

# The Old-Time Evangelistic News

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## Being Filled with the Holy Ghost (Part 1) (Ephesians 5:18)

This month we begin looking at a subject that on one hand is too often misunderstood and on the other hand is too often neglected. The subject is being filled with the Holy Ghost. Many Independent Baptists are afraid of the term because of its abuse by the charismatic churches, but we cannot allow those who wrongly use the term to rob us of the truth that is found in Scripture. Some are afraid of the term because they fear emotionalism. When they hear “filled with the Spirit,” they think that people will run the aisles and shout. Of this, they should not be afraid. There is nothing wrong with expressing emotion. While not everyone may shout, cry, or run the aisles, those who do not should not be critical of those who do. But as much as I enjoy the displays of emotion, that is not necessarily being filled with the Spirit. There is nothing wrong with the displays of emotion, but there is much more to being filled with the Spirit than those emotions.

Before we get into the heart of the message, I want to mention some false views of the filling of the Holy Ghost. The first false view of being filled with the Holy Ghost is that it is characterized by speaking with tongues. The charismatics will say that one who is filled with the Holy Ghost will speak in tongues. They misinterpret what happened in the book of Acts and say that it will happen today. I will not go into a full rebuttal of their teaching, but speaking in tongues only occurred three times in Acts. In Acts 2:4, Jews spoke in tongues when the Holy Ghost was given to them. In Acts 10:46, Gentiles spoke in tongues when the Holy Ghost was given to them. And in Acts 19:6, John’s disciples spoke in tongues when the Holy Ghost was given to them. These are the only three times that tongues are mentioned in the book of Acts. But nowhere else in all of

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Scripture is speaking in tongues equated with being filled with the Spirit. In none of the epistles is speaking in tongues given as evidence of being filled with the Spirit. The tongues in Acts were a sign that the Holy Ghost was given in fulfillment of what Jesus had promised in John 14:16-18. Now the Holy Ghost indwells every believer at the moment of salvation (Romans 8:9). The believer of today will not speak in tongues as a result of being filled with the Spirit. As we will see, the gift of tongues ceased (I Corinthians 13:8), and are not for the church today.

It is very interesting to see that those who advocate speaking in tongues for today do not follow the guidelines laid down in Scripture for the first century church. In I Corinthians, Paul gives the guidelines for the use of tongues in chapter 14. Paul, inspired by the Holy Ghost, gives three guidelines: 1) Only two or three should do it—I Corinthians 14:27; 2) It must be interpreted—I Corinthians 14:27-28; and 3) Women cannot speak in tongues—I Corinthians 14:34. If tongues are for today, they must be used by these guidelines. But for the vast majority (if not all of them) of those who claim tongues for use today, they do not follow these guidelines. It is all a vain show of flesh for entertainment purposes, or a tool of the devil to confuse people. As mentioned earlier, I Corinthians 13:8 says that tongues will cease. Biblical evidence and historical evidence show that to be the case.

The second false view of being Spirit-filled is that it is characterized by healing. The third false view is that it is characterized by other miraculous gifts. As with tongues, the charismatics love to show off these gifts and claim to be Spirit-filled. But again, I Corinthians 13:8-10 declares that these sign gifts will cease. They did cease as the age of the apostles began to close. As more and more of the New Testament was written, less and less of the sign gifts were used. Paul, who had healed others, could not heal Epaphroditus in Philippians 2:25-30. Paul rejoiced that God had healed him, but he himself could not do it. His sign gifts were slowly going away. As Scripture and history reveals, the sign gifts ceased with the close of the first century. In fact, as you read history, the only

ones that practiced sign gifts up through the 20<sup>th</sup> century were heretical groups. No sound, Bible-believing Christians have accepted sign gifts as proof of the filling of the Spirit. They have ceased. It makes you wonder if we should not identify the charismatics of today as a heretical group just like those fringe groups that practiced and advocated the sign gifts in previous centuries. To me, they are.

But now we turn our attention to the heart of the message—being filled with the Spirit. Now that we have briefly dismissed some false views, let us look at the truth that is found in Scripture. We will consider three great truths: I. The Meaning of Being Filled with the Holy Ghost—What is it?; II. The Method of Being Filled with the Holy Ghost—How does it happen?; and III. The Manifestation of Being Filled with the Holy Ghost—What happens when you are filled? We will begin with the first truth and continue with the others next month.

What does it mean to be filled with the Holy Ghost? Consider with me **The Meaning of Being Filled with the Holy Ghost**. To obtain a better understanding of what is involved in this subject, we must consider The Definition. Therefore we must look at the words as they are used in Scripture. Three Greek words are used in the New Testament to describe this glorious reality. We will look at each of them individually. The first word is *pimplemi*; it is used eight times in Scripture—Luke 1:15; Luke 1:41; Luke 1:67; Acts 2:4; Acts 4:8; Acts 4:31; Acts 9:17; and Acts 13:9. Each time the word is used it is translated filled. Notice a more detailed definition. It means “to fill; to wholly take possession of; to be illuminated, sanctified, and guided by His influence.” Consider who was filled with the Holy Ghost. In Luke 1:15 it was John the Baptist while still in his mother’s womb. In Luke 1:41 it was Elisabeth when Mary came to visit her. In Luke 1:67 it was Zacharias upon the birth of John the Baptist. In Acts 2:4 it was the disciples upon the descent of the Holy Ghost at Pentecost. In Acts 4:8 it was Peter as he preached to the Sanhedrin. In Acts 4:31 it was the disciples as they prayed after being persecuted. In Acts 9:17 it was Paul after his conversion. And in Acts 13:9 it was Paul as he was rebuking Elymas for his opposition to the preaching of the Gospel.

You will notice that in none of these instances was there a vain show of flesh or a desire for the applause of people. John was filled from the womb and set aside to be the forerunner of Jesus Christ. Elisabeth was filled and began to praise God for sending the Messiah through Mary. Zacharias was filled and began to praise God for fulfilling His promises to Israel. The disciples were filled and began to speak “the wonderful works of God.” Peter was filled and declared that Jesus was the only name “whereby we must be saved.” The disciples were filled and “they spake the word of God with boldness.” Paul was filled and prepared for the ministry that he would begin and later filled again to rebuke Elymas’ opposition. What a lesson we can learn from just these eight passages! They were filled with the Holy Ghost to praise, preach, and rebuke. How much more do we need to be filled with the Holy Ghost so that we can properly praise our God and Savior, preach the Gospel to lost sinners, and rebuke those that will try to stop the propagation of the Gospel.

But there is more. A second word, *pleroo*, is translated filled. It is found in Acts 13:52 and Ephesians 5:18. It means “to fill to the full; to flood; to diffuse through one’s soul; to pervade; to take possession of one’s heart; to take control.” As such, the Spirit is the One who should continually dominate and control the life of the believer. In Acts 13:52, the disciples were filled with the Holy Ghost. In Ephesians 5:18, believers are commanded to be filled with the Holy Ghost. Because of the command that is given, it is something in which we must be involved. It is not automatic, but as we will see later it is something that we must let the Holy Spirit do to us. When the Holy Ghost floods our soul and diffuses throughout it, He will pervade and take possession and thus control of us. That is what He wants to do. If we are to be used of Him, that is what must happen. You will notice that these words are very similar, thus the same translation. Every time I look at these definitions, my heart cries out, “That is what I want! I want the Holy Ghost to have absolute control. I want Him to lead me and use me as He wants.” Is that your desire?

The third word that is used in connection with the Spirit’s filling of believers is *pleres*. It is used five times and is always translated full. It

is found in Luke 4:1, Acts 6:3, 6:5, 7:55, and 11:24. A more expanded meaning of the word is “filled up; covered in every part; thoroughly permeated with.” O that we might grasp what is really meant when we are told to be filled with the Holy Ghost! Too often we hear the word filled and just pass on by without fully grasping what it means. As we saw with the other two words that are translated filled, we find some examples in Scripture of those who were “full of the Holy Ghost.” Jesus in Luke 4:1 was full of the Holy Ghost. Remember that Jesus was God in human flesh. If He needed to be full of the Holy Ghost to accomplish His ministry while on earth, how much more do we need to be full of the Holy Ghost to do what we are commanded to do.

The next time the term “full of the Holy Ghost” is used is in Acts 6:3. There the church in Jerusalem was choosing men to help the apostles. One of the qualifications was that they be “full of the Holy Ghost.” Apparently the apostles knew that the people would be able to discern who is full of the Holy Ghost and who is not. Some say these are deacons, but some say that these are not. Regardless of what you want to call them, they were chosen by the church who could tell if they were full of the Holy Ghost or not. The question I ask is this, “Can others tell if you are full of the Holy Ghost?” Are you “covered in every part and thoroughly permeated with Him”? If we are, it will come out and everyone will be able to tell. It was obvious with everyone who was filled or full of the Holy Ghost. May God help us to desire to obey the command and be filled with the Holy Ghost. More next month!

*(For the completion of this message, please see our July 2008 NewsLetter and our August 2008 NewsLetter.)*