

Seeking God's Spirit

DAY 4—THE BAPTISM OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

“And while staying with them he ordered them not to depart from Jerusalem, but to wait for the promise of the Father, which, he said, ‘you heard from me; for John baptized with water, but you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days from now’” (Acts 1:4, 5, ESV).

Testimony

“When you have received the baptism of the Holy Spirit, then you will understand more of the joys of salvation than you have known all your life hitherto” (Ellen White, *Manuscript Releases*, vol. 5, p. 231).

I visited a man who was passing away from an incurable disease. I prayed and tried to encourage him with God's love and mercy, but when I left his home, I was struck with how powerless I felt in the situation—and how powerless so many Christians seem to be. As I compared my life and the lives of other Christians with the New Testament Christians, the contrast was shocking. As a result of that visit, I determined to thoroughly study the subject of the Holy Spirit in the Bible. Eventually I studied 273 texts in the original languages that directly speak to the work of the Holy Spirit, and I found well over 2,000 unique quotes in Ellen White's writings on the subject.

In my Bible study I discovered the baptism of the Holy Spirit. That experience changed the lives of Peter, Paul, and everyone else who received God's Spirit in fullness. Even Jesus was empowered by the Holy Spirit, for until the Holy Spirit descended upon Him as a dove, He had remained in the carpenter's shop. After the Spirit came upon Him, Jesus did the work of the Messiah.

In Bible stories we always find some evidence indicating that the power of the Holy Spirit has been bestowed. On a Friday night around 10:00, our 8-year-old daughter called out for Mommy. As my wife went to our daughter, I decided to go into my office to pray. As I prayed, I sensed the divine presence of Jesus enter the room. I began to speak to the Lord with great fervency and hunger for His Spirit's presence in my life. Soon I saw Jesus at the door of my church lovingly placing His nail-pierced hand on the shoulder of each church member with a gracious, welcoming expression. Jesus asked me, “Do you love my people?” I could say I did love them, but I had to admit a few of them were particularly hard to love. The tears began to flow as I confessed my sin. Then I saw the nail-pierced feet of Jesus standing at the pulpit where I preached each week. Jesus said, “I died so that I may forgive and save the people of this world. Are you preaching the gospel each week with passion for lost souls?” I could say it was my desire to preach the gospel with great urgency to save the lost, but I felt so unworthy in His presence. The tears flowed as I confessed my sins to Jesus. Then I saw the crown of thorns forced down onto His brow. I heard Jesus say, “I humbled myself even unto the death of the cross. Do you seek praise from men?” I could say I did not want the praise of men, but I tearfully admitted I struggled with pride. I felt completely unworthy and unacceptable in His presence, and the tears flowed even more profusely. Suddenly Jesus pulled aside His robe, and I saw His side where the spear had pierced Him. He said, “Those who come to Me I will never cast away.”

Then I felt the complete love and acceptance of the Lord as I had never felt it before. I knew my sins were forgiven, and I knew I was accepted by Him. I was basking in that revelation when I heard my wife starting down the stairs. I looked at the clock; it was 12:00 midnight. Two hours had seemed like only minutes. I wasn't ready to talk about what had happened, so I went back to bed and turned my back to the door so my wife would not see I was awake. Entering the room, she asked, “What happened to you?” I said, “What do you mean?” She said, “I know something

happened to you. I can tell. What happened?" So I told her everything, and my wife immediately went out to the living room to pray by herself. I could hear her calling out to God that she would also be blessed.

The next day, Sabbath, I felt the power of God as I preached my sermon. Several people made decisions for Christ that day. Afterward a man asked, "Pastor, did something happen to you last night?" Amazed, I said, "Why would you ask that?" He said, "I know something must have happened to you last night. The whole time you were preaching, I saw a glow on your face." When I shared what had happened, he said, "Surely the Lord has visited you." That year 37 people gave their lives to Jesus. In the years since that night, hundreds of people have made decisions for Christ. May the Lord Jesus be praised forever!

Bible Texts to Pray About

- Luke 3:21, 22—After His baptism, Jesus prayed for the Holy Spirit to come upon Him.
- Acts 1:5-8—You will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you.
- Acts 2:1-4—And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in various languages.
- Acts 4:31—The early church received power as they prayed for God's Spirit to come upon them.
- Acts 8:15-17—They had been baptized in water in the name of Jesus, but they needed the Holy Spirit.
- Luke 11:11-13—The baptism of the Holy Spirit is given to those who seek Him through prayer.
- Acts 5:31, 32—To those who are willing to obey, the Holy Spirit will be given.

Suggested Prayers

- Dear Father, please baptize me in the Holy Spirit that I may live and love for You with success.
- It is my great desire, Lord Jesus, that I may represent You well to the world. Please prepare my heart to receive the Holy Spirit and share Your love with the people in my life.
- Please guide me into all truth so that I may always do those things that are pleasing in Your sight. Let Your Holy Spirit reveal to me what You want me to know and what You want me to share. Let my convictions and burdens come from Your heart and not from my own selfish tendencies.
- We pray that our loved ones who have left the faith will remember what it was like to be in fellowship with You and will long to be reunited with You. Help them sense and accept Your love and forgiveness.
- Lord, we ask for Your protection over missionaries working in dangerous places.
- We pray for the 16 million people in the 6 least-reached cities of South Pacific Division. We pray for the daily baptism of the Holy Spirit on members as they reach out in love to the unreached.
- We pray for the Holy Spirit to help us know how to reach the 406 million people in the 105 least-reached cities of Northern Asia-Pacific Division.
- Please bless as Adventist Chaplaincy Ministries mobilizes chaplains and interested members to minister to those in prison.
- We also pray for our list of seven or more people [name the names if appropriate].
- Local Prayer Requests:

Suggested Songs

Baptize Us Anew (Hymn #258); Spirit of the Living God (Hymn #672); Come, Holy Spirit; Breathe on Me, Breath of God (Hymn #265); Breathe; Holy Spirit, Come Fill This Place; Holy Spirit, Rain Down.