interpretation used together in the Scriptural way, you know it is of God!

1 Corinthians 12:3 and 1 John 4:1-3 tell us how we can know if someone using tongues is of the Lord.

The personal, private use of tongues is for an individual's own edification as indicated in 1 Corinthians 14:5. Paul was wishing we all had this type of communication with the Lord; but

that it was meant to be used privately. Our spirit is cooperating with the Holy Spirit within us, to commune with God.

Our private use of tongues or prayer language as it is commonly called today is good for us to use because it builds us up in the Lord as individuals. It also equips us to better serve the Lord. To use a private prayer language out loud in an open to the public meeting, would be wrong, since it was not given to us by God for that purpose. Hence, 1 Corinthians 14 was given.

Chapter 12:27-31 of 1 Corinthians is not talking of a private tongue or prayer language, which is given to all believers who accept it. These verses are referring to the public Gift of Tongues, which is given as the Holy Spirit wills, and not the prayer language that is available to all. That is, the public speaking in tongues is to be interpreted so that the whole body of believers will be edified.

My husband has a prayer language and often uses it in his private prayer times; however, he has never been given the Gift of Tongues with interpretation. (1 Corinthians 12:30)

In 1 Corinthians 14, Paul is telling us that to use our private tongue in public is contrary to the purpose God gave it to us for, but using the public Gift of Tongues with interpretation is right. It must be used in the right way, according to the guidelines given in 1 Corinthians 14:26-33.

- It must be done orderly.
- Two or at the most three using the public Gift of Tongues
- The public use of tongues **must** have an interpretation.
- Either the one using tongues is to interpret (1 Corinthians 14:13) or someone else in the group may be given the interpretation by God
- The message given will **never** contradict Scripture.
- The public use of tongues used with interpretation is equal in value to that of prophecy and therefore subject to the same conditions of a prophet.
- Must be willing to be judged – is the message given in agreement with Scripture?

### **Tongues are not equal to God's Word**

Tongues and interpretation, revelations, Word of Knowledge, Word of Wisdom, and prophecy are not equal to the written Word of God. The Bible is God's inspired and infallible Word. In it (the 66 books of the canon), we find how we are to live and what God wants us to do.

These others are gifts that are given to fallible man. We are not inspired of God (God-breathed) as the men who wrote down the Scriptures. Therefore, these gifts are used for comfort, edification, building-up, or confirmation of something the Lord has been dealing with us about already.

You should never change your lifestyle, way of living, etc. just on the word of one person. If the Lord has really spoken through a person, He will bring it to your attention, to confirm at least twice and possibly three times. This will be through other persons or circumstances who know nothing of what has happened.

As an example of this: When Gary was the pastor at a church in Eastern Oregon, he had closed the service by having the congregation hold hands and form a circle at the front of the church. As we were standing and praying and waiting on God, I felt God wanted me to say something to someone in the circle.

I was shy, so did not speak out during this prayer time. After we were dismissed, I went to this woman and told her what I had been impressed by God to say. I had two partial verses I quoted to her. They didn't have special meaning to me, but the woman immediately burst into tears.

She looked at me and said, "You don't know what that means do you?" I told her that I didn't, and she said that some day she would tell me. The parts of the verses were, "Children are a gift of the Lord, blessed is the man whose quiver is full," (Psalm 127:3-5) and "Every good gift and perfect gift is from God." (James 1:17)

What I didn't know was that this woman was once again expecting a baby and was not happy about it. She was becoming resentful. God wanted her to know that this child was from Him, this child was a gift, this child was a good gift, and this child would be a blessing to her and her husband.

God is not vague, but if you need to know something, He will give you definite, specific information. Remember, He has given us the Bible to be our guide. Spiritual leaders and other mature Christians, who are in the church, will also confirm the things God has given in His Word.

### **Are There Prophets Today?**

Weren't they done away with when Scripture was completed? Acts 2:16-21; Joel 2:28-31. Why would there be prophets in the end times (which was begun at Pentecost) if they were used only for giving God's inspired Holy Word? Acts 21:8, 9; Acts 21:10-11; Acts 13:1; Acts 11:27; Acts 15:32; Acts 19:6; 1 Corinthians 11:4; 1 Corinthians 13:2, 8.

Were these prophets mentioned actually just pastors who were preaching the Word of God as some people claim? None of them are recorded as having written any of the inspired Word of God.

One example is in Acts 21:10, 11; this was a prophecy, not a message preached from the Bible. It was a message given directly from God to a prophet named Agabus. Is it possible for God to give us direct guidance in a specific situation? Again, this would not be anything contrary to Scripture.

1 Timothy 1:18 and 1 Timothy 4:14 – What type of prophecy was this? Did the men preach a message from the Bible while laying hands on Timothy? Or, could it be that it was prophesied that Timothy was to be a shepherd of the flock?

### **What about healing?**

Was that just for the early church? Just when the original 12 Apostles were living?

Mark 16:15-20 states that these signs will follow those that believe. One of the signs is that they **will** lay hands on the sick and they **will** recover. This is something we can expect to see. Philip was healing the sick – and he wasn't an Apostle – just a willing vessel for the Lord to use.

“And the multitudes with one accord heeded the things spoken by Philip, hearing and seeing the miracles which he did. For unclean spirits, crying with a loud voice, came out of many who were possessed; and many who were paralyzed and lame were healed. And there was great joy in that city.” (Acts 8:6-8)

Gospel for Asia pastors and workers are seeing many healed today. Look at articles on this at the [Gospel for Asia website](#).

Acts 9:17, 18, Ananias was not an Apostle, but was able to heal Paul's blindness. 1 Corinthians 12:9 indicates that healing was in operation in the early church. James 5:14, 15 indicate the sick **should** be prayed for, and they can expect health to be restored.

The Apostles did many miracles. Each time they did, they emphasized that it was Jesus' power that was doing the healing. They were just willing vessels used by God. You do need to beware of television evangelists who are claiming to heal, but often it is only for show. Miracles of any kind should always point people to Christ and not to man!!

Where did Jesus' power come from? Philippians 2:5-11 states that Jesus had authority in heaven, on earth, and under the earth. Verses 6 and 7 say that Jesus put off His God-head. He did not come to earth as God, but as man – in order to redeem man.

In Matthew 3:16, Jesus received an anointing after His baptism. What He did was through the Holy Spirit. In Acts 10:38, it says that God anointed Jesus with the Holy Spirit and with power. This anointing power of the Holy Spirit enabled Jesus to perform miracles.

Jesus promised us this same anointing in John 14:16, 17 and John 16:7.

Acts 1:4, 5, 8; Acts 2:1-4; Luke 24:49; tell us that this anointing is to give us power. Gives us power to do what? Carry on the works of Jesus. Those works in a nutshell are found in Luke 4:18, 19. In John 16:7-11, we are told this anointing will help us to demonstrate God to those around us.

In Acts 1:13-15, we are told that there were about 120 people present on the Day of Pentecost. All of these were filled with the Holy Spirit and spoke in tongues - (Acts 2:3, 4) - not just the 12 disciples (The original 11 and the new one chosen by lot, Matthias). (Acts 1:20-26)

In Acts 3 we see a miracle take place. The reason why it took place was because they had the same power source that Jesus had – the Holy Spirit. (Acts 4:29-31)



When you use your prayer language – the power of the Holy Spirit within you is built up. (1 Corinthians 14:4)

When you use your prayer language – you are communing with God. “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 14:2)

Your prayer language is a means of praying for a situation, person, etc. when in yourself you don't know how to pray. (Romans 8:26, 27)

### **How to receive the baptism of the Holy Spirit**

Familiarize yourself with the Word of God (the Bible). Go back over the above Scriptures and learn to listen to God.

You must [be a Christian](#) – one who has accepted Christ's death on the cross as the only means of your sins being forgiven. (John 14:16, 17)

Jesus is the baptizer. (Acts 2:32, 33) Ask Jesus for the Holy Spirit.

Renounce anything in your past not from God – i.e. Involvement in the occult, a cult, astrology, etc.

Recognize that God will give only good gifts. He has promised to give you the Holy Spirit. (Luke 11:11-13)

You receive the baptism of the Holy Spirit by faith – just as you received salvation by faith. The Gift of Tongues **is not** the baptism of the Holy Spirit. The speaking in tongues does not come until **after** the baptism of the Holy Spirit. You ask in faith for the baptism of the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit comes. Then, you open your mouth by faith, and allow the prayer language that the Holy Spirit brought with Him to flow out of your mouth.

Today there is not a need to tarry or wait. You receive the moment you ask. You can have a full and complete release in your prayer language.

Remember, when you receive the baptism of the Holy Spirit, you haven't “arrived,” you've just begun! The gifts of the Holy Spirit operate hand in hand with the fruit of the Spirit. If you use any of the gifts without the greatest, LOVE, then you are out of line. All of the fruit should be developing in you, maturing you spiritually, as you become a person of The Word.

“But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control. Against such there is no law.” (Galatians 5:22, 23)

Use your prayer language often, and as much as possible. Remember, you are charging yourself up (edifying) when you use it.

“If you abide in Me, and My Word abides in you...” John 15:7. **Live** in the Word!!