

## INTRODUCTION AND OVERVIEW

The “baptism” of the Holy Spirit is central to the Christian life. It is neither an option nor something only for the elite, but is something Jesus said would be given to all who “ask”. Jesus told us the importance of the Holy Spirit and that it is better that He go to the Father because He would send us the Holy Spirit which would enable us to do the things He did.

- Because of the Holy Spirit there are gifts given to the body of Christ for ministry. *1 Cor 12:1-10*
- Because of the Holy Spirit there is fruit in the Christian life. *Gal 5:22-23*
- Because of the Holy Spirit there is power to live victoriously. *Rom 6:10-14*
- Because of the Holy Spirit there is the ability to witness. *Acts 1:8*
- Because of the Holy Spirit there is healing, evangelism, social justice, outreach, etc. *Jn 14:12*
- Because of the Holy Spirit there is love in our hearts. *Rom 5:5*
- Because of the Holy Spirit there is guidance and revelation of Truth *Jn 16:13*
- Because of the Holy Spirit there is true worship. *Jn 4:23*
- Because of the Holy Spirit we are born again. *Jn 3:3-8*
- Because of the Holy Spirit we can put to death the deeds of the flesh *Gal 5:16*
  
- Jesus was conceived by the Holy Spirit *Lk 1:35*
- Jesus was baptized by the Holy Spirit *Lk 3:22*
- Jesus was filled with the Holy Spirit *Lk 4:1*
- Jesus ministered in the power of the Holy Spirit *Lk 4:18*
  
- We are to be conceived (born again) by the Holy Spirit *Jn 3:3-8*
- We are to be baptized in the Holy Spirit *Mark 1:8*
- We are to be filled with the Holy Spirit *Acts 2:4*
- We are to be lead by and minister in the power of the Holy Spirit *Rom 8:14*
- We are to be raised from the dead by the power of the Holy Spirit *Rom 6:4*

You can not read through the book of Acts without noticing the centrality of the work and ministry of the Holy Spirit as manifest through the early church. The early church was filled with the Holy Spirit and walked in “signs, miracles and wonders”.

There were healings, deliverances, conversions, transformations and even raising people from the dead. There was preaching with boldness; they stood firm before kings and religious rulers; they evangelized entire cities and brought Christianity to the gentiles.

A quick synopsis of the early church compared to most mainline churches in the west shows a startling contrast. The Holy Spirit was vibrant in the early church and thus the first century Christians had a vitality that was compelling and attractive. People were attracted, joined the church and were transformed, being set free from sin. All of this is the work of the Holy Spirit.

**Apostolic Era – 1<sup>st</sup> Generation – passion for Jesus connected with:**

• Evangelism	Turned the world upside down
• Making Disciples	Mature followers of Christ
• Healing	Everywhere
• Signs and Wonders	Expected
• The Holy Spirit	Welcomed
• Miracles	Normal
• Supernatural as Normal	Part of the new life
• Suffering, Sacrifice, Serving, Surrender	Evidenced
• Obedience	Unto Death
• Church Planting	Everywhere
• Church Discipline	Loving but firm
• Correction, Rebuke, Exhortation	Necessary and done
• Authority of Scripture	Taught and caught
• Salvation in Christ Alone	Motivation for message
• Flee Immorality	Taught and caught
• Sinners will not inherit the Kingdom of God	Proclaimed
• Repentance	Required
• Conversion	Expected
• Reality of Hell, Satan, Eternal Damnation	Real and feared

**Mainline Denominations in the West Today**

• Evangelism	40 years of numerical decline
• Making Disciples	Vast majority are in “unbelief”
• Healing	Not practiced, taught or expected
• Signs and Wonders	Avoided and dismissed as phony
• Holy Spirit	Down played
• Miracles	Denied
• Supernatural as Normal	Avoided
• Suffering, Sacrifice, Serving, Surrender	Consumer Christianity
• Obedience	Permissive
• Church Planting	Church Closing
• Church Discipline	Tolerance
• Correction, Rebuke, Exhortation	Political Correctness
• Authority of Scripture	Personal Interpretation/Reinterpretation
• Salvation in Christ Alone	Many ways to God
• Flee Immorality	Embrace who you are
• Sinners will not inherit the Kingdom of God	All saved, Loving God, No hell
• Repentance required	No longer needed
• Conversion	Vague and unclear
• Reality of Hell, Satan, Eternal Damnation	Denied, ridiculed, rejected

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The contrast between these two eras of church history is a sad commentary on the state of the church in North America.

It is our prayer that this workbook will help you and your church “reclaim” the work and ministry of the Holy Spirit as **NORMATIVE** in your life and in your fellowship. We believe the Holy Spirit is essential for healthy and growing churches. It is not optional. It is not only for the elite.

The ability to lead people into the “baptism” of the Holy Spirit is on the Father’s heart. He wants His church to receive this gift. He wants His children to walk in the power of His Holy Spirit and do what His Son Jesus did. A Spirit filled church was what He had in mind and it began on the Day of Pentecost. That mighty rushing wind and flaming tongues of fire that rested on the 120 in the upper room transformed the world. It began in Jerusalem, spread to Judea, then into Samaria and spread into the whole world.

We believe that *Acts 1:8* is a key verse: ***“don’t leave Jerusalem until you have received power from on high. Then you will be my witnesses, in Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria and to the uttermost parts of the earth.”*** No Holy Spirit, no witness; no Holy Spirit, no power; No Holy Spirit, no healing; No Holy Spirit, no freedom; No Holy Spirit, no deliverance.

May our Lord Jesus Christ give you a spirit of wisdom and revelation as you use this workbook. And may your life and your church come to know the fullness of the Holy Spirit.

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