



Spirit Baptism

Introduction to Series

Leader Notes

This PDF document contains all the leader and participant notes to facilitate this three-week series on Spirit baptism. The leader's notes are for the group leader and the participants' notes are only for the participants. Print the packet out as well as the appropriate pages for each session for the number of participants involved.

Objective. This study can be used on the individual or group level with minimal preparation. At the end of this study, participants will be familiar with both the Old and New Testament scriptures concerning Spirit baptism and see that just as it was for the early church, Spirit baptism for us should be:

- A subsequent experience after salvation.
- A purposeful experience with eternal focus.
- A normal experience throughout the New Testament.
- An empowering experience for witness.

Participants will also understand the difference between the baptism of repentance, baptism in water, and baptism in the Spirit.

Summary. This three-week series entitled, *Spirit Baptism*, examines the role of the Holy Spirit in Spirit baptism from a scriptural foundation.

- **Part 1. The Enabling Spirit** examines the Old Testament's foreshadowing and prophetic forthtelling of Spirit baptism. It helps participants better understand the scriptural foundation from Old Testament scriptures.
- **Part 2. Empowered by the Spirit** explains the difference between the baptism of repentance, baptism in water, and baptism in the Spirit. It also explains the four primary characteristics of Spirit baptism the Bible portrays within the early church. The first two that are covered in this lesson document how Spirit baptism was a subsequent and purposeful experience for New Testament believers.
- **Part 3. Empowered by the Spirit** continues the examination of the four primary characteristics of Spirit baptism by covering the remaining two as both a normal and empowering experience for New Testament believers.

Session notes. There are two separate sets of notes for each session.

- **The leader's notes** will have all the teaching written out so the group leader can study the notes and present the material. Text in the leader's notes that is underlined is not included in the participants' notes. Underlined text usually consists of detailed teaching notes or answers to discussion questions so the leader will know how to guide the group's discussion and interaction. The leader should spend about 30-60 minutes prior to the session going over the leader's notes, teaching points, and discussion questions.
- **The participant's notes** have the same headings but not the detailed teaching content. In addition, there is also extra space for the participant to take notes and jot down observations.

Meeting structure. Each of the three sessions in this series is designed to be about 60 minutes in length and contains the following segments:

- **Ice breaker.** An interactive question the group will discuss that will help to introduce the session's topic. This should take about 10-15 minutes each session.
- **Teaching and interaction.** The main body of teaching will be presented with discussion questions the leader can select beforehand. This is the largest part of the session, and the leader should be strategic in engaging the participants and exposing them to each of the teaching points. This section normally takes about 45 minutes to complete.
- **Making it real.** The concluding segment will help participants identify a few practical ways to apply the teaching to their own lives.

The leader should be sure to start each session with prayer and ask the Holy Spirit to enlighten and illuminate the scriptures to all involved.

Spirit Baptism

Week 1



Spirit Baptism

Part 1: *The Enabling Spirit* (Ezekiel 11:18-21) Leader Notes

NOTE TO LEADERS: Portions of the teacher's notes that are underlined signifies content that IS NOT found in the participant notes.

ICE BREAKER

15 minutes

Has there ever been one thing you could NEVER have faced or accomplished without God's empowerment or help? Briefly share it with the group and how God empowered you?

TEACHING AND INTERACTION (*Enabling Spirit*)

45 minutes

We often mistakenly think that the New Testament is the primary source of teaching regarding the outpouring of God's Spirit. However, the Old Testament promises the Spirit as an ENABLER that gives us the "want to" in terms of obedience while the New Testament promises the Spirit as an EMPOWERER for service and witness. We need both!

Ezekiel 11 contains a powerful foreshadowing of the Holy Spirit's ministry. This chapter contains God's promise to one day give His wayward people a supernatural power source. This power source will transform their lives and give them the desire to obey God. Ezekiel is echoing several other Old Testament passages that promise the outpouring of God's Holy Spirit in the lives of God's people.

Today we are going to look at several passages to better understand the promised work of the Holy Spirit in the Old Testament.

- A. The Spirit's transforming work in Ezekiel.** Ezekiel 11:18-21 promises a transforming Spirit.

HISTORICAL CONTEXT: A NEW COVENANT AND A NEW SPIRIT

Because of their obsessive idolatry, moral corruption, and spiritual apathy, God allowed the nation of Judah to be defeated by a foreign army and carried off into Babylonian captivity. However, God spoke through the prophet Ezekiel and promised to make a new covenant with the nation that would gather the scattered people and restore them to their native land. This new covenant would involve an outpouring of God's Spirit as promised by the prophets and initially instituted in Acts 2 of the New Testament.

NOTE TO GROUP LEADER: Have someone read the following passage aloud.

¹⁸They will return to it and remove all its vile images and detestable idols. ¹⁹I will give them an undivided heart and put a new spirit in them; I will remove from them their heart of stone and give them a heart of flesh. ²⁰Then they will follow my decrees and be careful to keep my laws. They will be my people, and I will be their God. ²¹But as for those whose hearts are devoted to their vile images and detestable idols, I will bring down on their own heads what they have done, declares the Sovereign LORD" (Ezekiel 11:18-21 NIV, Emphasis added).

Ezekiel says God will gather the scattered and captive nation and bring them back to the Holy Land. He then predicts that God will put a "new Spirit" into His people that will transform and empower them to obey His commands.

GROUP DISCUSSION. As a group, discuss some or all the following questions:

- **Read Ezekiel 11:18-21. What did the people need to do before God would empower them with His transforming Spirit?**
 - **Faith:** To obey God and return to the land from captivity (Ezekiel 11:18).
 - **Repentance:** They will remove all the vile images and detestable idols, thus cleansing the land and their own hearts (Ezekiel 11:18).
 - **Devotion:** This is implied in the comparison to them and those who refuse to repent and remain devoted to idol worship (Ezekiel 11:21).
- **In Ezekiel 11:18-21, what did God promise to do on their behalf?**
 - Gather them from foreign captivity (Ezekiel 11:17).
 - Restore them back to the land (Ezekiel 11:17).
 - Give them an undivided heart (Ezekiel 11:19).
 - Put a new Spirit in them that will enable them to obey (Ezekiel 11:19).
 - Remove from them a heart of stone (Ezekiel 11:19).
 - Give them a heart of flesh (Ezekiel 11:19).
- **In Ezekiel 11:19, what do you think the Lord is talking about when He speaks of their having a "heart of stone"? How might that apply in modern times?**
 - Insensitivity to the things of God.
 - Bitterness, unforgiveness, or malice.
 - Callousness towards sin.
- **Read Ezekiel 11:18-21 as a group and create a list of five things that this new Spirit would accomplish in their lives.**
 - **Spiritual Focus:** "An undivided heart" (Ezekiel 11:19).
 - **Spiritual Sensitivity:** "I will . . . give them a heart of flesh" (Ezekiel 11:19).
 - **Obedience:** "They will follow my decrees" (Ezekiel 11:20).
 - **Caution:** "They will . . . be careful to keep my laws" (Ezekiel 11:20).
 - **Belonging:** "They will be my people and I will be their God" (Ezekiel 11:20; Jeremiah 31:33).
- **As a group, look over the list of five things the Spirit will do in their lives. What makes this list unique, and why are these endowments so needed?**

- **Humanly impossible:** They are things we cannot accomplish in our own strength.
- **Empowering:** They empower us to obey and fulfill the things God expects of us.
- **Motivational:** They give us the “want to” and desire to obey.
- **Transformational:** They change and transform us by removing what is not pleasing to God and replacing it with something that is.

B. The Spirit's intimate work in Jeremiah. Ezekiel's prophecy of a new covenant was also promised in Jeremiah 31:31-34.

NOTE TO GROUP LEADER: Have someone read the following passage aloud.

³¹“The days are coming,” declares the LORD, “when I will make a new covenant with the people of Israel and with the people of Judah. ³²It will not be like the covenant I made with their ancestors when I took them by the hand to lead them out of Egypt, because they broke my covenant, though I was a husband to them,” declares the LORD. ³³“This is the covenant I will make with the people of Israel after that time,” declares the LORD. “I will put my law in their minds and write it on their hearts. I will be their God, and they will be my people. ³⁴No longer will they teach their neighbor, or say to one another, ‘Know the LORD,’ because they will all know me, from the least of them to the greatest,” declares the LORD. “For I will forgive their wickedness and will remember their sins no more” (NIV).

GROUP DISCUSSION. As a group, discuss one or both of the following questions:

- **Read Jeremiah 31:31-34 as a group and come up with a list of things God says He will do.**
 - **Inner conviction:** God will put His law in their minds and write it on their hearts (Jeremiah 31:33).
 - **Covenant of belonging:** God will be their God, and they will be His people (Ezekiel 11:20; Jeremiah 31:33).
 - **Spiritual intimacy:** They will know the Lord personally (Jeremiah 31:34).
 - **Forgiveness and restoration:** God will forgive them of their sins (Jeremiah 31:34).
- **In the past, the law of God had been written on scrolls, but now the Lord said it will be “written on their hearts.” What do you think is the difference between the two?**
 - Written law is external while conscience law is internal.
 - Written law is obligatory while heart law is internalized.
 - Written law speaks of obligation while heart law speaks of relationship.
 - Written law speaks in generalities while heart law speaks of personal application.
 - Written law is dependent upon interpretation while heart law is personalized.

C. The Spirit's powerful work in other passages. Ezekiel 11 and Jeremiah 31 are not the only Old Testament passages that speak of God's transforming Spirit. The giving of God's Spirit was also fourfold in the following passages as well.

NOTE TO GROUP LEADER: Ask different members of your group to read each of the following scriptures aloud.

1. **Deuteronomy 30:6 as a counter to the curse for disobedience:** *The LORD your God will circumcise your hearts and the hearts of your descendants, so that you may love him with all your heart and with all your soul, and live (NIV).*
2. **Jeremiah 31:33 as an alternative to negligence regarding the law:** *"This is the covenant I will make with the people of Israel after that time," declares the LORD. "I will put my law in their minds and write it on their hearts. I will be their God, and they will be my people" (NIV).*
3. **Joel 2:28-29 as a result of repentance:** *And afterward, I will pour out my Spirit on all people. Your sons and daughters will prophesy, your old men will dream dreams, your young men will see visions. Even on my servants, both men and women, I will pour out my Spirit in those days (NIV).*
4. **Ezekiel 36:26-27 as a promise of future restoration:** *I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit in you; I will remove from you your heart of stone and give you a heart of flesh. And I will put my Spirit in you and move you to follow my decrees and be careful to keep my laws (NIV).*

NOTE TO GROUP LEADER: The next question requires more concentration and group focus than the previous ones. Challenge your group to rise to the occasion and engage this question. The results will be very rewarding.

GROUP DISCUSSION. We have looked at three different Old Testament teachings that promise the Holy Spirit's work. As a group, look over each of the three points above and identify a few common denominators that exist in all three.

- Each blessing of the Spirit comes AFTER repentance.
- Each blessing of the Spirit empowers us to obey God instead of expecting us to do what we are incapable of.
- Each blessing of the Spirit facilitates inner transformation of the heart (removing hard and replacing with soft).
- Each blessing of the Spirit bestows a willingness, desire, and eagerness to obey God.
- Each blessing of the Spirit helps us to truly exist as the people of God.
- Each blessing of the Spirit is God specifically addressing what we lack.

MAKING IT REAL (Application)

5 minutes

NOTE TO GROUP LEADER: Today's "Making it Real" segment is a group activity. Prepare your group for this change and ask for their enthusiastic cooperation. This segment is intended to be a creative way to conclude your group by believing together for the Spirit's work in the areas promised in scripture.

Today's "Making it Real" segment is going to be a group activity.

A. Look over the following Old Testament scriptures that promise a specific action regarding the Spirit's work.

1. **Spiritual focus:** "An undivided heart" (Ezekiel 11:19).
2. **Spiritual sensitivity:** "I will . . . give them a heart of flesh" (Ezekiel 11:19).
3. **Obedience:** "They will follow my decrees" (Ezekiel 11:20).
4. **Caution:** "They will . . . be careful to keep my laws" (Ezekiel 11:20).
5. **Belonging:** "They will be my people and I will be their God" (Ezekiel 11:20; Jeremiah 31:33).
6. **Inner conviction:** "I will put my law in their minds and write it on their hearts" (Jeremiah 31:33).
7. **Spiritual intimacy:** "They will all know me" (Jeremiah 31:34).
8. **Forgiveness and restoration:** "I will forgive their wickedness" (Jeremiah 31:34).
9. **Spiritual surgery:** "The LORD your God will circumcise your hearts" (Deuteronomy 30:6).
10. **Supernatural outpouring:** "I will pour out my Spirit on all people" (Joel 2:28).
11. **Desire to obey:** "I will put my Spirit in you and move you to follow my decrees and be careful to keep my laws" (Ezekiel 36:27).

B. Identify three promises from the list above that represent a need in your life. Write them down here as a matter of future and group prayer.

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

C. Pick one of the three items you identified and share it with the group as your personal prayer request.

D. Your group leader will then close in prayer, believing God together for the promised work of God's Spirit in each need mentioned.



Spirit Baptism

Part 1: *The Enabling Spirit* (Ezekiel 11:18-21)

Participant Notes

ICE BREAKER

15 minutes

Has there ever been one thing you could NEVER have faced or accomplished without God's empowerment or help? Briefly share it with the group and how God empowered you.

TEACHING AND INTERACTION (Enabling Spirit)

45 minutes

We often mistakenly think that the New Testament is the primary source of teaching regarding the outpouring of God's Spirit. However, the Old Testament promises the Spirit as an ENABLER that gives us the "want to" in terms of obedience while the New Testament promises the Spirit as an EMPOWERER for service and witness. We need both!

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¹⁸They will return to it and remove all its vile images and detestable idols. ¹⁹I will give them an undivided heart and put a new spirit in them; I will remove from them their heart of stone and give them a heart of flesh. ²⁰Then they will follow my decrees and be careful to keep my laws. They will be my people, and I will be their God. ²¹But as for those whose hearts are devoted to their

vile images and detestable idols, I will bring down on their own heads what they have done, declares the Sovereign LORD" (Ezekiel 11:18-21 NIV, Emphasis added).

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GROUP DISCUSSION. As a group, discuss some or all the following questions.

- Read Ezekiel 11:18-21. What did the people need to do before God would empower them with His transforming Spirit?
- In Ezekiel 11:18-21, what did God promise to do on their behalf?
- In Ezekiel 11:19, what do you think the Lord is talking about when He speaks of their having a "heart of stone"? How might that apply in modern times?
- Read Ezekiel 11:18-21 as a group and create a list of five things that this new Spirit would accomplish in their lives.
- As a group, look over the list of five things the Spirit will do in their lives. What makes this list unique, and why are these endowments so needed?

B. The Spirit's intimate work in Jeremiah. Ezekiel's prophecy of a new covenant was also promised in Jeremiah 31:31-34:

³¹"The days are coming," declares the LORD, "when I will make a new covenant with the people of Israel and with the people of Judah. ³²It will not be like the covenant I made with their ancestors when I took them by the hand to lead them out of Egypt, because they broke my covenant, though I was a husband to them," declares the LORD. ³³"This is the covenant I will make with the people of Israel after that time," declares the LORD. "I will put my law in their minds and write it on their hearts. I will be their God, and they will be my people. ³⁴No longer will they teach their neighbor, or say to one another, 'Know the LORD,' because they will all know me, from the least of them to the greatest," declares the LORD. "For I will forgive their wickedness and will remember their sins no more" (NIV).

GROUP DISCUSSION. As a group, discuss one or both of the following questions:

- Read Jeremiah 31:31-34 as a group and come up with a list of things God says He will do.
- In the past, the law of God had been written on scrolls, but now the Lord said it would be "written on their hearts." What do you think is the difference between the two?

C. The Spirit's powerful work in other passages. Ezekiel 11 and Jeremiah 31 are not the only Old Testament passages that speak of God's transforming Spirit. The giving of God's Spirit was also fourfold in the following passages as well.

1. **Deuteronomy 30:6 as a counter to the curse for disobedience:** *The LORD your God will circumcise your hearts and the hearts of your descendants, so that you may love him with all your heart and with all your soul, and live (NIV).*

2. **Jeremiah 31:33 as an alternative to negligence regarding the law:** *"This is the covenant I will make with the people of Israel after that time," declares the LORD. "I will put my law in their minds and write it on their hearts. I will be their God, and they will be my people" (NIV).*
3. **Joel 2:28-29 as a result of repentance:** *And afterward, I will pour out my Spirit on all people. Your sons and daughters will prophesy, your old men will dream dreams, your young men will see visions. Even on my servants, both men and women, I will pour out my Spirit in those days (NIV).*
4. **Ezekiel 36:26-27 as a promise of future restoration:** *I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit in you; I will remove from you your heart of stone and give you a heart of flesh. And I will put my Spirit in you and move you to follow my decrees and be careful to keep my laws (NIV).*

GROUP DISCUSSION. We have looked at three different Old Testament teachings that promise the Holy Spirit's work. As a group, look over each of the three points above and identify a few common denominators that exist in all three.

MAKING IT REAL (Application)

5 minutes

Today's "Making it Real" segment is going to be a group activity.

- A. Look over the following Old Testament scriptures that promise a specific action regarding the Spirit's work.
 1. **Spiritual focus:** "An undivided heart" (Ezekiel 11:19).
 2. **Spiritual sensitivity:** "I will . . . give them a heart of flesh" (Ezekiel 11:19).
 3. **Obedience:** "They will follow my decrees" (Ezekiel 11:20).
 4. **Caution:** "They will . . . be careful to keep my laws" (Ezekiel 11:20).
 5. **Belonging:** "They will be my people and I will be their God" (Ezekiel 11:20; Jeremiah 31:33).
 6. **Inner conviction:** "I will put my law in their minds and write it on their hearts" (Jeremiah 31:33).
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 8. **Forgiveness and restoration:** "I will forgive their wickedness" (Jeremiah 31:34).
 9. **Spiritual surgery:** "The LORD your God will circumcise your hearts" (Deuteronomy 30:6).
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 11. **Desire to obey:** "I will put my Spirit in you and move you to follow my decrees and be careful to keep my laws" (Ezekiel 36: 27).
- B. Identify three promises from the list above that represent a need in your own life. Write them down here as a matter of prayer.

1. _____
2. _____

3. _____

- C.** Pick one of the three items you identified and share it with the group as your personal prayer request.
- D.** Your group leader will then close in prayer, believing God together for the promised work of God's Spirit in each need mentioned.

Spirit Baptism

Week 2



Spirit Baptism

Part 2: *Empowered by the Spirit* (Acts 1:4-8) Leader Notes

NOTE TO LEADERS: Portions of the teacher's notes that are underlined signifies content that IS NOT found in the participant notes.

ICE BREAKER

15 minutes

What truth from last week's teaching had the most impact upon you and why?

BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT

5 minutes

The Bible speaks of three different forms of baptism:

- **Baptism of repentance.** When a person repents of their sins and are baptized by the Spirit into the body of Christ. *For we were all baptized by one Spirit so as to form one body—whether Jews or Gentiles, slave or free—and we were all given the one Spirit to drink* (1 Corinthians 12:13 NIV).
- **Baptism in water.** When new believers are baptized in water by the church as an act of obedience and identification with Christ.
- **Baptism in the Spirit.** When believers are baptized in the Holy Spirit by Christ.

Jesus spoke about the baptism in the Holy Spirit, teaching that Spirit baptism is an endowment of God's supernatural power for life and witness.

⁴On one occasion, while he was eating with them, he gave them this command: "Do not leave Jerusalem, but wait for the gift my Father promised, which you have heard me speak about. ⁵For John baptized with water, but in a few days you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit." ⁶Then they gathered around him and asked him, "Lord, are you at this time going to restore the kingdom to Israel?" ⁷He said to them: "It is not for you to know the times or dates the Father has set by his own authority. ⁸But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth" (Acts 1:4-8 NIV).

Over the next two weeks, we are going to take a bird's eye view of the baptism in the Holy Spirit. This week, we will see that the baptism in the Holy Spirit is a subsequent and purposeful experience. Next week, we will discover that it is a normal and empowering experience.

TEACHING AND INTERACTION (*Empowered by the Spirit*) 45 minutes

NOTE TO LEADERS: This first segment has a lot of teaching to build a foundation for discussion later in the lesson. Keep your participants engaged by having a different person read the italicized scriptures aloud for each point.

Let's begin by looking at two characteristics about the baptism in the Holy Spirit.

A. Spirit baptism is a subsequent experience.

Each of the references to Spirit baptism in the New Testament has several things in common. One is that Spirit baptism happened AFTER a person experienced conversion. Let's look at the five experiences recorded in the New Testament.

- 1. The Day of Pentecost—Fifty days after Jesus' resurrection (Acts 2:1-13).** The disciples, along with another 100 people, were filled with the Holy Spirit in the form of a supernatural prayer language.

¹When the day of Pentecost came, they were all together in one place. ²Suddenly a sound like the blowing of a violent wind came from heaven and filled the whole house where they were sitting. ³They saw what seemed to be tongues of fire that separated and came to rest on each of them. ⁴All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues as the Spirit enabled them (Acts 2:1-4 NIV).

We know they were already believers because Jesus told them after sending them out, *Do not rejoice that the spirits submit to you, but rejoice that your names are written in heaven (Luke 10:20 NIV).*

- 2. The Samaritan Revival (Acts 8:4-19).** Philip went to Samaria, and many believed and were water baptized (Acts 8:4-13). When the apostles in Jerusalem heard about the revival, they sent Peter and John to check it out. When they arrived, they prayed that the Samaritan believers would receive the Spirit baptism.

¹⁴When the apostles in Jerusalem heard that Samaria had accepted the word of God, they sent Peter and John to Samaria. ¹⁵When they arrived, they prayed for the new believers there that they might receive the Holy Spirit, ¹⁶because the Holy Spirit had not yet come on any of them; they had simply been baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. ¹⁷Then Peter and John placed their hands on them, and they received the Holy Spirit (Acts 8:14-17).

GROUP INTERACTION. When the Bible tells us that these Christians “had simply been baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus” (v.16), what do you think that meant?

- They had been baptized in water after conversion.
- They had been obedient in following the Lord's command to be water baptized.

- 3. The Apostle Paul (Acts 9:1-19).** Paul experienced a dramatic conversion while traveling on the Damascus Road. Three days later, God spoke to Ananias and told him to go and lay hands on Paul and pray that he would be healed and filled with the Holy Spirit. When Ananias arrived, he told Paul that God had sent him to lay hands on him that he might see again and be *filled with the Holy Spirit* (Acts 9:17 NIV).

¹⁷Then Ananias went to the house and entered it. Placing his hands on Saul, he said, "Brother Saul, the Lord—Jesus, who appeared to you on the road as you were coming here—has sent me so that you may see again and be filled with the Holy Spirit." ¹⁸Immediately, something like scales fell from Saul's eyes, and he could see again. He got up and was baptized (Acts 9:17-18 NIV).

- 4. Cornelius and the Gentiles (Acts 10:44-48; 11:15-17).** Cornelius was an honest man who had not experienced salvation but was hungry for God. He invited Peter to visit his home and speak to his family.

⁴⁴While Peter was still speaking these words, the Holy Spirit came on all who heard the message. ⁴⁵The circumcised believers who had come with Peter were astonished that the gift of the Holy Spirit had been poured out even on Gentiles. ⁴⁶For they heard them speaking in tongues and praising God (Acts 10:44-46 NIV).

GROUP INTERACTION. As a group, discuss one or both of the following questions.

- **The Bible tells us that Peter (a Jewish man) was "astonished" that the gift of the Holy Spirit had been poured out even on Gentiles. Why do you think that astonished him?**
 - **It revealed that God's promise was for all people, not just the Jews.**
- **What might we learn from Peter's lesson?**
 - **That the baptism in the Holy Spirit is not reserved for a select few.**
 - **That God wants to empower all of His children to reach the world.**

- 5. The Ephesian Disciples—32 years after Pentecost (Acts 19:1-7).** During his travels, Paul came across a group of new Christians in the city of Ephesus. The Bible informs us that Paul was concerned that, although they had become Christians, they had not been taught about Spirit Baptism.

¹Paul took the road through the interior and arrived at Ephesus. There he found some disciples ²and asked them, "Did you receive the Holy Spirit when you believed?" They answered, "No, we have not even heard that there is a Holy Spirit." ³So Paul asked, "Then what baptism did you receive?" "John's baptism," they replied. ⁴Paul said, "John's baptism was a baptism of repentance." He told the people to believe in the one coming after him, that is, in Jesus. ⁵On hearing this, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. ⁶When Paul placed his hands on them, the Holy Spirit came on them, and they spoke in tongues and prophesied (Acts 19:1-6 NIV).

GROUP INTERACTION. Although Paul does NOT tell the Ephesian disciples that Spirit baptism is needed for salvation, he was concerned that they were unaware of it. Why do you think Paul was concerned?

- Paul wanted them to be empowered to live a Spirit-filled life.
- Paul wanted them to be “full gospel” followers of Christ (to know all the teachings of Jesus).
- Paul wanted them to be effective in reaching their communities.

Each one of these descriptions records people receiving Spirit baptism AFTER they had already become Christians.

B. Spirit baptism is a purposeful experience.

NOTE TO LEADERS: Have different participants take turns reading the various scripture verses in this section aloud.

Many believers mistakenly think the baptism in the Holy Spirit is like a “spiritual upgrade” for a heightened experience. Although Spirit baptism brings great blessing and fulfillment to a person's life, **Jesus taught us that its purpose was to make believers more effective witnesses.**

⁴On one occasion, while he was eating with them, he gave them this command: “Do not leave Jerusalem, but wait for the gift my Father promised, which you have heard me speak about. ⁵For John baptized with water, but in a few days you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit.” ⁶Then they gathered around him and asked him, “Lord, are you at this time going to restore the kingdom to Israel?” ⁷He said to them: “It is not for you to know the times or dates the Father has set by his own authority. ⁸But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth (Acts 1:4-8 NIV, Emphasis added).

This verse sheds light on three reasons for Spirit baptism.

- 1. The first reason for Spirit baptism is to fulfill the Father's promise and Jesus' teaching.** Jesus reminded the disciples that the baptism in the Holy Spirit was not something new to His teaching. That is why He reminded them that Spirit baptism was promised by the Father and taught by Him.

Do not leave Jerusalem, but wait for the gift my Father promised, which you have heard me speak about (Acts 1:4 NIV, Emphasis added).

God also promised the baptism in the Holy Spirit through several Old Testament prophets.

- **Deuteronomy 30:6 as a counter to the curse for disobedience:** *The LORD your God will circumcise your hearts and the hearts of your descendants, so that you may love him with all your heart and with all your soul, and live (NIV).*
- **Jeremiah 31:33 as an alternative to negligence regarding the law:** *“This is the covenant I will make with the people of Israel after that time,” declares the*

LORD. "I will put my law in their minds and write it on their hearts. I will be their God, and they will be my people" (NIV).

- **Joel 2:28-29 as a result of repentance:** *And afterward, I will pour out my Spirit on all people. Your sons and daughters will prophesy, your old men will dream dreams, your young men will see visions. Even on my servants, both men and women, I will pour out my Spirit in those days (NIV).*
- **Ezekiel 36:26-27 as a promise of future restoration:** *I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit in you; I will remove from you your heart of stone and give you a heart of flesh. And I will put my Spirit in you and move you to follow my decrees and be careful to keep my laws (NIV).*

GROUP INTERACTION. The Old Testament presents the empowerment of the Holy Spirit as giving us the desire to obey God. The New Testament presents the empowerment of the Holy Spirit as giving us the power to function in a supernatural world. Look over the list of the four Old Testament passages above and make a list of what the promised Holy Spirit will accomplish in people's lives.

- Perform spiritual surgery on our hearts (Deuteronomy 30:6).
- Empower us to love God with all our hearts and souls (Deuteronomy 30:6).
- Place God's desires in our heart and make us people of God (Jeremiah 31:33).
- Pour out God's Spirit on all people, young and old (Joel 2:28-29).
- Give us new hearts that are sensitive to the things of God (Ezekiel 11:18-21).
- Place His spirit WITHIN us rather than AROUND us (Ezekiel 36:26-27).

Earlier in His ministry, Jesus had also spoken to the disciples concerning Spirit baptism:

³⁷On the last and greatest day of the festival, Jesus stood and said in a loud voice, "Let anyone who is thirsty come to me and drink. ³⁸Whoever believes in me, as Scripture has said, rivers of living water will flow from within them." ³⁹By this he meant the Spirit, whom those who believed in him were later to receive. Up to that time the Spirit had not been given, since Jesus had not yet been glorified (John 7:37-39 NIV).

If you then, though you are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father in heaven give the Holy Spirit to those who ask him! (Luke 11:13 NIV).

2. The second reason for Spirit baptism is to transform us with a fullness of the Spirit.

When Jesus wanted to describe the encounter that His followers would experience, He chose the word, "baptize."

For John baptized with water, but in a few days you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit (Acts 1:5 NIV, Emphasis added).

The word baptize means to be immersed or submerged in or to be saturated with. In this context, we are immersed into the Spirit.

GROUP INTERACTION. Why do you think Jesus chose the word “baptize” to describe the baptism in the Holy Spirit, and what does it reveal to us about the experience?

- It reveals that we become immersed in the Spirit.
- It reveals that our character and heart soak in God’s Spirit.
- It reveals a habitation of God in our lives.

- 3. The third reason for Spirit baptism is to empower us for effective witness.** Jesus told His disciples that the baptism in the Holy Spirit would make them more effective witnesses.

But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth (Acts 1:8 NIV, Emphasis added).

GROUP INTERACTION. As a group, discuss one or both of the following questions.

- The Spirit-filled community often emphasizes the experiential side of Spirit baptism as it would relate to worship, prayer, and supernatural gifts; but Jesus tells us that those who are filled with the Holy Spirit will become “witnesses.” What does this verse tell us about the kind of witnesses they should become?
 - Supernaturally empowered witnesses.
 - Witnesses in their own communities.
 - Witnesses in places they have never been—“the ends of the earth.”
- For the disciples, Jesus said the Spirit would empower them to be witnesses in an expanding circle starting from their home town of Jerusalem to the ends of the earth. What might the following levels of expanding witness look like in our own modern context?
 - Our Jerusalem.
 - Our Judea.
 - Our Samaria.
 - Our “ends of the earth.”

MAKING IT REAL (Application)

5 minutes

- A.** We have identified several things the baptism in the Holy Spirit does in the life of a Christian. Following is a list of a few of them. Identify two or three areas you need the Spirit’s help with today.

- | | |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Cleanse and purify your heart | <input type="checkbox"/> Make you sensitive to the things of God |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Love God more completely | <input type="checkbox"/> Have the power to obey God |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Desire the things that God desires | |

- ☐ Live a godly life
- ☐ Be effective in reaching your community

- ☐ Live a Spirit-filled life
- ☐ Better know and understand God's Word

B. One function that Jesus shares in Acts 1:8 is that if you have received the Holy Spirit, *"You will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth."*

1. When is the last time you shared the gospel with an unbeliever?

2. Who is someone in your life that you can begin praying for an opportunity to share the gospel with?



Spirit Baptism

Part 2: *Empowered by the Spirit* (Acts 1:4-8) Participant Notes

ICE BREAKER

15 minutes

What truth from last week's teaching had the most impact upon you and why?

BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT

5 minutes

The Bible speaks of three different forms of baptism:

- **Baptism of repentance.** When a person repents of their sins and are baptized by the Spirit into the body of Christ. *For we were all baptized by one Spirit so as to form one body—whether Jews or Gentiles, slave or free—and we were all given the one Spirit to drink* (1 Corinthians 12:13 NIV).
- **Baptism in water.** When new believers are baptized in water by the church as an act of obedience and identification with Christ.
- **Baptism in the Spirit.** When believers are baptized in the Holy Spirit by Christ.

Jesus spoke about the baptism in the Holy Spirit, teaching that Spirit baptism is an endowment of God's supernatural power for life and witness.

⁴On one occasion, while he was eating with them, he gave them this command: "Do not leave Jerusalem, but wait for the gift my Father promised, which you have heard me speak about. ⁵For John baptized with water, but in a few days you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit." ⁶Then they gathered around him and asked him, "Lord, are you at this time going to restore the kingdom to Israel?" ⁷He said to them: "It is not for you to know the times or dates the Father has set by his own authority. ⁸But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth" (Acts 1:4-8 NIV).

Over the next two weeks, we are going to take a bird's eye view of the baptism in the Holy Spirit. This week, we will see that the baptism in the Holy Spirit is a subsequent and purposeful experience. Next week, we will discover that it is a normal and empowering experience.

TEACHING AND INTERACTION (*Empowered by the Spirit*) 45 minutes

Let's begin by looking at two characteristics about the baptism in the Holy Spirit.

A. Spirit baptism is a subsequent experience.

Each of the references to Spirit baptism in the New Testament has several things in common. One is that Spirit baptism happened AFTER a person experienced conversion. Let's look at the five experiences recorded in the New Testament.

1. **The Day of Pentecost—Fifty days after Jesus' resurrection (Acts 2:1-13).** The disciples, along with another 100 people, were filled with the Holy Spirit in the form of a supernatural prayer language.

¹When the day of Pentecost came, they were all together in one place.

²Suddenly a sound like the blowing of a violent wind came from heaven and filled the whole house where they were sitting. ³They saw what seemed to be tongues of fire that separated and came to rest on each of them. ⁴All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues as the Spirit enabled them (Acts 2:1-4 NIV).

We know they were already believers because Jesus told them after sending them out, *Do not rejoice that the spirits submit to you, but rejoice that your names are written in heaven* (Luke 10:20 NIV).

2. **The Samaritan Revival (Acts 8:4-19).** Philip went to Samaria, and many believed and were water baptized (Acts 8:4-13). When the apostles in Jerusalem heard about the revival, they sent Peter and John to check it out. When they arrived, they prayed that the Samaritan believers would receive the Spirit baptism.

¹⁴When the apostles in Jerusalem heard that Samaria had accepted the word of God, they sent Peter and John to Samaria. ¹⁵When they arrived, they prayed for the new believers there that they might receive the Holy Spirit, ¹⁶because the Holy Spirit had not yet come on any of them; they had simply been baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. ¹⁷Then Peter and John placed their hands on them, and they received the Holy Spirit (Acts 8:14-17).

GROUP INTERACTION. When the Bible tells us that these Christians “had simply been baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus” (v.16), what do you think that meant?

3. **The Apostle Paul (Acts 9:1-19).** Paul experienced a dramatic conversion while traveling on the Damascus Road. Three days later, God spoke to Ananias and told him to go and lay hands on Paul and pray that he would be healed and filled with the Holy Spirit. When Ananias arrived, he told Paul that God had sent him to lay hands on him that he might see again and be *filled with the Holy Spirit* (Acts 9:17 NIV).

¹⁷Then Ananias went to the house and entered it. Placing his hands on Saul, he said, “Brother Saul, the Lord—Jesus, who appeared to you on the road as you were coming here—has sent me so that you may see again and be filled with the Holy Spirit.” ¹⁸Immediately, something like scales fell

from Saul's eyes, and he could see again. He got up and was baptized (Acts 9:17-18 NIV).

- 4. Cornelius and the Gentiles (Acts 10:44-48; 11:15-17).** Cornelius was an honest man who had not experienced salvation but was hungry for God. He invited Peter to visit his home and speak to his family.

⁴⁴While Peter was still speaking these words, the Holy Spirit came on all who heard the message. ⁴⁵The circumcised believers who had come with Peter were astonished that the gift of the Holy Spirit had been poured out even on Gentiles. ⁴⁶For they heard them speaking in tongues and praising God (Acts 10:44-46 NIV).

GROUP INTERACTION. As a group, discuss one or both of the following questions.

- **The Bible tells us that Peter (a Jewish man) was “astonished” that the gift of the Holy Spirit had been poured out even on Gentiles. Why do you think that astonished him?**
- **What might we learn from Peter’s lesson?**

- 5. The Ephesian Disciples—32 years after Pentecost (Acts 19:1-7).** During his travels, Paul came across a group of new Christians in the city of Ephesus. The Bible informs us that Paul was concerned that, although they had become Christians, they had not been taught about Spirit Baptism.

¹Paul took the road through the interior and arrived at Ephesus. There he found some disciples ²and asked them, “Did you receive the Holy Spirit when you believed?” They answered, “No, we have not even heard that there is a Holy Spirit.” ³So Paul asked, “Then what baptism did you receive?” “John’s baptism,” they replied. ⁴Paul said, “John’s baptism was a baptism of repentance.” He told the people to believe in the one coming after him, that is, in Jesus. ⁵On hearing this, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. ⁶When Paul placed his hands on them, the Holy Spirit came on them, and they spoke in tongues and prophesied (Acts 19:1-6 NIV).

GROUP INTERACTION. Although Paul does NOT tell the Ephesian disciples that Spirit baptism is needed for salvation, he was concerned that they were unaware of it. Why do you think Paul was concerned?

Each one of these descriptions records people receiving Spirit baptism AFTER they had already become Christian.

B. Spirit baptism is a purposeful experience.

Many believers mistakenly think the baptism in the Holy Spirit is like a “spiritual upgrade” for a heightened experience. Although Spirit baptism brings great blessing and fulfillment to a person’s life, **Jesus taught us that its purpose was to make believers more effective witnesses.**

⁴On one occasion, while he was eating with them, he gave them this command: "Do not leave Jerusalem, but wait for the gift my Father promised, which you have heard me speak about. ⁵For John baptized with water, but in a few days you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit." ⁶Then they gathered around him and asked him, "Lord, are you at this time going to restore the kingdom to Israel?" ⁷He said to them: "It is not for you to know the times or dates the Father has set by his own authority. ⁸But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth (Acts 1:4-8 NIV, Emphasis added).

This verse sheds light on three reasons for Spirit baptism.

- 1. The first reason for Spirit baptism is to fulfill the Father's promise and Jesus' teaching.** Jesus reminded the disciples that the baptism in the Holy Spirit was not something new to His teaching. That is why He reminded them that Spirit baptism was promised by the Father and taught by Him.

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- **Joel 2:28-29 as a result of repentance:** *And afterward, I will pour out my Spirit on all people. Your sons and daughters will prophesy, your old men will dream dreams, your young men will see visions. Even on my servants, both men and women, I will pour out my Spirit in those days (NIV).*
- **Ezekiel 36:26-27 as a promise of future restoration:** *I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit in you; I will remove from you your heart of stone and give you a heart of flesh. And I will put my Spirit in you and move you to follow my decrees and be careful to keep my laws (NIV).*

GROUP INTERACTION. The Old Testament presents the empowerment of the Holy Spirit as giving us the desire to obey God. The New Testament presents the empowerment of the Holy Spirit as giving us the power to function in a supernatural world. Look over the list of four Old Testament passages above and make a list of what the promised Holy Spirit will accomplish in people's lives.

Earlier in His ministry, Jesus had also spoken to the disciples concerning Spirit baptism:

³⁷On the last and greatest day of the festival, Jesus stood and said in a loud voice, "Let anyone who is thirsty come to me and drink. ³⁸Whoever believes in me, as Scripture has said, rivers of living water will flow from within them." ³⁹By this he meant the Spirit, whom those who believed in him were later to receive. Up to that time the Spirit had not been given, since Jesus had not yet been glorified (John 7:37-39 NIV).

If you then, though you are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father in heaven give the Holy Spirit to those who ask him! (Luke 11:13 NIV).

2. The second reason for Spirit baptism is to transform us with a fullness of the Spirit.

When Jesus wanted to describe the encounter that His followers would experience, He chose the word, "baptize."

For John baptized with water, but in a few days you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit (Acts 1:5 NIV, Emphasis added).

The word baptize means to be immersed or submerged in or to be saturated with. In this context, we are immersed into the Spirit.

GROUP INTERACTION. Why do you think Jesus chose the word "baptize" to describe the baptism in the Holy Spirit, and what does it reveal to us about the experience?

3. The third reason for Spirit-baptism is to empower us for effective witness. Jesus told His disciples that the baptism in the Holy Spirit would make them a more effective witness.

But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth (Acts 1:8 NIV, Emphasis added).

GROUP INTERACTION. As a group, discuss one or both of the following questions.

- The Spirit-filled community often emphasizes the experiential side of Spirit baptism as it would relate to worship, prayer, and supernatural gifts; but Jesus tells us that those who are filled with the Holy Spirit will become "witnesses." What does this verse tell us about the kind of witnesses they should become?
- For the disciples Jesus said the Spirit would empower them to be a witness in an expanding circle starting from their home town of Jerusalem to the ends of the earth. What might the following levels of expanding witness look like in our own modern context?

MAKING IT REAL (Application)

5 minutes

A. We have identified several things the baptism in the Holy Spirit does in the life of a Christian. Following is a list of a few of them. Identify two or three areas you need the Spirit's help with today.

- | | |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Cleanse and purify your heart | <input type="checkbox"/> Live a godly life |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Love God more completely | <input type="checkbox"/> Be effective in reaching your community |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Desire the things that God desires | <input type="checkbox"/> Live a Spirit-filled life |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Make you sensitive to the things of God | <input type="checkbox"/> Better know and understand God's Word |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Have the power to obey God | |

B. One function that Jesus shares in Acts 1:8 is that if you have received the Holy Spirit, *"You will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth."*

1. When is the last time you shared the gospel with an unbeliever?

2. Who is someone in your life that you can begin praying for an opportunity to share the gospel with?

Spirit Baptism

Week 3



Spirit Baptism

Part 3: *Empowered by the Spirit* (Acts 1:4-8)

Leader Notes

NOTE TO LEADERS: Portions of the teacher's notes that are underlined signifies content that IS NOT found in the participant notes.

ICE BREAKER

15 minutes

What truth from last week's teaching had the most impact upon you and why?

BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT

5 minutes

In our last session, we looked at two of the four characteristics our study will cover concerning Spirit baptism. Today we will examine the last two characteristics of Spirit baptism found in the remaining chapters of the Book of Acts. It is here that we see the baptism in the Holy Spirit as both a normal and empowering experience in the lives of New Testament believers.

TEACHING AND INTERACTION (*Empowered by the Spirit*)

45 minutes

NOTE TO LEADERS: This first segment has a lot of teaching to build a foundation for discussion later on in the lesson. Keep your participants engaged by having a different person read the italicized scriptures aloud for each point.

A. Spirit baptism is a normal experience.

Spirit baptism was a normal experience in the New Testament church as well as the life of believers.

1. **It was a normal experience foretold in God's Word.** In Part 2 of this study, we looked at specific references where Spirit baptism was promised in both the Old and New Testaments; but let's take a bird's eye view of this again.

- *¹⁴Then Peter stood up with the Eleven, raised his voice and addressed the crowd . . . ¹⁵"These men are not drunk, as you suppose. It's only nine in the morning! ¹⁶No, this is what was spoken by the prophet Joel"* (Acts 2:14-16 NIV).
- *²⁸And afterward, I will pour out my Spirit on all people. Your sons and daughters will prophesy, your old men will dream dreams, your young men will see visions. ²⁹Even on my servants, both men and woman, I will pour out my Spirit in those days. ³⁰I will show wonders in the heavens and on the earth* (Joel 2:28-30 NIV).

- Jesus spoke of it as a product of God's goodness: *¹³If you then, though you are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father in heaven give the Holy Spirit to those who ask him!* (Luke 11:13 NIV).
- Jesus told His disciples: *⁴Do not leave Jerusalem, but wait for the gift my Father promised, which you heard me speak about. ⁵For John baptized with water, but in a few days you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit* (Acts 1:4-5 NIV).
- Romans 12:1-8 gives reference to the gifts of the Spirit.
- The Book of Acts gives 13 references to being filled and refilled with the Spirit. Five of these are specific in mentioning a prayer language and eight are just references.
- 1 Corinthians 11 through 14 give reference to Spirit baptism being used in the form of a gift to the body of Christ with specific instruction regarding their operation.

GROUP INTERACTION. God foretold the giving of His Spirit long before it occurred. If the scriptures clearly present the promise of the Holy Spirit, why might this phenomenon be difficult for some to view as legitimate?

- We mistakenly feel it was for a past generation and not for us today.
- We are unfamiliar with what the scriptures teach about the Holy Spirit.
- We are turned off by it because of fear or negative experiences in the past.

2. It was a normal experience in the life of the New Testament church. When all the references to Spirit baptism in the Book of Acts are put in chronological order, a clearer picture emerges of how normal this experience really was for the New Testament church.

- **The Day of Pentecost in Acts 2:1-13 (50 days after the resurrection).** The apostles and disciples, along with another 100 people, were filled with the Holy Spirit.
- **The Samaritan Revival of Acts 8:4-19 (1-2 years after Pentecost).** When the apostles in Jerusalem heard of the Samaritan revival, they sent Peter and John who prayed with them that they might receive the Holy Spirit (Acts 8:17).
- **Paul's personal experience in Acts 9:1-19 (2-3 years after Pentecost).** Paul had a life-changing conversion while on the Damascus Road. He was blinded and then went to Damascus and stayed there for three days. Three days later, God spoke to Ananias and told him to go lay hands on Paul. When Ananias arrived, he told Paul that God had sent him that he might receive his sight and be filled with the Holy Spirit (Acts 9:17).
- **Cornelius and the Gentiles in Acts 10:44-48; 11:15-17 (8-9 years after Pentecost).** While Peter was sharing God's plan of salvation with a group of Gentile seekers, they were filled with the Holy Spirit and spoke in other tongues. The church leadership was astonished that ⁴⁵the Holy Spirit had been poured out even on the Gentiles. ⁴⁶For they heard them speaking in tongues and praising God (Acts 10:45-46 NIV).
- **The Ephesian Disciples in Acts 19:1-7 (over 25 years after Pentecost).** Paul found a group of Ephesian believers and asked them if they had been told

about Spirit baptism. While he was laying hands on them, ⁶the Holy Spirit came on them, and they spoke in tongues and prophesied (Acts 19:6 NIV).

- **1 Corinthians 14 (50 years after Pentecost).** Paul was encouraging the Corinthians to build their faith on love rather than the gifts alone: ⁵I would like every one of you to speak in tongues (1 Corinthians 14:5 NIV) and ¹⁸I thank God that I speak in tongues more than all of you (1 Corinthians 14:18 NIV).

GROUP INTERACTION. What may hinder us from experiencing the Holy Spirit as an active and “normal experience”?

- **We isolate the Spirit to church services.**
- **We do not think of the Holy Spirit as an important ingredient in our lives.**
- **We mistakenly think it was only for the early Church.**

3. It is a normal experience available to all. Although the Book of Corinthians teaches us that the corporate gift of tongues (to edify the entire church) is a gift given to some, the Bible teaches that Spirit baptism is available to all.

- Jesus told the disciples to teach the availability of the baptism in the Holy Spirit to all people. He told the disciples to go and teach everything that He taught and commanded them (Matthew 28:20). Part of His teaching was to expect the Holy Spirit and to wait for the Holy Spirit in Jerusalem.
- Peter showed that the Old Testament prophecies taught the availability of the baptism in the Holy Spirit to all people: ³⁹*The promise is for you and your children and for all who are afar off—for all whom the Lord our God will call* (Acts 2:39 NIV).
- Paul taught the availability of the baptism in the Holy Spirit to all believers: ⁵*I would like every one of you to speak in tongues* (1 Corinthians 14:5 NIV).

B. Spirit baptism is an empowering experience.

When we look at how Spirit baptism affected the lives of the New Testament believers, we see three common denominators. It empowered them with a dynamic presence of God, made them more effective witnesses, and enabled them to experience a deeper level of spiritual transformation.

1. Spirit baptism empowers believers with a dynamic presence of God. Jesus employed the word “baptism” when He described the experience to His disciples:

⁴*Do not leave Jerusalem, but wait for the gift my Father promised, which you heard me speak about. ⁵For John baptized with water, but in a few days you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit* (Acts 1:4-5 NIV).

The word baptism means to be immersed in, plunged under, or submerged. By using this word, Jesus was helping them to understand that Spirit baptism would saturate a person with the dynamic Spirit of God. The Apostle Paul gave a personal testimony about how Spirit baptism empowered his prayer life:

²⁶In the same way, the Spirit helps us in our weakness. We do not know what we ought to pray for, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us through wordless groans. ²⁷And he who searches our hearts knows the mind of the Spirit, because the Spirit intercedes for God's people in accordance with the will of God (Romans 8:26-27 NIV).

GROUP INTERACTION. As a group, discuss one or both of the following questions.

- **What have you ever immersed yourself in (i.e., work, hobbies, etc.)?**
- **What hinders us from being “immersed” in God’s Holy Spirit?**
 - Other priorities.
 - Do not know how.
 - Do not understand the importance of it.

- 2. Spirit baptism empowers believers to be more effective witnesses.** Jesus told His disciples that the purpose of Spirit baptism was not just to have an experience but also to make them more powerful witnesses.

⁸But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and the ends of the earth (Acts 1:8 NIV).

The word “receive” means to “get hold of” or “embrace.” We then see this supernatural empowerment demonstrated in the lives and ministries of the New Testament believers in the following ways:

- After Spirit baptism, the early Christians experienced a new dimension of power.
- After Spirit baptism, early Christians had an intensified consecration to God and dedication to His work. The Bible informs us that *⁴²they devoted themselves to the apostles’ teaching and to the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer (Acts 2:42 NIV).*
- After Spirit baptism, the early Christians had a more active love for Christ, for His Word, and for the lost. Peter, who denied Christ three times, became a courageous and militant preacher of the Word. Paul went from being a person who persecuted Jews to being a man who said, ²⁰It has always been my ambition to preach the gospel where Christ was not known (Romans 15:20 NIV).

GROUP INTERACTION. As a group, discuss one or both of the following questions.

- **Have you ever had a more effective witness because of the Holy Spirit? Please share your experience with the group.**
- **Why do you think your witness is more effective with the Holy Spirit’s power?**
 - The Holy Spirit knows the hearts of people.
 - The Holy Spirit can guide a person to say just the right things.
 - The Holy Spirit can speak to a person’s situation you may not know about.

3. Spirit baptism enables believers to experience a deeper level of spiritual transformation. Jesus said that Spirit baptism would empower believers to “be” something they were not and “do” something they could not in and of themselves.

⁸But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth (Acts 1:8 NIV, Emphasis added).

Jesus also said that those receiving Spirit baptism would experience a fullness of the Spirit:

³⁷“Let anyone who is thirsty come to me and drink. ³⁸Whoever believes in me, as Scripture has said, rivers of living water will flow from within them.”

³⁹By this he meant the Spirit, whom those who believed in him were later to receive. Up to that time the Spirit had not been given, since Jesus had not yet been glorified (John 7:37-39 NIV).

It is important to note that NOWHERE in God's Word are we told that Spirit baptism is a requirement for salvation. We see Christ's promise of power poured out over and over again down through the centuries. The Bible teaches us that we can expect the same strength and can continue to be empowered by the Holy Spirit until we get to heaven. So what is the takeaway for you? God has not left you ill-equipped or under-resourced to thrive as a spiritual being. Because you were created as a spiritual being and are part of a cosmic spiritual battle, God has given you access to the tools you will need to be successful on that level. It is important to remember that you are a spiritual being first and a physical being second.

GROUP INTERACTION. It is hard for us to comprehend being a spiritual being because our existence is consumed by the physical world in which we live. What causes us to forget that we are part of a spiritual battle demanding spiritual resources?

- Present physical trials prohibit us from seeing the spiritual side of things.
- Culture and society are opposite of the spiritual so we are influenced by the physical first.
- Our own relationship with God hinders that view.
- The lack of reading the Word can hinder that view.
- The lack of prayer can also hinder that view.

Your physical existence is limited and temporary, but your spiritual existence is eternal. Before you were a Christian, you probably ignored the spiritual side of your existence and focused on the physical, emotional, and mental side; but the Holy Spirit can now help to bring understanding, purpose, and power to your spiritual existence. The power that Jesus spoke of and promised is a power to help you combat Satan as a spiritual being while here on earth.

The Holy Spirit is the X-Factor that lives within you and empowers you to be a powerful witness for Christ and confront the spiritual assault and resistance that the devil will unleash on this planet and in your life.

MAKING IT REAL (Application)

5 minutes

- A.** What is one thing that has stopped you from having the Holy Spirit active in your life as a normal occurrence?
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- C.** Write down your prayer to God about your desire for the Spirit to become normal in your life.

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Spirit Baptism

Part 3: *Empowered by the Spirit* (Acts 1:4-8)

Leader Notes

ICE BREAKER

15 minutes

What truth from last week's teaching had the most impact upon you and why?

BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT

5 minutes

In our last session, we looked at two of the four characteristics our study will cover concerning Spirit baptism. Today we will examine the last two characteristics of Spirit baptism found in the remaining chapters of the Book of Acts. It is here that we see the baptism in the Holy Spirit as both a normal and empowering experience in the lives of New Testament believers.

TEACHING AND INTERACTION (*Empowered by the Spirit*) 45 minutes

A. Spirit baptism is a normal experience.

Spirit baptism was a normal experience in the New Testament church as well as the life of believers.

1. It was a normal experience foretold in God's Word. In Part 2 of this study, we looked at specific references where Spirit baptism was promised in both the Old and New Testaments; but let's take a bird's eye view of this again.

- ¹⁴Then Peter stood up with the Eleven, raised his voice and addressed the crowd . . . ¹⁵"These men are not drunk, as you suppose. It's only nine in the morning! ¹⁶No, this is what was spoken by the prophet Joel" (Acts 2:14-16 NIV).
- ²⁸And afterward, I will pour out my Spirit on all people. Your sons and daughters will prophesy, your old men will dream dreams, your young men will see visions. ²⁹Even on my servants, both men and woman, I will pour out my Spirit in those days. ³⁰I will show wonders in the heavens and on the earth (Joel 2:28-30 NIV).
- Jesus spoke of it as a product of God's goodness: ¹³If you then, though you are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father in heaven give the Holy Spirit to those who ask him! (Luke 11:13 NIV).
- Jesus told His disciples: ⁴Do not leave Jerusalem, but wait for the gift my Father promised, which you heard me speak about. ⁵For John baptized with water, but in a few days you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit (Acts 1:4-5 NIV).

- Romans 12:1-8 gives reference to the gifts of the Spirit.
- The Book of Acts gives 13 references to being filled and refilled with the Spirit. Five of these are specific in mentioning a prayer language and eight are just references.
- 1 Corinthians 11 through 14 give reference to Spirit baptism being used in the form of a gift to the body of Christ with specific instruction regarding their operation.

GROUP INTERACTION. God foretold the giving of His Spirit long before it occurred. If the scriptures clearly present the promise of the Holy Spirit, why might this phenomenon be difficult for some to view as legitimate?

2. It was a normal experience in the life of the New Testament church. When all the references to Spirit baptism in the Book of Acts are put in chronological order, a clearer picture emerges of how normal this experience really was for the New Testament church.

- **The Day of Pentecost in Acts 2:1-13 (50 days after the resurrection).**
- **The Samaritan Revival of Acts 8:4-19 (1-2 years after Pentecost).**
- **Paul's personal experience in Acts 9:1-19 (2-3 years after Pentecost).**
- **Cornelius and the Gentiles in Acts 10:44-48; 11:15-17 (8-9 years after Pentecost).**
- **The Ephesian Disciples in Acts 19:1-7 (over 25 years after Pentecost).**
- **1 Corinthians 14 (50 years after Pentecost).**

GROUP INTERACTION. What may hinder us from experiencing the Holy Spirit as an active and “normal experience”?

3. It is a normal experience available to all. Although the Book of Corinthians teaches us that the corporate gift of tongues (to edify the entire church) is a gift given to some, the Bible teaches that Spirit baptism is available to all.

- Jesus told the disciples to teach the availability of the baptism in the Holy Spirit to all people. He told the disciples to go and teach everything that He taught and commanded them (Matthew 28:20). Part of His teaching was to expect the Holy Spirit and to wait for the Holy Spirit in Jerusalem.
- Peter showed that the Old Testament prophecies taught the availability of the baptism in the Holy Spirit to all people: ³⁹*The promise is for you and your children and for all who are afar off—for all whom the Lord our God will call* (Acts 2:39 NIV).
- Paul taught the availability of the baptism in the Holy Spirit to all believers: ⁵¹*would like every one of you to speak in tongues* (1 Corinthians 14:5 NIV).

B. Spirit baptism is an empowering experience.

When we look at how Spirit baptism affected the lives of the New Testament believers, we see three common denominators. It empowered them with a

dynamic presence of God, made them more effective witnesses, and enabled them to experience a deeper level of spiritual transformation.

- 1. Spirit baptism empowers believers with a dynamic presence of God.** Jesus employed the word “baptism” when He described the experience to His disciples:

⁴Do not leave Jerusalem, but wait for the gift my Father promised, which you heard me speak about. ⁵For John baptized with water, but in a few days you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit (Acts 1:4-5 NIV).

The word baptism means to be immersed in, plunged under, or submerged. By using this word, Jesus was helping them to understand that Spirit baptism would saturate a person with the dynamic Spirit of God. The Apostle Paul gave a personal testimony about how Spirit baptism empowered his prayer life:

²⁶In the same way, the Spirit helps us in our weakness. We do not know what we ought to pray for, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us through wordless groans. ²⁷And he who searches our hearts knows the mind of the Spirit, because the Spirit intercedes for God’s people in accordance with the will of God (Romans 8:26-27 NIV).

GROUP INTERACTION. As a group, discuss one or both of the following questions.

- **What have you ever immersed yourself in (i.e., work, hobbies, etc.)?**
- **What hinders us from being “immersed” in God’s Holy Spirit?**

- 2. Spirit baptism empowers believers to be more effective witnesses.** Jesus told His disciples that the purpose of Spirit baptism was not just to have an experience but also to make them more powerful witnesses.

⁸But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and the ends of the earth (Acts 1:8 NIV).

The word “receive” means to “get hold of” or “embrace.” We then see this supernatural empowerment demonstrated in the lives and ministries of the New Testament believers in the following ways:

- After Spirit baptism, the early Christians experienced a new dimension of power.
- After Spirit baptism, early Christians had an intensified consecration to God and dedication to His work. The Bible informs us that ⁴²*they devoted themselves to the apostles’ teaching and to the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer (Acts 2:42 NIV).*
- After Spirit baptism, the early Christians had a more active love for Christ, for His Word, and for the lost.

GROUP INTERACTION. As a group, discuss one or both of the following questions.

- **Have you ever had a more effective witness because of the Holy Spirit? Please share your experience with the group.**

- **Why do you think your witness is more effective with the Holy Spirit's power?**

3. Spirit baptism enables believers to experience a deeper level of spiritual transformation. Jesus said that Spirit baptism would empower believers to “be” something they were not and “do” something they could not in and of themselves.

⁸But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth (Acts 1:8 NIV, Emphasis added).

Jesus also said that those receiving Spirit baptism would experience a fullness of the Spirit:

*³⁷“Let anyone who is thirsty come to me and drink. ³⁸Whoever believes in me, as Scripture has said, rivers of living water will flow from within them.”
³⁹By this he meant the Spirit, whom those who believed in him were later to receive. Up to that time the Spirit had not been given, since Jesus had not yet been glorified (John 7:37-39 NIV).*

It is important to note that NOWHERE in God's Word are we told that Spirit baptism is a requirement for salvation. God has not left you ill-equipped or under-resourced to thrive as a spiritual being. Because you were created as a spiritual being and are part of a cosmic spiritual battle, God has given you access to the tools you will need to be successful on that level. It is important to remember that you are a spiritual being first and a physical being second.

GROUP INTERACTION. It is hard for us to comprehend being a spiritual being because our existence is consumed by the physical world in which we live. What causes us to forget that we are part of a spiritual battle demanding spiritual resources?

The Holy Spirit is the X-Factor that lives within you and empowers you to be a powerful witness for Christ and confront the spiritual assault and resistance that the devil will unleash on this planet and in your life.

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