

FOUR THINGS THE BIBLE MAKES CLEAR ABOUT THE HOLY SPIRIT

By Bob Young

Luke introduces the story of the beginning of the church by describing a prayer meeting. Before Jesus ascended to heaven, he told his eleven apostles that they would be his witnesses. But before they could become witnesses, they were to wait for the Holy Spirit. Jesus connected the Holy Spirit and witnessing. Before the coming of the Holy Spirit, 120 disciples gathered in an upper room; they “were constantly united in prayer” (Acts 1:14). They prayed about the selection of Matthias to restore the number of apostles to twelve.

On the day of Pentecost, the Holy Spirit came on the Twelve and they were filled with power to be witnesses of Jesus, speaking in the languages of those present. (Note: Contemporary churches continue to debate whether receiving spiritual gifts [like miraculous languages] is a sign of being filled with the Spirit.) What is clearly seen throughout Luke’s account of the history of the church is that when the Spirit fills people, they talk about Jesus and give glory to him.

A quick Bible study will be helpful. The promise that everyone baptized for the remission of sins would receive the gift of the Holy Spirit (Acts 2:38) and the parallel statement that God gives the Holy Spirit to all who obey him (Acts 5:32) do not seem to refer to the same thing as Luke’s repeated references to “being filled with the Spirit” (Acts 4:31, for example). In Acts 4:31, the Bible says that those who had previously received the gift of the Holy Spirit were again “filled with the Spirit.”

In Acts 2:38, the reception of the gift of the Holy Spirit at baptism (the Holy Spirit is the gift) is God’s guarantee and promise to disciples (2 Cor. 1:22; 5:5; Eph. 1:14). When those baptized were later “being filled with the Spirit,” that is God’s empowering for God’s work.

The Bible says four things about the Holy Spirit.

In the book of Acts, **Spirit-filled people talk about Jesus.** “...they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and continued to speak the word of God with boldness.” Based on Scripture, when someone claims the Spirit but never talks about Jesus, it is legitimate to ask about the Holy Spirit. In Acts 19, it may be that Paul asked about the Holy Spirit because the disciples he met were not talking about Jesus.

The Word of God is the sword of the Spirit (Eph. 6:17). **Spirit-filled people capably wield the sword of the Spirit.** When a person claims to be filled with the Holy Spirit but has little knowledge of the God’s Word, one should naturally ask about Holy Spirit filling. Spirit-filled people take up the sword of the Spirit as they talk about Jesus.

Those who take up the sword of the Spirit also “pray in the Spirit” (Eph. 6:18). **Spirit-filled people pray.** In Acts 4:31, those present were filled with the Spirit after praying. Prayer is vital to effective evangelism. Prayer is the natural result of relationship with God. We give God access to our hearts through prayer. We become sensitive to his will; we increase in boldness. We pray, God gives us “Spirit filling,” we receive power to speak about Jesus. Without prayer, we are left with duty and our own strength. Praying in the Spirit, we become his witnesses.

An important part of effective evangelism is example. Spirit-filled people walk by the Spirit, avoiding fleshly works, evidencing fruit of the Spirit (Galatians 5). **Spirit-led people live pure lives.** Paul says that Spirit-led people live by the Spirit, and by the Spirit put to death the deeds of the body, which is the mark of sonship (Rom. 8:12-14). [Read the passage. The evidence of Spirit-leading is moral purity, marking those who are sons of God.]

Mark these four things down! Each of these four truths connects the Holy Spirit to evangelism. The Bible leaves no doubt about these four evidences of the Holy Spirit filling and leading.

- Spirit-filled people **talk about Jesus.**
- Spirit-filled people **take up the sword of the Spirit.**
- Spirit-filled people **pray in the Spirit.**
- Spirit-filled, Spirit-led people **live pure lives evidenced by the fruit of the Spirit.**