

You Will Be Baptized With the Holy Spirit

by John Piper

The baptism with the Holy Spirit is a promise made by Jesus to his disciples, where they would receive extraordinary spiritual power for Christ-exalting ministry.

Duration: 35:32

Scripture: Matthew 6:33, Matthew 14:13-21, Luke 24:34, Luke 24:49, John 6:1-14, Acts 1:1-5

Topics: "Book Of Acts"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher begins by praying for the Holy Spirit to pour out and meet the individual needs of the congregation. The sermon focuses on the book of Acts and how it is not just the Acts of the Apostles, but the continued acts of Jesus. The preacher highlights three things that the Apostles and disciples needed to be effective instruments for Jesus: a spirit-authenticated commission, verification of Jesus' resurrection, and further instruction on the kingdom of God. The sermon concludes by mentioning the fourth thing the disciples needed, which is the baptism with the Holy Spirit.

Transcript

The following message is by Pastor John Piper. More information from *Desiring God* is available at www.DesiringGod.org. Please turn with me in your Bibles to Acts chapter 1. Pastor John will be preaching from Acts chapter 1, verses 1 to 5. In the first book, O Theophilus, I have dealt with all that Jesus began to do and teach, until the day when he was taken up, after he had given commandment through the Holy Spirit to the apostles whom he had chosen. To them he presented himself alive after his passion, by many proofs, appearing to them during forty days and speaking of the kingdom of God.

And while staying with them, he charged them not to depart from Jerusalem, but to wait for the promise of the Father, which he said, You heard from me, for John baptized with water, but before many days you shall be baptized with the Holy Spirit. Let's pray together before we move into the text. Father, we acknowledge our utter dependence upon you now and our great need for the Holy Spirit.

Our confession as a church is that what Tom has read is inspired and infallible and profitable to equip us for every good work, to complete the Great Commission, to minister in love, to worship with power. And yet we realize, Lord, that many people read the Bible as a dead book, hear it preached as a dead word. Would you come now by your Spirit and make it alive for us, by quickening our hearts, guard us from error, and may we abound in truth.

There are such manifold needs in this room right now. 400 people, Lord Jesus, with 400 different needs, and dozens of them each. Relational needs, physical needs, spiritual needs, loneliness, discouragement, depression, anger, disinterest.

So, Father, I ask you to pour out your Holy Spirit upon us so that the miracle of the breaking of the bread would happen. Five loaves and two fish made to feed 5,000 plus. Surely you can take one sermon and multiply it into 400 individual needs.

Do that miracle, I pray, for your great glory. And may people praise your name because of how their needs were met. Beyond all my expectation and planning, in Jesus' name, Amen.

We began a series on the book of Acts last week and took verses 1 to 3. Let me sum it up for you. Verse 1 says that in the first book, the first volume, namely the Gospel according to Luke, Jesus began to do and to teach. Which, I take it, means that in the second volume, namely the book of Acts, we are reading about what Jesus continues to do and to teach.

So that the book of Acts is not merely the acts of the apostles, it's the acts of Jesus. And then we saw in verses 2 and 3 that there are three things that the apostles and the disciples needed in order to be instruments in the hands of the risen Christ to do his work and to speak his word. Number one, in verse 2, they needed a spirit-authenticated commission.

And so it says he commanded them through the Holy Spirit. Second, in verse 3, they needed verification that Jesus was alive and that he had triumphed over death. And so you see at the beginning of verse 3, he presented himself to them alive after his death with many proofs appearing to them for 40 days.

And the third thing that they needed was more instruction concerning the kingdom of God, because they were so mixed up about this whole issue. And so at the end of verse 3, we see for those 40 days he was speaking to them of the kingdom of God. And then I ended last time by saying there is one more.

There is a fourth thing that the disciples need in order to be effective instruments in the hands of the risen Christ. And that is the baptism with the Holy Spirit. And that's found in verses 4 and 5. That's what we're going to talk about this morning.

Let me read those two verses once again with you. While staying with them, he charged them not to depart from Jerusalem, but to wait for the promise of the Father, which he said, You heard from me, for John baptized with water, but before many days you shall be baptized with the Holy Spirit. Now he's referring back about three years, isn't he? To the time when John the Baptist led a kind of renewal movement among the Jewish people.

John the Baptist broke on the scene as a prophet from the wilderness, and he began to preach, Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand. Be baptized for the forgiveness of your sins. And many of the Jews realized they'd been living a phony relationship with their God.

They repented of their sins. They restored their relationship with him. They signified it in baptism.

And a whole new renewal movement started with John the Baptist. But John said, Take note. There is one coming after me, the Messiah, who is greater than I, and he's going to baptize you, not with water like I do, but with the Holy Spirit.

Let me read for you the exact words. Luke 3, verse 16. I baptize you with water, but he who is mightier than I is coming, the thong of whose sandals I am not worthy to untie.

He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and with fire. Now it's obvious, isn't it, in Acts chapter 1, verse 5, that that's what Jesus is referring to. Jesus says here, that's going to happen in just a few days.

Just as John immersed you in the Holy Spirit, I mean in the water, like I'm going to immerse people in water right here behind this wall tonight, so Jesus will immerse you in the Holy Spirit. Just as John drenched you with water, I'm going to drench you with the Holy Spirit like you've never experienced the Holy Spirit before. And so the fourth thing that is needed then for these disciples, these apostles, in order to be instruments in the hands of the risen Christ, to do his work and speak his word, is that they be baptized with the Holy Spirit.

And so the question this morning is, what is it? What happened when it happened? What did they need that they received when they were baptized in the Holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost? Now, the way I want to proceed is simply, first of all, to go get a clear video camera picture of what really happened. The best we can see anyway that Luke gives us. So let's go to Acts chapter 2 and read what happened when the prophecy of the baptism with the Holy Spirit was fulfilled.

Let's read verses 1 to 4 of Acts 2. Now, keep in mind all the way through this morning, our goal is, what is the baptism with the Holy Spirit? What happened when it happened? When the day of Pentecost had come, they were all together in one place. And suddenly a sound came from heaven like the rush of a mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting. And there appeared to them tongues as a fire, distributed and resting on each one of them.

And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other languages or tongues as the Spirit gave them utterance. So, here is the baptism with the Holy Spirit coming upon these apostles and these 120 disciples. And it's several things.

A mighty wind that immerses this house and fills all of its rooms. And second, the disciples themselves are filled with the Holy Spirit. And third, there are tongues of fire that appear to be resting on their heads.

And fourth, there are languages being spoken so that over a dozen nationalities in Jerusalem heard in their own minds and understood what happened when they began to testify. So, those are some of the components that on that first day of Pentecost were part of the baptism of the Holy Spirit. Now, what were they saying? I think that's really important to ask.

What were they saying when they were baptized with the Holy Spirit? When they opened their mouths and spoke and the people understood them, what did they understand? And the answer to that is given in verse 11 of chapter 2. It says, We hear them telling in our own tongues the mighty works of God. In other words, the Holy Spirit evidently had so completely taken over and so saturated and drenched and immersed them that the Holy Spirit was imparting to them His own vision of God, His own passion for God, His own praise of God. So that what was spilling over out of their mouths was a praise or an extolling or an exaltation of the mighty works of God.

And I presume that was not just empty, rote language. That was because they were seeing something. They were feeling something.

And the Holy Spirit was doing that to them. He was taking the eyes of their heart, as Paul called it, and opening a new vista of God's grandeur and greatness such that they were simply swept up and stunned by the glory of God. And it spilled out in praise and prophetic utterances.

Now that last phrase, prophetic utterances, is not a throwaway word. That takes us a step further in what was happening here. Look at verses 16 and 17.

Peter now has to stand up and give an account for what's going on in this baptism with the Holy Spirit. And very, very significantly, as we'll see as we move along, the text he chooses to interpret, the baptism with the Holy Spirit, is Joel chapter 2. So let's read verses 16 and 17 of Acts 2. This is what was spoken by the prophet Joel. In the last days it shall be, God declares, that I will pour out My Spirit upon all flesh and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy.

Now, look back at chapter 1, verse 4, and you'll see that Jesus had said, Wait for the promise of the Father. Now, what promise did He have in mind? The promise of the Father. Well, a good guess, that I'm going to argue is a correct guess, is that He had in mind Joel 2. Because when Peter undertakes to explain in terms of promises what was happening in the baptism with the Holy Spirit, he said, It's Joel 2, folks.

It's Joel 2. That's the baptism of the Holy Spirit. And it's very significant that he chose Joel 2, as we'll see in a minute. But let me confirm this for you now by looking ahead to Peter's further interpretation of what's happening in chapter 2, verse 32.

Drop your eyes, cross the page or wherever it is in your Bible to Acts 2, 32 and 33. Peter is coming to the end of his sermon now and he says, This Jesus, God raised up from the dead, of that we are all witnesses, being therefore exalted at the right hand of God and having received from the Father. Now, here's the promise of the Father.

Received from the Father, the promise of the Holy Spirit, he has poured out this which you see in here. Namely, that which is interpreted by Joel 2. Namely, your sons and your daughters will prophesy, your old men will dream dreams, your young men will see visions. So what you are seeing and hearing in the prophetic utterance of the glories and praise of God in languages that many nations can understand is the fulfillment of Joel 2. It's the receiving of the promise of the Father.

It's the pouring out of the Spirit. And it is the baptism with the Holy Spirit. Now, the question then I raise is, What's the essence of it? What's the heart of it? I mean, when we're talking about the baptism with the Holy Spirit, do we always have to say, well, it must include tongues of fire resting on the head that people can see.

And it must always include languages that are spoken that you don't know, but others do. And must it always include a loud wind that rushes and sweeps everybody up? And must it always include filling with the Holy Spirit? Must it always include prophetic utterances as you praise the mighty works of God in public? Or is there an essence? Is there a heart that this is always it? And sometimes it's those other things. But this is always the baptism of the Holy Spirit.

Or this was the essence of it. That's the question I want to try to answer now. And to answer it, I want to begin by saying what I don't think the essence is, or what I don't think the heart of baptism with the Holy Spirit is.

And here I'm going to distance myself from a view that I argued for in 1984, and one that has a great and wonderful historic tradition behind it, but which I have become increasingly persuaded is not accurate, at least not the way I was arguing for it. I do not think that baptism with the Holy Spirit refers to new birth. I do not think that baptism with the Holy Spirit refers to conversion to Christ.

And I do not think that baptism with the Holy Spirit refers to being united by the Spirit to the body of Christ. In other words, I do not think that Luke or Acts chapter 2 is talking about what Paul is talking about in 1 Corinthians 12.13. I invite you to turn to 1 Corinthians 12.13. This is a major issue and I want at least for you to understand clearly where I am coming down on it and be able to assess the reasons and arguments that I'm going to give you here briefly. The context of 1 Corinthians 12 is the gifts of the Spirit, and Paul is arguing as he moves down through verses 9, 10, 11, 12, that the Holy Spirit is sovereign.

He is one. He gives diverse gifts, but it is one Spirit doing this. And then he carries that emphasis on the sovereignty and the unity of the Spirit further into verse 13.

And he says, For by one Spirit, not many, by one Spirit, we were all baptized into one body. Jews are Greek, slaves are free. Now, the words of this verse are almost identical with the words in Acts 1.5 and Luke 3.16 and the other places where baptism with the Holy Spirit is spoken of.

And it could mean the same thing, so that Paul and Luke are saying identical things, but the context here, to my mind, rules out the possibility that Jesus is baptizing with the Holy Spirit here, but rather stresses that the unity and sovereign work of the Spirit is taking believers and grafting them into the body of Christ. That is, what Paul is talking about is conversion. What Paul is talking about is new birth and union with Jesus Christ in the body of Christ.

I don't think that's what Acts 2 is about. I don't think Luke and Paul, in other words, mean the same thing by baptism with the Holy Spirit. That's the difference between what I'm going to say now and what I wrote a paper on and said six years ago.

I don't see any tension or any contradiction between these two views of the baptism of the Holy Spirit at all. Paul's is absolutely true and Luke's is absolutely true. But if we let each text stand and interpret itself for us rather than saying, well, they have to mean the same thing because they're both using similar language, I think they come out meaning different things which are perfectly coherent.

Now, let me say before I move on to show you what I do think Acts 2 means and give you reasons. The view that I'm turning from is perfectly orthodox. And if you hold it when I'm done, you are welcome at Bethlehem and welcome into my heart and loved and have a great historic tradition behind you, namely that the baptism with the Holy Spirit in Acts 2 and 1 Corinthians 12, 13 are one and the same thing and nobody's going to boot you out of this church for holding that view or otherwise I would have been gone six years ago.

But not to make light of the disagreement, I have prayed and struggled and labored and sought and studied and wept and talked and I believe that I was wrong and that that view is wrong and that the view I'm going to give you this morning is right and desperately needed in the church. So the question again is what's the heart of the baptism of the Holy Spirit? Is it new birth, conversion, unity to Christ? I say no. In Paul's mind, that's a reality.

And the Holy Spirit baptizes into Christ every believer. If you are here this morning and you believe in Jesus Christ, Paul would say you have been baptized by the Holy Spirit into Christ, whether you have felt anything or done anything besides faith. All right, is that clear? Paul would say that and he'd be right because words can mean anything you want them to mean and he says that's what they mean for him.

But now I'm going to take you to Acts 2 and I'm going to argue that when Jesus promised the baptism with the Holy Spirit and when it came on Pentecost and when Luke wrote the story, they mean something very different and perfectly coherent with that. Here's what I think the baptism with the Holy Spirit means in Acts. I think the essence and heart of the baptism of the Holy Spirit is when a person who is already a believer receives extraordinary spiritual power for Christ-exalting ministry, period.

I'll say it again, it's very simple. When a person who is already a believer receives from the Holy Spirit extraordinary spiritual power for Christ-exalting ministry. That's what I think the baptism of the Holy Spirit is in the book of Acts and is promised by Jesus.

Here are my four reasons. Reason number one. I invite you to turn with me back to the last page of Luke's gospel, Luke 24-49.

And I want to compare Luke 24-49 with Acts 1-4. So if you can keep your fingers wedged in there and look at these two verses at the same time, you'll see beyond the shadow of a doubt that they are referring to the same thing. In Acts 1-4 it says Jesus charged the apostles not to depart from Jerusalem but to wait for the promise of the Father.

That's Acts 1-4. Don't depart, wait for the promise of the Father, namely the baptism with the Holy Spirit. Now in Luke 24-49, listen to what he says.

Behold, I send the promise of my Father upon you. There's that phrase that's the same. But stay in the city.

There's that phrase that's the same. Don't depart, stay in the city until, and then instead of saying until you are baptized with the Holy Spirit, he says until you are clothed with power from on high. So the parallel between Acts 1-4 and 5 on the one hand and Luke 24-49 on the other, to me, is an unmistakable definition of baptism in the Holy Spirit.

It means being clothed with divine power from on high. And that's what happened at Pentecost. That's my argument number one.

The parallel between Luke 24-49 and Acts 1-4 and 5. Second, we're back in Acts chapter 1 now, and just reading on into next week's text, verses 6-8, you find Jesus unfolding the expectancy of the baptism with the Holy Spirit in words that are different and illuminating. Let's read them. Verse 5, Lord, they say, will you at this time restore the King to Israel? And he said to them, It is not for you to know the times or seasons which the Father has fixed by his own authority, but you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you shall be my witnesses.

Now, I think that is simply a restatement of verse 5. Verse 5 saying, In not many days you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit. Verse 8 says, When this Holy Spirit comes upon you, you will receive power, and the point of the power will be unprecedented effectiveness in witness around the world. So, my second argument is that the definition given closest at hand of the baptism in the Holy Spirit is an extraordinary empowering for ministry, especially witness.

Now, let's just think about these two texts for a moment. Notice that neither of them suggests that baptism in the Holy Spirit is being reborn or being converted or having union with Christ. In fact, if we had time, I would develop extended arguments that the disciples are already born again, they are already converted, they are already united to Christ, they have the Holy Spirit dwelling within them, for no one belongs to Christ who does not have the Spirit.

Romans 8 and 9, and I could talk of John 13, 10, John 15, 3, Romans 8 and 9, John 3, 5, and so on. These disciples, it can be shown, are already believers, they already have the Holy Spirit, but they have not been baptized with the Holy Spirit. It doesn't say, for example, wait in Jerusalem until you are born again, or wait in Jerusalem until you are converted, or wait in Jerusalem until you are united to the body of Christ universal.

It says wait until you are clothed with power. It doesn't say you shall receive membership into the body of Christ when the Holy Spirit comes upon you. It says you shall receive power when the Spirit comes upon you.

So the immediate defining texts define the experience of baptism with the Holy Spirit as extraordinary empowerment for ministry. Now here's reason number three for why I think this is what Luke means. When Peter moves on now to explain in his sermon what's going on at Pentecost, namely the baptism of the Spirit, he comes to verses 16 and 17 and says that this is Joel chapter 2. This is that which was spoken by the prophet Joel.

I will pour out my Spirit upon all flesh, your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your young men shall see visions, your old men will dream dreams. Now think about this for a moment. If it was Luke's intention to demonstrate that the promise of the Father was to unite the disciples to Christ through faith and conversion and new birth, there were wonderful Old Testament texts he could have used to show that that was the promise of the Father.

Ezekiel 11, 19. Ezekiel 36, 27. Had he wanted to say that the meaning of the baptism of the Holy Spirit at that moment was in fact you shall have a new Spirit dwelling within you and you will now walk in paths of righteousness and you will be united to the people of God, there were texts he could have used.

And what did he use to explain the baptism with the Holy Spirit? He used a text that promised extraordinary prophetic empowerment. Your sons and your daughters will prophesy, your old men will dream dreams and your young men will see visions and this will be the baptism with the Holy Spirit. And therefore my third argument for why the baptism with the Holy Spirit in Luke's understanding, Peter's understanding and Jesus' understanding here is that the Old Testament text chosen to define the experience is not a text that promised new birth but a text that promised prophetic empowerment.

That's argument number three. Now, argument number four. In chapter two, verse four of Acts, Luke describes the baptism with the Holy Spirit as a filling with the Holy Spirit.

You see verse four of Acts two, when the wind blew and the house was filled and the tongues of fire rested on their heads, it says, and they were all filled with the Holy Spirit. Now that's very significant that he would use the term filling there because if you take your concordance and look up all the places in the book of Acts where the term full of the Holy Spirit or filled with the Holy Spirit is used, they all refer to an anointing for special empowerment for ministry with the exception perhaps of one in chapter 13:52 where it simply says all the disciples were filled with joy and with the Holy Spirit and doesn't say what happened. But let

me show you all the other places in the book of Acts where this is so.

Acts chapter four, verse eight. I don't know if you're fast enough to turn to these with me. You can try if you want.

It sounds like you are, but I'm going to go fast here and wrap this up. But I want to show you all the places in the book of Acts where the term filling with the Holy Spirit is used. Acts four, eight.

Peter again is filled with the Holy Spirit. He speaks with such power that the Jewish leaders are amazed at his boldness and dumbfounded and said, where'd this man get this education? He must have been with Jesus. They are stunned at the power he spoke with when he was filled with the Spirit in Acts four, eight.

Again, Acts chapter four, verse 31. The house in which they were praying was shaken and all of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and spoke the word of God with boldness and such effect that the people again were moved and stunned and there were signs and wonders performed. Acts chapter six.

Stephen, in verse five, is a man full of faith in the Holy Spirit. And what's the effect? In verse eight, he does wonders and signs and perhaps most importantly, for all the other examples in Acts, in verse 10, it says, they could not resist the wisdom and the spirit with which he spoke. His face shone like an angel.

There was such extraordinary anointing upon Stephen that his face glowed and his words were invincible in the council of the elders. That's what it means to be full of the Holy Spirit. Acts chapter nine, verse 17.

Paul, just after his conversion, is filled with the Holy Spirit. He enters into Damascus. He confounds.

It says he confounds the synagogues as he proves that Jesus is the son of God as a baby Christian in Acts 9.22. Acts 11.24. Barnabas was full of the Holy Spirit as he went up to Antioch. And it says, because he was full of the Holy Spirit, a large company was added to the Lord, just like at Pentecost, a large company of people were converted because this man was so full of the Holy Spirit. And then finally, in Acts 13.9, Paul, on the island of Cyprus, is filled with the Holy Spirit as he spoke and his speaking was with such confidence and power that Elimas, the magician, was struck blind by the words of Paul.

Now, I just back off and say, my understanding of being baptized in the Holy Spirit then, according to the book of Acts, as I believe is a clear intention of the inspired author, Luke, is that we are baptized with the Holy Spirit whenever there is an extraordinary empowering for Christ-exalting ministry. And it has happened in the church again and again and again in revival seasons. And I believe this is true because, one, Peter calls it or Luke calls it being filled with the Holy Spirit.

And everywhere in the book of Acts, being filled is associated with extraordinary empowerment for ministry. I believe it's true because Peter says it is what Joel promised. And what Joel promised was extraordinary prophetic empowering of the sons and daughters of God.

I believe it's true, thirdly, because Jesus said, Tarry in Jerusalem until you are clothed with power from on high. And I believe it's true, fourthly, because when he describes it in Acts chapter 1-8, it is you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit comes upon you and you shall be my witnesses. Now, the implications of this are great for our church.

And we'll be talking about them extensively because we're going to talk about the book of Acts extensively and that's what the book of Acts is all about. What does the church look like when the church receives the

baptism with the Holy Spirit as it did again and again in those early days? In a word, I would say that the baptism with the Holy Spirit is available for us and that the baptism with the Holy Spirit is indispensable if we are to fulfill the Great Commission in the last decade of this millennium. There is a song printed in your worship folder that is a song of gratitude.

It does not zero in specifically on one side or the other in this issue of what the baptism with the Holy Spirit is. It simply celebrates the wonderful truth that we've been given the Son and we've been given the Holy Spirit. And I hope that wherever you are in processing the Biblical teaching concerning the fullness and the baptism with the Holy Spirit, your heart is full enough to sing a song of gratitude to the Lord for the giving of the Son and the leaving of the Holy Spirit until the work of God is done.

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