

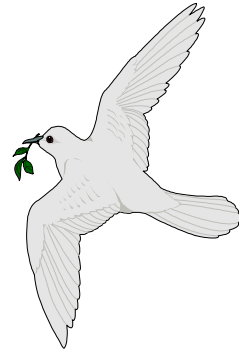
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## CHAPTER 4

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### THE MYSTERY OF NEW COVENANT UNION: THE FATHER KEEPS HIS PROMISE

**M**any fail to consider the dynamic changes which took place when the New Covenant joined God and man together. The crucifixion of Jesus changed the entire spiritual authority structure of the universe. Satan may still be around, but his dominion ended at the cross. Sin and death dominated the human race since the garden of Eden. Jesus Christ, as the last Adam, started a new race, the people of the covenant, who are not under Satan's authority. Fear was the power behind the old human race headed up by the first Adam (Genesis 3:9-10). Covenant faith is the power behind the race of new creatures in Christ (Galatians 2:20, 3:11). The power of Christ's righteousness and eternal life has replaced the power of sin and death for the believer (Romans 8:2).



Once Jesus had completed the requirements of the New Covenant, God the Father had a responsibility to fulfill. The Old Testament prophets revealed what was to come.

*“I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit within you; I will take the heart of stone out of your flesh and give you a heart of flesh. **I will put My Spirit within you** and cause you to walk in My statutes, and you will keep My judgments and do them.” (Ezekiel 36:26-27)*

God gave us this promise hundreds of years before the cross. Until the crucifixion of Christ, God's Spirit did not indwell His people. Under the old covenant, the Bible teaches that the Holy Spirit was “with” or upon an individual—but never permanently inside anyone. Under the old covenant, the presence of the Holy Spirit was conditional upon the obedience of an individual to all of God's commandments and ordinances. When a person was disobedient, the Holy Spirit left. An example of this is in I Samuel 16:14 where the Holy Spirit departed from Saul due to his continual disobedience to God's commands. David was also worried about this consequence when he prayed, “Do not cast me away from your presence, and do not take Your Holy Spirit from me” in Psalm 51:11. When Israel

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was in the desert, God dwelled **with** them in the form of the cloud by day and the pillar of fire by night. Yet, God said that there would come a time when He would send His Spirit to dwell inside His people, forever. Sin and disobedience may grieve the Holy Spirit, but He will never leave the New Covenant believer (Ephesians 4:25-32, Hebrews 13:5)

*“And I will pray the Father, and He will give you another Helper, **that He may abide with you forever**, even the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees Him nor knows Him; but you know Him, **for He dwells with you and will be in you.**” (Jesus speaking in John 14:16-17)*

After the resurrection, Jesus tells us once again of the Father’s promise to send the Holy Spirit in Acts 1:4-5...

*“And being assembled together with them, He commanded them not to depart from Jerusalem, but **to wait for the Promise of the Father**, “which,” He said “you have heard from Me; for John truly baptized with water, but you shall be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days from now.”*

Jesus instructed His disciples to wait for the Father to send the Holy Spirit. The price had been paid. The covenant had been cut and validated. Yet, man had not technically experienced his New Covenant union with God. On the day of Pentecost everything changed.

### A NEW BAPTISM

The Bible speaks about a definite sequence of events that takes place as a person experiences the new birth. These events are:

- 1) Hearing the Gospel
- 2) Repentance
- 3) Believing on Jesus Christ (You are a Christian at this point)
- 4) Water Baptism

In Acts 1:4-5, Jesus tells us about another baptism that **believers** are to receive. He refers to it as “the baptism with the Holy Spirit.” Many churches that emphasize a salvation message are very good at giving their congregation instruction in the four basic areas above. However, the

baptism with the Holy Spirit that Jesus taught, is left out, explained away or redefined to such an extent that many Christians never receive this vital spiritual empowerment. The reason most churches either avoid or redefine this experience is because of wrong doctrine or misuse. This is a serious problem in the church. There are many trusted, well-known Bible teachers who send Christians in the wrong spiritual direction on this subject.

Why is the baptism with the Holy Spirit so important? Jesus said that this provision of salvation equips the believer with power. When I look at the modern church—what stands out is a lack of power. They lack power to live victoriously. They lack power to be a witness for Christ (this is not necessarily “witnessing” as used in personal evangelism). Many are told that this is normal and that God is building their character or increasing their dependency on Him through this weakness. Many good sounding “theological” explanations are given. When talking about the New Covenant, we should keep in mind the tremendous benefit of the union of God’s Spirit and man. New Covenant union produces power in the believer’s life. The Holy Spirit is God’s power. If this is true, why do so many Christians appear powerless? We’ll examine some areas of misunderstanding that causes Christians to fail in this area.

The baptism in the Holy Spirit is the provision of Christ’s salvation that energizes the union of God and man in the New Covenant. Failing to observe Jesus’ teaching on this subject result in a life that, while producing many good things, lacks effectiveness in the things on which God has placed a priority.

*“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.” (The words of Jesus in Acts 1:8)*

#### **CLEARING UP THE CONFUSION**

Many are confused with statements like “being filled with the Holy Spirit” or “receiving the Holy Spirit.” These phrases are used interchangeably with “receiving the baptism in the Holy Spirit.” When someone becomes a Christian, they are changed inside (their spirit is recreated or reborn, or “born again”) and the Holy Spirit comes to live in them at that moment. The confusion comes from the question, “If I got the

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Holy Spirit when I was saved, why do I have to receive Him again?” Yet, the baptism in the Holy Spirit is a question of who has possession. The Holy Spirit takes up residence in a Christian when they place faith in Christ. But, the real question is, does the Holy Spirit have them? Power (or Divine enablement) in the Christian life comes only from the Holy Spirit. If control hasn't been given by yielding to the baptism in the Holy Spirit, there will be little power and fruit. The baptism in the Holy Spirit is Divine power to be a witness to Jesus. It is allowing God's Spirit to fill and overflow your life. Receiving the Holy Spirit means inviting Him to have access and control. **It is a totally separate experience from salvation.** Some Christians refer to it as “the second blessing.”

All of this should be good news. However, because of a rejection of God's ways, the baptism in the Holy Spirit is spoken against in many churches. Some congregations are taught that it is evil and of the devil. There are several reasons for this. First, many preachers believe that you “get it all” when you get saved. They readily tell you that if you are saved you have all of the Holy Spirit you're ever going to get. In a general sense, this appears to be true. Yet, the Bible does not agree with this teaching.

The second reason the baptism in the Holy Spirit is not accepted in most churches is because of the radical change that takes place in the recipient's life. A new energy, vitality and awareness overtakes such a life. At first, this “power” may seem to be a type of personal revival or a renewed enthusiasm for the things of God. However, time will show that it is more than enthusiasm. The “power” that results from a life filled with the Holy Spirit disturbs the controlled, religious atmosphere in many congregations. A Christian who is truly filled with God's Spirit has a “low tolerance” for traditional teachings that tend to replace the truth of God's Word. This zeal for defending the truth motivates them to change things around them. These “Spirit-filled” Christians can many times greatly influence believers who hunger for more of God. Spirit-filled believers are grieved when they see God's people hurting. They have a burden to see their fellow brothers and sisters in Christ come into the freedom they now enjoy. Sadly, in many mainline churches, this new zeal for God is not welcomed. It causes similar situations that we read about between Jesus and the Scribes and Pharisees. Disruption always occurs when pure Christianity confronts a Christianity mixed with religion. It is inevitable. Disagreement in Christian circles about the baptism in the Holy Spirit has continued for over a century. The

persuasive arguments against the baptism in the Holy Spirit, if believed, can cripple a Christian's spiritual maturity and keep them powerless for the rest of their life. God gave His Holy Spirit to help us. However, many Christians are cheated out of this benefit.

### JESUS—OUR EXAMPLE

The Scriptures teach that Christ's life is to be an example for us. When Jesus humbled Himself and washed the disciples' feet, He said, "For I have given you an example, that you should do as I have done to you" (John 13:15). Peter wrote, "For to this were you called, because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that you should follow in His steps" (I Peter 2:21). Finally, John wrote, "He who says he abides in Him ought himself also to walk just as He walked." It is clear from the Bible that we are to pattern our life to live like Jesus. The example that Jesus set includes the works that He did. In John 14:12, Jesus said...

*"Most assuredly, I say to you, he who believes in Me, the works that I do he will do also; and greater works than these he will do, because I go to My Father."*

Many say, "But that was Jesus and He is God. How can you expect us to live the way He did?" Christians forget what Philippians 2:5-11 says about Jesus, that though He was God, He laid aside His Godly privileges and took upon Himself the likeness of a man and became a servant. Jesus did not live His life on earth in the power He possessed as God. If He did then John 14:12 would be impossible for us to fulfill. If Jesus utilized His Godhead powers during His earthly walk then how could He experience or know the sufferings of the human race so as to qualify as our High Priest? (Hebrews 4:15) If Jesus used some power that is not available to us then it disqualifies Him to be our example. Jesus became our example by demonstrating how a man empowered and filled with the Holy Spirit is to live. He limited Himself to the same source of spiritual power to which you and I have access.

Let's read how Jesus began His earthly ministry.

*"Then Jesus came from Galilee to John at the Jordan to be baptized by him. And John tried to prevent Him, saying, 'I have need to be baptized by You, and are You coming to me?'"*

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*But Jesus answered and said to him, ‘Permit it to be so now, for thus it is fitting for us to fulfill all righteousness.’ Then he allowed Him. Then Jesus, when He had been baptized, came up immediately from the water, and behold, the heavens were opened to Him, and He saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and alighting upon Him. And suddenly a voice came from heaven, saying, ‘This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.’” (Matthew 3:13-17)*

The Bible states that John the Baptist preached a baptism of repentance (Acts 13:24). People from all over Israel came to be baptized by John and to confess their sins (Matthew 3:5-6). The baptism of Jesus is an example of the different stages a person goes through in receiving the new birth. These stages are: Hear the Gospel, repent, believe on Christ, be water baptized and receive the baptism in the Holy Spirit. Jesus didn’t have to hear the Gospel. Jesus is the Gospel. When someone preaches the Gospel, they are preaching Jesus. Jesus didn’t have to repent because He was sinless. This is evidenced by the fact that John tried to stop Jesus from being baptized (Matthew 3:14). In John’s eyes, Jesus was the only man alive that had no need of repentance or water baptism. However, Jesus convinced John to baptize Him anyway so that they could “fulfill all righteousness” (Matthew 3:15). Once again we see that Jesus sets an example for us by submitting to water baptism even though He had no need of it. The next event is most important. When Jesus came up out of the water after being baptized, the Bible says that He saw heaven open and **the Spirit of God descending upon Him** like a dove.

If you remember, we said earlier that the most common question asked by Christians about the baptism in the Holy Spirit is “If I got the Holy Spirit when I was saved, why do I have to receive Him again?” Well, the same argument could be made about Jesus in this example. Jesus was God and had the Spirit and nature of God in Him from birth. If Jesus already had the Holy Spirit, why did He have to receive Him again? The answer is that Jesus was giving us an example to follow by showing us the way to receive the power of the Holy Spirit. In the Christian life, having the Holy Spirit is not enough. You need God’s power by allowing the Holy Spirit to possess you.

It is interesting that Jesus did not perform any supernatural works until after His encounter with the Holy Spirit at the Jordan River. Only after

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Jesus was **empowered** did He start His earthly ministry. The Bible records that His first miracle was at the marriage celebration at Cana where He turned water into wine (John 2:11).

## THE BAPTISM IN THE HOLY SPIRIT—AN EARLY CHURCH PRIORITY

At this point we might ask, “Can any other examples be found in the New Testament that demonstrate the necessity for a **believer** to receive the Holy Spirit?” We’ll look at two examples that illustrate the priority the early church placed on this experience.

### PHILLIP AT SAMARIA

The events that took place in Samaria show us the importance the early church placed on Christians receiving the Holy Spirit. You should read the entire account in Acts 8:5-25. I will quote only those verses that apply to our discussion.

*“Then Phillip went down to the city of Samaria and preached Christ to them. And the multitudes with one accord heeded the things spoken by Philip, hearing and seeing the miracles which he did.” (verses 5 & 6)*

*“But when they believed Phillip as he preached the things concerning the kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ, both men and women were baptized.” (verse 12)*

*“Now when the apostles who were at Jerusalem heard that Samaria had received the Word of God, they sent Peter and John to them, who, when they had come down, prayed for them that they might receive the Holy Spirit. For as yet He had fallen upon none of them. They had only been baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. Then they laid hands on them, and they received the Holy Spirit.” (verses 14-17)*

Notice the pattern here. Phillip went to Samaria and preached Christ (preaching Christ is preaching the Gospel) to them. Samaria heard the Gospel through Phillip. Next, the Bible says that Samaria believed those things that Phillip preached—they trusted (or placed faith in) Jesus Christ.

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Next, among those who believed on Christ, both men and women, were water baptized. Verses 14-17 are important. When the apostles at Jerusalem heard that Samaria had received the Word of God, they didn't just rejoice that Phillip's evangelistic campaign had been so successful. The early church didn't believe that the process of Christ's salvation ended with water baptism. They knew that the work in Samaria was **incomplete** until they had received the Holy Spirit and His power. It is also interesting to note that Phillip was not gifted in ministering the Holy Spirit to these new Christians. Phillip did his job by introducing Samaria to Jesus. Someone else was given the task of introducing Samaria to God's Holy Spirit. The apostles in Jerusalem sent Peter and John to pray with the new believers. Peter and John laid hands on them, and they received the Holy Spirit. Once again, this is a totally separate experience that follows the new birth.

### **THE DISCIPLES OF JOHN RECEIVE THE HOLY SPIRIT**

*“And it happened, while Apollos was at Corinth, that Paul, having passed through the upper regions, came to Ephesus. And finding some disciples he said to them, ‘Did you receive the Holy Spirit when you believed?’ And they said to him, ‘We have not so much as heard whether there is a Holy Spirit.’ And he said to them, ‘Into what then were you baptized?’ So they said, ‘Into John’s baptism.’ Then Paul said, ‘John indeed baptized with a baptism of repentance, saying to the people that they should believe on Him who would come after Him, that is, on Christ Jesus.’ When they heard this, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. And when Paul had laid hands on them, the Holy Spirit came upon them, and they spoke with tongues and prophesied.” (Acts 19:1-6)*

Paul found some disciples of John the Baptist at Ephesus. These men were followers of John but had never been exposed to the Gospel. Notice the probing nature of Paul's question, “Did you receive the Holy Spirit when you believed?” Their response to this question revealed to Paul that they had never heard the complete New Testament Gospel message. They received John's doctrine and baptism but failed to continue on into the teaching of the One for whom John was sent. Paul proceeded to share the Gospel with them. When they heard it, they were water baptized in Jesus' name. Paul did not stop and rejoice that these men had experienced the new birth. He didn't give them some literature and send them on their way. Paul



realized that to end with water baptism was to provide these men with an **incomplete** salvation. Did these men have eternal life? Yes, they did. What they didn't have was the power of the Holy Spirit. The Bible says when Paul laid hands on them, "the Holy Spirit came upon them, and they spoke with tongues and prophesied." Paul did not consider the work complete until the Holy Spirit had fallen on them.

### **MY PERSONAL EXPERIENCE WITH THE HOLY SPIRIT**

I was saved in December 1969 as a teenager. My experience started when a young man by the name of Tom came to the restaurant where I worked. He needed a job and was assigned to work with me in the kitchen. One day, as we worked the grill during lunch rush, Tom asked me the question, "Have you ever asked Jesus Christ to be the Lord of your life?" I had grown up in a church going family. But no one had ever asked me this question in such a direct way. I said, "Well... I've gone to church." Tom said, "That's not what I asked you." Tom then explained to me what it meant to be a Christian. Over the next few months Tom and I became good friends. I attended Bible studies where I heard the Gospel. These events led me to entrust my life to Christ. I was later water baptized in a Southern Baptist church.

I was a Christian. I had heard the Gospel and understood it. I changed my direction and put my faith in Christ. I attended church and studied the Bible. However, my spiritual life didn't seem to be going anywhere. I would spend time praying, reading the Bible and going to church services, but these things didn't seem to have much life. I continued in this condition for almost 3 years. One night in frustration, I remember laying my head down on my desk and praying, "This can't be all there is. If there is anything else, Father, please show me." I only had to wait a few weeks for my answer.

I was working late one night at the same restaurant. A husband and wife came in, ordered some food and sat down at one of the tables to eat. About 15 minutes later, the husband, whose name was Chuck, came up to me at the counter and began to talk. He was very friendly. Without going into detail about our conversation, he invited me to come to visit them one night the following week. I politely refused. It was not my habit to visit anyone's house I did not know. Before Chuck left we traded phone numbers. Giving a total stranger my phone number was not something I normally did. Chuck

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called me every week to invite me over to visit. I always found some excuse not to go. Finally, running out of excuses, I decided to accept his invitation. As it turned out, meeting Chuck and his wife was one of those “Divine appointments” that changed my life—and I almost missed it. When we first met at the restaurant, I didn’t know that they were Christians. On the night I visited them, I had an encounter with God that changed my view of Christianity forever. Chuck and I became friends and some months later he prayed for me to receive the baptism in the Holy Spirit. I learned about a whole area of Christianity I never knew existed. Many of the things being shared in this book are a direct result of meeting Chuck and his wife almost 35 years ago. I had prayed that God would show me if there was anything more. He answered my prayer by sending someone to make sure I received the power of the Holy Spirit. Even though I was saved, my response to the Gospel was incomplete. God did not want to leave me in that condition.

Many Christians secretly ask, “Is there anything more? Is this all there is.” If you’re in that place, God certainly has more to show you.

## THE EVIDENCE OF THE BAPTISM WITH THE HOLY SPIRIT

Many who read this might ask the question, “How do I know that I have received the baptism with the Holy Spirit?” As I said earlier, the power of the Holy Spirit is accompanied with a vitality and enthusiasm for the things of God. The Bible takes on new meaning because the Holy Spirit is now released to give you spiritual insight into Divine truth (John 16:13). You’ll discover many of the blockages to your understanding of the Holy Scriptures are removed. I Corinthians 2:12-13 explains why...

*“Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is from God, **that we might know the things that have been freely given to us by God.** These things we also speak, not in words which man’s wisdom teaches but which the Holy Spirit teaches, comparing spiritual things with spiritual.”*

In many cases, the Holy Spirit will teach you things that men who have years of Seminary training (but who have not received the power of the Holy Spirit) do not understand or believe in. As you grow spiritually, you will notice that religious thinking found within Christianity will try to replace the Holy Spirit with head knowledge, methods of Bible interpretation and formal religious training. One of the most spiritually

destructive counterfeits in the church today is when the knowledge of the Holy Spirit is replaced with the power of the human intellect—and the Holy Spirit will give you the ability to discern it. You'll begin to discern the difference between Bible truth and religious error in church teachings—and yes there's a lot of it around. All these things begin to happen when the Holy Spirit is released as "teacher" in your life.

*"But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My name, He will teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all things that I said to you." (John 14:26)*

Where the Holy Spirit is allowed to rule—the gifts of the Holy Spirit discussed in I Corinthians chapter 12, will begin to operate. These gifts are given to each member of the body of Christ as the Spirit wills to meet ministry needs within the Church.

There are many other evidences. However, the Bible speaks of a primary evidence that occurs in the life of a person who has received the baptism of the Holy Spirit. In almost every place in the book of Acts where the Holy Spirit fell, the people spoke in tongues. There are five recorded incidences where the baptism in the Holy Spirit occurred in the book of Acts. The most common one is found in Acts 2:4 where 120 men and women were waiting on the Holy Spirit in an upper room in Jerusalem...

*"And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance."*

We previously read about another example in Acts 19:1-7 where Paul found a group of John's disciples who had never heard about salvation through Jesus Christ. First of all, Paul led them to a saving knowledge of Christ, baptized them in water and then laid hands on them to receive the Holy Spirit...

*"And when Paul had laid hands on them, the Holy Spirit came upon them, and they spoke with tongues and prophesied."*

On your own, read about how the Holy Spirit was received in Acts 10:44-48, Acts 9:17-19 (also read the Apostle Paul's words in I Corinthians 14:18) and Acts 8:5-25. In all accounts except one, the Holy Spirit was received with the evidence of tongues. The exception in Acts 8:5-25 does not say that the people who received the Holy Spirit didn't speak with

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tongues...it just doesn't comment. From the accounts in the book of Acts, the Bible teaches that the baptism in the Holy Spirit is evidenced by speaking in tongues. There is no Biblical support for the notion that the Holy Spirit can be received without this unique evidence.

By definition, tongues is a language that the Holy Spirit enables you to speak which is unknown to you. It is "spiritual" language. It can be a language of man (known earthly languages) or it can be a language of the angels, which is unknown to the earth (I Corinthians 13:1). Read all of Acts chapter 2 for the full account of what happened when the 120 men and women who were gathered in the upper room received the Holy Spirit and spoke in tongues in Jerusalem. In this case, the tongues were earthly languages. This event set the stage for the salvation of more than 3000 people, marking the birth of the first century church.

When you speak in tongues your words makes no sense to your mind (I Corinthians 14:14). It is perfectly natural to feel awkward and even embarrassed during your first encounter with this gift. Most religious people consider the Biblical experience of tongues to be foolishness. A sad fact is that other Christians will try to discourage or even shun you for even believing in this gift. This type of persecution follows almost every aspect of the Spirit-filled life (II Timothy 3:12). Jesus and the apostles had to endure rejection and ridicule—and so will you. Speaking in tongues is usually your first step into a vital supernatural relationship with God.

"Spirit-filled" Christians are commonly accused of being prideful and acting "superior" to everyone else. Pride can enter the life of any Christian. However, the only real difference between "Spirit-filled" Christians and those who are not is the decision to be fully obedient to the New Testament Gospel and receive the power of the Holy Spirit. It's the life of the Holy Spirit that upsets "religiously oriented" Christians. Most churches do not like to be upset. Yet, God is in the "upsetting" business. It was said of the early Christians, "These who have turned the world upside down have come here too" (Acts 17:6). If He is allowed to, the Holy Spirit will turn the religious world upside down...through you. Yet, never expect other professing Christians to applaud your efforts in this area. They won't. The baptism in the Holy Spirit is not just for the clergy or a privileged few but for any Christian who desires all God has to offer.

## THE PURPOSE OF SPIRITUAL LANGUAGE

Tongues have at least three purposes in the New Covenant. First, it is an intercessory prayer language for the Spirit-filled Christian (Romans 8:26-27). Second, it is a sign to unbelievers (I Corinthians 14:22) as demonstrated on the day of Pentecost when each heard the wonderful works of God in their own language (Acts 2:4-12). Third, it is a gift of the Spirit to be used in public worship (I Corinthians 14:26-28). The apostle Paul gave rules for the use of tongues **in public worship**. For instance, if an interpreter is not present, speaking in tongues is not to be used out loud in public (I Corinthians 14:27-28). The critics do not differentiate how tongues are used in the life of the Church. Their criticism is designed to convince inexperienced Christians to believe that speaking in tongues is either unimportant or irrelevant and should be ignored. Scripture is taken out of context to make the Bible appear as if it supports their argument. For instance, the apostle Paul states in I Corinthians 12:30 and I Corinthians 14:5 that not everyone speaks in tongues. However, he was discussing the subject **in the context of a public worship service**. It is true that God has not gifted everyone to operate in this public ministry gift. However, every Spirit-filled Christian is given the ability to use this power-filled language of the Holy Spirit in their prayer life. Critics use these scriptures out of context to build a case that God has given spiritual language to some but not all. They say that God has not given this gift for any believer to use today (they argue that it was only for the early church). By applying this reasoning to all three areas of use, you can effectively discourage your listeners from seeking this spiritual empowerment from heaven. I've heard just about all the arguments. If you don't know your Bible, you can easily be misled by the teachings of your own denomination.

It is not the goal of this book to cover the subject of speaking in tongues in detail. In the following paragraphs we cover the purpose of spiritual language (or speaking in tongues) as it relates to the believer's prayer life. It is this area of "prayer" that we can begin to see the real power that the baptism with the Holy Spirit brings to the Christian.

The reason the subject of tongues is so unpopular in many churches is because its purpose is misunderstood. Religious people reject speaking in tongues because they are offended by its apparent foolishness. Some might ask, "Why do I need to speak words I can't understand?" We need to

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recognize that the Bible defines tongues as “the language of the Holy Spirit”. It is direct communication between the Holy Spirit in you and your heavenly Father. The communication is not directed toward us (our intellect)—it is directed toward God. I heard one dear Christian put it this way, “If you don’t understand what you’re saying in tongues—that’s what you get for opening someone else’s mail!” The apostle Paul discusses this subject in I Corinthians 14:2...

*“For he who speaks in a tongue does not speak to men but to God, for no one understands him; however, in the spirit he speaks mysteries.”*

What I am about to say is of utmost importance. It is one of the issues that demonstrates why the baptism in the Holy Spirit and the subject of tongues is so important in the New Covenant. The Bible teaches that God’s ability to move in the earth on our behalf is greatly restricted by the lack of prayer by His people. James 4:2 says...

*“You lust and do not have. You murder and covet and cannot obtain. You fight and war. **Yet you do not have because you do not ask.**”*

Ezekiel 22:30-31 discusses God’s problem when He looked for an intercessor and could not find one...

*“So I sought for a man among them who would make a wall, and stand in the gap before Me on behalf of the land, that I should not destroy it; but I found no one. Therefore I have poured out My indignation on them; I have consumed them with the fire of My wrath...”*

There is something that hinders God from moving the way He wants when we fail to pray. I believe this mystery is directly connected to His respect for covenant. The Bible teaches that God will grant whatever we ask in Jesus’ name (John 14:13-14). The condition is that we must ask. James said we don’t have—because we don’t ask. For God to be able to move the way He wants in the earth, the request must come through a human channel. The apostle Paul illustrates God’s commitment to His covenant when he discusses the subject of the “body of Christ.” Christ’s body is compared to a physical human body with its different members (I Corinthians 12). Christians are Christ’s body in the earth. Jesus

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accomplishes His work in the earth only through His people, who are the “containers” that hold his Holy Spirit. When the work of God fails, it is because His people failed. In a physical body, the head does not separate itself to go off and do things independently. There is no Biblical evidence to indicate that Jesus, as the head, will move independently of His people, the body of Christ. We see this truth illustrated again in the “great commission” (Matthew 28:18-20). Jesus said, “All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. Go, therefore and make disciples of all the nations...” In this statement, Jesus demonstrated His covenant commitment. He didn’t say, “All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. Therefore, I will go and make disciples of all the nations for you.” Remember in a blood covenant all liabilities and assets are held mutually. Jesus was stating a covenant truth. If Jesus has received all power in heaven and on earth then we have access to the same power as His body. Jesus expects us to use His power to change this planet. Jesus works **with** us, but not in our place. If the body of Christ fails to preach the Gospel—then it doesn’t get preached. God will not somehow go around us and do it anyway. Just like in a physical body—the head can never leave the body behind—and Jesus will never leave us behind. Jesus is committed to us, even when we fail, because we are His body in the earth. God’s covenant commitment in this area has direct implications to our prayer life.

Christians who fail to receive the baptism in the Holy Spirit can only pray for things they personally know about. They pray in their native language and are **limited to their natural understanding**—and God will generally answer their requests. However, Spirit-filled Christians who pray using the language of the Holy Spirit (or tongues) allow the Holy Spirit to pray through them to the Father. The natural understanding of the Spirit-filled Christian has no part to play when tongues are being used. Saint Paul said that the natural understanding of a person praying in tongues is unfruitful (I Corinthians 14:14). The word “unfruitful” as Paul uses it here means that you can’t understand the meaning of the words you are speaking. The knowledge of the Holy Spirit is unlimited because He is omni-present (He’s everywhere all the time). Therefore, **the intercessory prayer of a Spirit-filled believer is unlimited** because the Holy Spirit is doing the praying. By praying in tongues, a believer in America (for example) can allow the Holy Spirit to petition the Father to move in specific ways for someone in India whom he has never met. Only the Holy Spirit knows the specific details. Religious people malign spiritual language because they

don't understand what they're praying for—and for that reason they consider it foolish “gibberish”. You see, as flawed human beings it's natural to want to be in control. Yet, **by using spiritual language in your intercessory prayer life you yield this control so that the Holy Spirit can accomplish His special purposes and priorities through you.** You and the Holy Spirit are joined together in the oneness of a blood covenant. Covenant oneness means that when you permit the Holy Spirit to pray through you, God sees it as “you” praying and immediately grants the request. Praying in tongues (Saint Paul called it praying in the Spirit) is always according to the will of God and is one of the highest honors in the Christian life.

## HOW TO RECEIVE THE BAPTISM WITH THE HOLY SPIRIT

The first step in receiving the baptism with the Spirit is making sure you've met the prerequisites. If you've heard the New Testament Gospel and trusted Jesus Christ as your redeemer and Lord (as Saint Paul taught in Romans 10:9-10) you're ready for the next step. The baptism with the Holy Spirit is only for authentic Christians.

A personal self-examination is crucial. A complete break from all known sin must take place—especially in the area of the occult. Involvement with palm readers, ouija boards, witchcraft, horoscopes, seances (communication with the dead), astral-projection, channeling or any other such practices involving “spiritism” will hinder or prevent a person from receiving the infilling of the Holy Spirit. Things like heavy metal rock and rap music that contain sexual, profane, and violent content also fall into this territory. God's Spirit is called the “Holy” Spirit. You cannot dabble in Satan's domain and expect to walk with God. Another area of examination deals with our attitude toward the gifts and operation of the Holy Spirit's rule in our life. These things include the nine gifts of the Spirit and especially speaking in tongues. Speaking in tongues is one evidence that the baptism in the Holy Spirit has been received by the believer in Christ. If you hold objections that are contrary to Scripture in this area, it will hinder or prevent you from receiving. Some people want the baptism in the Spirit, yet refuse to accept speaking in tongues because it offends their theology. They place their personal beliefs above what God has said in this matter. Others have been taught wrong things in their church. The baptism in the Holy Spirit is usually received only by those who have completely



surrendered their will to God and who have set themselves in full agreement with His Word.

If you have been involved in any of these activities or attitudes, go before your heavenly Father in prayer and renounce each one by name. Be specific. Your heavenly Father will graciously forgive.

The last step may depend upon your situation. You should have someone who is spiritually equipped by God to minister the Holy Spirit by laying hands on you and praying. Receiving the Holy Spirit through the act of “laying on of hands” is the Bible way. Find a church that believes in the baptism in the Holy Spirit with all its Biblical evidences. You shouldn’t have to become a member of the church to partake of this vital ministry. Yet, I warn you to proceed with caution because there are some churches that use the gifts of the Holy Spirit in an unruly and unbiblical manner. Your best course of action is to pray and trust God to guide you. Remember that your heavenly Father wants you to have the power of His Spirit more than you want it.

If the situation exists where no qualified minister is available, go to Jesus directly and ask Him to baptize you with the Holy Spirit. Many in the older generation of Spirit-filled believers received the Holy Spirit this way because it wasn’t as widely accepted or practiced as it is today. When you go to Jesus, you could pray something like...

*“Lord Jesus, I understand that it is You who baptizes with the Holy Spirit and fire. I also know that this baptism cannot be earned by good works or by being good enough. By faith, I am asking You, right now, to baptize me with the Holy Spirit so that I might have the power to live the way you commanded me to live before an unbelieving world. I believe that I am receiving your Holy Spirit right now.”*

At the end of your prayer, it is crucial to receive the baptism in the Holy Spirit by faith. In Mark 10:15 Jesus said that whoever does not receive the kingdom of God as a little child would by no means enter it. To complete the receiving of the baptism in the Holy Spirit, you should yield yourself to speaking in tongues. This doesn’t necessarily mean that God is going to over-power you and force words out of your mouth. He doesn’t work that way. You must do the yielding—and you must do the speaking. The Holy

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Spirit will give you the words as you speak them in faith. Being “child-like” in this area is both difficult and embarrassing for adults because our knowledge and experience shapes the way we respond to situations. Adults tend to be skeptical about many things. Skepticism will always hinder or stop the baptism in the Holy Spirit. When dealing with the spiritual realm God tells us to have a child-like faith and trust. After all, we are God’s children—so it’s not unreasonable for Him to make this request of us. Most children have a trusting attitude. If you tell them something, their first response is to believe you. God tells us to have this same attitude toward His Word. If God said that speaking in tongues is necessary, He wants you to believe Him regardless of how it feels or looks to others. Remember that the group in Jerusalem that spoke in tongues were accused of being drunk (Acts 2:13). The best way I have found is to start acting like you can speak in tongues by speaking out loud using words you don’t understand. Act like the Word of God is true for you! You need to get accustomed to this spiritual benefit. You’ll be using it for the rest of your earthly life. Some believers have no problem. Others, who may struggle with this type of simplistic faith, may have great difficulty. Some may have a powerful experience on the spot as God’s Spirit envelops them. For others, there will be no sense that anything has happened and the feelings will come later. No matter what happens, it is essential that you purpose in your heart to receive the baptism in the Holy Spirit at the time you pray for it. You cannot base your receiving on how you feel. You’re using Bible faith if you believe you received the power of the Holy Spirit when you prayed. If you’re looking to receive in the future, you’re not asking in faith and should not expect to receive anything from the Lord (Mark 11:24 and James 1:6-7).

The baptism in the Holy Spirit is serious business with God. You should never view it as some “blessing” that God may or may not want to give you. It makes the difference between success and failure in the Christian life. God wants His children empowered. It’s the only way He can accomplish His will in the earth. For this reason God will never withhold the Holy Spirit from any Christian who is sincere about receiving Him (Luke 11:11-13).

### INCOMPLETE EVANGELISM

When we talk about the “Mystery of the Faith,” one of our goals is to expose things that keep believers in a place of powerlessness. A lack of

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knowledge about the new covenant in Christ's blood is certainly a major part. However, preaching an incomplete Gospel by failing to take new Christians into the baptism with the Holy Spirit is another major area of neglect. It's like sending soldiers into battle without the powerful weapons needed to get the job done. Satan cannot stop the new birth. However, he can distort the Gospel message through religious and traditional reasoning to such an extent that it produces Christians with no power to do the things God has called them to do. If you are a Christian who has never received the baptism with the Holy Spirit, God has not left you powerless. Spiritual power is still as much available to us as it was in the book of Acts. You can experience the energizing effect of your covenant union with God through receiving the baptism with the Holy Spirit. If you're a Christian you have God's Spirit. Now, make your obedience to the Gospel of Jesus Christ complete by allowing God's Spirit to have you.