

The Holy Spirit and Spirituality

The Baptism and Filling of the Holy Spirit

Lesson #5 for February 4, 2017

Scriptures: Mark 1:8; Ephesians 5:18; Acts 5:32; 13:52; Luke 11:8-10; Galatians 5:16-26.

1. In this lesson we will discuss the baptism of the Holy Spirit and how that might have an effect on our individual lives, the prerequisites to receiving the Holy Spirit, and the difference the infilling of the Holy Spirit might make in the life of an individual believer. *Infilling* simply means to be filled inside.
2. Read John 10:10. What do you think Jesus had in mind when He said that we may have life and “have it to its full” (*NIV*), “life in all its fullness” (*GNB*), or “more abundantly” (*KJV*)?
3. Read Mark 1:8; compare Matthew 3:11; Luke 3:16; and John 1:33. Read also Acts 1:5 and 11:16. In order to prevent the idea from being suggested that John and Jesus had arranged things to fool the people, they had never met prior to Jesus’s baptism. (*2SP* 58.2; *RH*, January 21, 1873, par. 2) When John saw Jesus approaching him at the river Jordan, he stated clearly that while he baptized with water, Jesus would baptize His followers with the Holy Spirit and fire. But, before that experience can happen, we must have the repentance which comes from recognizing our need for transformation in our lives. What do we know about the baptism by fire from elsewhere in Scripture? Consider what happened at Pentecost. (See Acts 2:3-4; compare Acts 11:14-18.)
4. When the disciple John discussed the baptism of the Spirit, he used a Greek form suggesting that experience must be a daily experience. (See John 1:33.) He suggested that the ministry of Jesus consisted not only in taking away our sins as we repent of them but also in giving us the Holy Spirit. (John 1:29; Acts 2:38)
5. Read Acts 10:43-44 and 11:16. Peter said that those Gentiles with Cornelius had received the Holy Spirit just as the disciples had received it on the day of Pentecost. What do you think that implies?
6. Read Acts 2:28-39. It is God’s plan that when we are baptized by immersion for the repentance of our sins, we are also supposed to receive the Holy Spirit. However, that is supposed to be just the beginning of a lifelong work. Every day as we study our Bibles, pray, and when we have opportunity, witness to others, we are asking the Holy Spirit to enter our lives and make the necessary changes so that we can become more like Jesus Christ. The baptism of the Holy Spirit is not supposed to be a once-in-a-lifetime event!
7. Read 1 Corinthians 12:13; compare 1 Corinthians 10:1-4. Paul clearly suggested that baptism followed by the receiving of the Holy Spirit is an experience that is supposed to come to each Christian. If you believe that the Holy Spirit cannot be a Personal Being because we are supposed to drink Him, then you need to say the same thing about Jesus!
8. Do you think you can remember a clear time when you were filled with the Holy Spirit? Is He a part of your daily life? Is it scary to think of it? Have you read the book, *One Miracle After Another: The Pavel Goia Story* by Greg Budd? Why aren’t there more Adventists who have lived like that and can tell such stories?
9. Read Ephesians 5:18; Acts 13:52; and Romans 8:9. What do these verses tell us about being filled with the Holy Spirit? What does it mean *to be filled with the Spirit*? (Luke 1:41, 67; Acts 2:4; 4:8,31; 9:17; 13:9) In these verses mostly from the experiences of the early

church as recorded in the book of Acts, Paul suggested that the filling of the Holy Spirit comes to those who are completely submitted to God and asking for the guiding influence of the Holy Spirit.

10. We know that various kinds of influences can affect our lives. Those who drink alcohol on a regular basis show that their walk, talk, even their thoughts are affected in bad ways. Would it be true to say that those who are filled with the Holy Spirit will demonstrate through their walk, talk, and thoughts that they are reflecting the experience of Jesus Christ?
11. What is the relationship between receiving the Holy Spirit and having faith? (Galatians 3:2,14) Titus 3:5-6 suggest that we might have a great infilling of the Holy Spirit at the time of our baptism. But, a single experience at any point in time is never meant to carry us on through any extended period of time. The infilling of the Holy Spirit needs to be a daily experience.
12. What does it really mean to be filled with the Holy Spirit? Many Christian evangelists and pastors suggest that if they could just have more of the power of the Holy Spirit, they would accomplish great things! But, being filled with the Holy Spirit may have a different meaning. Is it that we are supposed to possess more of Him? Or, that He is supposed to possess more of us?

I wish to impress upon you the fact that those who have Jesus abiding in the heart by faith, have actually received the Holy Spirit. Every individual who receives Jesus as his personal Saviour, just as surely receives the Holy Spirit to be his Counselor, Sanctifier, Guide, and Witness.—Ellen G. White, *Manuscript Releases*, vol. 14, 71.

13. One thing is very certain: The Holy Spirit cannot fill the lives of those who are filled with thoughts of their own sins. Repentance and baptism are supposed to clear away this rubbish from our lives. (Acts 2:37-38)
14. The Holy Spirit will help us to recognize that true repentance is more than just feeling sorry for the consequences of our sins. It means that through personal experience—but, perhaps even more through reading about and studying the life of Christ—we will recognize the dangers of sin, and we will be repulsed from even committing sins. We are to be drawn to God by His “kindness.” (Romans 2:4)
15. Read Galatians 3:14 and James 1:6-8. James suggested that if we do not have a solid, reliable relationship with the Holy Spirit, our religious experience may be no more stable than an ocean wave. So, how do we avoid that kind of experience? How do we grow our faith?
16. Read Luke 11:8-10,13. When speaking to His disciples, Jesus told them very directly that to receive the blessings that God offered, they—and we—must be persistent in asking. It is not that He is in any way reluctant to give us the Spirit; but, we need to be changed as we ask for God’s Spirit until the time comes that we are prepared to receive Him. Our prayers need to be our way of talking to God in response to His way of talking to us through His Word.
17. Read Acts 5:32. How do you understand the idea that the Spirit is God’s gift to those who obey Him? What does that mean? The process of obedience in the biblical sense requires several steps. First of all, we need to understand clearly what God wants to teach us. Then, we must give our full and willing consent to follow Him. Then, with the aid of the Holy

Spirit, we must progress as far as possible in actually doing God’s will. The Greek word for *obedience* is *hupakoe* which means a humble willingness to listen. It is not focused on our ability to do something.

18. Read 1 John 2:4-5. These can be scary words. How many Christians claim to be knowledgeable about God but do not keep His commandments? Would God really call them liars? How many people living today does God consider to be liars?
19. Read Jude 18-21. It should be clear from these verses and other parts of the Scriptures that if we are controlled by our natural desires, we cannot have the Holy Spirit.
20. The presence of God is often described in the Bible as being something like fire or flames. Does that apply to all Members of the Godhead? Think of some times described in the Bible when God appeared like fire on this earth: The burning bush (Exodus 3:1-11); the pillar of cloud by day and the pillar of fire by night (Exodus 13:21-22); the giving of the Ten Commandments on the top of Mount Sinai (Exodus 19-20); Daniel 7; Ezekiel 1; etc. Does that apply to the Holy Spirit as well? If the Holy Spirit comes into our lives like a fire, is that for the purpose of destroying the sin and worldliness in our lives? The battle against self is never an easy one. We love to be in charge, and we want to be able to do what we want to do. But, that is Satan’s way. The battle against self is probably the greatest battle of all time. But, if we succeed in recognizing the advantages of having the Holy Spirit in our lives, then:

There is no limit to the usefulness of one who, by putting self aside, makes room for the working of the Holy Spirit upon his heart, and lives a life wholly consecrated to God.—Ellen G. White, *The Desire of Ages* 250.3-251.0. [Bold type is added.]

What does it mean to say: “There is no limit...”?

21. Read Galatians 5:16-26 again; compare Ephesians 5:1-9,17-20. In these passages, we have a clear picture of the contrast between the self-centered life and the Spirit-filled life. Notice the following chart from the *Adult Sabbath School Bible Study Guide* for Thursday, February 2, 2017:

Self-Centered Person	Spirit-Controlled Person
Desires what is sinful and displeasing to God	Desires what is spiritual and pleasing to God
Is controlled by sinful passions	Is controlled by the Spirit
Misuses his/her freedom and gets enslaved in sin	Is set free from the bondage of sin and is called to freedom in Christ
Is disobedient to God’s will	Is obedient to God’s will
Is self-indulgent	Is self-sacrificing
Displays the fruit of sin	Displays the fruit of the Spirit
Does not recognize the need for forgiveness and is boastful of self	Recognizes the need for forgiveness and praises Jesus for what He has done

22. Let us not deceive ourselves. We cannot transform ourselves. We do not have the power

to do that because sin is so ingrained in our lives. This is no mere external change. It requires a complete change in our thoughts and our minds including our motives. It is the work of a lifetime. God recognizes that there will be ups and downs; but, He promises to work with us if we truly ask Him to do so.

All true obedience comes from the heart. It was heart work with Christ. And if we consent, He will so identify Himself with our thoughts and aims, so blend our hearts and minds into conformity to His will, that when obeying Him we shall be but carrying out our own impulses. The will, refined and sanctified, will find its highest delight in doing His service. When we know God as it is our privilege to know Him, our life will be a life of continual obedience. Through an appreciation of the character of Christ, through communion with God, sin will become hateful to us.—Ellen G. White, *The Desire of Ages* 668.3. [Bold type is added.] Compare Psalm 40:8.

23. Can you identify times in your life when you truly have been guided by the Holy Spirit as well as times when you have been determined to do your own thing? In Galatians 5:23, we notice that the final portion of the fruit of the Holy Spirit is self-control. What form does self-control take? God never forces Himself on us; but, He asks us to voluntarily allow the Holy Spirit to work with us. In fact, God suggests that to be truly free, we need to have this working relationship with the Holy Spirit. How does that make us truly free?
24. Read Psalm 119:45; Luke 4:18; John 8:34-36; 2 Corinthians 3:17; and Galatians 5:1. In many ways God is trying to make it clear that the only real freedom comes when we recognize that His way is the only right way.

The Christian's life is not a modification or improvement of the old, but a transformation of nature. There is a death to self and sin, and a new life altogether. This change can be brought about only by the effectual working of the Holy Spirit.—*Ibid.* 172.1; *FLB* 55.2; *AG* 22.4; *Mar* 70.2; *MYP* 157.1; *YRP* 323.5. [Bold type is added.]

25. The Greek word often translated *blessed* also means *happy*. Is a Spirit-filled life really the happiest life? Have we seen that in our own lives?
26. We have already tried to explore what the Bible means by *a Spirit-filled life*. What would you say to a person who tells you that you have not received the Holy Spirit unless you are able to speak in tongues? Is it possible to be certain that you have received the Holy Spirit? Could you tell if someone else has received the Holy Spirit in their lives?
27. On one occasion, a Pentecostal group of Christian believers announced that they were going to pray for the Seventh-day Adventist Church until the Adventists “got the Spirit.” They held a large meeting in a downtown hall in Boston to which they invited Adventists. One professor from an Adventist college attended that meeting. Soon people were standing and “speaking in tongues.” Immediately, someone else in the room would stand up and give an “interpretation” of what the speaker had said. After a while, the Adventist scholar stood and began to speak in “a strange tongue.” As soon as he was finished, someone jumped up across the room and “interpreted” what the Adventist scholar had said. When that person had finished, the Adventist scholar stood up slowly and stated that he had simply quoted Isaiah 53 in the original Hebrew and that he could not see how that had anything to do with what the “interpreter” had said! Everything in the room suddenly

went quiet!

28. In light of all that we have studied so far, do you think it is important for us to understand the infilling of the Holy Spirit?
29. The Bible seems to suggest in several places that the Holy Spirit works with and through angels. What is the role of the angels in all these things we have been talking about? Does the Holy Spirit still work with angels?
30. What can we do to correctly realize the dangers of sin in our lives? What practical biblical steps can we take to experience the infilling of the Holy Spirit?
31. Do you see any indication anywhere in the Bible to suggest that God is reluctant to give us the Holy Spirit? Or, does God long to fill His people with the Holy Spirit?
32. Let us be very clear that it was never God's idea that the infilling of the Holy Spirit should be an experience only for Bible teachers and pastors or those select members who seem to be among the spiritual elite! If we have not experienced the infilling of the Holy Spirit, our Christian lives lose strength, and we will certainly be powerless to overcome temptation.
33. One of the questions which arises in the minds of especially young Christians is the following: What does it mean when Jesus talked about the unpardonable sin? (Matthew 12:31; Mark 3:29) In what sense is the unpardonable sin a sin against the Holy Spirit? Would it be correct to say that on the spectrum of Christian living, the unpardonable sin is at one end of the spectrum while the baptism of the Holy Spirit is on the other end? If the Holy Spirit is the One who brings the truth about God and the life of Jesus to us in our day through the Bible and by inspiring us and if we reject that way, then we have rejected God's plan for our lives. Jesus said: "I am the way, the truth, and the life." (John 14:6, *GNB*) There is no other way. God will honor your choice. If you reach the point that you have completely rejected God, then with sadness He will honor your decision and leave you alone. (Hosea 4:17)
34. *To be filled with the Holy Spirit* means to be filled with the fruit of the Spirit as found in Galatians 5:22-23. It means to be daily practicing Bible study, prayer, and witnessing, leading us to become more and more like Jesus, and thus, more and more in agreement with the guidance of the Holy Spirit until we reach the place where we do what is right because it is right because we have come to understand why God's ways are the only right, true, and safe ways to live.
35. The Holy Spirit will never lead us off into speculative and unbiblical ideas.
36. Read again Matthew 3:11. Why did John say that Jesus would baptize us with the Holy Spirit and fire? What does the *fire* part mean?
37. We have looked at many verses in Scripture dealing with the Holy Spirit and spirituality. Some of those verses may be difficult to understand. Let us suggest three things, as modified from page 67 of the *Adult Teacher's Sabbath School Bible Study Guide*, that we could do to improve our understanding of the biblical passages we are studying:
 - 1) Read the full context of the passage. What was the setting? Who was speaking? And to whom? What were the circumstances?
 - 2) How do the words and the ideas in this particular passage compare with similar passages in other parts of the Bible?

3) In some cases, it may be necessary to explore the meanings of the original words in Greek or Hebrew. A good Bible commentary or Bible dictionary can be useful in that situation.

38. Seventh-day Adventists have always promoted the idea of baptism by immersion. We understand what immersion in the water means. What does *immersion in the Holy Spirit and fire* mean? In an earlier lesson, we suggested that the Holy Spirit was intimately involved in revelation through angels and prophets in order to give us the Holy Scriptures. He is also very much involved in the inspiration needed for us to understand what is written in those Scriptures.
39. John the Baptist suggested that Jesus could baptize with the Holy Spirit and with fire. There seem to be a number of passages in Scripture suggesting that God is likened to a fire in one way or another. See Genesis 3:24; Exodus 3:2-4; 13:21; 24:17; 25:8,21-22; 40:34-38; 1 Kings 18:38; Isaiah 6:6-8; Malachi 3:2-3; and 4:1. These are just a few verses; there are more including a number of passages in the book of Revelation. Why has God chosen to represent Himself by fire?
40. In this series, we have not yet studied about the early rain or the latter rain. Do you think that God will pour out His power on human beings at the time of the latter rain in as much power as He did at Pentecost? How do you think that manifestation might actually take place in our day?
41. In this lesson we have suggested that repentance is a prerequisite to receiving the Holy Spirit. What role does reading God's Word have in that process? What is the role of obedience? Why does God not pour out His Holy Spirit on those who are knowingly disobedient? Why does the presence of sin or an impurity in our lives prevent or hinder the work of the Holy Spirit?
42. These lessons so far have proved to be a great exercise in understanding Scripture. We have looked at many verses. Is the role of the Holy Spirit becoming more clear to you?

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