

Baptism with the Holy Spirit – Who, what, why, when & how (4)

1. I must first be born again

John 14:17 **The (Holy) Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive,...**

Before I was born again I was of the world, in that state Jesus said I could not receive the Holy Spirit, I had first to be born again. This important truth is fully amplified in the third paper in this series on the Holy Spirit. Great confusion on the timing of the Baptism with the Holy Spirit has arisen, in part, because of a misunderstanding of the following verse:

Rom 8:9 **But you are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if indeed the Spirit of God dwells in you. Now if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he is not His.**

If this verse is taken only at face value it appears to say, and has been commonly interpreted to say, that if I don't have the Holy Spirit I'm not a Christian but since I am a Christian then therefore I must have the Holy Spirit and therefore I must have received the Holy Spirit when I was born again. That is not what this verse is saying. In the first place the book of Romans is written to Christians and not unbelievers. Secondly, this particular section of scripture is contrasting Christians who are living in their flesh (carnal Christians) with Christians who are living in their spirits, it is not contrasting unsaved people with Christians, as can be clearly seen from the context:

Rom 8:5 **For those (Christians) who live according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh, but those (Christians) who live according to the Spirit, the things of the Spirit.**

Rom 8:8 **So then, those (Christians) who are in the flesh cannot please God.**

There are many born again Christians today who are living in their flesh. What this crucial verse 9 is saying is that the only way for a Christian to not be ruled by his flesh is to be full of the Holy Spirit. Conversely if a Christian is not full of the Holy Spirit he will be ruled by his flesh and not ruled by Christ and therefore while in that fleshly state, although born again, not currently belonging to Christ. This verse 9 is saying the same thing as does the preceding verse 8, namely, that a fleshly Christian cannot please God. It is also consistent with a succeeding verse that says only those Christians who are led by the Holy Spirit are actually living as sons of God. Other Christians who don't have the Spirit and are not led by the Spirit, while still sons of God, are not living as true sons but as prodigal sons who are not currently under Christ's lordship.

Rom 8:14 **For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, these are sons of God.**

2. I must believe that it is possible for me to receive the Holy Spirit

Acts 2:39 **For the promise of the Holy Spirit is to and for you and your children, and to and for all that are far away,...** AMP

“All that are far away”, whether geographically or in the future. There is no scripture in the Bible that limits the promise of the Holy Spirit to a particular time or place.

3. I must honestly recognize that I don't have the Holy Spirit

F.B. Meyer the acclaimed Bible teacher and principal spokesman for the Keswick Movement in the late 19th century on the deeper life in Christ offered these three tests to determine if I have been baptized with the Holy Spirit:

- (i) Do I have God's power and anointing to boldly witness for Jesus?
- (ii) Do I have consistent victory over my flesh and temptations to sin?
- (iii) Do I know and act like I know that Jesus Christ increasingly lives in me?

Dr. Martyn Lloyd-Jones, referred to as the greatest reformed preacher of the last century in England, suggested this question to determine if I have been baptized with the Holy Spirit: “ Does my Christian life resemble more the lives of the disciples before they received the Holy Spirit or their lives after they received the Holy Spirit?”

4. I must see my own compelling need for the Holy Spirit

Am I grieved by my lack of love and compassion for those who are lost – recognizing that “God gives us the Holy Spirit to fill our hearts with His love” Rom. 8:5. Do I lament my continuing fear of man and lack of boldness to proclaim the Gospel of my salvation? Do I regret my lack of a deeper heart knowledge and conviction about the scriptures even though I mentally agree with them? Am I frustrated and somewhat disgusted at my inability to overcome the sinful nature of my flesh? Dr. Lloyd-Jones says such a person, who so mourns, is the most likely to receive the comforter:

Matt 5:4 **Blessed are those who mourn, For they shall be comforted** (with the Comforter, the Holy Spirit, the Oil of God).

Isa 61:3 **To console those who mourn in Zion, To give them ...The oil of joy for mourning , The garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness;..**

5. I must allow an intense hunger & longing for the Holy Spirit to grow in my heart

We saw from Romans until I receive the Holy Spirit I will still be ruled by my flesh:

Rom 7:25-8:2 **Oh, what a terrible predicament I'm in! Who will free me from my slavery to this deadly lower nature? Thank God...For the power of the life-giving Spirit ...has freed me from the vicious circle of sin and death.** TLB

6. My heart must be clean, humble and able to hear God's word, that is, Meek

John 15:3 **Now you are clean through the word which I have spoken unto you**

Matt 5:5 **Blessed are the meek (have ears to hear) for they shall inherit the land.**

The Baptism with the Holy Spirit is the gateway out of the spiritual wilderness and into the spiritual promised land. Only the meek, those whose hearts are clean, humble and able to hear God's promise of the Holy Spirit will enter this spiritual land of God's rest.

7. I must be currently inclined to obey God and willing to become totally obedient

Joh 15:14 (Jesus said) **And you are my friends if you obey me.** TLB

Even though I may still frequently stumble in sin it must matter to me to do those little things that my heart knows God wants me to do, like always receiving His forgiveness. Also I need to have come to that place where I desire to fully surrender my life to God recognizing I will need God's ability to actually do it. It is on these that God says He will stamp the seal of His ownership, the seal of the Holy Spirit. Prior to being sealed, I may have been bought by the blood, but I am not ready to submit to Christ's lordship.

Eph 1:13 **In Him you also who have heard the Word of Truth, ...and have believed in and adhered to and relied on Him, were stamped with the seal of the long-promised Holy Spirit.** AMP

Acts 5:32 **...The Holy Spirit whom God has given to those who obey Him.**

8. I must not be afraid of handing over control of my life to God

Have I not yet seen enough of the goodness, kindness, rightness and love of God in my own life, the lives of others and in the scriptures to dispel any fear thoughts that the enemy of my soul will use to try and stop me from fully surrendering to God? Do I not know that the way God works is to always place in the hearts of His people the desire to do whatever it is He wants them to do so that they then have a delight in doing it?

Luke 12:32 **Do not fear, little flock, for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom.**

Rom 14:17 **For the kingdom of God is ...in the Holy Spirit.**

Phil 2:13 **For it is God Who is all the while effectually at work in you energizing and creating in you the power and desire, both to will and to work for His good pleasure and satisfaction and delight.** AMP

9. And now all I need to do is pray and ask my Father to give me His Holy Spirit

Luke 11:13 **If you then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those (of His children) who ask Him!**

But God wants me to ask with an insistence that will not be denied because He knows that otherwise it will be too easy for my spiritual enemy to deceive me into giving up.

Luke 11:8 **I tell you, ...because of his shameless persistence and insistence he will ...give him as much as he needs.** AMP

Also, if I have heard with my heart God's words promising me the Holy Spirit, God wants me to take Him at His word and believe in my heart that He has given me, right away, the Holy Spirit, just as He promised.

Mark 11:24 **Therefore I say to you, whatever things you ask when you pray, believe that you receive them, and you will have them.**

Gal 3:2 **Let me ask you this one question: Did you receive the Holy Spirit as the result of obeying the Law and doing its works, or was it by hearing the message ...and believing it?** AMP

10. And when exactly may I expect to receive the Holy Spirit?

It can happen while I am praying, either individually or with others. It can happen when I am contemplating one or more of the mighty truths set out in the scriptures and in this paper. It can happen when I'm listening with my heart to the preaching of God's word at a meeting or on a CD or in a book, and the preaching does not necessarily have to be on the subject of the Holy Spirit.

I have believed that it is possible for Christ to Baptize me with the Holy Spirit, I have believed that I am not but need to be Baptized with the Holy Spirit, and I have believed that God has promised to baptize me with the Holy Spirit. When will it happen? It will happen the moment I take God at His word and believe in my heart He has Baptized me with the Holy Spirit – and such a belief, if it is in my heart, will always be reflected in my confidently beginning to take action as a person who has now been Baptized with the Holy Spirit. That is, fully expecting God to now lead me, guide me and direct my paths as I acknowledge Him in all of my ways, by the inward witness of His Spirit communicating with my spirit. My heart now is the temple of the Holy Spirit.

Rom 8:14 **For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, these are sons of God.**

Rom 8:16 **The Spirit Himself bears witness with our spirit...**