

Then, in Acts 9:17-22 I believe we see Paul empowered with the Spirit of God as he speaks the Word of God with boldness! So we have seen Paul's conversion into the faith, that he got saved on the road to Damascus, and then we saw the subsequent empowerment for service as he waited in Damascus. The result of this empowerment was the movement of the Gospel message forward as he was "proving that this Jesus is the Christ." That is exactly what Jesus said would be the evidence for this *baptism unto power*. We would be witnesses of Him, that the Gospel message would move forward. We see that in the life of Paul!

6. SALVATION AND THE BAPTISM OF THE HOLY SPIRIT BY THE LAYING ON OF HANDS – ACTS 19

In Acts chapter 19:1-4 we see Paul is on his third missionary journey. When he is in the city of Ephesus he encounters some disciples that were dry and lifeless. I don't believe these men were saved at this time. As Paul questioned them they only know of John's baptism, which was one of repentance from sins, to prepare for the coming Messiah. That was all they knew of. So they were not saved.

They were waiting for the coming Messiah, not knowing that He had already come and paid in full the penalty for their sins. They were what we might call Old Testament saints. The Spirit of God had not indwelt them for they had not received Jesus as yet. So Paul shares with them about Jesus, His atoning death and glorious resurrection and they got saved! In Acts 19:5-7 we see their salvation and this empowerment for service as the Holy Spirit comes upon them!

I want to share with you a portion from Greg Laurie's book, "On Fire" regarding this empowering of God's Spirit upon our lives. This is what he said,

"A town somewhere in the U.S. was battered one night by hurricane-force winds. In the morning, after the storm had abated, the citizens emerged from their homes and shelters to assess the damage. The power of the storm quickly became clear to one investigator who was dumbfounded by an incredible discovery. Mouths dropped open as people came to check out his report: a common plastic drinking straw driven deep into a telephone pole by the night's vicious winds. Obviously, under normal circumstances, a flimsy straw could never penetrate a telephone pole. But the tremendous power of the wind had driven the straw into the wood like a spike.

As believers living in an ungodly world, sometimes we wonder if we can ever make a difference. We wonder if we can effectively penetrate our cynical culture with the good news God has given us to proclaim. The answer lies in the source of our power. If we rely on our own strength and methods, then no, we cannot make much of a difference. But if we choose to be driven by God's limitless power, we become like that straw in the hurricane where nothing can stop us. We can indeed make a dramatic difference."

- Greg Laurie, On Fire, pp. 21-22

I hope you have seen that this empowerment is very Scriptural and that it is for today just as much as it was for the first century church. ***The baptism unto power!***

Remember what Jesus said to us in Acts 1:8, from The Amplified Bible, "**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 Judea and Samaria and to the ends (the very bounds) of the earth.**"

The Living Bible puts it like this, "**But when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, you will receive power to testify about me with great effect, to the people in Jerusalem, throughout Judea, in Samaria, and to the ends of the earth, about my death and resurrection.**"

Why not receive all that God has for us and as we do, may others be able to say of us, as they said of Paul and his companions, ". . . **These who have turned the world upside down have come here too.**" Acts 17:6. Actually, this upside down world, by the power of God's Spirit, may we turn this world right side up!

Let me leave you with this to think about.

Author Jamie Buckingham once visited a dam on the Columbia River. He'd always thought that the water spilling over the top provided the power, not realizing that it was just froth, that deep within turbines and generators transformed the power of tons and tons of water to electricity - quietly, without notice, not like the flashy froth on top.

- Source Unknown

May we come to the power source and not think that our froth is something. It is the power source that gives to us the power to move that Gospel message forward. May we not forget that. I hope you have seen that this empowerment is very Scriptural and that it is for today just as much as it was for the first century church. ***The baptism unto power!***

What the Bible says about . . . The Baptism with the Holy Spirit

We have looked at two of the three Greek prepositions that are used in the New Testament regarding the Holy Spirit. First of all the Holy Spirit is "**with**" us, PARA in the Greek, drawing us to Christ. Once we receive Jesus as our Lord and Savior, the Holy Spirit comes "**in**" us, EN in the Greek. He indwells us! Both of these prepositions are found in John 14:16-17.

The third Greek preposition regarding the Holy Spirit is found in Acts 1:8 where we are told, "**But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be witnesses to Me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth.**"

This third Greek preposition that is used of the Holy Spirit is EPI. This word speaks of the Holy Spirit coming "**upon**" us or "over" us, empowering us for service. Now there are many in the church today who like to discredit this and say that there is no such thing as the Baptism with the Holy Spirit. They will tell you that this phrase, "baptism of the Holy Spirit" is not found in the Bible. That is true. But just because a phrase is not spoken of in the Scriptures, does that mean the Bible is silent on this subject? Absolutely not!

Keep in mind that after the death and resurrection of Jesus, in John 20:22, Jesus breathed on His men and told them to receive the Holy Spirit. At that point they were New Testament saints. The Holy Spirit had come in them. They had all the information at this point, but they lacked the dynamic power to take that information to a world lost and dying in their sins. They are saved at this point but not empowered. Therefore, Jesus tells them in Luke 24:49 what they needed to do. He said to them, "**Behold, I send the Promise of My Father upon you; but tarry in the city of Jerusalem until you are endued with power from on high.**" The disciples were told to wait until they were empowered by the Holy Spirit and the reason is simple. If they did not wait, they would be working in the power of their flesh instead of by the Spirit of God, and they will only become frustrated and unfruitful in the endeavor. They needed to wait until they were empowered for service.



In Acts 1:8 Jesus tells us that this power in your life will be used in such a way so that you will “**be witnesses**” of Christ! There is a point that needs to be made here. Notice that it doesn’t say that we are to go out and witness. Witnessing is not wrong, but that is not what Jesus is saying here. He is saying that the Holy Spirit will empower us to be witnesses of Christ. That burning love we have for Christ in our hearts is manifested in our actions and as people look at us, they see something vastly different. They see God working in us. They see Christ in us! We are to be witnesses of Christ!

Think of this power that Jesus is giving us, this empowering with the Holy Spirit in our lives to be witnesses of Christ, like steam in a locomotive. The steam in a locomotive is not there to toot the whistle, even though that may be fun and it may sound cool. But the steam in a locomotive is there to move the train forward, so it can arrive at its destination.

The same is true with the power of God’s Spirit in our lives. This empowering is not there for us to toot our whistle or draw attention to ourselves, but to move the Gospel message forward!

I want to share with you about two different baptisms that the Bible speaks of. First of all there is the *baptism unto life*. In this baptism it is the Holy Spirit that is the baptizer. In I Corinthians 12:13 we are told, “**For by one Spirit we were all baptized into one body - whether Jews or Greeks, whether slaves or free - and have all been made to drink into one Spirit.**” Who is doing the baptizing here? It is the Holy Spirit! In this baptism we are being baptized into the body of Christ. The purpose is the new life we have in Christ, that eternal life. The evidence for this is the Fruit of the Spirit!

I don’t think many people have a problem with that. But there is a subsequent baptism. This is a *baptism unto power* and this time the baptizer is Jesus. In Luke 3:16 we are told, “**John answered, saying to all, ‘I indeed baptize you with water; but One mightier than I is coming, whose sandal strap I am not worthy to loose. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire.’**”

And in John 1:32-34 we are told, “**And John bore witness, saying, ‘I saw the Spirit descending from heaven like a dove, and He remained upon Him. I did not know Him, but He who sent me to baptize with water said to me, ‘Upon whom you see the Spirit descending, and remaining on Him, this is He who baptizes with the Holy Spirit.’ And I have seen and testified that this is the Son of God.**”

Again, who is the baptizer here? It is not the Holy Spirit. John the Baptist tells us that it is Jesus who will baptize us *with* the Holy Spirit! This is not speaking of being baptized into the body of Christ, but with the Holy Spirit. The purpose for this baptism is for power, the power to be a witness for Jesus.

A LOOK AT THE EVIDENCE IN THE EARLY CHURCH OF THIS BAPTISM UNTO POWER

1. **THE DAY OF PENTECOST – ACTS 2**

In Acts 2:1-6 we see what took place on the Day of Pentecost. Remember what Peter was like before this event. He was afraid to even mention that he was a disciple of Jesus or that he even knew Jesus. But now, after this baptism unto power, we see that this frail, weak Peter, who was afraid to say he was a disciple of Jesus at one time, now speaks with boldness the message of Christ. He doesn’t pull any punches but lays it all out and the people listen and they are cut to the heart. They are convicted.

In Acts 2:16-18 we see Peter point to the prophet Joel showing that what has taken place is of God. Out of this witness, out of Peter pointing them to Jesus, 3,000 people got saved as the Holy Spirit worked on the hearts of the people through the preaching of the Word of God. The church got started with a bang. We see here the boldness of Peter to speak the Word of God as he was empowered by the Holy Spirit. This is the baptism unto power that Jesus has given to Peter and to us! So we see it in the early church, at least on the Day of Pentecost.

2. **A REFILLING OF THE HOLY SPIRIT – ACTS 4**

In Acts 4:23-33, Peter and John are released from prison having been arrested for healing a lame man. The people that were gathered together here in Acts chapter 4, were basically the same people that had gathered together on the Day of Pentecost. And yet, here we see them filled once again with the Holy Spirit. The result of that refilling is that they spoke the Word of God with boldness and they gave witness of the resurrection of Jesus Christ! They prayed for that powerful boldness and God gave it to them as they asked. In fact, the word “**boldness**” is PARRESIA in the Greek and it speaks of “telling it all.” In other words, they didn’t hold back. They laid it all out and they were not fearful of what people might do or say to them!

3. **BAPTISM INTO THE BODY OF CHRIST AND THEN THE BAPTISM WITH THE SPIRIT AT A LATTER TIME – ACTS 8**

The baptism with the Holy Spirit is often a separate and subsequent work apart from salvation, but it can take place at the time of salvation. In Acts chapter 8 Philip begins to do a work in Samaria. In Acts 8:5-8, 12, 14-17 we see them saved, but the Holy Spirit had not fallen upon them yet. As Peter and John come, they lay hands on them and they are now empowered for service. They are baptized with the Holy Spirit! As you can see in this instance, it occurred at a different time than their salvation.

4. **BAPTISM WITH THE HOLY SPIRIT AT THE SAME TIMES AS THEIR CONVERSION – ACTS 10**

In Acts chapter 10 we read of a man named Cornelius who was in Caesarea. He was an Italian Centurion, and was in charge of 100 soldiers. This man feared God. He was a good man. He even prayed to God, and yet he was not saved. He recognized, along with his family, the emptiness of the Roman gods and wanted to know the true and living God. God was not only working in the heart of Cornelius at this time, but also in Peter who would bring the Gospel to Cornelius and his family!

Through a series of events, God had Peter go to the house of Cornelius and as he spoke forth the Word of God, the Holy Spirit moved upon their hearts. The Spirit moves through the teaching of the Word of God. That is the Biblical pattern! They didn’t have to learn how to speak in tongues. They didn’t have to practice it. The Holy Spirit came upon them as they gave their lives to Christ and they spoke in tongues and magnified God. Here we see their salvation and the baptism with the Holy Spirit occurring at the same time. After all of this, they were then baptized in water!

5. **SAUL’S CONVERSION AND EMPOWERMENT – ACTS 9**

In Acts chapter 9 Saul is on his way to Damascus to bring those who were of the Way, Christians, back to Jerusalem with him, bound with chains. But on the way there, Saul encounters the Lord. Keep in mind that Damascus was 130 miles northeast of Jerusalem, so this was at least a six-day journey. That tells me that Saul was very committed to his cause, to stamp out the Way or Christianity. You can read of what took place in Acts 9:1-9.

Somewhere between the verses of this experience, I believe we see Paul get saved. This “requested one” Saul became the “little” one or Paul, as he saw himself in Christ. What is the evidence that Saul got saved here? I think there are two reasons for us to believe this.

First, Saul asked Jesus, “**Lord, what do You want me to do?**” The voice replies that He is Jesus and Saul is no longer persecuting Jesus but calling Him Lord! And secondly, he was praying in verse 11 of Acts chapter 9. We are told this, “**So the Lord said to him, ‘Arise and go to the street called Straight, and inquire at the house of Judas for one called Saul of Tarsus, for behold, he is praying.’**”