

Conversation Starter

FOR the week of February 3 to 9, 2008

This Week's Theme: Where Does The Power Come From?

Reading #1: Acts 1:1-5

Reading #2: Luke 3:15-17 & 3:21-22

Reading #3: Acts 1:8

A reading from the book of Acts:

In my former book, Theophilus, I wrote about all that Jesus began to do and to teach until the day He was taken up to heaven, after giving instructions through the Holy Spirit to the apostles He had chosen. After His suffering, He showed Himself to these men and gave many convincing proofs that He was alive. He appeared to them over a period of forty days and spoke about the kingdom of God. On one occasion, while He was eating with them, He gave them this command: "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 1:1-5)

So, then, where does the power come from, that is, the power or the ability to serve Jesus? Where does the power to pray effectively come from? Where does the power to proclaim the gospel come from? Where does the power to be effective witnesses for Jesus come from? Where does the power to use God's spiritual gifts come from? Where does the power that gives convincing proofs that Jesus is alive come from? Where does the power that enables us to do the will of our heavenly Father come from? As we see in Readings #1 and #2, the power comes from the Holy Spirit through an experience known as "baptism in the Holy Spirit". Notice Jesus' words: *you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit (Acts 1:5)* and John the Baptist's words: *But One more powerful than I ...will baptize you with the Holy Spirit... (Luke 3:16)* Jesus also said in Acts 1:8: *But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be My witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.* If you have never been baptized in the Holy Spirit, ask God to have His power come down on you and if you do so, it will be a life-changing experience.

1. Describe a time when you know you experienced the Holy Spirit at work in you or through you.
2. What does it mean to be "baptized in the Holy Spirit"?
3. How is "baptism in the Holy Spirit" different from an initial commitment to Jesus Christ?
4. Why should Christians desire to be "baptized in the Holy Spirit"?
5. How does someone receive the "baptism in the Holy Spirit"?
6. In what ways has the work of the Holy Spirit in your life changed you to be more like Jesus?