

What is the Baptism of the Spirit?

Intro: Over the past couple of decades there has been a lot of confusion regarding the work of the Holy Spirit. The rise of intellectualism in the church crowded out anything that looked like emotionalism, even though most of the denominations in the U.S. were firmly established during the Great Awakenings of the 1700s, a movement that included significant outpourings of the Holy Spirit and of what came to be known as emotionalism. For many years the Mainline church decried anything that even hinted of emotional or spontaneous spiritual expressions. However, the rise of Pentecostalism in North America in the twentieth century raised a lot of questions and created a firestorm of fears, misconceptions, and misunderstandings about the gifts and the baptism of the Holy Spirit. This week you will have an opportunity to look at what the Bible teaches about this topic and to decide for yourself what you believe about the baptism of the Holy Spirit. And of course, as usual, you will be encouraged to share your discovery with a friend, relative, associate, neighbor, and/or a coworker.

What the Bible Teaches: Break into Groups of Four, read the following Bible verses, and discuss the questions. You may want to jot down notes and thoughts on the back of this page.

What do these passages teach about baptism of the Holy Spirit? Is this "baptism" different, the same, or simultaneous to water baptism?

Mark 1:7-8; Acts 1:3-5; Acts 19:1-7

According to these scriptures, what are some of the manifestations of the baptism of the Holy Spirit? Does everyone receive the same manifestation?

Acts 2:38; 1 Corinthians 12:4-10, 29-31

When (and how) do people receive the baptism of the Holy Spirit?

Acts 10:44-48; Luke 11:11-13; Acts 8:12-17

What I Believe: Take ten minutes for silent reflection and thought. Ask yourself what you believe about the baptism of the Spirit. Use the back of this page to formulate a response to the question:

“What is the Baptism of the Spirit?”

Write your final response here: _____

Articulations: Pair up with one other person and share your response with one another. Take five minutes each. Try to *not* look at your written statement; instead, try to tell your beliefs from your heart. This will prepare you to share whenever you are asked about what you believe.

Therefore: Jesus said His followers should Go and make disciples (Matthew 28:19-20). One of the first steps in making disciples is being ready and able to share the reason for the hope we have (1 Peter 3:15), in other words, knowing what we believe, why, and then being able to share it. Sharing your faith is important. This week, find someone—it can be *anyone*—and articulate your belief about this issue. If you have an unchurched/unreached friend whom you can share with, all the better (you can always say you have a homework assignment from church and you'd like to share it with them). Be ready to talk about your experience next week over the meal at your House Church.