

# The Baptism of the Holy Spirit



## SABBATH AFTERNOON

**Read for This Week's Study:** *Acts 2:37, 38; 9:5, 6; 1 Cor. 12:1-13; 2 Cor. 7:9-11; Gal. 3:1-11; 5:5, 6.*

**Memory Text:** “Be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess; but be filled with the Spirit” (*Ephesians 5:18*).

There's been a great deal of speculation and argument in the Christian church over the centuries about what the “baptism of the Holy Spirit” means. It is clear from the few references in Scripture that it deals with the Holy Spirit in the life of a person who has been born again. Without the prompting of the Spirit, no one can experience the new birth; those who have had that experience have been baptized with the Holy Spirit.

In Acts 1:5, Jesus told His followers they would be baptized with the Holy Spirit; the spectacular events of Pentecost ten days later seem the obvious fulfillment of His words (*see Acts 2*), when many people accepted Christ and became born-again followers of the Messiah.

One thing is sure: Anyone who has surrendered in faith and obedience to the Lord Jesus Christ has been baptized in the Holy Spirit. A loving and lovable Christian, giving of himself or herself for others, is the greatest manifestation of that baptism.

This week we'll look at this promise for all who give of themselves to the Lord Jesus Christ.

*\*Study this week's lesson to prepare for Sabbath, May 6.*

## One Spirit, One Body

**Read** 1 Corinthians 12:1-13. What point is Paul making here, especially in verse 13?

Paul is dealing with a church that was fighting over spiritual gifts. In response, Paul exclaims, “Don’t get divided over this issue.” Or, as he specifically expressed it: “For by one Spirit we were all baptized into one body, whether Jews or Greeks, whether slaves or free, and we were all made to drink of one Spirit” (*1 Cor. 12:13, NASB*).

The word translated “by” in the above verse (*NASB*) may also be translated “in” (*as in NEB, etc.*). Thus, genuine believers are baptized *in* one Spirit into the body of Christ (*vs. 13*), which is the church. Whatever other points Paul wanted to make, one point is clear: All believers share the reality of being baptized by the Spirit, and this makes us part of the body of Christ, the church.

Baptism in the Spirit, or conversion, ideally precedes water baptism. Baptism in water is an outward demonstration of the change that has already taken place in the heart. The true believer is born by the Spirit (*John 3:5, 6*); the Spirit is the sealing Agent (*Eph. 1:13, 14*); and the Spirit has been given as an earnest (guarantee) and reminder that one belongs to God (*2 Cor. 5:5*).

**How** important is it that the Holy Spirit dwells in us? *Rom. 8:9*.

In personally accepting Jesus as our Savior, we receive the Spirit as a heavenly endowment, or assurance, of ultimate and complete salvation. His indwelling becomes our guarantee and constant reminder that someday in the future Jesus will not merely dwell within us; we shall dwell with Him and the unfallen angels in a realm where temptation and sin will no longer touch us. In order to remind us constantly of this ultimate deliverance from the realm of sin, He constantly gives us His Spirit.

Every true believer since Pentecost has received the guarantee of the Spirit, which is the same experience as baptism in the Spirit. The important question for us is this: How willing are we to receive the Spirit?

**What is your understanding of what it means to be baptized in the Holy Spirit? If someone were to ask, “Have you been baptized in the Holy Spirit?” how would you respond?**

**Key Text:** *Eph. 5:18*

**Teachers Aims:**

1. To show the importance of the Holy Spirit's role in convicting us of our sin.
2. To emphasize the importance of accepting and using the gifts of the Holy Spirit.
3. To refocus on the faith relationship of salvation.

**Lesson Outline:**

**I. Good Guilt** (*Acts 2:37*)

- A. Conviction shows us our need for forgiveness.
- B. The Holy Spirit's conviction and our obedience to Him lead to change.
- C. Self-imposed guilt lacks the hope of salvation.

**II. Many Gifts but Only One Spirit** (*1 Cor. 12:1-13*)

- A. Spiritual gifts vary according to the needs of the church.
- B. Faith and obedience allow the gifts to be manifest.

**III. Salvation Through Faith Alone** (*Gal. 3:5-7*)

- A. Only through faith in Jesus Christ are we saved.
- B. Good works are meant to be a sign of the Holy Spirit, not a means of salvation.
- C. Faith without works is dead but so also are works without faith.

**Summary:** The Holy Spirit works to strengthen our relationship with God by continually showing us our need of salvation and faith. As we allow Him to use us for God's glory, various spiritual gifts will be manifest in our lives. Using these gifts as God intended can sometimes develop into a routine or habit. If we aren't careful we run the risk of becoming so caught up in the works that we lose the relationship that makes it all worthwhile. To avoid this trap, we must always remember that salvation is a gift of God and works alone are a trap of self-righteousness. Only our relationship with God through the Holy Spirit allows us to accept the gift of salvation.

**COMMENTARY**

**Introduction**

The baptism of the Holy Spirit comes in answer to cheerful, willing compliance with God's authority and purposes. This spiritual baptism produces sanctified unity among believers. It also produces a coordinated action for soul winning, and constant advancement in spiritual life, which includes a growth in character development and in faith to receive and impart the blessings of Heaven.

**I. One Spirit, One Body**

Christ prayed for present and eternal unity among His disciples (*John 17*). In union is strength, peace, and joy; from disunion arise contention, misery, and weakness. Angels of heaven are united in heart, purpose, and action. The universe itself functions in system-wide harmony. At the same time God prizes diversity, as 1 Corinthians 12 makes plain. Analogizing from human

## Guilt and the Spirit

**“Now when they heard this, they were pricked in their heart, and said unto Peter and to the rest of the apostles, Men and brethren, what shall we do?”** (*Acts 2:37*).

Look at the action depicted in the above text. If you read the verses preceding it in Acts 2 (*starting in verse 14*), you can see clearly what was going on here. Peter, quoting the Old Testament, preached to them about the death, resurrection, and ascension of Jesus. He was giving them the plan of salvation.

Notice, too, their immediate response. Was it joy? Gladness? Happiness? On the contrary, they were “pricked in their heart.” The Greek verb means “to pierce,” and the idea given in the text is that they were pained, they suffered, their consciences were troubled. And no wonder, especially when you read verse 36. Of course, in one sense, we are all just as guilty as these men in that it was the sins of all of us that ultimately brought Jesus to the Cross.

Nevertheless, the idea here is clear: It was guilt, it was sorrow, it was pain that helped bring them to where they needed to be.

**Read 2 Corinthians 7:9-11. In your own words write what Paul is saying here and how it relates to the experience of the Jews at Pentecost.**

---

---

---

---

In this context, it’s easier to understand Christ’s words, “Blessed are the poor in spirit: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven” (*Matt. 5:3*). However much the gospel is a message of joy, of peace, and of hope, the process of salvation, of repentance, and of sanctification does involve some suffering on our part (*Acts 14:22*). Indeed, one of the acts of the Holy Spirit is to bring to us conviction of sin (*John 16:8*), and this can happen only to the degree that our hearts can be “pierced” over the reality of just how sinful our lives have been.

**How has the Holy Spirit brought conviction to your heart? What kind of feelings did you have? How has the Spirit been able to use this conviction toward your own spiritual growth?**

anatomy and physiology, Paul reasons that if all bodily parts were identical in form and function, then no viable organism would exist. On the other hand, the striking diversity of organs that comprise the body is no call for competition among these diverse parts. Without strife or discord they can all work together to keep the whole person alive and healthy. So it is to be with the church; the gift of the Spirit includes a diversity of operations for the express purpose of engendering gracious interdependence among believers in extending the triumphs of the Cross worldwide through many lines of service. (*See Eph. 4:8-16; 1 Cor. 14:12, 26, 40.*) This effective harmony makes it possible for the Lord to add daily to the church those who should be saved (*Acts 2:46, 47*), without lowering His standard or distorting His gospel in the least particular of His stated will.

### **II. Guilt and the Spirit**

Sin has made the human heart almost impervious to shame or compunction concerning the evil in our lives. In fact, the carnal mind glories in its depravity and is spellbound by earthly things (*Ps. 4:2; Phil. 3:18, 19*). It is the work of the Holy Spirit alone to break through this wall of impenitence. He flashes the light of holy truth into our hearts and holds it in clear contrast to our natural corruption. Peter's Spirit-charged preaching of the Cross enabled his hearers to discern their guilt for high treason against God's government and to receive the first dawning of insight into His reconciling love. In the clear moral atmosphere of this setting they cried out in desperation, "Men and brethren, what shall we do?" (*Acts 2:37*). For the first time in their lives they were ready to fling aside their deeply ingrained self-righteousness as the sin-infested rag that it was. They were awakening from their deadness in sin to the righteousness of Christ and the full legitimacy of His claims to be Lord and Savior of their lives. If Peter had given a muffled message, sprinkled with jokes and diverting anecdotes, no such result would have ensued. The Spirit comes to us all to convict us of sin, righteousness, and judgment. (*See John 16:7, 8.*)

### **III. Repentance and the Spirit**

It is the goodness of God that leads us to repentance (*Rom. 2:4*). When we clearly recognize that unrepentance is the chief obstacle to conversion and salvation, then it becomes evident why Scripture calls repentance a gift. (*See Acts 3:26; 5:30, 31.*) Genuine repentance is not the fruit of harrassment, persecution, or emotional manipulation by skilled communicators; it is an enlightened response to Calvary—love.

### **IV. Obedience and the Spirit**

It is clear from Scripture that the Holy Spirit is given to all

## Repentance and the Spirit

**“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”** (*Acts 2:38*).

Though Peter here promises the gift of the Holy Spirit to those who repent and are baptized, it’s only through the working of the Holy Spirit that they could be brought to repentance. Thus, we can see here the reality of the Holy Spirit working in every stage of a person’s relationship to his or her Creator. Theologians sometimes refer to this as “common grace.”

Repentance is a change of mind and life. The words for “repentance” in both Hebrew and Greek involve the idea of change, especially a change of mind and direction. It is acknowledgment that one has been wrong, an acknowledgment that leads not only to sorrow but to a change, a turn to the Source of life and moral understanding. Repentance, true repentance (*2 Cor. 7:10*), is powerful evidence that a person has been touched by the baptism of the Holy Spirit.

**Read** Romans 2:4, along with John 15:26 and 16:13, 14. How do these texts help us understand the role of the Holy Spirit in bringing us repentance?

---

---

The Holy Spirit is Christ’s Representative here on earth. Only through His work of revealing to us the truth about Christ can a person be brought to conviction and, hence, to true repentance. Only through the power of the Spirit can we be moved to make the conscious choice to surrender our sinful ways and live in submission to the Lord. By revealing to us the love of God, the Spirit touches us and gives us the only true motive for wanting to serve God: a grateful heart that loves a God who first loved us (*1 John 4:10*).

True love for God, however, cannot be forced. The Spirit comes and touches us; we have the freedom to surrender to His convictions or to push them away. In the end, the choice is ours, and ours alone.

**Write out a paragraph explaining your own experience with repentance. Where were you when you first felt conviction? What was your immediate reaction? How did you finally respond? What changes took place? Be prepared to share your response with the class.**

those who obey Him (*Acts 5:32*). God’s Spirit is omnipotent. How could it companionably abide with anyone who is willfully disobedient? Jesus told His disciples, “If you love Me, keep My commandments. And I will pray the Father, and He will give you another Helper, that He may abide with you forever” (*John 14:15, 16*). Christ makes it clear that He sends His Spirit to those who are committed to keeping His commandments.

“All true obedience comes from the heart. It was heart work with Christ. And if we consent, He will so identify Himself with

## Inductive Bible Study

**Texts for Discovery:** *Isaiah 8:20; John 16:7-11; 2 Corinthians 3:6; Galatians 3:5, 6; 1 John 5:7*

- ❶ Seventh-day Adventists typically believe that the baptism of the Holy Spirit, mentioned in several places in the New Testament, refers to an inner experience of conversion. Many charismatics and Pentecostals believe this baptism should be accompanied by “supernatural” manifestations, such as speaking in tongues. If we are not to expect these manifestations as a matter of course, how can we be sure of the genuineness of our Spirit-baptism?
- ❷ Even within the Seventh-day Adventist Church, one could probably find many different beliefs about what the Holy Spirit can, should, must, or does do. Is there any test by which we can determine whether something is, or is not, a sign or gift of the Holy Spirit?
- ❸ One thing we know the Holy Spirit does is convict us of our sin. Does that mean the Holy Spirit is what we popularly refer to as the conscience? If not, what is the difference between the Holy Spirit and the conscience?
- ❹ In a Christian context, is there a contradiction between the letter of the law and the Spirit, as 2 Corinthians 3:6 suggests? If so, what is the nature of that contradiction? Does it mean that observance of the law is somehow unnecessary or even harmful to someone who is or wants to be guided by the Spirit? Explain your answer.
- ❺ Faith is perhaps the most important gift of the Holy Spirit, because it is the gateway to all the other gifts. How does one exercise this faith? How do we receive it? What is the relationship of the faith spoken of in this context (*Gal. 3:5, 6, for example*) to correct doctrine or belief?

## Obedience and the Spirit

**Read** again Acts 2:37, the reaction of these Jews to Peter’s witness. What was their response? Compare this response with Saul’s response (Acts 9:5, 6). In both cases, what immediate evidence shows that their conversion was genuine?

---

---

---

“We are his witnesses of these things; and so is also the Holy Ghost, whom God hath given to them that obey him” (Acts 5:32). As this text suggests, obedience is one of the prerequisites for receiving the Holy Spirit. However much we are saved by faith, it’s only Christ’s righteousness credited to us that saves us from the final consequences of sin. We cannot live in disobedience to the Lord. The Spirit was given to bring conviction to us, a conviction that will lead us to obedience. Anything else is a counterfeit.

**Look** up the following texts. What do they tell us about the role of the Spirit and obedience?

*Acts 16:7*

---

*Gal. 5:5, 6*

---

*Gal. 5:22-26*

---

*1 Pet. 1:2*

---

When here, Jesus admonished His followers to obey God, to walk in the commandments, to love and forgive one another as God loves and forgives us. How foolish to believe that the Holy Spirit, which is here in His place, would admonish us in any other way. Those who claim “baptism of the Holy Spirit” and use, for instance, “speaking in tongues” as proof of that baptism yet live in disobedience to God’s commandments are fooling themselves. The greatest proof of living by the Spirit is a life lived in faith and obedience to God.



our thoughts and aims, so blend our hearts and minds into conformity to His will, that when obeying Him we shall be but carrying out our own impulses. The will, refined and sanctified, will find its highest delight in doing His service. When we know God as it is our privilege to know Him, our life will be a life of continual obedience. Through an appreciation of the character of Christ, through communion with God, sin will become hateful to us.”  
—Ellen G. White, *The Desire of Ages*, p. 668.

## V. Faith and the Spirit

Faith is not a magical feeling or mystical power that we conjure up. Christ is the Author and Finisher of our faith. In Hebrews 11 we learn that faith is a living principle that enables its posses-

## Witnessing

Human beings are incapable of ever fully comprehending the *enormous* sacrifice of Christ in offering His blameless life in exchange for our sinful, degenerate souls. Nevertheless, when we pause to consider this incredible gift of eternal life, our hearts wonder at the tremendous cost our Savior paid for redeeming each one of us. His road to Calvary brings heartache and great joy for so many reasons.

**The mental and physical pain that He bore for us.** Think back on the most painful, emotional time in your life. Remember how you felt during that time—confused; vulnerable; the hurt washing over you, battering you to the point that you felt yourself way off-balance, out of control. Now, pile on to that pain the trauma and distress of a significant physical hurt. Combine the two sets of memories and you have just an inkling of what Jesus endured before and during His crucifixion. We can’t really grasp the enormity of it all. No one could have endured what He did. Only God could bear the burden of sin.

**Separation from the One who loved Him best.** During the last hours before His arrest, Christ pleaded with His Father to remove Him from the situation, if possible. How His Father’s heart must have grieved to hear His precious Son’s pleas! How easy it would have been for Christ to simply say, “Forget the whole sordid mess; I quit!” and return to His Father’s side. Think of the pain of separation felt by both the Father and Son. It was almost more than the Son could bear, but He knew that man’s salvation rested on His sacrifice. What great news for us!

Such a precious gift can’t be set aside, returned, or rejected. Helping others know that Jesus remains with us as manifested through the Holy Spirit, that He’s never far from us and will hear and answer our prayers, is one of the ways we have to say *Thank You* to Him for His gifts to us.

## Faith and the Spirit

As we saw yesterday, those who yield to the influence of the Holy Spirit will be brought into what Paul calls “the obedience of faith” (*Rom. 16:26*). However, because those who are saved in Christ obey, and because salvation is inseparable from obedience, people can easily slip into the trap of confusing the results of salvation (obedience) with the means of salvation (faith in Christ). This was a problem with the Galatians.

**Read Galatians 3:1-11. What issue is Paul addressing here? What concern does he express for the Galatians? Note particularly the role he gives to the Spirit in these texts.**

---

---

---

---

The Holy Spirit was to lead people into “all truth” (*John 16:13*); the center of “all truth” is, of course, Christ and Him crucified (*1 Cor. 2:2*). The greatest and most important of all truths is that Jesus Christ died for the sins of the world, that at Calvary He paid the penalty for all human sin, and that anyone can, by faith, be forgiven his or her sin and stand perfect before God. Central to this truth is that no works any human can do, even works of the law, can atone for his or her sins and bring forgiveness (*Rom. 3:20, Gal. 2:16*). This forgiveness and atonement come only through the work of Jesus and become effective in the life of those who believe; that is, those who claim it for themselves by faith (*Gal. 3:5, 6*). Thus, the same Holy Spirit who guides us toward obedience is the same one that helps us understand the great truth of salvation by faith alone. It’s obvious the Galatians were somehow losing sight of this great truth.

Notice, too, the crucial role Paul attributes to the Holy Spirit here (*Gal. 3:2-5*) and how Paul so closely links the Holy Spirit coming to the people through their faith, as opposed to their works of the law.

**What are some of the subtle traps of legalism we can easily fall into? How can we protect ourselves from these traps?**

---

---

sors to appropriate every blessing of the gospel. Faith is not a substitute for planning, action, or courage, but the means by which every God-given faculty is engaged beyond ordinary human capacity. Faith is a distinct fruit of the Spirit that helps us to live in harmony with the will of God. (See *Gal. 5:5, 6, 22, 23; 1 John 5:4-8.*) “Through faith every deficiency of character may be supplied, every defilement cleansed, every fault corrected, every excellence developed.”—Ellen G. White, *The Acts of the Apostles*, p. 564.

## Life-Application Approach

**Icebreaker:** What was one of the best gifts you were ever given? On what occasion did you receive it? The Holy Spirit gives spiritual gifts to those who are willing to receive them. (See *1 Cor. 12:1-13.*) We can’t earn those gifts, but we can accept them. Ask each class member to share one spiritual gift that God has given to him or her. Then encourage the class to affirm how they see that gift being used in the congregation and in the community to bless and bring people to Jesus.

### Thought Questions:

**1** As a Sabbath School class, do a short survey in the Gospels of biblical characters who met Jesus. Make two lists; one list should include those lives that were changed for the good, the other list should include those who rejected Jesus. Discuss what made the difference between the two groups. How have you been “cut to the heart” (*Acts 2:37, NIV*) through your encounter with Jesus? Read about Saul’s encounter with Christ in *Acts 9:3-6*. Was your meeting a dramatic confrontation or was it a slow and gentle journey? Share your story with the class.

**2** Review yesterday’s activities. How many times were you successful in keeping God’s law? Where did you fail? Read *Galatians 3:1-11; 5:5, 6*. Why is complete faith and trust in God so critical? How can our own efforts at obedience be dangerous stumbling blocks to our reliance on the Spirit’s work in our lives? What things do you need to surrender to God so that you may experience a victorious life (for example, busyness that keeps us from devotional time)?

### Application Question:

Describe “godly sorrow” (*2 Cor. 7:10, NIV*) and the impact it has on our lives. What is the difference between a paralyzing guilt and a conviction that leads to repentance? How does the Holy Spirit bring us to salvation and to a life change? How did you experience the baptism of the Holy Spirit? What tangible differences occurred in your behaviors, attitudes, or perspectives of life? Who needs to hear your testimony this week?

**Further Study:** Ellen G. White, *The Acts of the Apostles*, pp. 41–46, 50; *Christian Service*, pp. 252–255; *Patriarchs and Prophets*, pp. 283–287, 290, 632–634; *Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 6, p. 444; vol. 7, pp. 211, 212; Exodus 14.

“Let Christ work by His Holy Spirit, and awaken you as from the dead, and carry your minds along with His. Let Him employ your faculties. He has created your every capability that you may better honor and glorify His name. Consecrate yourself to Him, and all associated with you will see that your energies are inspired of God, that your noblest powers are called into exercise to do God’s service. The faculties once used to serve self and advance unworthy principles, once serving as members of unrighteous purposes, will be brought into captivity to Jesus Christ and become one with the will of God.”—Ellen G. White, *Testimonies to Ministers and Gospel Workers*, p. 396.

“We need the baptism of the Holy Spirit.”—Ellen G. White, *Evangelism*, p. 66.

### Discussion Questions:

- 1 Share your answers to Tuesday’s final question with the class. What can you learn from one another’s responses?
- 2 As a class, read together Luke 11:11-13. Then talk about what it was like when you gave someone you cared about a gift that you knew they would really like. How did it make you feel? Why were you so eager to give it? What good would it do for the person you gave it to? With those thoughts in mind, what can we learn about the promise of the Holy Spirit offered to us?
- 3 As a class, see whether you can get some time before the lesson study to prepare a small presentation for Sabbath School on what the “baptism of the Holy Spirit” means. Anticipate as much as possible beforehand what questions people in the church might have regarding this topic and be prepared to answer them.