

## *Abundant Life Lesson 4 - The Holy Ghost*

### Introduction

In the Greek, there is only one word used for the Holy Ghost which makes for an easy word study:

*Pneuma* - a spirit; a wind; breath.

When referencing the Spirit of God, *Pneuma* is translated in the King James Version as both "Holy Spirit" and "Holy Ghost." There is absolutely no difference between the two and the dual words were supplied by the English translators. If you go back to the Greek, the words are the same. John 4:24 tells us that God is a Spirit. Revelation 15:4 tells us that God alone is holy so the "Holy Spirit" can only refer to the Spirit of God, Himself. Most modern English translations translate the word as Holy Spirit. The term is particularly used for when the Spirit of God moves in or among men.

### The Old Testament Prophecies

There are many references to the Holy Ghost in the Old Testament scriptures. Isaiah prophesied that God would use "speaking in tongues" (which we will see always accompanies the infilling of the Holy Ghost) as a part of the "rest" that God would send:

**Isa 28:11-12 For by people of strange lips and with a foreign tongue the Lord will speak to this people, 12 to whom he has said, "This is rest; give rest to the weary; and this is repose"; yet they would not hear. ESV**

Paul quoted this verse while teaching the church in Corinth on things of the Spirit:

**1 Cor 14:21 In the Law it is written, "By people of strange tongues and by the lips of foreigners will I speak to this people, and even then they will not listen to me, says the Lord." ESV**

The prophet Joel also prophesied that God would pour out His Spirit upon all flesh. On the Day of Pentecost in Acts chapter 2, Peter quoted much of this prophecy and said that the outpouring of the Holy Ghost was the fulfillment of Joel's prophecy:

**Joel 2:28-29 "And it shall come to pass afterward, that I will pour out my Spirit on all flesh; your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your old men shall dream dreams, and your young men shall see visions. 29 Even on the male and female servants in those days I will pour out my Spirit. ESV**

Isaiah also prophesied of the same event:

**Isa 32:15 until the Spirit is poured upon us from on high, and the wilderness becomes a fruitful field, and the fruitful field is deemed a forest. ESV**

### The New Testament Prophecies

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John the Baptist is quoted by all four Gospel writers saying that Jesus Christ would baptize with Holy Ghost and with fire (Matthew 3:11; Mark 1:8; Luke 3:16; John 1:33).

Jesus Christ, Himself, also prophesied about the Holy Ghost outpouring. He referred to it in 3 different ways:

1. A river of living water bringing eternal life - John 4:10-14
2. Being born again into the kingdom of God - John 3:1-8
3. A comforter which would help us - John 14:16-17

Most people do not realize that the Holy Ghost was not poured out until after Jesus Christ was crucified and ascended into heaven.

**John 7:37-39 On the last day of the feast, the great day, Jesus stood up and cried out, "If anyone thirsts, let him come to me and drink. 38 Whoever believes in me, as the Scripture has said, 'Out of his heart will flow rivers of living water.'" 39 Now this he said about the Spirit, whom those who believed in him were to receive, for as yet the Spirit had not been given, because Jesus was not yet glorified. ESV**

When Jesus ministered, the people were still under the law, which accounts for why no one received this wonderful experience until Acts chapter 2 (Jesus ascended into heaven in Acts chapter 1).

### *Descriptions of the Holy Ghost*

There are many in scripture. Just to name a few:

1. Spirit of Christ - Romans 8:9-11.
2. A spiritual baptism - I Corinthians 12:13.
3. A new birth - John 3:1-8.
4. A seal, or stamp of approval from the King of Kings - Ephesians 4:30.
5. The guarantee (like a down payment) of our inheritance - II Corinthians 1:22.
6. A rest and repose - Isaiah 28:11-12.
7. Spirit of Adoption which makes God our Father - Romans 8:15.
8. Living Water - I Corinthians 10:1-4.
9. The Helper - John 14.

### *Speaking in Tongues*

The Bible is very specific in identifying the infilling of the Holy Spirit with "speaking in other tongues as the Spirit gives the utterance." Nearly every time in scripture, with one notable exception, that someone received the Holy Ghost they spoke in a language that they had never learned or studied as God moved through them. We have already seen how that Isaiah prophesied about this, and Paul wrote to the church in Corinth that he

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spoke with tongues more than all of them (I Corinthians 14:18) so we know that it was not a one-time event. Here are some scriptural examples of people actually receiving the Holy Ghost:

1. The Day of Pentecost - There were 120 people that received the experience followed by 3,000:

**Acts 2:1-4** When the day of Pentecost arrived, they were all together in one place. **2** And suddenly there came from heaven a sound like a mighty rushing wind, and it filled the entire house where they were sitting. **3** And divided tongues as of fire appeared to them and rested on each one of them. **4** And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues as the Spirit gave them utterance. **ESV**

The people in the Upper Room felt a presence like wind move into the room. Each person was speaking in a different language. Notice that the Spirit "gave them utterance" and they were not taught by other men to "speak in tongues" as some churches do.

2. The Samaritan Revival - It is conclusive that they spoke with tongues when they received the Holy Ghost:

**Acts 8:14-18** Now when the apostles at Jerusalem heard that Samaria had received the word of God, they sent to them Peter and John, **15** who came down and prayed for them that they might receive the Holy Spirit, **16** for he had not yet fallen on any of them, but they had only been baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. **17** Then they laid their hands on them and they received the Holy Spirit. **18** Now when Simon saw that the Spirit was given through the laying on of the apostles' hands, he offered them money, **ESV**

Notice that the Samaritans did not automatically receive the Holy Ghost when they believed or were baptized as some people teach. It is possible for a person to believe or even be baptized and receive the Holy Ghost some time later. The point here is that when they received the Holy Ghost, Simon, who was standing by, "saw" that the Holy Ghost was given. How could he "see" something invisible come in? Because he saw the effects of the Holy Ghost.

3. The Gentiles in Cornelius' House - The Holy Ghost with the evidence of speaking in other tongues was poured out on the Gentiles (non-Jewish people) as well. It is very obvious that God did not intend for this experience to be only a one-time event on the Day of Pentecost:

**Acts 10:44-48** While Peter was still saying these things, the Holy Spirit fell on all who heard the word. **45** And the believers from among the circumcised who had come with Peter were amazed, because the gift of the Holy Spirit was poured out even on the Gentiles. **46** For they were hearing them speaking in tongues and extolling God. Then Peter declared, **47** "Can anyone withhold water for baptizing

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**these people, who have received the Holy Spirit just as we have?" ESV**

Notice that Cornelius and his family received the Holy Ghost first and then were baptized in water. Even today people may receive the Holy Ghost before they are baptized, but that does not mean that they do not need water baptism, because Peter went on and commanded Cornelius' family to be baptized (Acts 10:47-48).

4. The Disciples of John the Baptist that Paul met - These were the men who were re-baptized in the name of Jesus. They also received the gift of the Holy Ghost:

**Acts 19:1-6 And it happened that while Apollos was at Corinth, Paul passed through the inland country and came to Ephesus. There he found some disciples. 2 And he said to them, "Did you receive the Holy Spirit when you believed?" And they said, "No, we have not even heard that there is a Holy Spirit." 3 And he said, "Into what then were you baptized?" They said, "Into John's baptism." 4 And Paul said, "John baptized with the baptism of repentance, telling the people to believe in the one who was to come after him, that is, Jesus." 5 On hearing this, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. 6 And when Paul had laid his hands on them, the Holy Spirit came on them, and they began speaking in tongues and prophesying. ESV**

Notice that the men also prophesied. Some people falsely teach that prophecy (speaking anointed words from God in a known language) is also a sign of receiving the Holy Ghost. That is not true. All of the prophets of the Old Testament prophesied before the Holy Ghost was even available so prophecy cannot be a true sign of the infilling of the Holy Ghost. In the New Testament, people may have prophesied; they may have magnified God; they may have acted like drunks when they received the Holy Ghost; but they ALWAYS spoke with other tongues as the Spirit gave the utterance. The tongues are NOT the Holy Ghost, but merely a sign to the seeker that they have received the Spirit of God within them. The first time that a person "speaks in tongues as the Spirit gives the utterance" they are receiving the Holy Ghost. After a person is filled with the Holy Ghost, God uses tongues for other things. There are several ways that God uses tongues in scripture:

1. The initial sign of the infilling of the Holy Ghost. (as we have just studied)
2. A renewing of the Holy Ghost. (Titus 3:5, Acts 4:31)
3. Praying in the Holy Ghost, building up our most holy Faith. (Jude 1:20)
4. The Gift of Tongues and Interpretation, when God wants to speak directly to a church congregation. (I Corinthians 12:10; 14:1-40)

### *Synonymous Terms For the Gift of the Holy Ghost*

There are ten "expressions" that all refer to receiving the Holy Ghost. They are used interchangeably throughout scripture and all mean the same thing:

1. Baptism of the Holy Ghost - Ephesians 4:5; Matthew 3:11; Mark 1:8; Luke 3:16; Acts

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- 1:5; I Corinthians 12:13.
2. Filled with the Holy Ghost - Acts 2:1-4; 9:17.
  3. Gift of the Holy Ghost - Acts 2:38; 8:20; 10:45; 11:17; Romans 5:5; 6:23.
  4. Received the Holy Ghost - Acts 8:15-19; 10:47; 19:2; John 7:37-39.
  5. Holy Ghost come upon you - Acts 1:8; 19:6.
  6. Poured out - Joel 2:28-29; Acts 2:17; 10:45.
  7. Sent down from heaven - I Peter 1:12.
  8. Sound from heaven - Acts 2:2.
  9. Holy Ghost fell - Acts 8:16; 10:44; 11:15.
  10. Shed on us - Titus 3:5-6; Acts 2:33; Romans 5:5.

That these terms are interchangeable is discernable from, for instance, when Cornelius and his household received the Holy Ghost, four of these terms (fell, poured out, gift, and receive) were used yet they only received one experience (Acts 10:44-48).

### *Is Receiving the Holy Ghost Essential for Salvation?*

According to scripture it is. Notice the following scriptures:

**John 3:5-6** Jesus answered, "Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God. ESV

**John 7:38-39** Whoever believes in me, as the Scripture has said, 'Out of his heart will flow rivers of living water.'" 39 Now this he said about the Spirit, whom those who believed in him were to receive, for as yet the Spirit had not been given, because Jesus was not yet glorified. ESV

The word translated "were to" here literally means "to have the duty to do" in the Greek.

**Acts 2:38** And Peter said to them, "Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins, and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. ESV

**Rom 8:9-11** You, however, are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if in fact the Spirit of God dwells in you. Anyone who does not have the Spirit of Christ does not belong to him. 10 But if Christ is in you, although the body is dead because of sin, the Spirit is life because of righteousness. 11 If the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, he who raised Christ Jesus from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through his Spirit who dwells in you. ESV

**Titus 3:5** he saved us, not because of works done by us in righteousness, but according to his own mercy, by the washing of regeneration and renewal of the Holy Spirit, ESV

Notice that Paul said that we are saved by the "washing of regeneration (baptism) and renewal of the Holy Spirit. The word "regeneration" means "spiritual rebirth" or

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“figuratively, spiritual renovation”. When Adam and Eve were in the garden, they were commanded to not eat of the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil because in the day that they ate, they would "surely die" (Genesis 2:17). They did eat of the tree but they did not physically die that day. Through study of the Scripture, we will see that there was "spiritual death" that day and the close relationship between God and man was lost. Romans 5:12 tells us that the spiritual death brought on by Adam was passed on to every man so that all of us are born without that close relationship with God. When you receive the Holy Ghost, that relationship is restored, and what was once dead is "regenerated." The close relationship between God and man is restored that was lost in the Garden of Eden!

### Who Can Have the Holy Ghost?

Anyone! God is no respecter of persons. Jews received it on the Day of Pentecost (Acts 2). The mixed-race Samaritans received it in Acts chapter 8. Gentiles (non-Jews) received it in Acts chapter 10. Jesus taught that God would willingly give it:

**Luke 11:13 If you then, who are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will the heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask him!" ESV**

Peter joined in saying that the Holy Ghost was for anyone sensitive to the call of God:

**Acts 2:38b-39 and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. 39 For the promise is for you and for your children and for all who are far off, everyone whom the Lord our God calls to himself." ESV**

Millions have received the Holy Ghost all over the world from every tongue, culture, and background. God will fill YOU with the Holy Ghost if you ask Him!

### How Do I Receive the Holy Ghost?

You must believe that Jesus Christ is your savior and God and the only one who can save you. You must truly repent of your sins and sinful behavior to Jesus Christ. You must be baptized in the name of Jesus, even though sometimes people receive the Holy Ghost first. You then must ask God for the Holy Ghost and begin to praise Him in "spirit and in truth." You must forget about everything else and surrender everything to God. As you begin to truly praise God, you will feel Him and His Spirit all around you. As you submit to that, your tongue will become "heavy" or "thick" feeling as if you are losing control of it. Submit to that feeling and allow God to take complete control of your tongue. At the same time, you will feel something began to rise out of you like a "river of living water." Even though, the Holy Ghost is coming in you, it will fill like something is flowing out of you, because your spirit man is being regenerated. As this river flows through your praise and worship, God will cause your language to change, and whether you are even aware of it or not, you will begin to speak in other tongues as the Spirit gives the utterance. Sometimes people are so lost in the euphoric experience of the Spirit of God

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moving into them, that they do not realize that they are speaking in other tongues until much later!

There are only 4 things that can cause a person not to receive the Holy Ghost when they seek it:

1. Failure to truly repent - You must be willing to change anything in your life!
2. Unbelief - Doubt that God can/will really do it for you.
3. Failure to worship God completely and outwardly - Worship and being sensitive to the Spirit comes more natural for some than others. I have seen people get the Holy Ghost sitting down, standing up, jumping, dancing, sitting still, kneeling, in a car, in a service, at a job, at a school, but I have NEVER seen anyone receive the Holy Ghost WITHOUT them first opening their mouth and praising God out loud. All pride and care of what others might think must vanish in the presence of almighty God.
4. Seeking to speak in tongues - The speaking in tongues accompany the Holy Ghost and are not the Holy Ghost itself. You should pray to receive the gift of the Holy Ghost, and the speaking in tongues will come with it. The Holy Ghost is the Spirit of God coming to live within your life. Forget about speaking in tongues and surrender completely to God's Spirit: the speaking in tongues will happen naturally.

### Conclusion

God still fills people with the Holy Ghost today. Being born again of the Spirit is just one of the first steps of living for God completely. After you receive it, the Holy Ghost will try to "reprove you of sin," "lead you into all truth," and "discern" what we need to do in God (see John 16:13,18; Romans 8:26). Initial Biblical salvation is not hard to achieve. It is your responsibility to repent. Then you must allow the minister to baptize you in the name of Jesus Christ in water. Then when you surrender completely to Him, God will baptize you with the Holy Ghost. You then stand ready to move on and grow closer to God and learn to serve Him in everyday living.

Stephen, the first martyr of the church, was declared to be "full of the Holy Ghost" (Acts 6:3,8). May we all attain that wonderful level in God!