

## **Chapter 8 The Bible Evidence of the Baptism of the Holy Spirit**

In order to determine the Bible evidence of the baptism of the Holy Spirit, let's look at five recorded instances in the Book of Acts of believers receiving the Holy Ghost.

### **Scriptural Witnesses for Tongues As the Evidence of the Baptism of The Holy Spirit**

The Bible says, ". . . in the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established" (Matt. 18:16). As we study these accounts, notice the Bible gives us three scripture "witnesses" to specifically show that speaking with tongues is the initial evidence or sign that a person is filled with the Holy Spirit, and two "witnesses" which infer that speaking in tongues is the evidence of the infilling of the Holy Spirit.

Let's look first at the three Biblical accounts which specifically show that speaking in tongues is the evidence of receiving the Holy Spirit.

#### **First Witness: The One Hundred and Twenty**

First of all, in Acts 2:4, we read that on the Day of Pentecost the 120 who were gathered in the upper room were all filled with the Holy Ghost.

##### **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.

It wasn't just Jesus' disciples, who were filled with the Holy Spirit that day. There were 120 who gathered in the upper room and were filled with the Holy Spirit (Acts 1:14,15; Acts 2:1-4)). Women as well as men were in that company. Even Mary the mother of Jesus was there (Acts 1:14). And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost and ". . .began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance" (Acts 2:4).

#### **Second Witness: Cornelius and His Household**

Second, in Acts chapter 10, we find that speaking in tongues was the same sign or evidence that convinced the Hebrew Christians who went with Peter to Cornelius' house that the Gentiles had received the Holy Spirit.

## **ACTS 1:44-46**

**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 were astonished, as many as came with Peter, because that on the Gentiles also was poured out the GIFT OF THE HOLY GHOST.

**46** For they heard them SPEAK WITH TONGUES, and magnify God....

These brethren of the circumcision were astonished because the gift of the Holy Ghost was poured out on the Gentiles. How did they know that the Gentiles had received the Holy Spirit? "For they heard them speak with tongues, and magnify God. . ." (Acts 10:46).

### **Third Witness: The Ephesian Disciples**

The third instance of believers receiving the Holy Spirit and speaking in other tongues is recorded in Acts 19:1-7. This is the account of Paul ministering to the Ephesian disciples, which occurred years after the Day of Pentecost.

## **ACTS 19:1-7**

**1** And it came to pass, that, while Apollos was at Corinth, Paul having passed through the upper coasts came to Eph-esus: 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.

**4** Then said Paul, John verily baptized with the baptism of repentance, saying unto the people, that they should believe on him which should come after him, that is, on Christ Jesus.

**5** When they heard this, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus.

**6** And when Paul had laid his hands upon them, THE HOLY GHOST CAME ON THEM; and THEY SPAKE WITH TONGUES, and prophesied.

**7** And all the men were about twelve.

### **Fourth Witness: The Samaritan Believers**

Now let's look at the two Biblical accounts which do not say specifically that the believers spoke with other tongues when they received the Holy Spirit, but which do infer that speaking in tongues was the initial evidence.

In Acts chapter 8 we read the account of the Samaritans receiving the Holy Spirit.

## **ACTS 8:14-18**

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.

18 And WHEN SIMON SAW that through laying on of the apostles' hands THE HOLY GHOST WAS GIVEN, he offered them money.

Notice the Bible says, ". . . when Simon SAW. . ." (Acts 8:18). That phrase indicates there had to be some kind of a sign or evidence that registered on Simon's physical senses for him to know that the Samaritans had received the Holy Ghost.

Some people say that what Simon saw was the great joy of the new Samaritan believers. But Simon must have seen more than just the joy of the believers. For in reading Acts chapter 8:5-8, we find there was already "great joy in that city" because of the message of salvation or the new birth (Acts 8:8).

Likewise, the sign or evidence Simon saw couldn't have been devils being cast out or healings taking place, because these things had also occurred previously, as mentioned in this same chapter in Acts (Acts 8:7,8).

We cannot see the Holy Ghost with our physical eyes for He is a Spirit. But there had to be some physical evidence that registered on Simon's physical senses for him to know that the Samaritans had received the Holy Spirit. And it is only logical to assume that it is the same evidence of believers receiving the Holy Spirit that is recorded elsewhere in the Scriptures, that is, speaking in tongues.

And, in fact, Bible students know the Samaritans did speak with tongues, for every one of the Early Church fathers say they did. One does not need to be a student of church history, however, to realize this because the Bible itself gives conclusive proof that tongues are the evidence of receiving the infilling of the Holy Spirit, as we have seen in the three accounts in Acts 2,10, and 19.

### **Fifth Witness: Saul**

The other account in Acts that infers that speaking in tongues was the evidence of receiving the Holy Spirit is found in Acts 9. In the case of Saul (who was later named Paul), the account in Acts

9 says Ananias was sent by Jesus to lay his hands upon Saul that Saul might be filled with the Holy Spirit.

### **ACTS 9:17**

17 And Ananias went his way, and entered into the house; and putting his hands on him said, Brother Saul, the Lord, even Jesus, that appeared unto thee in the way as thou camest, hath sent me, that thou mightest receive thy sight, and BE FILLED with the Holy Ghost.

"But it doesn't say Saul, or Paul, spoke with tongues," someone might object.

While it is true the Bible doesn't specifically say in Acts 9:17 that Paul spoke with tongues, we do know that Paul spoke with tongues because he said in another passage, "I thank my God, I speak with tongues more than ye all" (1 Cor. 14:18).

We know that Paul didn't begin speaking with tongues before he received the Holy Ghost, so it is logical to assume that when Ananias laid hands on him, Saul received the Holy Ghost just as everyone else did — with the evidence of speaking in other tongues. Paul received the Holy Ghost and spoke in tongues just like the rest of us do when we receive the Holy Ghost, because tongues go along with this biblical experience.

### **The Baptism of the Holy Spirit And Speaking in Tongues Go Hand in Hand**

I know in my own case as a denominational pastor more than fifty years ago, that as I read the New Testament and the Spirit of God helped me understand these verses, I was convinced that if I received the same Holy Ghost the Christians in the Book of Acts received, I would have the same initial sign or evidence they had — I would speak with tongues too. I wasn't satisfied with anything else.

We need to understand that speaking in tongues is not the Holy Ghost and the Holy Ghost is not speaking in tongues, but the two do go hand in hand. For example, it is just like the tongue of a shoe. The tongue isn't the shoe and the shoe isn't the tongue, but the tongue is a part of the shoe, and it's an integral part of the shoe; a shoe is not a shoe without it.

To further illustrate this point, when you buy an automobile in the United States, you receive a certificate of title. That certificate of title is evidence that the automobile is yours. Certainly the automobile is not the certificate of title, and the certificate of title is not the automobile. But you'll never get very far in the automobile without the certificate of title because the car would not be considered legally yours without it! Therefore, the automobile is not fully of benefit to you without the certificate of title.

It's the same way with receiving the Holy Spirit. If you have the infilling of the Holy Ghost, then you should have the biblical evidence that goes along with that experience, which is speaking

in tongues.

To answer the question, Is it necessary to speak in tongues? let me put it this way: If you want a New Testament experience of the baptism in the Holy Ghost and you want the same Holy Spirit the apostles and the Early Church had, then you will want to speak with tongues. That is what the Christians in the Early Church did, and that is consistent with what the scriptures teach.

### **The Ephesian Disciples: Speaking in Tongues and Prophesying**

It is interesting to note that in the account of the Ephesian disciples in Acts 19, the Bible says that the believers spoke in tongues and prophesied when they received the Holy Spirit.

#### **ACTS 19:6**

6 And when Paul had laid his hands upon them, THE HOLY GHOST CAME ON THEM; and THEY SPAKE WITH TONGUES, and PROPHESED.

Sometimes believers receive additional spiritual gifts as well as tongues when they are filled with the Spirit. However, tongues always comes first and is the evidence of having received the Holy Spirit. Acts 19:6 doesn't say that they prophesied and then spoke with tongues. It says they spoke with tongues and then prophesied.

I have seen folks receive the Holy Ghost and speak with tongues and then prophesy. I have also seen folks receive the Holy Ghost and speak with tongues and interpret the tongues (1 Cor. 12:10). But don't expect any more at the moment you are filled with the Spirit than what the Word of God teaches, which is that the believer will speak in tongues as the initial evidence of being filled with the Holy Spirit (Acts 2:4).

If another spiritual gift is added, well and good. However, we must also remember that spiritual gifts are given to the believer as the Holy Spirit wills, not as we will (1 Cor. 12:11). But, again, every believer should expect to speak with tongues as the initial evidence of having received the Holy Spirit.

When I received the Holy Ghost, I knew I had received Him because I spoke with tongues. But I also received an additional gift of the Spirit, too, although I didn't realize it at that time.

But I will be perfectly honest with you, when I received the Holy Spirit and spoke in tongues, I felt a little disappointed in a way. I think maybe I expected some kind of overwhelming spectacular experience. Having heard some Pentecostal folks testify about receiving the Holy Spirit, I thought I would have some sort of experience that was out of this world, so to speak. But I didn't.

I said to myself afterwards, Well, all I did was talk in tongues. I've gotten a bigger blessing than this many times just praying in English with my understanding.

But the baptism in the Holy Spirit is not just receiving a blessing. It is more than that. I knew the Bible and I knew about walking by faith, so I said, "I don't care what I feel or what I don't feel. I know I have received the Holy Spirit because I have spoken with other tongues. I have the Bible evidence for the baptism in the Holy Spirit."

I kept speaking in tongues and praising God almost continuously for about three days. Later I realized that at the same time I had received the Holy Spirit and had spoken with tongues, I had also received another gift of the Spirit, the word of knowledge.

### **The Fruit of the Spirit Is Not the Evidence Of Receiving the Holy Spirit**

So many times people have listened to others and not to what the Bible teaches. Or sometimes people draw their own conclusions about Bible experiences, such as salvation or receiving the Holy Spirit instead of relying on what the Word says. They want to accept their own conclusions instead of accepting what the Bible says.

For example, some people argue against the baptism of the Holy Spirit by saying, "But a lot of these Full Gospel folks who speak with tongues don't have the fruit of the Spirit as they ought to have; therefore, they could not be filled with the Holy Spirit." However, the fruit that Paul talks about in Galatians 5:22 and 23 is not the fruit of the baptism of the Holy Spirit at all. It is the fruit of the recreated human spirit.

### **GALATIANS 5:22,23**

22 But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith,  
23 Meekness, temperance: against such there is no law.

Most Bible translators and scholars agree that the word "Spirit" is erroneously capitalized in verse 22, and that it should be "spirit" indicating that it is the fruit of the born-again, recreated human spirit.

Therefore, Galatians 5:22 and 23 is talking about the fruit that should be in the life of every believer, not just in the life of Spirit-filled believers. Jesus said, "I am the vine, ye are the branches . . ." (John 15:5).

Fruit grows on branches, and Jesus said believers are the branches. Therefore, the fruit of the spirit grows in the life of the born-again, recreated believer because of the life of Christ resident and developed within believers — the branches.

The first fruit of the spirit listed in Galatians chapter 5 is love. Believers who are filled with the Holy Spirit don't necessarily have any more love than Christians who are not filled with the Spirit, for the simple reason that Jesus said all believers are to have love: "By THIS shall all men know that ye are my DISCIPLES, if ye have LOVE one to another" ( John 13:35).

Every believer is to have the fruit of love. The Bible further states that "We [every believer] know that we have passed from death unto life, because we LOVE the brethren . . ." ( 1 John 3:14). Love is the fruit of the born-again human spirit, not the fruit of the baptism of the Holy Spirit; therefore, every Christian should have the fruit of the spirit regardless of whether or not he is filled with the Holy Spirit.

Another fruit of the spirit listed in Galatians chapter 5 is peace. I didn't have any more peace after I received the baptism of the Holy Ghost than I had before. The Word of God says in Romans 5:1, "Therefore being justified by faith [in Jesus Christ], we have peace. ..." Therefore, peace is a fruit that should be resident in the life of every Christian because of the life of Christ within through the new birth.

However, one thing we must understand about the fruit of the spirit is that, just as with natural fruit, the fruit of the spirit can grow and be developed in the believer's life. Baby Christians, for example, don't produce and grow fruit all at once. After all, you don't expect a baby tree to produce fruit all at once. It takes time for a tree to mature and for the fruit on its branches to grow and develop. It's the same way with a baby Christian.

A baby Christian can be filled with the Holy Ghost, however, and have power, and can even have the gifts of the Spirit operating in his life. For example, the Corinthians were babes. Paul called them babes in Christ: "And I, brethren, could not speak unto you as unto spiritual, but as unto carnal, even as unto babes in Christ" (1 Cor. 3:1). Yet he also said, ". . . ye come behind in no gift.. ." (1 Cor. 1:7).

Therefore, even though the Corinthians were babes in Christ and didn't have a lot of fruit of the spirit evident yet in their lives, they did have gifts of the Spirit operating in their lives.

The fruit of the spirit are for holiness, but the gifts of the Holy Ghost are for power. You can be holy without having much power, and you can have power without being so holy. Yet the combination of holiness and power in a Christian's life is best, and that is what God desires.

I have seen plenty of people who are wonderful Christians and who have marvelously developed the fruit of the spirit in their lives, but they have no power in their lives whatsoever. Then I know of other Christians who are certainly powerhouses for God, but it is obvious they need to grow a little more fruit of the spirit in their lives.

## **The Ministry of the Laying On of Hands**

In a meeting I preached in Texas many years ago, we held day services for a number of months, as well as the night services. People came daily, some from more than one hundred miles away. After I taught on the baptism in the Holy Ghost for about seven weeks, no one came to the meetings without receiving the Holy Spirit. Folks received the Holy Ghost in every service.

We spent a week talking about the laying on of hands as a fundamental doctrine of the Bible (Heb. 6:2). As I've said, in the days of the Early Church the laying on of hands was widely practiced in receiving the Holy Ghost.

### **ACTS 8:18-20**

18 ... 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.

Some have thought Simon was trying to buy the gift of the Holy Ghost, but he wasn't. He was trying to buy the gift or the ability to impart the Holy Spirit to people through the laying on of hands.

The Lord Jesus appeared to me in a vision years ago in which He told me to lay hands on believers to receive the Holy Ghost. When I hesitated because that was not widely practiced in that day, the Lord The Bible Evidence of the Baptism of the Holy Spirit led me to Acts chapter 8. He called my attention to the fact that the apostles who abode in Jerusalem sent Peter and John to Samaria to lay hands on people to receive the Holy Ghost.

Philip had a wonderful ministry in Samaria. He got people saved by the hundreds and healed by the scores. But he didn't get anyone filled with the Holy Ghost.

The Early Church believed in special ministries just as the Bible teaches. Therefore, the disciples sent Peter and John to Samaria because they had a special ministry of getting folks filled with the Holy Ghost. They had a ministry of laying on of hands. In fact, Peter called being able to lay hands on people to receive the Holy Ghost a "gift of God" (Acts 8:20).

When I lay hands on folks who have already received the Holy Spirit, I often know immediately by the Holy Spirit that they are Spirit filled without their telling me. But, remember, any revelation would have to be a manifestation of one of the revelation gifts in operation.

## Helping Others Believe They Have Received

In this meeting in Texas that I mentioned, we were praying and laying hands on people to receive the infilling of the Holy Ghost. I had laid hands on several people and they all received.

Then I laid hands on a certain man and the minute I did, I knew by the manifestation of the Holy Spirit that this man had received the Holy Spirit some time in the past.

I stopped praying and said, "You have received the Holy Spirit sometime in your life. You have already been filled."

He said, "No, no, I haven't."

"Perhaps I am wrong then," I said. "After all, I am human."

But if I do miss it, it wouldn't be because God has missed it. It would be because I somehow failed to listen or respond to Him as I ought.

No human is ever going to get to the place of perfection. Even the great Apostle Paul said, "Not as though I had already attained, either were already perfect. . ." (Phil. 3:12).

Ministers can miss it, but that doesn't mean God misses it or that the ministers don't have the right gift operating in their lives. Sometimes we may just fail to receive accurately what God is saying to us.

For example, when talking on the telephone we sometimes fail to pick up everything that someone on the other end of the line has said. In the same way, I don't always get everything God is saying to me. But that doesn't mean that these gifts of the Spirit are not genuine.

I laid hands on this brother again and began to pray. I had the same manifestation again and knew that he had already been filled with the Holy Ghost.

I stopped praying, took my hands off of his head, and with more assurance this time, said, "Now, Brother, you have received the Holy Ghost at some time or another."

Again he stated very emphatically that he had not, so I began to pray for the third time.

When I had that manifestation again, I could no longer question it. I said, "Brother, I am not wrong. Open your eyes and look at me. I didn't miss it. You have been filled with the Holy Ghost at some time in your life. Has anyone ever told you that you have received the Spirit?"

"Well," he replied, "about eighteen months ago at a Full Gospel church, the pastor and two or three of the men praying with me at the altar told me I received the Holy Ghost."

"Then what makes you so sure you didn't receive Him?" I asked.

"Because my wife said. . . \* and about that time his wife who was standing nearby spoke up and began to tell me what she had said.

"Wait a minute, Sister," I said. "It is not you who is wanting the Holy Ghost. It's your husband. Let him explain."

This man then explained that his wife had said that receiving the Holy Spirit was a far greater experience than being born again. He said, "I doubted I had received the Holy Spirit because to me being born again was the greater experience of the two. Therefore, I was sure I had not received the Holy Spirit."

I said, "Then according to your wife, I am not filled with the Holy Spirit either, for becoming a child of God is the greatest thing that has ever happened to me too.

"You see," I explained, "you can go to heaven without being filled with the Holy Spirit, but you can't go to heaven without being born again. God did not promise to give you the Holy Spirit according to your wife. He promised to give you the Holy Spirit according to the Word."

I continued, "You have no right to expect to be filled with the Holy Spirit according to your wife's experiences or ideas or according to anyone else's. But you do have a right to expect to be filled with the Holy Spirit according to the Word of God."

"I guess I did receive the Holy Spirit back then," he answered, "because I did speak something that wasn't English. But I have never talked in tongues since then."

I said, "You didn't because you were doubting what you had received from God. Doubt will paralyze the power of God in your life. You don't need to receive the Holy Spirit again now. You just need to claim what you received eighteen months ago. You just need to reactivate the Holy Ghost within you."

I once heard a minister on the radio say, "You will not need anyone to tell you when you receive the Holy Ghost. If you are in doubt, then you've not received Him."

I can't agree with that statement entirely, however. We just discussed the example of a man who actually received the Holy Spirit with the accompanying evidence of speaking in tongues, but allowed another person's opinion to cause him to doubt.

That is why I cannot agree that people don't occasionally need someone to tell them whether or not they have received the Holy Spirit. This man was in doubt about it and needed someone's encouragement, even though he had actually received. He had listened to his wife instead of listening to the Word of God.

The devil, of course, will try to get believers to doubt any biblical experience they may have. But just because a believer is tempted to doubt doesn't mean that he didn't receive whatever it was he asked for according to God's Word.

People are often taught to believe that their receiving certain petitions from God depends upon experiencing some evidence the Bible does not teach us to expect. But we receive God's promises by faith in His Word. Yet in regard to the baptism of the Holy Spirit, God does give us physical evidence — speaking in tongues — to confirm to us that we have received the infilling of the Holy Spirit.

### **Expect the Biblical Evidence Of Receiving the Holy Spirit**

Many people have different opinions about receiving the Holy Spirit that do not line up with God's Word. They form their own opinion about what the evidence should be of receiving the Holy Spirit. But we should expect to see the evidence that the Word of God teaches us to expect.

### **Misconceptions About Receiving The Holy Spirit**

In the Early Church, they had no trial-and-error method of seeking and not finding, or of coming to receive the Holy Spirit and going away empty. We should be scriptural and tell people what the Word of God says. Too many times, people tell folks what they think. They give their theory or tell their experience. But did you know that you have no right to preach or to teach your experience?

Paul told Timothy, "Preach THE WORD . . ." (2 Tim. 4:2). He didn't say, "Timothy, tell folks what you think about the subject." He didn't say, "Now, Timothy, give people your theory on this subject." The preaching of opinion and theory just produces doubt and unbelief and holds people in bondage.

The truth of God's Word will liberate people: "And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free" (John 8:32). God's Word will also instill faith in people: "So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God" (Rom. 10:17).

### **Magnify the Word, Not Your Experience**

Some people have unusual experiences beyond what most of us have when they are born again or receive the Holy Spirit. It is all right to refer to experiences one may have had, if those experiences are in line with the Word of God. But magnify the Word above experiences. Then let everyone have his or her own scriptural experience, for experiences will vary in many ways.

An example of an unusual born-again experience occurred when Paul was converted on the road to Damascus. A light brighter than the noonday sun shone round about him and he heard a voice speaking to him, saying, ". . . Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me?" (Acts 9:3,4).

However, when I was born again, I didn't see any light or hear any voice speaking to me, but I am just as born again as Paul was. Paul never told folks that they had to be converted in the same manner that he was. He never told folks that in order to be saved they had to see a light or hear a voice as he had. He referred to his experience occasionally, but he taught the scriptural way to be saved.

### **ROMANS 10:9,10**

9 That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved.

10 For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.

We thank God for Paul's born-again experience, but we should not hold one's experience up as the standard or criteria for being saved. No, we should magnify the Word, and let every person have his own experience as God wills.

### **Don't Seek Experiences To Receive the Holy Spirit**

In the same way, some people have unusual experiences when they receive the Holy Spirit. When I was a young boy preacher, I knew a fine denominational woman in whom I had great confidence. She related to me once how she received the baptism in the Holy Ghost.

She said she was seeking God, and she had her eyes closed, praising God. She saw in the spirit a beam of light about as big as a pencil. That beam of light seemed to come down through the roof and the ceiling and hit her right between the eyes. When it did, she started speaking with tongues.

Many people have told me, "I heard of people who were seeking the Holy Ghost, and they saw a ball of fire about as big as a basketball. It came and burst over their heads, and they started speaking in tongues."

My experience was different; I have never seen any beam of light or ball of fire, but I am just as much filled with the Holy Ghost as anyone. I had the Bible evidence of being filled with the Holy Spirit — I spoke with tongues.

I don't doubt that some of those other experiences happened, but God's Word really only promises the evidence of speaking with tongues as the initial sign that a person has been filled with the Spirit.

If other scriptural experiences occur, that's fine — as long as those experiences are in line with God's Word. But don't seek experiences. You do have a right, however, to seek to be filled with the Spirit and to speak with tongues.

All believers will speak with tongues when they receive the Holy Spirit, but some may also initially be given an additional gift of the Spirit. However, that doesn't mean they have any more of the Holy Ghost than you or I do.

### **The Need for Biblical Instruction For Receiving the Holy Spirit**

Too many times folks have no instructions on how to receive the Holy Spirit. Or even worse, they receive wrong instruction, and therefore fail to receive the Holy Spirit.

I've also seen people come to receive the Holy Spirit, and they spoke a few words in tongues quietly.

Then I've seen someone slap them on the back and say, "Well, too bad you didn't receive this time! Better luck next time."

However, we don't receive from God by luck; the Bible says we receive the promises of God by faith (Heb. 11:6). The gift of the Holy Spirit is one of God's promises that we receive by faith in God's Word. And if a person spoke only two words in tongues, he has received the Holy Spirit just as much as anyone else who might speak fluently in other tongues.

Of course, I don't encourage people who only speak a few words in tongues to stop there. But just because people only speak a few words in tongues doesn't mean they haven't received. Acts 2:4 says, ". . . [they] BEGAN to speak...."

Many people have gone away discouraged when they actually did receive the Holy Spirit. Many who should have received the Holy Spirit haven't because of wrong instruction and a lack of knowledge of God's Word.

### **An Example of Wrong Instruction For Receiving the Holy Spirit**

Through the years, it has been my privilege to help many lawyers, doctors, college professors, school teachers, and others to be filled with the Holy Ghost. Many of these have related to me incidents of getting wrong instruction to receive the Holy Spirit, such as the story one man told me.

He said, "Brother Hagin, I saw this truth in the Bible about receiving the Holy Spirit years ago. I visited a Full Gospel church and came to the altar to receive the Holy Ghost. The people there said to me, 'Lift your hands.' I didn't mind lifting my hands, because I had read something about that in the Bible, so I lifted my hands.

"Then they told me to say, 'Praise God.' I didn't mind praising God. I knew that's in the Bible too. But then someone said, 'Say "Glory."'"

"So I said, 'Glory.' Someone said, 'Say it faster.' So I said it faster. Then someone said, 'Say it like this: Glub, glub, glub . . .' So I said, 'Glub, glub, glub . . .'

"Then I got to thinking that I'd never read anything about that in the Bible, so I got up and left the church building, and I hadn't been back to a Charismatic service since."

Many honest, sincere, intelligent people have been driven away by unscriptural practices and wrong instruction. We must be simple in our teaching and just teach folks what the Word of God has to say. We must instruct them according to the Word.

After all, the Bible declares, "The entrance of thy words giveth light. . ." (Ps. 119:130). Proper instruction in the Word of God will save people hours of needless seeking.

### **Falling Into a Trance Is Not Biblical Evidence For Receiving the Holy Spirit**

One minister said, "I know I received the Holy Ghost because I fell under the power of God and lay in a trance for three hours."

That is well and good, but that is not the Bible evidence that one has been filled with the Spirit. You could fall under the power of God and fall into a trance when you are filled, or you could do that after you were filled.

But the Bible doesn't say, "They were all filled with the Holy Ghost and fell into a trance." It says, "... they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and **BEGAN TO SPEAK WITH OTHER TONGUES...**" (Acts 2:4).

### **Experiencing Joy Is Not Biblical Evidence For Receiving the Holy Spirit**

Others who have received the Holy Ghost have said, "I don't have the joy I think I should have. I expected to receive great joy."

But reading in Acts chapter 8, we find, "And there was great joy in that city" (Acts 8:8).

That's verse 8. We don't read that they were filled with the Holy Ghost, however, until verse 17. In other words, great joy is not the evidence of being filled with the Holy Ghost.

You should be joyous just because you are a Christian. For example, in Acts chapter 8, when Philip preached the Word in Samaria, there was great joy in the city because many folks were born again. Also, there was great joy in the city because many healings and miracles took place, and because devils were being cast out and people were being set free.

You see, joy is a natural human reaction to faith. If you will just believe God, the joy of the Lord will take care of itself.

One man was complaining to me that he didn't have the joy he thought he should have, although he was filled with the Spirit. I told him, "When you go home tonight, get on your knees and say, 'Thank you, Lord, for filling me with the Holy Ghost. I know I was filled because I spoke with other tongues just as they did in the Acts of the Apostles.'"

I told him, "Then when you get into bed, just praise yourself to sleep, thanking God because you received the Holy Ghost. The first thing when you wake up in the morning, give praise to the Lord for filling you with the Holy Ghost. Then throughout the day as you work, praise the Lord because you have received the Holy Spirit. If you are working where no one is around, just praise Him out loud while you work. Otherwise, just praise Him quietly to yourself while you work."

The next night as I stood on the platform in church, I saw this fellow in the congregation, beaming as if someone had turned on a neon sign in the dark. I knew without asking him that he had the joy of the Lord. He came to me immediately after the service and said, "Brother Hagin, it worked just as you said."

Joy is a natural reaction to faith. If you will believe God, you won't have to worry about having joy. If you don't have joy, it is simply because your faith isn't grounded securely in God and in His Word.

### **Not What You Feel, But What You Do**

Then someone said, "But I don't feel like I think I ought to."

But Acts 2:4 doesn't say, "They were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and felt like they thought they ought to." And Acts 9:17 doesn't say, "And Ananias went his way, and entered into the house; and putting his hands on him said, Brother Saul, the Lord, even Jesus . . . has sent me, that you might receive your sight, and be filled with the Holy Ghost, and feel like you think you ought to."

Acts 19:6 doesn't say, "And when Paul had laid his hands upon them, the Holy Ghost came on them; and they spoke with tongues, and prophesied, and felt like they thought they ought to."

Acts 10:45 and 46 don't say that Cornelius and his household spoke with tongues and magnified God, and felt like they thought they ought to.

Acts 8:15 doesn't say that Peter and John laid hands on the Samaritans, and they received the Holy Ghost, and felt like they thought they ought to.

In fact, there is nothing in any of these scriptures about how the believers felt. If it were important how you felt, the Bible would have said so.

The important thing is not what you did or didn't feel when you received the Holy Spirit. The important thing is what you did; you believed you received and you yielded to the Holy Spirit and spoke in other tongues. In each of these instances I just mentioned, believers "spoke with tongues." And if you spoke with tongues, then you received the Holy Spirit too.

It doesn't matter how good you felt, if you didn't speak with tongues, you didn't receive the Holy Spirit because speaking in tongues is the Bible evidence of the baptism of the Holy Spirit. In other words, when you are filled with the Spirit, you will speak in tongues.

I was preaching in Oregon once, and in the meeting a number of folks came forward to receive the Holy Ghost, so I laid hands on them. I went down the line laying hands on folks, and every one of them received the Holy Spirit and spoke with tongues until I came to the last woman.

I laid hands on this woman and the Holy Spirit came on her, but she didn't begin speaking with tongues. Therefore, she hadn't received the infilling of the Holy Spirit; she didn't speak with tongues that night, but she jumped up and began to shout and dance a little jig for joy. A woman sitting nearby said, "That's the way I like to see them get it."

I said, "But she hasn't received the baptism of the Holy Spirit. These other folks have, but she hasn't." You see, this woman who was sitting nearby assumed that because the woman was shouting and dancing, she had received the infilling of the Holy Spirit.

In another one of my meetings, a man in the church came forward to receive the baptism of the Holy Spirit. I laid hands on him and he began to speak in tongues. He spoke in tongues for fifteen minutes while I laid hands on others to receive.

Then I went back to him and said, "Brother, the Lord reveals to me that there is a thought in your mind that is hindering you from accepting the fact that you have received the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit told me that you have always thought that when you got the Holy Spirit, you would jump or dance or run and just have a 'high time.'"

He said, "Yes, that is exactly what I have always thought."

I said, "Well, if you want to run, go ahead. It's all right with me. Or if you want to jump, go ahead. But whether you run or jump or not, you have received the Holy Spirit."

"But if you ever see me shout," this man said, "it will have to be God."

"What do you mean it will have to be God?" I asked. "It wouldn't be God shouting or dancing or running."

"Well, I mean if I ever did that, it would be because God made me do it," he replied.

"You'll never do it then, because God will never make you do anything," I said.

He left the church, and as he told us later: "I went home disappointed, mumbling to myself, 'I don't feel like I thought I would, so I must not have received the Holy Spirit. If I had received, I would have felt differently than this. I am not happy, I am not exuberant, and I am not in a state of ecstasy. I have felt better than this and have gotten a bigger blessing than this many times. I just know I didn't receive the Holy Spirit.'

"In the night," he continued, "I couldn't sleep, and I began to think, How am I going to know that I've received the Holy Spirit? Just what does the Bible say? The scripture in Acts 2:4 came to me: ' . . . and [they] began to speak with other tongues. . . . '

"Then it dawned on me and I said, 'Dear Lord, forgive me for being a doubter. I did receive the Holy Spirit. Acts 2:4 doesn't say they felt better. It doesn't say they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and were full of joy, and felt like they thought they ought to. It says they spoke with tongues. And I spoke with tongues.' Then I just lay there and spoke in tongues and praised the Lord for the rest of the night."

So we see that folks do need help and encouragement sometimes. Instruction will help people. It is a mistake to tell folks that they will be joyous after receiving the Holy Spirit. Immediately after the Holy Spirit came upon Christ, He was led into the wilderness to be tempted of the devil (Matt 4:1).

Sometimes the greatest temptations of life come immediately after we are filled with the Holy Spirit. We shouldn't ask for any more evidence than what the Bible teaches, but neither should we expect any less. We should expect to speak with tongues as the Word of God teaches.

### **Questions For Study:**

1. Name five recorded or witnesses in the Book of Acts of believers receiving the Holy Ghost.

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2. On the Day of Pentecost, how many were gathered in the Upper Room and were all filled with the Holy Ghost?

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3. How did the brethren of the circumcision know that the Gentiles had received the Holy Spirit?

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4. What does the phrase "...when Simon SAW..." in Acts 8:18 indicate?

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5. What do some people say that Simon saw?

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6. Why couldn't the sign or evidence that Simon saw have been devils being cast out or healing taking place?

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7. What should you say to answer the question, "Is it necessary to speak in tongues?"

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8. The fruit that Paul talks about in Galatians chapter 5 is not the fruit of the baptism in the Holy Spirit at all. What is it the fruit of?

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9. In Acts 8:18-20, what was Simon trying to buy?

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10. We don't receive the promise of God by luck. What does the Bible say is the way to receive them (Heb. 11:6)?

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