Chapter 7 Is It Scriptural To Tarry for the Holy Ghost?

In Chapter 1, we said there are some who believe that candidates must wait or tarry in order to receive the baptism of the Holy Spirit and to be endued with power from on High. They use Luke 24:49 and Acts 1:4 to support this claim. Some have supposed this is the Bible formula for receiving the Holy Spirit.

**LUKE 24:49**

49 And, behold, I send the promise of my Father upon you: but TARRY ye in the city of Jerusalem, until ye be endued with power from on high.

**ACTS 1:4, 5**

4 And, being assembled together with them, commanded them that they should not depart from Jerusalem, but WAIT for the promise of the Father, which, saith he, ye have heard of me.
5 For John truly baptized with water; but ye shall be BAPTIZED WITH THE HOLY GHOST not many days hence.

**Tarrying Is Not a Formula For Receiving the Holy Spirit**

It is true that Jesus made both of these statements to His disciples before the Day of Pentecost. However, if these verses were a formula for receiving the Holy Ghost, we would not have any right to take the word "Jerusalem" out of the text. Jesus told the disciples not only to wait, or "tarry," but He said to wait in Jerusalem. Why didn't He say to tarry in Bethlehem? Why didn't He say to tarry in Jericho? Because it was necessary that they wait in Jerusalem in order for the Church to have its beginning there.

What were the disciples waiting or tarrying for? They were waiting for the Day of Pentecost to come, for that is when the Holy Spirit was poured out upon the Church. They were not waiting or tarrying in order to get ready or to prepare themselves to be filled with the Holy Ghost.

If that had been true, the Bible would have said, "When they were fully ready, the Holy Ghost came." But it doesn't say that. Acts 2:1 says, "And when the DAY OF PENTECOST was fully come. . . ." That is what they were waiting for;— the Day of Pentecost.

**ACTS 2:1-4**

1 And WHEN THE DAY OF PENTECOST WAS FULLY COME, they were all with one accord in one place.
2 And suddenly there came a sound from heaven as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting.
3 And there appeared unto them cloven tongues like as of fire, and it sat upon each of them.
4 And they were all FILLED WITH THE HOLY GHOST, and began to SPEAK WITH OTHER TONGUES, as the Spirit gave them utterance.

Then reading in Acts chapter 8, notice that when Peter and John went down to pray for the Samaritans to receive the Holy Spirit, there is not the slightest hint or suggestion that Peter and John taught the Samaritans to tarry or to wait before they could be filled with the Holy Spirit.

**ACTS 8:14-17**
14 Now when the apostles which were at Jerusalem heard that Samaria had received the word of God, they sent unto them Peter and John:
15 Who, when they were come down, prayed for them, that they might receive the Holy Ghost:
16 (For as yet he was fallen upon none of them: only they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus.)
17 Then laid they their hands on them, and they received the Holy Ghost.

The infilling or the baptism of the Holy Spirit has already been given to the Church on the Day of Pentecost as a free gift. To teach people to tarry for the baptism of the Holy Spirit only produces doubt and confusion in those candidates who desire to receive this gift.

Rev. Howard Carter was the general supervisor of the Assemblies of God in Great Britain for nineteen years and the founder of the oldest Pentecostal Bible school in the world. He was also a leading teacher in Full Gospel circles worldwide. Rev. Carter has said that to teach people to wait or to tarry for the Holy Ghost is nothing in the world but a combination of works and unbelief. How true that is.

I am not saying that tarrying before the Lord is always unscriptural. Certainly I believe in tarrying before the Lord and waiting on the Lord in prayer, praise, and worship. Many times in prayer meetings we have waited up to five and six hours on the Lord in prayer.

So I believe in praying long and waiting earnestly before God. Yet when I see people waiting and praying, crying out and agonizing to receive the Holy Ghost, it breaks my heart because I know it isn't necessary.

In my Bible I have not been able to find any record where anyone ever waited, cried, agonized, struggled, or tarried to be filled with the Holy Ghost. Someone said, "But I believe in receiving the Holy Ghost the old-time way."
Well, I do too. You can't get any more old-time or any more scriptural than the way the Early Church received the Holy Spirit in the Book of the Acts of the Apostles. I propose that we look at the Acts of the Apostles, see how they did it, and follow their example in getting people filled with the Holy Ghost.

**Bible Examples of Receiving the Holy Ghost**

In reading through the 28 chapters of the Book of Acts, one might suppose that the events recorded occurred over a period of a few days, a few weeks, or just a very few years. However, the events in the Book of Acts cover a number of years. The first account we'll examine occurred at Samaria.

**The Samaritan Believers**  
**ACTS 8:5-8**  
5 Then Philip went down to the city of Samaria, and preached Christ unto them.  
6 And the people with one accord gave heed unto those things which Philip spake, hearing and seeing the miracles which he did.  
7 For unclean spirits, crying with loud voice, came out of many that were possessed with them: and many taken with palsies, and that were lame, were healed.  
8 And there was great joy in that city.

This passage in verse 8 says, "... there was great joy in that city." Joy is not necessarily a characteristic of being filled with the Holy Ghost, because these Samaritans who heard the Word preached had great joy before they were filled with the Spirit. You can have joy before you get filled with the Holy Spirit and you can have joy afterwards. It is joyous to be saved. It is joyous to be healed and to enjoy the blessings of God.

**ACTS 8:12-15,17-20**  
12 But when they believed Philip preaching the things concerning the kingdom of God, and the name of Jesus Christ, they were baptized, both men and women.  
13 Then Simon [the sorcerer ] himself believed also: and when he was baptized, he continued with Philip, and wondered, beholding the miracles and signs which were done.  
14 Now when the apostles which were at Jerusalem heard that Samaria had received the word of God, they sent unto them Peter and John:  
15 Who, when they were come down, prayed for them, that they might receive the Holy Ghost.  
17 Then laid they their hands on them, and they received the Holy Ghost.  
18 And when Simon saw that through laying on of the apostles' hands the Holy Ghost was given, he offered them money,  
19 Saying, Give me also this power, that on whomsoever I lay hands, he may receive the Holy Ghost. 20 But Peter said unto him, Thy money perish with thee, because thou hast thought that the gift of God may be purchased with money.
It seems that Philip had a glorious revival in Samaria. Hundreds of people must have been saved, and scores healed. And all of these folks received the Holy Ghost: "Then laid they their hands on them, and they received the Holy Ghost" (Acts 8:17). Notice that all of these Samaritans received the Holy Ghost without waiting, praying, or agonizing — and they received without exception or disappointment.

**Cornelius and His Household**

The Word gives us another account of people getting saved and filled with the Holy Spirit without tarrying or waiting.

Reading Acts chapters 10 and 11, we see how an angel appeared to Cornelius and told him to send to Joppa, and to inquire in the house of a certain individual for Simon Peter "Who shall tell thee words, whereby thou and all thy house shall be SAVED" (Acts 11:14).

Neither Cornelius nor his household was saved. They were Gentiles who had become Jewish proselytes. A person can't be saved without hearing the gospel. Those of Cornelius' household didn't know that Jesus had died for the sins of mankind and was raised from the dead for our justification.

Therefore, Peter preached to them about Jesus' death, burial, and resurrection (Acts 10:34-43). They believed the gospel message (Rom. 10:9,10), and they were born again while Peter was preaching (Acts 11:14). Then they received the Holy Ghost and spoke in tongues before Peter even finished his message.

**ACTS 10:44,45**

44 While Peter yet spake these words, the Holy Ghost fell on all them which heard the word.
45 And they of the circumcision which believed [the Jewish Christians] were astonished, as many as came with Peter, because that ON THE GENTILES ALSO WAS POURED OUT THE GIFT OF THE HOLY GHOST

Notice that while Peter was still speaking, Cornelius and his household were not only saved, but were filled with the Holy Ghost and spoke with tongues — without waiting, agonizing, or struggling.

How did the Jewish believers know the gift of the Holy Ghost was poured out on the Gentiles? "For they heard them SPEAK WITH TONGUES, and magnify God..." (Acts 10:46).
Is It Scriptural To Tarry for the Holy Ghost?

We make a mistake by thinking that things have to be done a certain cut-and-dried way. God doesn't have any cut-and-dried methods. While Peter was yet preaching, these Gentiles received the Holy Ghost.

In ministering the baptism in the Holy Ghost to believers, many Pentecostal or Charismatic church people want everyone to follow the same formula. They want to cut everyone's experience out with the same cookie cutter, so to speak.

Saul of Tarsus

Paul, who laid hands on these folks in Acts chapter 19, was previously known as Saul of Tarsus. The account of his experience of receiving the Holy Ghost is found in Acts chapter 9.

ACTS 9:11,12
11 And the Lord said unto him, Arise, and go into the street which is called Straight, and enquire in the house of Judas for one called Saul of Tarsus: for, behold, he prayeth, 12 And hath seen in a vision a man named Ananias coming in, and putting his hand on him, that he might receive his sight.

Ananias said to Saul, "... [Jesus] hath sent me, that thou mightest receive thy sight, and BE FILLED WITH THE HOLY GHOST" (Acts 9:17). And Saul received the Holy Spirit right then. We know that Paul received the Holy Spirit because he later said, "I thank my God, I SPEAK WITH TONGUES more than ye all" (1 Cor. 14:18).

Notice in this passage of Scripture that there was no suggestion of the need for Saul to tarry or wait to be filled with the Holy Ghost; Saul was immediately filled with the Holy Spirit when Ananias laid hands on him. It is most probable that Saul didn't know a thing in the world about the Holy Ghost until Ananias came in and laid hands on him. But Ananias obeyed the Lord and Saul was immediately filled with the Holy Spirit.

The Ephesian Disciples

The following incident occurred at Ephesus.

ACTS 19
1) And it came to pass, that, while Apollos was at Corinth, Paul having passed through the upper coasts came to Ephesus: and finding certain disciples, 2) He said unto them, Have ye received the Holy Ghost since ye believed? And they said unto him, We have not so much as heard whether there be any Holy Ghost.
3) And he said unto them, Unto what then were ye baptized? And they said, Unto John's baptism.

Then in Acts 19:6 we read, "And when Paul had laid his hands upon them, the Holy Ghost came on them; and they spake with tongues, and prophesied."

These folks at Ephesus had not heard about being filled with the Spirit and speaking in tongues. But as soon as Paul laid his hands on them, the Holy Ghost came upon them, and they spoke with tongues. Every one of them was filled with the Holy Ghost and spoke with other tongues as the Spirit of God gave them the utterance — without waiting, agonizing, struggling, or tarrying.

We have read from the New Testament every instance where people received the Holy Ghost over a twenty-year period, and there has been absolutely nothing at all in the Scriptures that even resemble what we call "a tarrying meeting" in order to be filled with the Holy Ghost.

In every single instance where a company of believers sought the Holy Spirit, everyone received right away. Not one went away disappointed because of failing to receive the Holy Spirit.

If we taught this to our people today, they would receive the Holy Spirit in the same way — the Acts of the Apostles way — the New Testament way. I have had the baptism of the Holy Ghost more than fifty-five years, and I have never told anyone to wait or to tarry to receive the Holy Spirit. I have always told people, "Come and receive the Holy Ghost." And I have seen people receive Him everywhere I go to minister.

**Come and Drink of the Holy Spirit**

In John chapter 7, Jesus talks about receiving the Holy Ghost.

**JOHN 7:37-39**

37 In the last day, that great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried, saying, If any man thirst, let him come unto me, and drink.
38 He that believeth on me, as the scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow RIVERS OF LIVING WATER.
39 (But this spake he of the Spirit, which they that believe on him should receive: for the Holy Ghost was not yet given; because that Jesus was not yet glorified.)

Jesus was not talking here about salvation, because He said speaking of salvation to the woman of Samaria in John 4:14, "... the water that I shall give him shall be in him A WELL of water springing up into everlasting life." John 4:14 refers to a well, and John 7:39 refers to a river.
What was the "river" Jesus was talking about in John 7:37-39? He was talking about receiving or being filled with the Holy Ghost. Also, notice Jesus said, "Come and drink" (John 7:37), not come and shout; not come and pray; not come and praise; not come and sing and then go away empty. No, Jesus said, "Come and drink and out of your belly will flow rivers of living water" (John 7:37,38).

We make a mistake a lot of times by not just taking Jesus at His Word. Jesus said, "Come and drink" (John 7:37). Also, how many people can drink and talk at the same time? Have you ever tried to drink water, for example, and talk at the same time? Or can you drink and sing, or drink and praise God at the same time? Of course, the Holy Ghost is present to give the utterance in other tongues. But you can't "come and drink" and speak your native language at the same time.

When Jesus said, "Come and drink," that implies that you don't have to wait or tarry to drink. How long does it take you to drink? Jesus said it is just as easy to drink of the Spirit, that is, to be filled with the Spirit, as it is to drink water or to be filled with water. In other words, if you're saved, you don't have to wait at all!

Notice another aspect of drinking water and being filled with water is that it is something that you do, not something the water does. Likewise, drinking of the Holy Ghost and being filled with the Holy Ghost is something you do, not something the Holy Ghost does.

In other words, if you do your part — receive Him, the Holy Spirit will do His part — fill you up to overflowing, and you will speak in tongues.

So quit talking and start drinking! Just drink in of the Holy Spirit. Drink until you get full. When you get full of the Holy Spirit, He will give you utterance in other tongues. Then you will speak in your new, heavenly prayer language!

Someone might ask, "Do you mean to insinuate that there is no need to tarry anymore?" No, I don't mean to insinuate it. I mean to state it! There isn't any need to tarry anymore!

"Do you mean to insinuate that there is no need to say, 'Oh, Lord, send the power right now'?" No, I don't mean to insinuate it. I mean to state it! There is no need to say, "Oh, Lord, send the power right now."

Jesus said, "You come and drink." And when you drink of the Holy Spirit until you get full, out of your belly will flow rivers of living water — the Holy Spirit.

And Jesus promises that we would receive power after we receive the Holy Spirit.
ACTS 1:8
8 But ye shall receive POWER, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth.

ACTS 1:8 (Amplified)
8 But you shall receive POWER — ABILITY, EFFICIENCY and MIGHT — when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be My witnesses in Jerusalem and all Judaea and Samaria and to the ends — the very bounds — of the earth.

God doesn't need to send the power "right now." If you have received the Holy Spirit, according to Acts 1:8, the power is already resident within you.

The Holy Spirit Is a Gift

Remember, Paul said to the Ephesians, "Have you received the Holy Spirit?" (Acts 19:2). He didn't say, "I have come down here to pray that God would pour the Holy Ghost out upon you." And the apostles in Jerusalem sent Peter and John down to Samaria so that they might lay their hands on the Samaritan Christians to receive the Holy Ghost (Acts 8:14-17). Notice also that they didn't send them down there to pray that the Lord would send the power to the Samaritans.

You can't buy the gift of the Holy Spirit any more than you can buy salvation. You don't do anything to merit the infilling of the Holy Spirit. In other words, babes in Christ can receive the infilling of the Holy Spirit just as well as more mature Christians can.

You don't get the Holy Ghost just because you have graduated to some marvelous degree of spirituality beyond everyone else, and, therefore, God puts a seal on you saying you are perfect.

The Holy Ghost is a Gift. The Bible says, "... ye shall receive THE GIFT of the Holy Ghost" (Acts 2:38). And if you are born again, you are ready to receive the gift of the Holy Spirit right away. If you had to do one more thing after the new birth to receive the Holy Spirit, then the baptism of the Holy Spirit ceases to be a gift and becomes a reward. The Holy Ghost is not a reward; He is a Gift.

Some say that I make it too easy for folks to receive the Holy Ghost. But it's not me who has made it easy to receive Him. It was God who made it easy to receive this gift. It wasn't me who said, "Come and drink and get filled with the Holy Spirit." It was Jesus. I wasn't the one who put receiving the Holy Spirit on a gift basis, it was God.

Someone else said, "Yes, but I don't believe in “railroading” people through to receiving the Holy Ghost." Well, if "railroading" people through means getting them filled quickly,
then that same person no doubt doesn't believe in "railroading" people through to salvation. But that is ridiculous!

Actually, it isn't a matter of "railroading" people at all. But we should be getting people saved as quickly as we can, because they might die and go to hell tomorrow. And if someone is sick, we should believe in getting them healed quickly.

Salvation is a gift. Healing is a gift. And the Holy Ghost is a Gift. You can receive one of these gifts just as quickly as you can the other.

Reading in the Acts of the Apostles, we see that the Early Church believed in getting folks filled with the Holy Ghost as quickly as they did getting them saved or healed, as we have already studied in this lesson. I not only believe in "railroading" people through to receiving the Holy Spirit, I believe in "jet planing" them through!

**Possessing What Is Yours**

Canaan's land is a type of the baptism of the Holy Ghost and of all of our rights and privileges in Christ. Some have thought it was a type of heaven. But Canaan's land couldn't be a type of heaven, because there were enemies to overcome in Canaan and there were battles that the children of Israel had to fight.

But there won't be any enemies to overcome or battles to fight when we get to heaven. The last enemy shall have been conquered. There won't be any enemies to overcome in the land over there.

Canaan is a type of the baptism of the Holy Ghost and our rights and privileges in Christ. The children of Israel came out of Egypt, and Egypt is a type of the world. Then the children of Israel were all baptized, because going through the Red Sea was a type of water baptism.

They also all drank of Christ; that rock out of which the water flowed was a type and shadow of Christ (Exod. 17:6; 1 Cor. 10:4).

The children of Israel could have gone directly into Canaan's land, but because of unbelief and disobedience, they wandered in the wilderness for forty years. Their descendants did eventually enter in, but the unbelieving Israelites took quite a detour.

If you want to detour and take the long way into the baptism in the Holy Ghost, you can. For example, you can detour by tarrying unnecessarily at the altar in order to receive the Holy Ghost. You can detour a lot of ways. But you can also come directly in and receive Him immediately if you are born again. That's God's best! The door is open to receive this precious Gift.
Take the Direct Route!

By way of illustration, if you wanted to go from Oklahoma City to Dallas, for example, you could go directly down the highway to get there. Or if you wanted to, you could go by way of St. Louis, down to Memphis, over to Atlanta, down to New Orleans, over to Houston, and then up to Dallas. You wouldn't have to, but you could.

It is the same way with receiving the baptism of the Holy Spirit. You can detour if you want to and take the long way to receiving the Holy Spirit, but why not take the direct route?

Someone said, "But I remember those wonderful times of seeking God for several years before I was filled."

"Well, have you stopped seeking God since you got filled?" I asked. "Because I remember the wonderful time I spent last week seeking God. In fact, I remember the wonderful time I spent today seeking God. I believe in seeking God and tarrying before God, but not to receive the Holy Ghost, or anything else God offers, for that matter."

Spirit-filled believers need to seek God just as much as folks who are not filled. But seek God with the Holy Spirit, not without Him. "Yes," someone said to me, "but I learned many lessons in those many years of seeking God for the baptism in the Holy Spirit."

I replied, "You could have learned those same lessons a whole lot faster with the Holy Ghost than you did without Him! And I will tell you something else: The thing you should have learned when you did get the baptism was that you didn't have to do all of that waiting and tarrying in order to receive the Holy Spirit."

This person I was talking to started laughing and patted me on the back, saying, "Oh, you have me pegged. You are exactly right. That is the first thing I said after I received — if only someone would have told me, I could have received years before I finally did. If you had just been there to tell me, Brother Hagin, I could have received years before."

As I said, in more than fifty-five years of having the Holy Ghost myself, I have never told anyone to wait or tarry to receive Him.

Someone else said, "More people have received the Holy Ghost after the midnight hour than at any other time." My answer to that is if they received the Holy Ghost after midnight, it's because they didn't believe God before midnight! God is not any different after midnight than He is before midnight!"
Then there are those who warn, "Be careful about getting in the flesh." In one sense I understand what they mean by the words, "in the flesh." However, in another sense of the expression, you can't get the Holy Ghost any other way but in the flesh! Every person who ever got the Holy Ghost was in the flesh, because we are all still clothed in mortal bodies — the flesh.

On the Day of Pentecost, Peter quoted Joel's prophecy saying, "And it shall come to pass in the last days, saith God, I will pour out of my Spirit upon all FLESH . . ." (Acts 2:17). And the Apostle Paul said, "...know ye not that your body [flesh] is the temple of the Holy Ghost?" (1 Cor. 6:19).

Let's look at what Jesus had to say in John chapter 14 on this subject.

**JOHN 14:17,23**
17 Even the Spirit of truth; whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him: but ye know him; for he dwelleth with you, and SHALL BE IN YOU [your body or your flesh]...
23 ... If a man love me, he will ke

The Holy Spirit comes to dwell in us in the new birth; our bodies become His temple. So in that sense, we will receive the Holy Spirit in the flesh too!

To receive the Holy Spirit, open your entire being to God with a strong desire toward Him. In simple faith, receive the gift of the Holy Ghost that God freely offers, breathe in or drink in of the Spirit of God, and you will be filled with the precious Holy Spirit.

Then as a sign or evidence that you have been filled, utterance in other tongues will be given to you. If you are simple enough in faith and strong enough in courage, you can speak that utterance out immediately.

If you can drink water, you can drink of the Spirit right now. I am quoting good authority — the Word of the Lord Jesus Christ (John 7:37-39).

Question for Study

1. **What two things are produced when people are taught to tarry for the baptism in the Holy Spirit?**

______________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________
2. In Acts 8:5-8, necessarily a characteristic of being filled with the Holy Spirit. Why?
________________________________________________________________________

3. What happened in every single New Testament instance where a company of believers sought the Holy Spirit?
________________________________________________________________________

4. If you do your part—receive the Holy Spirit, what will the Holy Spirit do on His part?
________________________________________________________________________

5. If you are born again, what are you ready to receive right away?
________________________________________________________________________

6. Who said “Come and drink and get filled with the Holy Spirit?”
________________________________________________________________________

7. What is Canaan a type of?
________________________________________________________________________

8. What is Egypt type of?
________________________________________________________________________

9. What is going through the Red Sea a type of?
________________________________________________________________________

10. What must you do to receive the Holy Spirit?
________________________________________________________________________