

# Faith -N- Focus

*Adult Bible Studies*

**June 2018**

(Includes July 1, 2018)

**“Pneumatology: Spirit Baptism”**

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# **“Pneumatology: Spirit Baptism”**

## **Monthly Summary**

In this month of Faith-N-Focus, we will consider the baptism with the Holy Ghost. Jesus promised to send the Comforter to abide with his disciples forever (Jn. 14:16). This promise was initially fulfilled on the day of Pentecost, but the promise of this baptism is for all believers in every generation unto his coming. The saints of God should therefore unite in prayer for the outpouring of God’s Spirit in the church today. God is willing to pour out his Spirit, and he knows how to baptize those who ask, but his children should earnestly seek for the promise by faith (Lu. 11:13; He. 11:6). When God pours out his Spirit, baptizing with the Holy Ghost and filling the saints with his power, Spirit-baptized believers speak in tongues. Tongues confirm one’s Spirit-baptism and serve to edify the saints of God and the church.

When God baptizes with the Holy Ghost, he not only immerses believers in his Spirit but also fills his saints with his Spirit, saturating them within. God’s presence is fulfilled in the church as its individual members are being filled with the Holy Ghost. Moreover, through the indwelling Spirit, the Lord empowers the church. The promise of the baptism with the Holy Ghost is also the promise of God’s power in the church. God’s mighty power works in the church as his saints yield themselves to the Holy Ghost. Through the power of the Spirit, we can be strong to withstand the enemy and overcome his attacks. Though we are weak humanly, we can be strong in the Lord because his Spirit empowers us from within. Thus, the Holy Ghost provides an unlimited source of power in the Lord – a power to give us victory over all opposition.

# June 3, 2018

## “The Promise”

### Main Point

The baptism with the Holy Ghost is the Father’s promise to every believer.

### Introduction

A promise is a binding commitment to fulfill one’s word: an obligation to do all that one has said. These days, taking a person at his word is risky. People say one thing but then do another. A man and woman stand before witnesses to pledge their undying devotion to one another in holy matrimony, only later to break their covenant by divorce and remarriage. Politicians make fair speeches filled with appealing words – promises they will never keep. Although man’s word is unreliable, God’s Word is trustworthy. He will do all he has promised in his Word.

### Key Verse

“For the promise is unto you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call” (Ac. 2:39).

### Lesson Summary

Without a doubt, we are living in the last days when “perilous times shall come” (2 Ti. 3:1-5). However, in these uncertain times of great opposition to our faith, God’s Word gives us “a strong consolation,” because he has made binding promises and cannot lie (He. 6:13-18; Nu. 23:19; 1 Sa. 15:29; Ti. 1:2). In fact, this world will one day pass away, but his Word will never pass away (Mt. 24:35; see also Mk. 13:31; Lu. 21:33; 2 Pe. 3:7, 10-13). The Word of God proves reliable and his promises faithful. 2 Cor. 1:18-20 teaches us that God is true and his promises also are true. God’s Word is not uncertain: his Word is not “yes” one minute and “no” the next. All that he has promised to us in Christ will forever stand true. When God said it, he meant it. His Word to us is “yes” and “amen” (“so be it”)! Therefore, we can count on the Word of God, today, tomorrow, and the next day, even until the Lord comes again. God’s Word will remain true for all eternity (Ps. 119:89; 1 Pe. 1:25). While the last days are indeed perilous, they also are full of promise. On the day of Pentecost, Peter

preached, “But this is that which was spoken by the prophet Joel; and it shall come to pass in the last days, saith God, I will pour out of my Spirit upon all flesh: and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams: and on my servants and on my handmaidens I will pour out in those days of my Spirit; and they shall prophesy” (Acts 2:16-18; Jl. 2:28-29). When Jesus prepared the disciples for his departure and for their future work and ministry in the church, he prophesied of the coming of the Holy Ghost, saying, “And, behold, I send **the promise of my Father** upon you: but tarry ye in the city of Jerusalem, until ye be endued with power from on high” (Lu. 24:49). Jesus referred to the Holy Ghost as “the promise of my Father.” Luke recorded these same words in Acts 1:4-5; “And, being assembled together with them, commanded them that they should not depart from Jerusalem, but wait for **the promise of the Father**, which, saith he, ye have heard of me. For John truly baptized with water; but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost not many days hence.” Again, the baptism with the Holy Ghost is the promise of the Father. Jesus said, “If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children: how much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him?” (Lu. 11:13). The Holy Spirit is the Father’s promise to his children. We can be sure he will fulfill his promise and give his Spirit to all who ask.

### **Scripture Study**

God’s word is true – He. 6:13-18; Nu. 23:19; 1 Sa. 15:29; Ti. 1:2; Mt. 24:35; 2 Co. 1:18-20; Ps. 119:89; 1 Pe. 1:25

The promise of God – Ac. 2:16-18; Jl. 2:28-29; Lu. 11:13; 24:49; Ac. 1:4-5; 2:38-39

### **Conclusion**

When the Holy Ghost was poured out on the church according to the Word of God, Peter understood that the baptism with the Holy Ghost was God’s promise to every believer, even to all future generations (Ac. 2:38-39). Therefore, every believer should pray and seek to be baptized with the Holy Ghost – the promise of the Father.

# June 10, 2018

## “Outpouring of the Spirit”

### Main Point

The saints of God should faithfully unite in prayer for the outpouring of the Spirit in the church today.

### Introduction

In this lesson, we will examine the behind-the-scenes details surrounding the Day of Pentecost in Acts 2, when Christ’s promise to baptize with the Holy Ghost was first fulfilled in the church. By reflecting on the experience of the New Testament church, we will be able to more fully understand the baptism with the Holy Ghost and build our expectation for the outpouring of the Spirit in the church today.

### Key Verse

“And on my servants and on my handmaidens I will pour out in those days of my Spirit . . .” (Ac. 2:18).

### Lesson Summary

Before he ascended, when Jesus promised to send the Holy Ghost (Jn. 15:26; 14:26), he told his disciples to “wait” and “tarry” for the promise of the Father” (Ac. 1:4; Lu. 24:49). They were to remain in Jerusalem until they were baptized with the Holy Ghost “not many days hence” (Ac. 1:5). However, “waiting” and “tarrying” should not be understood as passive in the sense of being idle until something occurred, but rather the apostles waited in active anticipation and expectation for the promise. For them, following Christ’s directives to wait and tarry took on a practical expression. Leading up to the day of Pentecost, the church “continued” to seek God for the fulfillment of his promise. They believed the promise and then took faithful action in order to prepare themselves to receive the Holy Ghost, praying and making supplication (Ac. 1:13-15; 2:1). Therefore, Christ’s disciples actively embraced the promise of the Spirit by faith (Ga. 3:14). True faith in the Word of God requires faithful action on our part for “faith without works is dead” (Ja. 2:17, 20, 26). Clearly, God’s promises in no way relinquish the church from responsibility; instead his promises expect faithful action and

obedience from us. Today, we should not sit back and relax waiting on God to send Holy Ghost revival in the church. Instead, when we “tarry” we must embrace God’s promise by faith continually seeking the face of God for the outpouring of the Spirit among us (He. 11:6). God will surely fulfill his Word because he is faithful to keep his promises, but only those who remain faithful to God can expect to receive from the Lord (Ja. 1:6-8; He. 11:33). Furthermore, the church had unity in their waiting and tarrying. Luke, the writer of the book of *Acts*, gave emphasis to this characteristic within the fellowship of the church when they assembled to receive the promise. In regard to their praying, Luke wrote, “These all continued with one accord” – note the words “all” and “one” which indicate a comprehensive togetherness, a cohesion (1:14). All who were in the upper room had one mind (Ph. 2:2). They were pulling together (Ph. 1:27). Today, a great challenge in the church is motivating all of the church to pull in unison and move in the same direction. The apostles’ unity “continued” and persisted as they prayed for the promise of the Holy Ghost (Ac. 1:14; Ro. 12:2; Co. 4:2). On the day of Pentecost, Luke again noted the unity of the church in the disciples’ coming together – “they were **all** with **one** accord in one place” (Ac. 2:1). This context of unity was directly connected to the coming of the Holy Ghost (v. 2). In other words, to think of the outpouring of the Spirit on a divided people is absurd (Ep. 4:3). The emphasis of unity in the outpouring of the Spirit is evident in that the Spirit “filled all the house,” he “sat upon each of them,” and “they were all filled,” as opposed to a partial or limited outpouring (Ac. 2:3-4).

### **Scripture Study**

Wait for the promise – Jn. 14:26; 15:26; Lu. 24:49; Ac. 1:4-5, 13-15

Faith to receive – Ga. 3:14; Ja. 1:6-8; 2:17, 20, 26; He. 11:6, 33

Unity in the church – Ac. 1:14; 2:1-4; Ep. 4:3; Ph. 1:27; 2:2

### **Conclusion**

Like the New Testament church, we also should wait and tarry, praying and supplicating in order to receive the promise of the Father. Those who desire to be baptized with the Holy Ghost should seek for the promise, and by faith expect to receive the spiritual blessing. Moreover, the saints of God should join together in one accord to receive a mighty outpouring of the Spirit in the church today.

# June 17, 2018

## “Speaking in Tongues”

### Main Point

Spirit-baptized believers speak in tongues which confirms their spiritual experience in the Lord.

### Introduction

Today’s subject has been a topic of widespread debate in Christian circles. Some groups have denied the authenticity of speaking in tongues in our day, limiting this practice to the era of the New Testament church. Others accept speaking in tongues but confine it to a private expression like individual prayers. Still others have misunderstood the spiritual purpose of speaking in tongues and its place in the church. In this lesson, we will clarify the role and importance of speaking in tongues.

### Key Verse

“For he that speaketh in an unknown tongue speaketh not unto men, but unto God: for no man understandeth him; howbeit in the spirit he speaketh mysteries” (1 Co. 14:2).

### Lesson Summary

Speaking in tongues is the ecstatic utterance of a language other than one’s own, spoken by the divine enablement of the Holy Spirit. When the Holy Ghost came on the day of Pentecost, the disciples were filled with the Spirit and spoke in other languages “as the Spirit gave them utterance” (Ac. 2:4). Contrary to the teaching and practice of some Christians, nowhere in the Scriptures should speaking in tongues be made fundamental to salvation. Instead, speaking in tongues is directly connected to the baptism with the Holy Ghost (Ac. 2:4, 6, 8, 11; 10:44-46; 11:15; 19:1-7; see also *Abstract of Faith* under “Speaking in Tongues”). When believers are baptized with the Holy Ghost, they always speak in tongues which confirms their experience. Tongues are an external witness of the indwelling Spirit – the Holy Ghost manifesting his abiding presence in the life of the believer (Mk. 16:17). Therefore, speaking in tongues is a normative experience among Spirit-filled Christians. Though speaking in tongues is a sign following believers, it is also a sign to unbelievers (1 Co. 14:21-23;

Ac. 2:6-12). [Note: This writer has witnessed the role of speaking in tongues in bringing unbelievers to Christ. On one occasion, after the Holy Ghost had uniquely manifested himself in tongues, a sinner man came forward with his wife to accept Christ as Savior. His background was completely incompatible with the Holiness-Pentecostal tradition. As the pastor was praying with him at the altar to receive salvation, the man's wife also prayed at the altar, simultaneously receiving the baptism with the Holy Ghost with the evidence of speaking in tongues.] Furthermore, tongues serve to edify the church itself. Individually, speaking in tongues builds up a believer because his spirit communicates with God in mysteries (1 Co. 14:2, 4, 14; Ro. 8:26-27). When the Holy Spirit prays and intercedes through a believer in this way, his faith is built up (Ju. 20). However, when the Spirit-inspired language is interpreted (see interpretation of tongues, 1 Co. 12:4, 10; 1 Co. 14:27-28), the tongues serve to edify all of the members of the church, fulfilling a much greater purpose in the body (1 Co. 14:5, 12-13).

### **Scripture Study**

The witness of the Spirit – Ac. 2:4, 6, 8, 11; 10:44-46; 11:15; 19:1-7; Mk. 16:17

A sign to unbelievers – 1 Co. 14:21-23; Ac. 2:6-12

Self-edification – 1 Co. 14:2, 4, 14; Ro. 8:26-27; Ju. 20

Edifying the whole body – 1 Co. 14:5, 12-13

### **Conclusion**

How should we think about speaking in tongues? Tongues are inseparable from the work of the Holy Ghost in the church. Holy Ghost-baptized saints will speak in tongues. In fact, when writing to the church at Corinth, Paul encouraged the saints in regard to the practice of speaking in tongues in the church (1 Co. 14:5, 18, 39). Nevertheless, excessively speaking in tongues is not an indication of superior spirituality (vv. 19, 23, 40).

# June 24, 2018

## “Filled with the Spirit”

### Main Point

God wants his church to be filled completely with his Spirit.

### Introduction

God’s plan in Jesus Christ is to indwell his people. When Jesus promised to send the Comforter, the Holy Ghost, he said, “Ye know him; for he dwelleth with you, and shall be in you” (Jn. 14:17). While God desires to dwell with his people, he desires even more for his people to remain consecrated and filled with his Spirit. Certainly, every born again believer should seek to be filled with the Spirit.

### Key Verse

“And be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess; but be filled with the Spirit” (Ep. 5:18).

### Lesson Summary

On the day of Pentecost, the fullness of the Spirit came into the church through the baptism with the Holy Ghost (Jl. 2:28-29; Ac. 1:4-5; 2:1-4, 14-18). When the saints in the upper room were baptized with the Spirit and spoke in tongues, devout Jews of every nation were also in Jerusalem for the feast of Pentecost (2:5). The Spirit dynamically came into the room with manifestations like wind and fire, filling not only “the house where they were sitting,” but filling every believer as well (vv. 2, 4). Some 120 saints, perhaps more, received the Holy Ghost baptism with the evidence of tongues, experiencing the fullness of the Spirit in the depths of their souls. When the Jews in the city heard about this strange phenomenon and came to see what was happening, they actually heard the saints speaking the wonderful works of God in their many diverse languages (Ac. 2:6, 11; 1 Co. 12:10). This spiritual manifestation was met with mixed reviews. Realizing that all of these saints were Galileans, all of the Jews were astonished, asking, “What meaneth this?” (Ac. 2:7, 12). But some mocked this mighty move of God refusing to hear his voice, saying, “These men are full of new wine” (Is. 28:11-12; Ac. 2:13). To sinful, fleshly men, this manifestation of the Spirit was reminiscent of intoxication. Of course, Peter contended that they were not drunk

at all, but rather that God poured out his Spirit upon them and they were filled with the Spirit. He said, “For these are not drunken, as ye suppose, seeing it is but the third hour of the day. But this is that which was spoken by the prophet Joel; And it shall come to pass in the last days, saith God, I will pour out of my Spirit upon all flesh . . . I will pour out in those days of my Spirit; and they shall prophesy” (Ac. 2:15-18). These saints of God were not filled with alcohol but were under the influence of the Spirit, being baptized with and full of the Holy Ghost. Intriguingly, the apostle Paul explained the will of God for the church, admonishing not to drunkenness (intoxication) but to “be filled with the Spirit.” He wrote, “Wherefore be ye not unwise, but understanding what the will of the Lord is. And be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess; but be filled with the Spirit” (Ep. 5:17-18). Being filled with the Spirit and being baptized with the Spirit are interrelated, yet not exactly the same. The baptism with the Holy Ghost is a one-time experience that immerses us into the fullness of the Spirit. However, as Spirit-baptized believers, we can and should be filled with the Spirit again and again. For example, after the initial outpouring of the Spirit on the day of Pentecost, Peter and John, along with the saints, were again filled (not baptized) with the Holy Ghost. When they prayed in one accord, the place where they were assembled shook; and then they were filled with the Spirit and spoke God’s word boldly (Ac. 4:23-32).

### **Scripture Study**

Baptized into fullness – Jl. 2:28-29; Ac. 1:4-5; 2:1-5, 14-18

Like drunken men – Ac. 2:6-13; Is. 28:11-12

Be filled with the Spirit – Ep. 5:17-18; Ac. 4:23-32

### **Conclusion**

Through the baptism with the Holy Ghost, God desires to fill up his church continually with his spiritual life and presence. As the Holy Spirit fills all of the members of the church individually, God fills the church with his Spirit corporately. In this way, the church functions as the temple of the living God: “an habitation of God through the Spirit” (Ep. 2:21-22; 1 Co. 3:16; 2 Co. 6:16).

# July 1, 2018

## “Empowerment”

### Main Point

The Holy Ghost gives power to the church through his indwelling presence.

### Introduction

Have you ever felt weak or inferior as a Christian, not because of anything you did wrong, but you simply felt insufficient to meet some challenge in your life? At some point, every child of God feels this way because we are limited in our humanity. But our weaknesses are not a problem for God. The apostle Paul declared, “Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me . . . for when I am weak, then am I strong” (2 Co. 12:9, 10). Jesus said, “For my strength is made perfect in weakness” (v. 9). Therefore, we are to understand that our strength is not in our humanity, but that we stand by the power of God.

### Key Verse

“Now unto him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us” (Ep. 3:20).

### Lesson Summary

We fight a spiritual and formidable enemy (Ep. 6:12; 2 Co. 10:3), but Jesus Christ has given us the spiritual power and authority to overcome Satan (Jn. 1:12; 2 Ti. 1:7). For this reason, the Scriptures place responsibility on us: “**Be strong** in the Lord, and in the power of his might” (Ep. 6:10); and “Watch ye, stand fast in the faith, quit you like men, **be strong**” (1 Co. 16:13). Truly, we can be strong in the Lord when we are full of the Holy Ghost. Jesus gave us his example to follow. He showed us how to be strong in resisting the enemy’s temptations (Lu. 4:1-13). He demonstrated how we should be filled with the Holy Ghost and spiritual power. Jesus, full of the Holy Ghost, emerged from his forty-day temptation in the power of the Spirit which thereafter characterized his earthly ministry (vv. 14-15). He evidenced the power of the Spirit in his life through exercising authority over demonic spirits, sicknesses, and diseases (vv. 30-36,

39-40). However, Jesus not only demonstrated the power of God in his life and ministry, but he also gave this same power of God to the church (Lu. 24:49). The baptism with the Holy Ghost, the fulfillment of Christ's promise (and the Father's) to the church, empowered the saints and enabled them to speak and act beyond their human ability (Ac. 1:8; 2:4, 43) – it was a baptism of power! One of the primary reasons the Holy Ghost was given was empowerment. For example, the apostle Paul testified that spiritual power, that is, the power of the Holy Ghost, distinguished his ministry (1 Co. 2:1-5; Ro. 15:18-19). In fact, he insisted on God's power as the basis of his effectiveness in the ministry (1 Co. 2:4-5). In the Old Testament, many were powerfully used by the Holy Ghost to perform tasks and duties for the Lord. Among them were the judges of Israel. Samson, a Nazarite and judge, illustrates this point (Jud. 13:5; 16:31). The Bible explains, "And the child grew, and the Lord blessed him. And the spirit of the Lord began to move him at times" (13:24-25). The Holy Spirit would come upon Samson mightily and he would do great exploits (14:6, 19; 15:14-15). But today, under the New Covenant with the outpouring of the Holy Ghost, the Spirit fills us and his power actually indwells us. Not only does the Holy Ghost move upon us, but now his power is working in us (Ep. 1:19; 3:16, 20; Co. 1:29).

### **Scripture Study**

Be strong – Jn. 1:12; 2 Ti. 1:7; Ep. 6:10; 1 Co. 16:13

Christ's example – Lu. 4:1-15, 30-36, 39-40

Baptism of power – Lu. 24:49; Ac. 1:8; 2:4, 43; 1 Co. 2:1-5; Ro. 15:18-19

Indwelling power – Jud. 13:24-25; 14:6, 19; 15:14-15; Ep. 1:19; 3:16, 20; Co. 1:29

### **Conclusion**

As Spirit-baptized believers, we have an unlimited supply of God's power available to us (Jn. 7:38-39). Through the indwelling Holy Spirit, the power of God resides within us. When we consider that God can do anything, that nothing is beyond his power, and that Jesus Christ has all authority in heaven and in earth, we are comforted to know we also can do great things by his Spirit that dwells in us.