

The Six 'Get' Booklets

In Acts 2, right at the start of the first church in Jerusalem, we see several distinct things happening to the new believers: they **got born again** through repentance, they **got water baptised**, they **got filled with the Spirit**, and they **got joined to a local church**.

These booklets reflect these 4 vital early steps for the new believer, and the fifth one called **Get Gifted** takes us on into the gifts of the Holy Spirit. Although they work as 'stand alone' reads, Godfirst Church runs regular courses of different lengths based on each booklet.

Get Started: To help you get going as a new Christian.

Get Started Daily: 30 days of bible reading for the new believer.

Get Baptised: To help you get water baptised.

Get Connected: About the vision, values and membership of Godfirst Church.

Get Filled: To help you get filled with the Holy Spirit.

Get Gifted: To help you get going in the gifts of the Holy Spirit.

Other Resources by PJ

Healing: Biblical principles, practises and encouragement to pray for the sick.

Money Matters: Developing biblical attitudes and actions with finance.

The Sword: Learning how to understand, enjoy and apply the bible to our lives.

Relationships and Sexuality: A comprehensive look at relationships and sexuality.

Getting Ready for Marriage: To help you get ready for engagement or marriage.

Quick-Start Parenting: For parents who just want the really important bits...and fast.

The World Needs More Apostles: Producing a new generation of apostles.

The World Needs More Elders: Producing a new generation of elders and leaders.

The World Needs More Preachers: Producing a new generation of mighty preachers.

The World Needs More Small Group Leaders: Producing more small group leaders.

Please visit www.godfirst.co.za to download these resources

CONTENTS

Part 1: Powerade	5
Chapter 1 We need power	6
Chapter 2 I need power	7
Chapter 3 Who is the Holy Spirit?	8
Chapter 4 What does the Holy Spirit do in our lives?	9
Part 2: The Journey	11
Chapter 5 A somewhat unusual morning	12
Chapter 6 Only for a few people	14
Chapter 7 The Longing	15
Chapter 8 The Fulfilment	16
Part 3: The Big Five	17
Chapter 9 The Two Big Questions	18
Chapter 10 The Jerusalem Encounter	19
Chapter 11 The Samaritan Encounter	20
Chapter 12 The Damascus Encounter	22
Chapter 13 The Ephesian Encounter	23
Chapter 14 The Caesarean Encounter	24
Part 4: A New Language	27
Chapter 15 Three common confusions about tongues	28
Chapter 16 Five great reasons to speak in tongues	30
Part 5: Your Encounter	33
Chapter 17 Avoiding the roadblocks	34
Chapter 18 Plunging in	36

PART 1

POWERADE

CHAPTER 1

WE NEED POWER

Time to pack some punch

Recently in a sports shop with one of my sons, I started to playfully knock his head with a boxing glove. With his 9 year old male bravado he said, 'Dad! Stop tickling me!' The 37 year old male bravado in me responded, 'Listen mate, if I put my fist in the glove it would be a different story!'

It is time for the church to tell a different story. Too often the world feels the impact of the church as more of a tickle, more of a giggle, more of a gentle face massage instead of a knock-out punch. The culture of this world is heavy-weight. Your friends' blindness to the gospel is heavy-weight. We gotta get us some heavy-weight. We need the Holy Spirit to propel us into the heavy-weight division with heavy-weight clout. We need the fist of God in us.

Without the baptism of the Holy Spirit the church today can never display God's power as did the early church – a combative, challenging and victorious power to evangelise a generation.

David Yongi Cho

The writer of Hebrews tells us that we are those who have *shared in the Holy Spirit, who have tasted of the powers of the coming age (Heb 6v4)*. Like Superman came from another age and lived amongst us with the powers of his 'home age', so also are we citizens of heaven called to live by God in this present age – and here's the good bit – we can access the supernatural power of our 'home' age.

CHAPTER 2

I NEED POWER

Standing tall. Standing Pure.

Once a younger man was sharing a train compartment with an older man. It turned out that they were both Christians, but that the young man was struggling with living a godly life. The older man asked him if he had been filled with the Holy Spirit to which the young man shook his head. The older man took out his pen and asked him whether he thought that he could balance the pen upright on the palm of his hand. Feeling the shaking of the train, the younger man said *'of course not'*. Then the older man took the pen and balanced it on the palm of his left hand...whilst holding the top of the pen with a finger of his right hand! Rather disgustedly the younger man said, *'But you are not balancing it. Your other hand is holding it up'* The older man replied, *'Son, on this rickety, bumpy train, there is no way that I could keep the pen up by itself. And my young friend, on this rickety, bumpy ride of life, there is no way that you can keep yourself upright by yourself. You need the Holy Spirit to hold you up!'*

Don't kid yourself: there can be no standing tall in this evil present age without the empowering of the Holy Spirit. Ezekiel said that the Spirit will help move us to obey God (Ez 36v27) – when it comes to consistently obeying God, don't you feel you need all the help that you can get? I certainly do. One of the Holy Spirit's names is The Helper. And that's because he comes to help us live radical and effective lives. Gordon Fee says it like this:

If today's church is going to recapture the effectiveness of the early church we need to recapture Paul's perspective: the Spirit as the experienced, empowering return of God's presence in and among us, who enables us to live radical lives of witness, service and purity.

Gordon Fee

CHAPTER 3

WHO IS THE HOLY SPIRIT

Before getting carried away, maybe we should back up and check that you are good-to-go in terms of who the Holy Spirit is.

The Trinity

The bible presents God as one God, but consisting of Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Although a multiple, he is still one. This side of heaven it is tricky to fully grasp this one, but biblically and intuitively we give it a total thumbs up. Think of marriage: Ashleigh and I are two people but one unit, one bed, one house, one bank account, one holiday, and so on. Our kids would say that we are separate but one. The Holy Spirit is the implementer of God's purposes on earth. But make no mistake, the Holy Spirit is fully God. Cast your eye over the following aspects of the Holy Spirit:

He is referred to as God in Mt 28v19, and in Acts 5v3-4 the Holy Spirit's name is used interchangeably with God's name.

He carries out work that only God can do: he creates in Gen 1v1-2, regenerates a human heart in Jn 3v5-7, and casts out demons in Mt 12v28.

He has the attributes of God: he is omniscient (1 Cor 2v10), omnipotent (Lk 1v35) and omnipresent (Ps 139v7-8).

He is referred to by four different names: the Holy Spirit (Acts 16v6, and in most scriptures), the Spirit of God (Gen 1v1), the Spirit of Jesus (Acts 16v7), and the Counselor (Jn 16v26).

He has many different symbols including water (Jn 7v37); fire (Mt 3v11); wind (Jn 3v8); oil (1 Sam 16v13); rain (Ps 72v6), dove (Jn 1v32); wine (Acts 2v12; Eph 5v18); seal (Eph 1v13; 4v30); deposit (2 Cor 1v22).

He has does 'works' of God toward us including speaking to us (Acts 1v16; Rev 2v7), helping us (Rms 8v26), praying for us (Rms 8v26), teaching us (Jn 14v26), guiding us (Jn 16v13), comforting us (Acts 9v31), and calling us into ministry (Acts 13v2).

Yep. I would say he is God.

CHAPTER 4

WHAT DOES THE HOLY SPIRIT DO IN OUR LIVES?

He does us good

Imagine the scene: after a couple of years of serious guy-time and bonding, and having become fully convinced of the reality that he is in fact 24 carat God, the disciples suddenly hear Jesus announce that he is leaving - to head back to heaven. Then he follows up with this statement: *“But I tell you the truth, it is for your good that I am going away. Unless I go away, the Holy Spirit will not come to you; but if I go, I will send him to you (Jn 16v7)*. To be honest, I reckon the disciples would have written off the last bit as a well-meaning yet weak attempt at encouraging them on the back of the worst bit of news they had heard in long time. But Jesus actually meant what he said – that the essence of what the Spirit does is to do us much “good”. What kind of good are we talking about?

He witnesses in us that we are children of God

Jesus said that the Spirit will come to us so we are not left as orphans, and Paul says that it is the Spirit within us that enables us to call God ‘Abba Father’ and testifies that we are God’s children. Once filled with the Spirit of God you will be hard pressed to doubt your salvation and sonship – I mean, you’ve got God on the inside and things don’t get more intimate than that, do they?

He helps us to pray and understand the bible

Ever found prayer a drag? Then the fullness of the Spirit is what you need, buddy! Check out Rms 8v26. And in terms of the bible, rather like a sundial is not much use without the sun, so the Spirit illumines the pages of scripture (Eph 1v17-18). The fuller you are of the Spirit, the more you will delight in prayer and scripture.

He gives us power to obey

Even though you are now a new creation, you have probably noticed that your old self, as well as the devil, work pretty hard to stop you from obeying God. But the great news is that the Holy Spirit comes to cause us to obey God (Ez 36v27). The fullness of the Holy Spirit brings a change of heart, and a new desire and ability to live an upright and godly life.

He helps us develop the ‘family likeness’

Paul lists the fruit of the Spirit as love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control (Gal 5v22-23). As you probably know, the bible is fond of referring to Christians as trees, and Paul is saying that just as an apple tree bears apple-fruit, so a Christian tree

should bear Christian-fruit. And the Spirit is the one who develops this fruit in our lives. The fuller you are of the Spirit, the more of this fruit you shall bear.

He gives amazing gifts

There are many different supernatural gifts of the Holy Spirit that are mentioned in the bible ranging from prophesying and healing through to leadership and serving. These supernatural gifts are from God, given to strengthen and encourage and build up the church. It is God's intention to give each Christian certain gifts that they can use to demonstrate the power and love of God to other people. Fullness of the Holy Spirit is essential in order to "flow" in the gifts. Three passages that list a variety of spiritual gifts are 1 Corinthians 12v7-11 and Romans 12v6-8 and Ephesians 4.

He gives us power to evangelise

Jesus clearly instructed his disciples not to leave Jerusalem until they had received the baptism of the Spirit, as only then would they be equipped to go into all the world and preach the gospel (Acts 1v4-8). He said that they would receive 'power' to be his representatives. When I got filled with the Spirit, the most obvious and immediate change in my life was that I knew a new boldness and effectiveness in telling people about Jesus. Do you lack wisdom and courage when it comes to sharing your faith with others? The Holy Spirit will anoint you to effectively share your faith with others. In fact, Luke 24v49 says that being filled with the Holy Spirit means being "clothed with power from on high".

The man with the cut hand...

A man cut his hand but managed to drive himself to the hospital. He walked in and saw a sign over two doors with the options 'Emergency or Non-emergency'. Going through the emergency door he saw a sign over two more doors saying 'Internal Injury or External Injury'. Once through the external injury door the next option was 'Upper Body or Lower Body'. He went through the upper body door and to his surprise found himself back in the carpark! Arriving back at home his wife asked him how it went at the hospital. He replied, 'Well, they were organised but they didn't help me very much'!

Without the fullness of the Spirit the Church might be very organised...but not end helping the world very much!

PART 2

THE JOURNEY

CHAPTER 5

A SOMEWHAT UNUSUAL MORNING

Acts 2v1-18: *When the day of Pentecost came, they were all together in one place. Suddenly a sound like the blowing of a violent wind came from heaven and filled the whole house where they were sitting. They saw what seemed to be tongues of fire that separated and came to rest on each of them. All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues as the Spirit enabled them. Now there were staying in Jerusalem God-fearing Jews from every nation under heaven. When they heard this sound, a crowd came together in bewilderment, because each one heard them speaking in his own language. Utterly amazed, they asked: "Are not all these men who are speaking Galileans? Then how is it that each of us hears them in his own native language? Parthians, Medes and Elamites; residents of Mesopotamia, Judea and Cappadocia, Pontus and Asia, Phrygia and Pamphylia, Egypt and the parts of Libya near Cyrene; visitors from Rome (both Jews and converts to Judaism); Cretans and Arabs--we hear them declaring the wonders of God in our own tongues!" Amazed and perplexed, they asked one another, "What does this mean?" Some, however, made fun of them and said, "They have had too much wine".*

Then Peter stood up with the Eleven, raised his voice and addressed the crowd: "Fellow Jews and all of you who live in Jerusalem, let me explain this to you; listen carefully to what I say. These men are not drunk, as you suppose. It's only nine in the morning! No, this is what was spoken by the prophet Joel: 'In the last days, God says, I will pour out my Spirit on all people. Your sons and daughters will prophesy, your young men will see visions, your old men will dream dreams. Even on my servants, both men and women, I will pour out my Spirit in those days, and they will prophesy.'"

The Experience

So, you are doing brunch with some mates in the upstairs lounge when all of a sudden all heaven brakes loose: it gets supernaturally breezy, there are tongues of fire on your mates head but his toupee doesn't even get singed, and everyone starts to praise God in languages that you ain't heard before...and, all of you have an unmistakable sense that the Holy Spirit has filled you. 'Wow' somehow doesn't quite cover it.

The Reactions

People in the crowd that gathered had four reactions: Bewildered. Amazed. Perplexed. Mockery. What is your reaction to the Holy Spirit? Maybe you are 100% within one of these groups, or maybe you are blend of these reactions.

The Explanation

After quickly assuring the crowd that this wasn't a party that had gone on way too long, Peter tells them that to understand this phenomena they would have to revert back to the Old Testament and get some context...which is exactly where we are going now...

CHAPTER 6

ONLY FOR A FEW PEOPLE

Around at the very beginning

Some people think that the Holy Spirit is a recent invention by the happy-clappy churches, but actually that perspective is a little out - like a squillion years out. The Holy Spirit has been part of God since....forever. When the bible picks up the story of world history, the Holy Spirit is mentioned in the second verse of the bible as hovering over the unformed earth.

But only for a few people...

Interestingly, throughout the Old Testament the Holy Spirit only came on particular people such as leaders and prophets, for particular tasks at particular times. For example, the Holy Spirit came upon Bezaleel for artist work (Ex 35v30-34), Samson for strength (Jud 15v14), Gideon for leadership (Jud 6v34) and on David for leadership (1 Sam 16v13).

But the ordinary person could never dream of such an encounter. He was only for the elite few. One of my favourite illustrations of this is found in Numbers Chapter 11v24-29:

So Moses brought together seventy of the elders and had them stand around the Tent. Then the Lord came down in the cloud and spoke with him, and he took of the Spirit that was on Moses and put the Spirit on the seventy elders. When the Spirit rested on them, they prophesied, but they did not do so again. However, two men, whose names were Eldad and Medad, had remained in the camp. They were listed among the elders, but did not go out to the Tent. Yet the Spirit also rested on them, and they prophesied in the camp. A young man ran and told Moses, "Eldad and Medad are prophesying in the camp." Joshua son of Nun, who had been Moses' aide since youth, spoke up and said, "Moses, my lord, stop them!" But Moses replied, "Are you jealous for my sake? I wish that all the Lord's people were prophets and that the Lord would put his Spirit on them!"

So, two of the elders slept straight through their alarms and miss the meeting at the Big Top with Mo. But when the Spirit comes on their 68 colleagues, he also comes on them as they are groggily getting out of bed and they also start to prophecy. One of Eldad's and Medad's neighbors sprint off to the Big Top and tells the leaders about Eldad's and Medad's antics, and Joshua (who knows the Old Testament arrangement that the Spirit is only for a few special people) immediately advises his boss to send a message back for Eldad and Medad to stop doing the Holy Spirit stuff. To which Moses gives the most intriguing and revealing response...

CHAPTER 7

THE LONGING

The Longing of Moses

Moses was not only delighted that the 68 guys with him - and the 2 sleepy-heads back in the camp – got filled with the Spirit, but he declares his longing for the day when God would liberally give his Spirit to everyone...not just the select few. Amidst this era of Holy Spirit restriction to just a few people, Moses longed for things to change. As the undisputed ‘man of God’ who seemed to have a virtual monopoly on the Spirit, the unselfish cry of his heart was *‘I wish that the Lord would put his spirit on **all** of His people’*. And so begins the longing...

The Longing of the Prophets

As the Old Testament progresses, this theme of ‘longing’ grows stronger and stronger and excitement builds and builds, and hardly surprisingly the Prophets pick it up with a vengeance. Haggai rather cryptically predicts that the future New Testament house will outclass the current Old Testament house. Ezekiel is considerably more candid saying straight out that the day will come when God will put his Spirit in his people and cause them to follow his decrees (Ez 36v27). And with unerring accuracy Joel foretells the coming era saying: *And afterward, I will pour out my Spirit on all people. Your sons and daughters will prophesy, your old men will dream dreams, your young men will see visions. Even on my servants, both men and women, I will pour out my Spirit in those days. (Joel 2v28-29)*

Did you see the A-word? ALL. If you are thinking ‘Dude, make your point!’ then let me heed your wish: ALL is the revolution. The deal until now had been that the Spirit was only for a select few, but what the Prophets were saying was that the time was coming where the Holy Spirit would be deliberately poured out on ALL flesh. And Joel, knowing that this would be the point of debate, painstakingly lists the sub-categories of ALL: men and women and boys and girls and servants as well as rich people. That about covers...er...everyone.

The Longing of John the Baptist

Scriptures says *‘And so John came, preaching a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins....And this was his message: "After me will come one more powerful than I...I baptize you with water, but he will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and with fire" (Mk 1v4-8 and Lk 3v9)*. Although he sneaked into the New Testament, John was really an Old Testament style prophet who excitedly predicted that he was preparing the way for the one who would come and fulfill the longing of the outpouring of the Spirit on all flesh...

CHAPTER 8

THE FULFILMENT

The solving of any great mystery involves answering *Who? How? When? Where?* doesn't it? And the mystery of how this *epic-new-era-of-the-spirit-for-all* would be ushered in is just groaning to be solved. The answers are found in the following verses. Here we go...

"After me will come one more powerful than I...I baptize you with water, but he will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and with fire" (Mk 1v4-8 and Lk 3v9).

On the last and greatest day of the Feast, Jesus stood and said in a loud voice, "If anyone is thirsty, let him come to me and drink. Whoever believes in me, as the Scripture has said, streams of living water will flow from within him." By this he meant the Spirit, whom those who believed in him were later to receive. Up to that time the Spirit had not been given, since Jesus had not yet been glorified. (Jn 7v37)

"Do not leave Jerusalem, but wait for the gift my Father promised, which you have heard me speak about. For John baptized with water, but in a few days you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit." (Acts 1v5)

Did you spot the answers?

Who? By Jesus. He is the baptizer...

How? Not crystal clear, but it's gonna involve fire...

When? When Jesus had ascended to heaven...

Where? Jerusalem...

Which brings us full circle back to where we started The Journey on that somewhat unusual morning in Acts Chapter 2.

PART 3

THE BIG FIVE

CHAPTER 9

THE TWO BIG QUESTIONS

The Two Big Questions

These 'Big Five' accounts in the book of Acts of people getting filled with the Holy Spirit are highly instructive in answering the following two questions:

1. *Did I receive the fullness of the Holy Spirit when I got born again, or is there more?*
2. *Does everyone get the gift of speaking in tongues when they are baptised in the Holy Spirit?*

Before we turn to these 5 accounts, let me make some introductory comments:

Regarding the question of 'how much' of the Holy Spirit we receive when we are born again, I would say the following:

(a) We are born again by the Holy Spirit. John 3 could not be clearer that the Holy Spirit is the agent of regeneration with Jesus saying in verse 8 that new birth is about being 'born of the Spirit'. Furthermore, Paul says concerning salvation that we are anointed and sealed by the Spirit: *'Now it is God who makes both us and you stand firm in Christ. He anointed us, set his seal of ownership on us, and put his Spirit in our hearts as a deposit, guaranteeing what is to come (2 Cor 1v21)*. In view of this total regeneration by the Spirit at conversion we will of course know and enjoy much of the Holy Spirit in our lives even before we are baptised in the Holy Spirit.

(b) However, the work of the Spirit at salvation seems to be different to being baptised or filled by the Holy Spirit. These five instances in the book of Acts make it impossible to say that being born again is synonymous with being baptised in the Holy Spirit. And once baptised in the Holy Spirit, the believers clearly experienced a new dimension of power and life in the Spirit.

Regarding tongues, we will find out that they definitely received the gift of tongues in four out of five instances, and probably also in the fifth.

CHAPTER 10

THE JERUSALEM ENCOUNTER

The Narrative

When the day of Pentecost came, they were all together in one place. Suddenly a sound like the blowing of a violent wind came from heaven and filled the whole house where they were sitting. They saw what seemed to be tongues of fire that separated and came to rest on each of them. All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues as the Spirit enabled them...When the people heard this sound, a crowd came together in bewilderment, because each one heard them speaking in his own language. Utterly amazed, they asked: "Are not all these men who are speaking Galileans? Then how is it that each of us hears them in his own native language? Parthians, Medes and Elamites; residents of Mesopotamia, Judea and Cappadocia, Pontus and Asia, Phrygia and Pamphylia, Egypt and the parts of Libya near Cyrene; visitors from Rome (both Jews and converts to Judaism); Cretans and Arabs--we hear them declaring the wonders of God in our own tongues!" Amazed and perplexed, they asked one another, "What does this mean?" Some, however, made fun of them and said, "They have had too much wine".

Then Peter stood up and addressed the crowd: "Fellow Jews and all of you who live in Jerusalem, let me explain this to you; listen carefully to what I say. These men are not drunk, as you suppose. It's only nine in the morning! No, this is what was spoken by the prophet Joel: 'In the last days, God says, I will pour out my Spirit on all people. Your sons and daughters will prophesy, your young men will see visions, your old men will dream dreams. Even on my servants, both men and women, I will pour out my Spirit in those days, and they will prophesy'" (Acts 2v1-18).

The Order of Events

1. They had been born again. This clearly happened sometime during their time with Jesus because they confessed Jesus as Lord (Mt 16v15-20) and we know that this is the mark of a believer (Rms 10v9). Also, Jesus had declared them to be clean (Jn 15v3).
2. They had been water baptized. Although the gospels do not recount this event, we assume they had been water baptized because (a) surely they would have followed Jesus example (Mt 3v16) and command (Mt 28v19), and (b) they were baptizing other people (Jn 4v1), and (c) endorsed baptism for all believers (Acts 2v38).
3. They got filled with the Holy Spirit

Did they speak in tongues? Yes.

CHAPTER 11

THE SAMARITAN ENCOUNTER

The Narrative

Those who had been scattered preached the word wherever they went. Philip went down to a city in Samaria and proclaimed the Christ there. When the crowds heard Philip and saw the miraculous signs he did, they all paid close attention to what he said. With shrieks, evil spirits came out of many, and many paralytics and cripples were healed. So there was great joy in that city. Now for some time a man named Simon had practiced sorcery in the city and amazed all the people of Samaria. He boasted that he was someone great, and all the people, both high and low, gave him their attention and exclaimed, "This man is the divine power known as the Great Power." They followed him because he had amazed them for a long time with his magic. But when they believed Philip as he preached the good news of the kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ, they were baptized, both men and women. Simon himself believed and was baptized. And he followed Philip everywhere, astonished by the great signs and miracles he saw.

When the apostles in Jerusalem heard that Samaria had accepted the word of God, they sent Peter and John to them. When they arrived, they prayed for them that they might receive the Holy Spirit, because the Holy Spirit had not yet come upon any of them; they had simply been baptized into the name of the Lord Jesus. Then Peter and John placed their hands on them, and they received the Holy Spirit.

When Simon saw that the Spirit was given at the laying on of the apostles' hands, he offered them money and said, "Give me also this ability so that everyone on whom I lay my hands may receive the Holy Spirit." Peter answered: "May your money perish with you, because you thought you could buy the gift of God with money! You have no part or share in this ministry, because your heart is not right before God. Repent of this wickedness and pray to the Lord. Perhaps he will forgive you for having such a thought in your heart. For I see that you are full of bitterness and captive to sin." Then Simon answered, "Pray to the Lord for me so that nothing you have said may happen to me." When they had testified and proclaimed the word of the Lord, Peter and John returned to Jerusalem, preaching the gospel in many Samaritan villages (Acts 8v4-25).

The Order of Events

1. They got born again
2. They got water baptized
3. They got filled with the Holy Spirit

Did they speak in tongues?

It doesn't say that they did. But it doesn't say that they didn't. And we know that Simon the Sorcerer was highly impressed with whatever occurred when Peter and John laid their hands on people to be filled with the Holy Spirit. Simon himself was a man familiar with doing impressive miracles (via sorcery), and regularly amazed the people, and interestingly he didn't try to buy Philip's gift of healing and deliverance (V6-7). He just wanted the ability to lay hands on people to get them filled with the Holy Spirit. We can therefore deduce that a new phenomena happened when people were filled with the Spirit, and judging from these other similar texts, it was likely to be tongues. So this one gets chalked up as a 'possibly' or 'likely'.

Possibly / Likely.

CHAPTER 12

THE DAMASCUS ENCOUNTER

The Narrative

As he neared Damascus on his journey, suddenly a light from heaven flashed around him. He fell to the ground and heard a voice say to him, "Saul, Saul, why do you persecute me?" "Who are you, Lord?" Saul asked. "I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting," he replied. "Now get up and go into the city, and you will be told what you must do." The men traveling with Saul stood there speechless; they heard the sound but did not see anyone. Saul got up from the ground, but when he opened his eyes he could see nothing. So they led him by the hand into Damascus. For three days he was blind, and did not eat or drink anything...

Then Ananias went to the house and entered it. Placing his hands on Saul, he said, "Brother Saul, the Lord Jesus, who appeared to you on the road as you were coming here has sent me so that you may see again and be filled with the Holy Spirit." Immediately, something like scales fell from Saul's eyes, and he could see again. He got up and was baptized, and after taking some food, he regained his strength (Acts 9v3-9, 17-19).

The Order of Events

1. He got born again on the road
2. He got filled with the Holy Spirit
3. He got water baptized

Did he speak in tongues?

It doesn't say that he did. But it doesn't say that he didn't. And we know from 1 Corinthians 14v18 that he claimed to speak in tongues more than anyone else. So we have to chalk Paul up as someone who definitely spoke in tongues, and it probably began through this initial encounter with the Spirit.

Yes.

CHAPTER 13

THE EPHESIAN ENCOUNTER

The Narrative

While Apollos was at Corinth, Paul took the road through the interior and arrived at Ephesus. There he found some disciples and asked them, "Did you receive the Holy Spirit when you believed?" They answered, "No, we have not even heard that there is a Holy Spirit." So Paul asked, "Then what baptism did you receive?" "John's baptism," they replied. Paul said, "John's baptism was a baptism of repentance. He told the people to believe in the one coming after him, that is, in Jesus." On hearing this, they were baptized into the name of the Lord Jesus. When Paul placed his hands on them, the Holy Spirit came on them, and they spoke in tongues and prophesied. There were about twelve men in all. (Acts 19v1-7)

The Order of Events

1. They got born again
2. They got water baptized
3. They got filled with the Holy Spirit

Key Truth

Paul's opening question to them proves that he did not consider being filled with the Spirit as something that happened within getting born again. He regarded it as a separate event that of course could happen right next to getting born again.

Did they speak in tongues?

Yes.

CHAPTER 14

THE CAESAREAN ENCOUNTER

The Context

At this stage, the gospel had not yet been preached to the gentiles (non-Jews), and new Jewish believers (including the disciples) had not yet got their heads around the fact that the gospel was to include the Gentiles. So, in addition to our investigation concerning the baptism of the Holy Spirit, we have an additional plot on the go: would the gentiles even be able to be born again?

The Narrative

Acts 10v24-43: *The following day Peter arrived in Caesarea. Cornelius was expecting them and had called together his relatives and close friends. (Then Peter begins to preach the gospel to them).*

Acts 10v44-48: *While Peter was still speaking these words, the Holy Spirit came on all who heard the message. The circumcised believers who had come with Peter were astonished that the gift of the Holy Spirit had been poured out even on the Gentiles. For they heard them speaking in tongues and praising God. Then Peter said, "Can anyone keep these people from being baptized with water? They have received the Holy Spirit just as we have." So he ordered that they be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ. Then they asked Peter to stay with them for a few days.*

Acts 11v1: *The apostles and the brothers throughout Judea heard that the Gentiles also had received the word of God.*

Acts 11v15: Peter's report to the leaders: *"As I began to speak, the Holy Spirit came on them as he had come on us at the beginning. Then I remembered what the Lord had said: 'John baptized with water, but you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit.' So if God gave them the same gift as he gave us, who believed in the Lord Jesus Christ, who was I to think that I could oppose God?" When they heard this, they had no further objections and praised God, saying, "So then, God has granted even the Gentiles repentance unto life."*

The Order of Events

1. They got born again
2. They got filled with the Holy Spirit
3. They got water baptised

Key Truths

1. Peter regarded the baptism of the Spirit to be proof that they were born again. This shows us that Peter understood the baptism of the Holy Spirit to follow being born again, rather than precede it.
2. And, because of this evidence of salvation, he felt comfortable to move to water baptism, because water baptism should always follow being born again, and not precede it.

So the big question is this: was this baptism of the Holy Spirit that these gentiles received one-and-the-same-thing with being born again, or is being born again and being baptised in the Spirit two separate events that in this instance seemed to happen very close together, if not indeed simultaneously? Because if these two experiences are one-and-the-same-thing, then maybe we don't actually need to be baptised in the Holy Spirit – we simply need to be born again!

Here is the answer:

I believe Cornelius' household experienced these events (being born again and being filled with the Spirit) as separate events, but very close together. Here are my reasons:

1. This text is not crystal clear: This text doesn't give us the exact moment when they got born again, rather the emphasis of the story is that *because* they received the outpouring of the Spirit, that was proof that they were born again – but exactly when the moment of regeneration occurred is not clear. The text does not compel us to believe that being born again and being baptised with the Spirit are one-and-the-same thing.

2. Other texts are crystal clear: Both Peter in Samaria (Acts 8v14-17) and Paul in Ephesus (Acts 19v2) actively assume that the baptism of the Holy Spirit does not automatically accompany being born again. Therefore, I conclude that what happened here in Caesarea were that the two events of being born again and being filled with the Spirit happened very, very close together but remain two separate events.

3. This situation might be regarded as unique: It seems that God had to do something special to prove to the dull Jewish believers (like Peter) that the gentiles could also be born again. To do this he used an evidence that they could fully understand – the experience of Pentecost! If this is correct, then this would another reason not to build a major case around this text.

Did they speak in tongues?

Yes.

PART 4

A NEW LANGUAGE

CHAPTER 15

THREE COMMON CONFUSIONS ABOUT TONGUES

1. 'Personal Tongues & Public Tongues are the same thing'!

In 1 Corinthians 12 and 14 Paul speaks of one of the nine gifts of the Spirit being *bringing a tongue* in a meeting that everyone listens to, and he says that when that happens someone else should use another of those nine gifts and bring *an interpretation* of that tongue. Paul says that simply bringing a tongue in a meeting for everyone to hear without an interpretation is pretty pointless! Paul really stresses this point in the opening verses of 1 Corinthians 14.

But this gift of the Spirit of 'bringing-a-tongue-in-a-meeting-for-everyone-to-hear-that-needs-an-interpretation' does not appear to be the same thing as the personal language that you receive when baptised in the Holy Spirit. We know this because:

1. There is no mention of tongues being interpreted in any of the Big Five instances of people being filled with the Spirit and speaking in tongues. It just says that they spoke in tongues. Even in Acts 2 there was no interpretation, although amazingly it seems in that instance that they were speaking in actual human languages that the crowd could understand.
2. And, why would we be given only one of the nine major gifts of the Spirit at our Spirit baptism, and at that the least of all the gifts that can't even be used without interpretation???

Having made a distinction between the 'personal' type of tongues that we receive when we are baptised in the Spirit, which, if used in a more private way doesn't need to be interpreted, and the 'public' gift of tongues that does need to be interpreted, we need to understand that a similar dynamic is at work in terms of the actual speaking of the tongue in either a private or public setting. Which brings us onto the next common confusion...

2. 'I am waiting for it to just gush out of me...and nothing seems to be is happening'!

In all my years of helping people get filled with the Spirit, I have never encountered anyone who was 'over-taken' by the Spirit and had this uncontrollable fountain of strange sounds gushing from their mouth! That doesn't seem to be God's way with the gift of personal tongues, or for that matter with any of the other gifts of the Spirit. His way is to *enable* us to *do it*, and he leaves us with the responsibility to initiate. So, unless you actually lay hands on the sick and pray, the gift of healing doesn't flow. Unless you deliberately speak words of prophecy, then there is no prophecy, and unless you actually make up and say the new sounds of 'tongues' then there is no

tongues! *You* must do the speaking. And wonderfully, the more you speak in tongues the more your range of sounds seems to develop.

Hang on a minute, did you just say 'make up the words'? Yes, I did. Who else do you think is going to make them up? Here's how it happens: you start to speak words that you don't understand, and the split second you say the word the Holy Spirit 'owns' it and attaches a meaning to it.

Hang on again, did you just say that the Holy Spirit 'attaches a meaning' to the sounds that you are making? Yes. Every language works like this, doesn't it? All earthly languages are simply sounds that different cultures attach different meanings to. And, if you as a Western man hear an Asia person prattling away in an Asian sounding language, I don't expect that you point an accusing finger at him and shout, '*Hey! You are just making that language up! I don't understand it therefore it is not a proper language!*' If you did that, you would be one proud, stuck-up snob, wouldn't you? Fancy claiming that any language you don't understand isn't actually a proper language! This leads us nicely into the third common misunderstanding about tongues...

3. 'It is not a proper language...I am just making it up'!

It is a proper language, but just like Chinese to the American, *you* don't understand it. But someone does...the Holy Spirit. And he attaches perfect meaning to every sound that you make. And tongues is a dynamic language that there is no dictionary for, so you can make a sound in prayer on Monday and it might mean X, but when you pray it again on Tuesday it could mean Y. **The meaning part is up to the Holy Spirit and the speaking part is up to you.** Just speak in faith knowing that the issue is not the phonics so much as the supernatural meaning that the Holy Spirit is attaching to every sound spoken in faith.

CHAPTER 16

FIVE GREAT REASONS TO SPEAK IN TONGUES

A wonderful evidence of being filled

Whilst I would stop short of saying that speaking in tongues is the only proof of being filled with the Spirit, I would certainly say that it is a sure evidence of being filled with the Spirit. Feelings come and go but tongues is here to stay! In Acts it was repeatedly cited as a response to being filled with the Spirit.

Tongues helps us to pray the perfect will of God

We know from Romans 8v26-27 that because the Spirit knows everything he always prays for us in accordance with God's perfect will. Therefore, when we pray for a person 'in the Spirit' (in tongues), we can be confident that the meaning that the Spirit is attaching to the sounds that we are saying are the exact things that this person needs. So, when I pray in English for a person, not only can I usually only think of things to pray for a few minutes before 'running dry', but I am not always sure that I am praying very accurately! But by praying for them in tongues I can pray for as long as I like...and know that I am praying accurately. What a great deal!

Tongues is a wonderful help in worshipping God

In 1 Cor 14v15-17 Paul specifically references using tongues to praise God, and in both Acts 2 and Acts 10 it references them praising God in tongues. I have found tongues to be a wonderful help in praising God because due to my limited brain power and English vocabulary, I can get a bit 'stuck' when praising God. When I am in a big meeting the songs help me worship God, and when I am alone I often use the Psalms to help me 'magnify God' (explore him...make him bigger in my heart and mind), but tongues enables me to bypass the limitation of having to think and speak intelligible words, and enables me to pour out a gushing torrent of pure delight and love to my Great King!

I am not knocking the God-given facilities of thought and speech that are also a great help in worshipping God, but Paul stresses that when I pray or sing in tongues I am *uttering mysteries (V2) that are unintelligible (V9) and my mind is unfruitful (V14)*. The reason that this can help us in worship is that by bypassing the process of thinking intelligible words and then making them come out of our mouths in an ordered and intelligible way, we can just let rip in praise! Tongues can pour out from your Spirit via your mouth expressing your deepest love and admiration for God.

Praising God in English is like shooting off single bullets of praise from a hand-gun, whereas tongues is a rapid fire machine gun! Praising God in English is like a football commentator who has to think of sensible things to

say when a great goal is scored, whilst tongues is like the roar of the crowd – doesn't make as much sense as the commentator but your 'shouts' actually express your true feelings a lot better than the commentator!

Tongues builds us up spiritually

Paul said that 'he who speaks in a tongue edifies himself' (1 Cor 14v4) and Jude verse 20 speaks of '*building yourselves up in your most holy faith and praying in the Holy Spirit*'. Although neither these two writers elaborate on this matter, experientially we find that speaking in tongues is a highly edifying experience for the speaker. It kind of recharges the batteries of your Spirit.

Tongues helps us to be abandoned to God

James says that the tongue is the bridle and the bit that can control the whole body like a tiny rudder does to a great ship (Jms 3v3-5). I suspect that part of God's wisdom in 'capturing' our tongues when we get baptised in the Holy Spirit is because he knows that a tongue surrendered to God will help steer the whole body into surrender to God.

PART 5

YOUR ENCOUNTER

CHAPTER 17

AVOIDING THE ROADBLOCKS

Here is a summary of possible roadblocks that people can encounter to being filled with the Holy Spirit:

Traditional upbringing and bad experiences

Some Christians have been brought up with faulty theologies or anti-Holy Spirit or anti-tongues attitudes. The way through is to understand that throughout church history there have been some glaring errors in interpreting scripture, and the anti-baptism of the Holy Spirit error is one such error that is being wonderfully corrected in our generation. Today, the majority of Christians around the world believe in the baptism of the Holy Spirit and even many of the more traditional denominations are producing spirit-filled believers.

Past occult practices

People who have dabbled in the occult sometimes struggle to receive the Holy Spirit. If that is you, then before you ask to receive the Holy Spirit then pray a simple prayer along the following lines: *Father, I renounce all past associations with witchcraft. You are my God! Amen.*

Fear of receiving a bad thing

Jesus reassures us of the impossibility of us receiving something bad when we ask for the fullness of the Holy Spirit: *“So I say to you: Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you. For everyone who asks receives; he who seeks finds; and to him who knocks, the door will be opened. “Which of you fathers, if your son asks for a fish, will you give him a snake instead? Or if he asks for an egg, will you give him a scorpion? If you then, though you are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father in heaven give the Holy Spirit to those who ask!”(Lk 11v9-13)*

Fear of losing control

Ezekial 47 speaks about the river of God as a river with several different standing options: ankle deep, waist deep or swimming deep. Ankle deep and waist deep are comfortable for us because we are in control, and it can be done quite respectably. But ‘swimming deep’ is exciting because we no longer have our feet on firm ground and we may be carried along to places that we have never been before – very exciting yet very safe. And when it comes to speaking in tongues, you are the one who actually has to make the sounds, so you still maintain the final bit of control!

Fear of expressing emotion

For some people their encounter with the Holy Spirit can be an emotional one. But this is nothing to either fear or resist because all genuine relationships should involve emotion, and your relationship with God is no different. A letter to the *Times* read: *“Why is it if a cinema comedy produces laughter, the film is regarded as successful, and if a theatre tragedy brings tears to the audience the production is regarded as touching; if a football match thrills the spectators to a near frenzy, the game is reviewed as exciting but if a congregation are moved by the glory and goodness of God in worship, they are accused of emotionalism?”* Emotions are God-given and they are to be enjoyed.

Dignity and pride

It can be a humbling thing to admit that you need the baptism of the Holy Spirit. Also, speaking in tongues requires a child-like faith and humility because it by-passes the intellect. Paul says that when we speak in tongues our mind is unfruitful. So, getting filled with the Holy Spirit and speaking in tongues both require a fair degree of self-surrender.

CHAPTER 18

PLUNGING IN

I hope that this booklet has helped you develop a scorching thirst for the fullness of the Spirit. Go for it! What have you got to lose? Come to Jesus and be filled with the Spirit and speak in your wonderful new heavenly language! Here are three final encouragements:

1. Remember that he is for you – yes you!

It can take a while to sink in that the Holy Spirit really is available to you. But you are part of ‘all flesh’, aren’t you? And Jesus has now risen so you live in the era of the Holy Spirit being poured out on all flesh. Aren’t you glad you live in this wonderful age?

2. Remember that he is free!

The Holy Spirit is a free gift to you (Acts 1v4 and Lk 11v9-13). He cannot be earned by doing good things. Just receive him by faith.

3. Come with expectant, excited child-like faith!

It is a mistake to try to receive the baptism of the Holy Spirit without being sufficiently convinced about it from scripture. God loves faith and responds to faith, so you need to be expectant and excited in your heart. If you need more time to come to this place of faith then you should take it.

Having said that, even if you can’t quite put all the scriptural pieces perfectly together to complete the perfect puzzle, I would encourage you to leap expectantly into the river of God’s Spirit – boots and all! At the end of the day, receiving the fullness of the Spirit is about having an attitude of child-like faith and passion to have as much of the Holy Spirit as possible.

Alone or together?

It is of course possible to receive the baptism of the Holy Spirit alone by your self – that actually happened to my friend Scott who heard about all this stuff, then went back to his room, sat on his bed and asked Jesus to baptize him with his Spirit, and that is exactly what happened. And he started to speak in tongues then and there. All the instances in the bible that we have looked at record people receiving the Holy Spirit in groups together and it usually happened through the laying on of hands. The way that I lead people into the baptism of the Spirit is to lead them in a short prayer like this one following, and then tell everyone that as soon as we have said ‘Amen’ everyone should speak out in tongues.

Lord Jesus, thank you for the gift of your Spirit. Please baptize me now with your Holy Spirit. I receive you, Holy Spirit. Amen.