

What Is the Baptism of the Holy Ghost?

The baptism of the Holy Ghost is a unique experience that occurs when a person is filled with the Spirit of God. The Baptism of the Holy Ghost is part of the new birth about which Jesus spoke in the Gospel of John, saying, "Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God." (John 3:5). The New Birth experience includes both Water Baptism and Holy Ghost (Holy Spirit) Baptism. The baptism of the Holy Ghost fulfills the aspect of being born of the Spirit in the New Birth. The baptism of the Holy Ghost is also referred to as the baptism of the Holy Spirit.

The first time the Baptism of the Holy Ghost occurred in the New Testament church is recorded in the Book of Acts 2:1-4. Jesus had told the disciples to wait until they received power from on high (Acts 1:4). Jesus also told the disciples that they would receive power to be witnesses after they received the Holy Ghost (Acts 1:8). Jesus then ascended into heaven, and the disciples waited as Jesus had commanded them. On the Jewish feast day of Pentecost, which occurred ten days later, the disciples received the Baptism of the Holy Ghost for the first time. Here is how the King James Bible records the event.

"And when the day of Pentecost was fully come, they were all with one accord in one place. And suddenly there came a sound from heaven as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting. And there appeared unto them cloven tongues like as of fire, and it sat upon each of them. And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance." (Acts 2:1-4)

Can Anyone Receive the Holy Ghost?

Anyone can receive the Holy Ghost as long as one is willing to repent of one's sins. Repentance is turning away from sin to God and asking God to forgive our sins. On the day of Pentecost, the disciples went into the streets speaking in tongues and proclaiming the works of God. When the people asked what was going on, Peter explained that the baptism of the Holy Ghost was a fulfillment of a prophecy from the Old Testament Book of Joel. Peter also explained that the promise of the Holy Ghost would be available to everyone until the Lord comes back for His church.

"But this is that which was spoken by the prophet Joel; And it shall come to pass in the last days, saith God, I will pour out of my Spirit upon all flesh..." (Acts 2:16-17)

"Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost. For the promise is unto you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call." (Acts 2:38-39)

The Gospel of John tells us that everyone that believes on Jesus is supposed to receive the baptism of the Holy Ghost. (John 7:37-39)

Is the Baptism of the Holy Ghost Necessary?

Jesus said a man must be born of the Spirit to enter the Kingdom of God (John 3:5). The book of Romans says that if we don't have the Spirit of Christ (Holy Ghost), then we don't belong to him (Romans 8:9). We need the baptism of the Holy Ghost to be a part of the Body of Christ [the church] (I Corinthians 12:13).

The early church thought the baptism of the Holy Ghost was important. When people in Samaria believed the preaching of Philip and were baptized, the early church sent Peter and John to them so that they would receive the Holy Ghost. (Acts 8)

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

When Paul found disciples who believed in Jesus, one of his first questions was, “...Have you received the Holy Ghost since ye believed?” (Acts 19:2).

How Do You Know When You Receive the Baptism of Holy Ghost?

The Initial sign of receiving the Holy Ghost is to speak in a language unknown by the speaker. On the Day of Pentecost believers spoke according to the foreign language the Spirit gave them. “...And began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance.” (Acts 2:4)

At Caesarea, when Cornelius and his house received the Holy Ghost, they spoke in tongues. “For they heard them speak in tongues, and magnify God...” (Acts 10:46).

At Ephesus, when Paul met some disciples, they spoke in tongues after they were re-baptized. “...the Holy Ghost came on them; and they spake with tongues, and prophesied.” (Acts 19:6)

Jesus said that if we believed we would speak with new tongues. “And these signs shall follow them that believe; In my name shall they cast out devils; they shall speak with new tongues;” (Mark 16:17).

Power to Live For God

It is the Holy Ghost which gives us the supernatural power we need in order to live for God. The Holy Ghost gives us power to witness, guides us, comforts us, and teaches us. (Acts 1:8, John 14:16-18, 26, 16:13). The Baptism of the Holy Ghost is a gift from God for today.

For the promise is unto you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call.” (Acts 2:38-39)