

# **Foundational Principles of the Christian Faith**

## **Chapter 4**

### **Baptism in the Spirit**

**"Baptism in the Spirit" describes being baptized with the Spirit. Being baptized in, into, unto and with, all refer to the same thing. Baptism in the Spirit is one of the cardinal doctrines of the Christian faith. There is so much clear teaching on it in scripture, yet there is no other aspect of biblical truth so misunderstood by Christians. That is why the Church is so devoid of spiritual power in a world where it is so much needed. Most Pentecostal Christians who speak in tongues as the evidence of being baptized in the Spirit believe that speaking in tongues is the goal to which they should attain. They do not understand that speaking in tongues is not so important as they are in God's plan and that it is but the doorway to a greater spiritual life in God. And because they lack that understanding, they also lack the power to do the work for which God has ordained them. This is not to criticise those Christians but to challenge them to understand what it is that God has ordained us for (CP Luke 24:49; Jn 16:7-15; Ac 1:4-8). We learn from these scriptures that the purpose of being baptized in the Spirit is to be endued with power for God's service. This cannot be impressed upon us enough. Warfare in God's service is spiritual, and the Church must be spiritually equipped to fight the war (CP 2Cor 10:3-5; Eph 6:11-18). Being baptized in the Spirit means the difference between a life bearing much fruit or a fruitless life; a life of spiritual power or a life of carnal defeat. It means boldness and power to accomplish the work of God and to make the believer's witness and proclamation of the word effective (CP Ac 1:8 with Ac 4:29-33).**

**The disciples were already baptized in the Spirit, but were given an even greater empowering than they already had when they asked God for it. It is important to note here that they did not pray to the Holy Spirit for their empowering but to God Himself. The Bible nowhere teaches us that we are to direct our prayers to the Holy Spirit. We are to direct them to God in the name of Jesus and He will replenish our spiritual needs, as Ac 4:29-33 clearly**

teaches (CP Jn 14:13-14; 15:16; 16:23-24). This in no way denigrates the Holy Spirit, but admonishes us to always keep what we do in biblical perspective. We learned this also in Eph 6:11-18. There is much confusion surrounding the Holy Spirit in the contemporary Church. Some Christians place more importance on having a "spiritual experience" than on being empowered for service by the Spirit. Without the empowering of the Holy Spirit believers cannot effectively fulfil Christ's command to build His Church (CP Mt 28:18-20; Mk 16:15-20).

The devil wants a weak Church. He does not want to have to contend with a powerful witnessing Church operating in the demonstration of the Spirit and of power today like he had to contend with the first century Church in the book of Acts, because it awakens unbelievers to a consciousness of the presence and the power of God which raises their faith in Jesus and they get saved. More than 5000 got saved as a result of one man being healed in the book of Acts (CP Ac 3:1-16; 4:1-4). The first century Church understood perfectly the power of God resident in them through the baptism in the Spirit and they were fearless in their witness. To counter this today, Satan would have the majority of Christians believe that there is only one valid baptism - water baptism, and there are many Churches who teach this. They claim Eph 4:5 as their authority but Verse 5 must be kept in context with the rest of Paul's teaching here, and when it is, it soon becomes apparent that it does not even refer to water baptism (CP Eph 4:1-6). In V1-3 Paul exhorts the Church to be unified in the Spirit because, as he says in V4-6, there is only one Body in Christ and we were all baptized into that one body, which is the Church. Paul illustrates for us here the sevenfold spiritual unity of God and man; one Body, one Spirit, one hope of our calling, one Lord, one faith, one baptism and one God. It has nothing whatever to do with water baptism or baptism in the Spirit, but to the baptism of believers by the Holy Spirit into Christ and into His body. It is the element into which believers are baptized that determines what kind of baptism it is in scripture (CP Ro6:1-10; 1Cor 12:12-14; Ga 3:26-28; Col 2:8-13; 3:1-3). It needs to be restated here - none of those scriptures refer to water baptism or being baptized with the Spirit. These scriptures all refer to the baptism of believers by the Holy Spirit into Christ and into His body. This shows how the Church is constituted (CP 2Cor 4:1-18; 11:21-33). These are two of the most inspiring testimonies of the Holy Spirit's empowering for believers in scripture. The earthen vessels of 2Cor 4:7 are weak and fragile, representative of human beings. By referring to himself and Timothy as earthen vessels, Paul expresses the paradox of how weak human beings can be the instruments of the power of God. This treasure in earthen vessels is the Holy Spirit in us. All the things Paul suffered in 2Cor 11:21-33

were the buffetings he received from his thorn in the flesh (CP 2Cor 12:1-10). Here we learn what Paul's thorn in the flesh really is - it was not sickness or disease, or bad eyesight, or severe bodily disfigurement, or any other related thing. It was a messenger from Satan - a demon instigated by God - sent to buffet him to stop him being puffed up with pride.

Baptism in the Spirit is the enabling power in believers to live crucified lives totally committed and consecrated to the service of God (CP Ro 6:5-8; Ga 2:20). The Holy Spirit enhances the believer's sensitivity to sin and gives the believer a deeper awareness of God's judgment against all ungodliness (CP Jn 16:7-15). The Holy Spirit quickens - makes alive - the word of God to believers. He imparts revelation knowledge of the word to us, and gives us a deeper love and understanding of the word. He also does not only convict the unsaved of their sin but He convicts believers too (CP 2Cor 3:18). Believers change under the conviction of the Holy Spirit to increasingly correspond to the original pattern of God. That is what the phrase ".. are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord" means. Image means moral and spiritual likeness here, not physical likeness.

Believers, with ever-increasing glory reflect what they behold. Not least of all the baptism in the Spirit is also the doorway to the treasures God has laid up in store for His Church: the gifts of the Spirit (CP 1Cor 12:7-11). We will not be able to do an in-depth study of them here, but we will examine them briefly. The scriptures relating to the gifts here are not exhaustive and you may not agree with them - most commentators use different scriptures to identify different gifts - but being right or wrong is not fundamental to salvation so if there is any disagreement let us agree to disagree in love. The important thing is that we know what the gifts are:

- 1) The Word of Wisdom. This is an utterance applying the revelation of God's word or the Holy Spirit's wisdom to a specific future situation or problem (CP Ac 11:28; 15:13-21; 21:10-11; 27:27-44). This is not to be confused with the wisdom of God we are to seek for our daily living (CP Jas 1:5)
- 2) The Word of Knowledge. This is an utterance applied in the present tense revealing certain knowledge about people or circumstances which the speaker could not possibly know of himself (CP Ac 5:1-10).
- 3) Faith. This is special faith, a supernatural ability to believe God implicitly, without human doubt, unbelief or reasoning for the extraordinary or miraculous to happen (CP Ac 14:8-10; 20:9-12; 27:20-26; 28:1-6).
- 4) Gifts of Healing. This is a supernatural empowering to heal all manner of sicknesses and diseases or any physical ailment without any human aids or medicine (CP Ac 9:32-35; 28:7-10). Opinions of Bible commentators vary on

scriptural examples of these gifts, but suffice it to say that they are not to be confused with the authority of believers to lay hands on the sick, or to pray over them for their healing, or to believe God in agreement with others (CP Mt 18:19; Mk 16:18; Jas 5:14-15).

5) Working of Miracles. This is supernatural power to alter the normal course of nature and to counteract natural laws (CP Jn 2:1-11; 6:1-14). This also includes raising up dead people (CP Ac 9:36-42; 20:7-12); causing death (CP Ac 5:1-10); causing blindness (CP Ac 13:6-12); restoring sight to the blind; walking on water; calming the storm; healings by Peter's shadow and Paul's apron, etc., all resulting in people believing in Jesus. The workings of miracles was also in operation many times in the Old Testament, for example, when Moses held out his rod over the Red Sea (CP Ex 14:15-29); with Elijah who performed 16 miracles (CP 1Ki 17:1-2 Ki 2:12), and with Elisha who performed 32 miracles (CP 2Ki 2:13-9:3; 13:20-21).

6) Prophecy. This is the enabling of believers to speak out a revelation directly from God under the impulse of the Holy Spirit. The purpose of prophecy is to build up, motivate and encourage the local body (CP 1Cor 14:3).

7) Discerning of Spirits. This is a special ability to properly discern and judge prophecies and to distinguish whether or not an utterance is Holy Spirit inspired. It is also the ability to detect the spirits behind certain human activities (CP Mt 24:5; Luke 9:51-56; Ac 16:16-18; 1Jn 4:1-6).

8) Divers Kinds of Tongues. These are supernatural utterances in other languages not known to the speaker. The speaker is communicating directly with God - it may be in prayer, praise, blessing or thanksgiving - under the influence of the Holy Spirit bypassing the speaker's mind (CP 1Cor 14:2-4, 14).

9) Interpretation of Tongues. This is the supernatural ability to understand and make known the meaning of an utterance spoken in another language. This ability may be given to the one making the utterance or to someone else. Those who have the gift of tongues should pray also for this gift (CP 1Cor 14:12-14).

These are all visible and tangible manifestations of the Holy Spirit operating through individual believers for the common good of the Church. They are not the same though as the gifts of grace and the ministries given to the Church in Ro 12 and Eph 4, whereby a believer receives the power and the ability to minister in a more permanent manner in the Church (CP Ro 12:5-8; Eph 4:7-14). These are entirely different outworking of the Spirit. They are for permanency, whereas the gifts of the Spirit are for specific occasions. The

manifestations or gifts of the Spirit are given according to the will of the Holy Spirit when need arises and according to the earnest desire of the believer (CP 1Cor 12:7, 11, 31). It is unscriptural and unwise to assume that because someone exercises a spectacular gift that person is more spiritual than one with less spectacular gifts. Neither does possessing a gift mean that God approves of all the possessor does or teaches (CP Ac 10:34-35; 1Cor 12:20-24). The gifts of the Spirit are not an end in themselves either, but like tongues, representative of the deeper life in the Spirit.

**Now, notwithstanding that speaking in tongues is not an end in itself, it is nonetheless the sure evidence that one is baptized in the Spirit.** Scriptures are quite clear on this point and we should be too. If believers do not talk in tongues it is because they have not yet been baptized in the Spirit, but there are many sincere Christians who truly believe that even though they do not speak in tongues they were baptized in the Spirit when they received Christ as their Saviour. They need to be shown what the scriptures teach (CP Joel 2:28-29). This is the most profound prophecy in the Old Testament about the future baptism in the Spirit for believers in Jesus. Peter quotes this prophecy on the day of Pentecost to explain that speaking in tongues was the sign that Joel's prophecy was being fulfilled in the disciples (CP Ac 2:14-18). The disciples had all been baptized in the Spirit and speaking in tongues was the evidence of it (CP Ac 2:4). This passage speaks for itself. As soon as the disciples were baptized in the Spirit they spoke in tongues as the Spirit gave them utterance (CP Ac 8:9-21). The word matter here is from the Greek word *logos*, which means something said, utterance, word, speech, divine expression. Simon wanted to buy the power of the Holy Spirit because he heard believers talking in tongues as the evidence of receiving the baptism in the Spirit when they had hands laid on them. It is interesting to note here that none of the converts in Samaria who Philip evangelized were baptized in the Spirit until the apostles laid hands on them (CP V14-17). It is pointless to speculate why - this still happens today - not everyone is baptized in the Spirit immediately when they come to Christ, but it is not teaching that only apostles can baptize new Christians in the Spirit (CP Ac 10:44-46).

We learn here that believers can be baptized in the Spirit upon receiving Christ, but like Cornelius and the others did here, they must talk in tongues as the evidence of it. That was how the Jews with Peter knew that Cornelius and the other gentiles had been baptized in the Spirit "For they heard them speak with tongues..." (CP Ac 19:1-6). Once again the explicit evidence of these disciples being baptized in the Spirit was that they spoke in tongues. The point all these scriptures make is that speaking in tongues is the sure evidence of being baptized in the Spirit. If there are no tongues spoken it means that there

has been no baptism in the Spirit. It is really as simple as that, otherwise the scriptures are meaningless. There are many who teach that tongues are not for today, that they were only valid for the first century Church, and some even go so far as to say that tongues are from the devil. That is tantamount to saying that baptism in the Spirit is of the devil too because tongues are the evidence of being baptized in the Spirit. That is blasphemy. Those teachers not only ignore the plain fact of scripture, they violate what Jesus Himself teaches (CP Luke 11:9-13). Jesus is referring to the baptism in the Spirit here because believers are already born again of the Spirit when they receive Jesus as Saviour (CP Jn 3:5-6; 1:12; Ro 8:14-16). We must be born again of the Spirit before we can be baptized in the Spirit, even though as we saw with Cornelius and the others in Ac 10:44-46, that one can be baptized in the Spirit immediately following upon being born again of the Spirit (CP Jn 7:37-39). "He that believeth" refers to every believer in Christ from the day of Pentecost onwards. Jesus promises them the baptism in the Holy Spirit. The analogy of "rivers of living water" teaches us that believers will have unlimited power to do the works of God (CP Jn 14:12). The promise is to all believers in Christ (CP Ac 2:38-39). These scriptures clearly refute the teaching that tongues were only for the first century Church - that they are not for today. This proves beyond any shadow of doubt that God's promise of the baptism in the Spirit extends far beyond the boundary of the first century Church. "All that are afar off" then includes us now, and all who will come to Christ in the future (CP Ac 5:32). The Holy Spirit in all His fullness is given to all believers when they are baptized in the Spirit and once more scriptures prove there is no time limit involved (CP Jn 14:16-17).

Here Jesus clearly distinguishes between being born again of the Spirit and being baptized in the Spirit. They are two separate and distinct operations of the Spirit. This teaches us that the Spirit abides with believers when they come to Christ - abide in V16 and dwelleth in V17 both mean to remain with - but He indwells them when they are baptized in the Spirit (CP 1Cor 3:16-17; 6:19-20). Remember, the disciples were already born again of the Spirit when they were baptized in the Spirit in Ac 2:1-4. They were two separate and distinct operations of the Spirit then and they are two separate and distinct operations of the Spirit now. We need to be very clear on this point in order to be able to teach those who think they are, but are not, baptized in the Spirit. Ac 8:9-21 also teaches this. The new Christians in Samaria were already born again of the Spirit when Peter and John prayed for them to be baptized in the Spirit. The Bible does not make any allowance for believers not being baptized in the Spirit and those who are not need to be shown from scripture how they

need to be spiritually equipped to fulfil God's purpose in their lives, and His promise to the Church. This is not teaching that Christians cannot get to heaven if not baptized in the Spirit, but it should challenge them to want to avail themselves of God's promise to the Church and see His purpose fulfilled in their lives (CP Mt 18:18-20; Mk 16:17-18; Luke 11:9-13; Jn 14:12-14; 15:26-27; 16:7-15; Ac 1:7-8).

Spirit filled believers have the same empowering that Jesus had to heal the sick, cleanse the lepers, raise the dead, cast out demons, tread on serpents and scorpions, and to take authority even over the elements. Every work Jesus did on earth, believers can do also and even greater things. This is not a special empowering for a select few in the Church but is given to every believer when they are baptized in the Spirit. All believers have to do is act it out in faith, otherwise the purpose of the baptism in the Spirit, which Jesus teaches us in Ac 1:4-8 is the endowment of power for service, is lost to the Church.

Believers operating in the power of the Spirit are the evidence to a lost world that Jesus is alive and that He confirms their ministries with signs following (CP Mk 16:15-20). Signs include healings, miracles, demons being cast out, the blind regaining their sight, the dead being raised up to life, the lame walking, etc. Jesus placed great importance on the signs that followed His ministry. He said "If you do not believe me for who I say I am, then believe me because of the works I do." (CP Jn 10:36-38; Ro 15:18-21). How inconsistent it is with scripture to teach that God only empowered the first century disciples for service, and that the empowering is not for today. If the Church is to fulfil Christ's command in Mt 28:19 to disciple all nations, it needs the same empowering the disciples had. The Church Christ is building is not yet complete, and until it is complete every believer needs to be baptized in the Spirit, for the Kingdom of God is not in word, but in power (CP 1Cor 2:1-5; 4:20). So many believers lack this power because they have neglected to be baptized in the Spirit.

It is the Father's desire to give the Holy Spirit to those who ask Him because He wants to seal them with His own personal stamp of approval (CP Ga 3:13-14, 26-29). We are God's heritage in Christ - He wants to preserve us for Himself - and He gives us the Holy Spirit as the divine pledge of our eternal inheritance (CP Eph 1:10-14). It is the birthright of every born again believer to seek, to expect, and to receive the baptism in the Spirit. The promise of the baptism in the Spirit is an integral part of God's redemptive plan: it is one of the salvation benefits of the cross, and part of our inheritance in Christ. We cannot afford to miss out on it.

Now, for those not yet baptized in the Spirit, you fulfilled the main conditions for baptism in the Spirit when you appropriated the promise of God for your

salvation, and by faith received Jesus as your Saviour. Now you simply appropriate the promise of God for the baptism in the Holy Spirit, and receive it by faith the same way as you received your salvation. Do not be looking for some sort of "feeling" or emotional experience, or special anointing to come upon you. Just receive the baptism in the Spirit by faith, and as you do, the evidence of being baptized in the Spirit - speaking in tongues - will follow. Do not be concerned either with what to say, as the language you will speak will be spoken supernaturally. In faith, put your vocal cords, tongue, lips into operation and the Holy Spirit will give you the utterance, the words to speak. God fills you, but you must begin to speak - it is your voice He uses. Prepare to receive the baptism in the Spirit by praying this simple prayer: "Heavenly Father, I come to you in Jesus' name believing with all my heart that I only have to ask, and you will give unto me as your word promises, the baptism in the Holy Spirit. I ask you now dear Lord to baptize me and fill me with your Holy Spirit. I believe that I have now received the baptism in the Spirit and I thank you for it Lord. I now expect to speak in tongues in accordance with your word as the Holy Spirit gives me the utterance."

You must now put your vocal cords into operation and mouth the words as the Holy Spirit gives you the utterance. Do it aloud, and do not be concerned with what you say or how it sounds. Just keep speaking the words out. You will soon become fluent in your new language. Now that you speak in tongues you need to know why they are important in God's redemptive plan. Firstly, when we speak in tongues we are communicating directly with God Himself, and without interpretation neither we nor anyone else can understand what is being spoken. We are speaking mysteries only God understands (CP 1Cor 14:2). When we pray in tongues we are praying from the Spirit, not from the mind which is the seat of our understanding or intellect. We are communicating with God direct, bypassing the mind, so we have no understanding of what we are praying (CP 1Cor 14:14). It is of the utmost importance to keep praying in tongues to build up our faith. It can be done either privately or in a prayer meeting (if it is done in Church though, without interpretation it only edifies the speaker, whereas prophecy edifies the whole congregation) (CP 1Cor 14:4; Jude 20).

Finally, the Holy Spirit knows our weakness in regard to knowing what we ought to pray for at times, and when we pray in tongues He takes hold with us and helps us to pray as we should, and therefore makes our weak prayers effective. It is a joint effort on both our parts. He does not take over from us and pray in our stead as some teach (CP Ro 8:26-27). The word helpeth here means to take hold of together with. We learn from this study that through

**the empowering of the Holy Spirit circumstances in life no longer dictate to us - we dictate to them. God wants us to have ruling power in the Spirit so that we can be stabilised in life and participate in all of God's blessings and resources (CP Eph 3:16-19). In conclusion, only the spiritually alive can receive from the Holy Spirit spiritual wisdom and revelation knowledge of the things of God (CP 1Cor 2:12-16).**