The Baptism in the Holy Spirit and How to Receive It

As always, we must first define our terms so what is said is clearly understood. The word "baptism" is from the Greek word "baptize," which means to immerse.

Strong's # 907 baptize (bap-tide-O); to immerse, submerge; to overwhelm (i.e. fully wet); used only (in the N. T.) of ceremonial ablution, especially (technically) of the ordinance of Christian baptism: KJV-- Baptist, baptize, wash. (DIC)
Many books have been written on this subject, but this is all you need to know to receive it.

Therefore, the baptism in the Holy Spirit means to be immersed in the Holy Spirit. This immersion is distinct from being baptized in water as the sign of conversion. It is usually a subsequent event. Scripture uses other expressions that also refer to this experience. They are "being filled with the Holy Spirit," "receiving the gift of the Holy Spirit," "the Holy Spirit coming upon them," and, "the Holy Spirit being poured out upon them."
Scripture also uses some of these expressions to refer to other works of the Holy Spirit. Baptism in the Holy Spirit always refers to what happened to the disciples at Pentecost. Therefore, the expression, "baptized in the Holy Spirit" will be the one used in this presentation. Also, since the word "baptize" comes from a Greek word that means to immerse, the use of the preposition "in" is consistent with that understanding. We are immersed in the Holy Spirit, not immersed by the Holy Spirit or immersed with the Holy Spirit.

WHAT IS THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN BEING BAPTIZED IN WATER AND BEING BAPTIZED IN THE HOLY SPIRIT?
Specifically, there are three baptisms mentioned in Scripture that apply to the believer:

1 Being baptized into the body of Christ [Christ being the element] by the Holy Spirit [the Holy Spirit being the agent].

For we were all baptized by one Spirit into one body -- whether Jews or Greeks, slave or free -- and we were all given the one Spirit to drink.
(1 Cor.12:13) (NIV)

2 Being baptized in water [water being the element] by the minister [the minister being the agent].

3 Being baptized in the Holy Spirit [the Holy Spirit being the element] by Jesus Christ [Christ being the agent].

I [John the Baptist] indeed baptize you with water to repentance: but he that comes after me [Jesus Christ] is mightier than I, whose shoes I am not worthy to bear: he shall baptize you in the Holy Ghost, and with fire:
(Matthew 3:11)
Being baptized in water is done by the minister. The candidate is baptized [immersed] in the element of water. This usually occurs shortly after conversion. It is to be born again. Being baptized in the Holy Spirit can occur at any time after being born again. It is done by Jesus Christ since He is the Baptizer in the Holy Spirit. The "element" in which we are baptized, in this case, is the Holy Spirit.

**BUT DON'T WE RECEIVE THE HOLY SPIRIT WHEN WE ARE BORN AGAIN?**
Yes, everyone who is born of God, becomes a temple of the Holy Spirit, and the Holy Spirit takes up residence in him. Still, this is not the baptism in the Holy Spirit which is in addition.

Do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit, who is in you, whom you have received from God? You are not your own.
(1 Corinthians 6:19)

But you are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if the Spirit of God dwells in you. Now if any man does not have the Spirit of Christ he is none of his.
(Romans 8:9) (NIV)

**THEN WHAT IS THE DIFFERENCE?**
In the first case, we are filled with the Holy Spirit. We become a "well of living water." In the second case, we are filled to overflowing, and become "rivers of living water." These rivers of living water generate the power we need to carry out God's purpose.

But whosoever drinks of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of [living] water springing up into everlasting life. John 4:14

In the last day, that great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried, saying, If any man thirst, let him come to me, and drink. He that believes on me, as the Scripture has said, out of his innermost being shall flow rivers of living water. [But this spoke he of the Spirit, which they that believe on him should receive: for the Holy Spirit was not yet given; because Jesus was not yet glorified [ascended to Heaven]. (John 7:37-39)

**WHY WAS IT NECESSARY FOR JESUS TO ASCEND TO HEAVEN BEFORE THE BELIEVER COULD BE BAPTIZED IN THE HOLY SPIRIT?**
Until Jesus had shed His blood on the cross and had ascended to Heaven, the Holy Spirit could not indwell us as temples. First, we as a temple of the Holy Spirit needed to be sanctified by the blood of Jesus.

Nevertheless I tell you the truth; It is expedient for you that I go away: for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come to you; but if I depart, I will send him to you. (John 16:7)

What? Know you not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which you have of God, and you are not your own? For
you are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's. (I Corinthians 6:19-20) (KJV)

WHY DO WE NEED THE BAPTISM IN THE HOLY SPIRIT?
Christ is our example. Before Jesus himself could begin His earthly ministry, He had to be baptized in the Holy Spirit. Before the disciples could begin their ministry, they had to be baptized in the Holy Spirit. This is what happened on the day of Pentecost. Should we then think it strange that we also need this baptism for ministry? In reality, Scripture says we will be called upon to do even greater works than Jesus.

Verily, verily, I say to you, He that believes on me, the works that I do shall He do also; and greater works than these shall he do; because I go to my Father. (John 14:12) (KJV)

BUT CAN'T WE WITNESS TO OTHERS WITHOUT THE BAPTISM IN THE HOLY SPIRIT?
Yes, and there are many in ministry who do not profess to having been baptized in the Holy Spirit. Some even teach against it. Also, there are some who privately profess to being baptized in the Holy Spirit and speaking in tongues but have never publicly acknowledged it. Nevertheless, it is God's provision for equipping us to carry out what He commissions us to do. Christ commanded His disciples to remain in Jerusalem until they had received this. Scripture confirms that they were much more effective after their experience on Pentecost than they were before. Also, there are a multitude of Christians today who acknowledge they were unable to witness, at least effectively, until they had been baptized in the Holy Spirit.

And, being assembled together with them, commanded them that they should not depart from Jerusalem, but wait for the promise of the Father, which, says he, you have heard of me. For John truly baptized with water; but you shall be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days hence...But you shall receive power, after that the Holy Spirit is come upon you: and you shall be witnesses to me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea, and in Samaria, and to the uttermost part of the earth. (Acts 1:4-6,8)

BUT DO I NEED TO SPEAK IN TONGUES?
No. It is possible to be baptized in the Holy Spirit without the release of the gift of tongues. It is not a question of do I need to, but do I get to! The basic question is, "Do I trust God?" Speaking in tongues is the Scriptural objective evidence of having received this power. By definition, evidence means that it is something that can be seen and heard by others. The subjective evidences which are those we can't see are many. These can be personally overwhelming, though they may not be noticeable to others.

WHAT GOOD DOES IT DO TO SPEAK IN A LANGUAGE WE DO NOT UNDERSTAND?
First, This is one of God's gifts to us, and He wants us to have it! If we trust Him that should be reason enough. However, because God can only reach the heart of most of us by way of our intellect, the following is offered: Tongues is also called a prayer language. Since this prayer language is given to us by the Holy Spirit, it make it possible to pray perfectly. Because we don't know what we are praying, our intellect is bypassed. So this
kind of prayer is never hindered by our ignorance, doubts, fears, unbelief, and human reasoning.

For anyone who speaks in a tongue does not speak to men but to God. Indeed, no one understands him; he utters mysteries with his spirit. There are times when, as the Scripture says, we do not know how to pray. Praying in the spirit [tongues] solves this problem.

(1 Cor. 14:2)

In the same way, the Spirit helps us in our weakness. We do not know what we ought to pray for, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us with groans that words cannot express. And he who searches our hearts knows the mind of the Spirit, because the Spirit intercedes for the saints in accordance with God's will. We are in spiritual warfare. The devil cannot decipher praying in tongues. Thus, we can pray to God in a secret code.

(Romans 8:26-27)

In addition to all this, take up the shield of faith, with which you can extinguish all the flaming arrows of the evil one. Take the helmet of salvation and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God. And pray in the Spirit on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests. With this in mind, be alert and always keep on praying for all the saints. Praying in the spirit [tongues] edifies us [build or charges us up spiritually].

(Eph. 6:16-18)

He who speaks in a tongue edifies himself, but he who prophesies edifies the church.(1 Corinthians 14:4)

BUT HOW DO I KNOW TONGUES ARE NOT FROM THE DEVIL?

Not so much anymore, but some still teach that speaking in tongues is from the devil. The answer is simple! If we go to the right place, we get the right thing. If we go to a bank, we will not get counterfeit money. If we go to Jesus, we will receive the genuine; We will not receive the counterfeit.

And I say to you, Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and you shall find; knock, and it shall be opened to you. For everyone that asks receives; and he that seeks finds; and to him that knocks it shall be opened. If a son shall ask bread of any of you that is a father, will he give him a stone? Or if he asks a fish, will he for a fish give him a serpent? Or if he shall ask an egg, will he offer him a scorpion? If you then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children: how much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him?

(Luke 11:9-13)

That this "giving of the Holy Spirit" refers to the baptism in the Holy Spirit and not conversion is confirmed, because God refers to Himself as our Heavenly Father. This baptism in the Holy Spirit is only available to God's children.
BUT DON'T SOME OF THOSE WHO HAVE BEEN BAPTIZED IN THE HOLY SPIRIT BECOME VERY EMOTIONAL AND FANATICAL?
Yes, some who have been baptized in the Holy Spirit, are not good witnesses, at least at first. Consider what God requires. We must be thirsty, trusting in our relationship with God, receptive, willing, and obedient. Fortunately for most of us, God does not also require that we be emotionally stable or mature. If we feel some are poor witnesses for God's gifts, we should seek the gifts out of obedience to God. Then we can be good witnesses.

WHAT ARE SOME SUBJECTIVE EVIDENCES OF THE BAPTISM IN THE HOLY SPIRIT?
A common discovery is that the Bible suddenly comes alive to us. We understand it in a way we never did before. We find ourselves with a new boldness to tell others what Jesus Christ means to us. We see and experience, more and more, the manifestation of the spiritual gifts. We not only have a new boldness to witness, but we have a lot more to witness about! In time, and as we mature, we start bearing the fruits of the spirit.

But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance: against such there is no law.
(Galatians 5:22-23)

BUT CAN'T I EXPERIENCE THESE THINGS WITHOUT THIS BAPTISM IN THE HOLY SPIRIT?
Yes, if we are born again, we can witness to what we have received, but few do. But the more we have received, the more we have to show and tell. But to carry out what the Holy Spirit directs us to do, we need all the resources that has made available to us through Him.

THEN HOW DO I RECEIVE THIS BAPTISM IN THE HOLY SPIRIT?
First, we must be born again. This is an absolute prerequisite. Then the baptism in the Holy Spirit becomes available. The Scriptures give us the basic approach, but we must experience it personally. That is, be thirsty, go to Jesus, who is the Baptizer, and drink.

In the last day, that great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried, saying, If any man thirst, let him come to me, and drink. He that believes on me, as the Scripture has said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water. But this spoke he of the Spirit, which they that believe on him should receive: for the Holy Ghost was not yet given; because that Jesus was not yet glorified .(John 7:37-39)

ARE THERE HINDRANCES TO RECEIVING THIS GIFT?
Yes. Fear, pride, lack of trust in God, not being willing to risk embarrassment, holding unforgiveness, and holding unconfessed sin in our lives are all hindrances. If you have difficulty receiving, remember God wants you to have it. If we ask Him, The Holy Spirit will reveal anything that is hindering you, provided you are honest and receptive. Some have said, "If God wants me to have it, he will give it to me." True, He does want you to have it, but you must thirst for it, go to Jesus to get it, and drink it in. Remember, we did not receive our salvation with that attitude.
SPECIFICALLY, WHAT DO I DO?
Different groups have some individuality in the methods they employ for receiving the baptism in the Holy Spirit. For some, listening to two teaching tapes, "How to Receive the Holy Spirit," and, "How to Exercise Vocal Gifts" by Derek Prince, has been successful. Praying, with the laying-on-of-hands, is a common way, and is scriptural. This especially true when done by someone who has the baptism in the Holy Spirit.

WHAT ABOUT SPEAKING IN TONGUES?
Although, it is possible to receive the baptism in the Holy Spirit without the manifestation of speaking in tongue, it is a gift from Jesus who wants you to have it. All languages are made up of a series of syllables. Tongues is also made up of a series of syllables. The syllables will come to your mind as thoughts but will require you to utter them. You may receive this prayer language spontaneously or it may require some practice, like learning to whistle. In any case, God wants you to have it and the devil doesn't. Don't let the enemy deceive you into believing it is not for you. There is no scriptural basis why everyone can't receive it. Although there is no reason you can't receive it on your own, it may be useful to have some spirit-filled person pray for you.

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." (Acts 8:14-19)

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." O 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. (Acts 19: 1-6)

WHAT IF NOTHING SEEMS TO HAPPEN?
Scripture says that when we receive it, we receive it by faith. That is, by trusting God. Experience teaches us there may be a need to persist until we receive it. Again, possibly there may be some hindrances we must deal with first. But, if we are diligent, we will receive. It seems, also, that those who persevere in the face of apparent initial failure, receive a greater measure when they do receive.
So I say to you, Ask and keep on asking, and it shall be given you; seek and keep on seeking, and you shall find; knock and keep on knocking, and the door shall be opened to you. For everyone who asks and keeps on asking receives, and he who seeks and keeps on seeking finds, and to him who knocks and keeps on knocking the door shall be opened. What father among you, if his son asks for a loaf of bread, will give him a stone; or if he asks for a fish, will instead of a fish give him a serpent; Or if he asks for an egg, will give him a scorpion? If you then, evil-minded as you are, know how to give good gifts -- gifts that are to their advantage -- to your children, how much more will your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask and continued to ask Him! (Luke 11:9-13 ) (Amp)

SUGGESTED PRAYER FOR RECEIVING THE BAPTISM IN THE HOLY SPIRIT?
Dear Lord Jesus. I am thirsty. I come to you as the Baptizer in the Holy Spirit. In obedience to your Word, I ask You to empower me to do my part in carrying out the Great Commission. I believe you provide us with all that you require of us if we will open ourselves to all that you have for us and simply receive. Therefore, I, by an act of my will, and in obedience to your word, present myself as a living sacrifice, wholly and acceptable to you, which is my reasonable service. I ask you, Lord Jesus, to baptize me in the Holy Spirit with the evidence of speaking in other tongues as the Holy Spirit gives me the utterance. I receive it by faith. That is, by a complete and total trust in You. Amen.

Since we are always in control of this gift of speaking in a language that we have never learned, we must do the actual speaking. Therefore, we must lift our voice to express the syllable sounds that come to our mind. Like learning to whistle, it may take some practice. Just start speaking any syllables that come into their mind. Initially, it may only be a few words, but with use, you will become more articulate. If you want it so badly you can taste it, our Heavenly Father will bless you beyond your wildest expectations! You might even get a little emotional!
You can be sure the devil does not want you to have such a powerful weapon that you can use against him. He will put the thought in our mind that we are doing this. He will accuse us of doing it ourselves. That it is of us and not of the Holy Spirit. Our reply is, "Yes, devil, I am doing the speaking myself, but it is the Holy Spirit who is giving me the words!"
It may help to think of a language as a series of syllables and what will come into your thoughts will therefore be syllables. You may wonder if they are genuine but practice uttering them. With practice this often leads to getting the real thing.

Note: It is often helpful for someone to pray with you for the baptism in the Holy Spirit.