# The Spirit-Filled Life:

## Promise, Evidence, Fullness, and Active Ministry



*by Andre Vorster*

DISCIPLESHIP SCHOOL

This teaching brings together the central truths concerning the baptism of the Holy Spirit, life in the Spirit, fullness of the Spirit, and the active ministry of the Spirit-filled believer. The Scriptures show that the promise of the Father is not merely a doctrine to be debated, but a living experience that brings power, purity, liberty, revelation, and fruitful service.

We need to understand and know that the Holy Spirit is not a something but that He is a person, He is part of the Godhead and therefore as much as we see God and Jesus as identities, so He is too.

Another point to bear in mind is the difference between the indwelling of the Holy Spirit and the baptism of the Holy Spirit, they are two distinct and separate functions.

Immediately after His resurrection, Jesus appeared to His disciples in a locked room, breathed on them, and said,

> *" Again Jesus said to them, "Peace be with you. As the Father has sent Me, so also I am sending you." When He had said this, He breathed on them and said, "Receive the Holy Spirit. "* **John 20: 21-22 BSB**

This ties in directly to Jesus who did not start His ministry until He was filled with the Spirit, how much more do we need the Holy Spirit in our lives to fulfil that to which we have been called.

But this goes far deeper when we delve into scripture, this deliberate act is deeply tied to the Old Testament imagery of God breathing life into humanity, making it one of the most significant moments in the New Testament.

**The Direct Link to Genesis and Creation**

By breathing on the disciples, Jesus was intentionally reenacting the very moment of human creation.

**The Old Testament connection:** In **Gen 2:7**,

> *"Then the LORD God {YHWH Elohim} formed man from the dust of the ground and breathed the breath of life into his nostrils, and the man became a living being"* **(BAB)**

The Hebrew word used there for breath is "*neshamah"*, which is closely tied to ruach (Spirit/breath). Note the reference in the next scripture from the New Testament:

> *"So also it has been written: "The first man Adam became into a living soul;" the last Adam into a life-giving spirit."* **1 Cor 15: 45 BLB**

**The New Creation:** Just as God's physical breath gave life to the original creation, Jesus' divine breath gave spiritual life to His disciples. This act marked the beginning of the "New Creation" and the birth of the Church.

**The Link to Ezekiel's Dry Bones:** This moment also directly fulfilled the famous Old Testament prophecy found in **Ezek 37**.

In Ezekiel's vision of the valley of dry bones—which represented a spiritually dead Israel—God commanded the prophet to prophesy to the wind (ruach). God declared,

> *"And I will put upon you sinews, and I will bring up flesh over you, and I will cover over you ⁺with skin; and I will put within you breath* (ruach)*, and you will live. And you will know that I am YHWH.'"... And He said to me, "**Prophesy to the breath**; prophesy, son of man, **and say to the breath**, thus says the Lord YHWH: From the four winds come, O breath, and breathe on these slain, that they may live." And I prophesied as He had commanded me. And the breath came into them, and they lived; and they stood on their feet—an exceedingly greatly great army."* **Ezek 37: 6, 9-10 BLB**

This is a very important scripture and relates directly to the New Testament while also referring back to Genesis. In these verses we see that God tells Ezekial to prophecy and to say which infers that the "breath" was not abstract but rather something alive if you wish a body. Further the breath of life was not restricted to a single entity but to the entire army just as the Holy Spirit is for all who are reborn today.

> *" And I will put My Spirit in you ⁺, and you ⁺will live; and I will settle you ⁺in your ⁺own land. And you ⁺will know that I, YHWH, have spoken, and I have done it, a declaration of YHWH.'"" "* **Ezek 37: 14 BLB**

Jesus breathing on the disciples was the literal execution of this promise, infusing spiritual life into what was previously a fearful, hiding group of followers.

**How this Connects to Pentecost:** A common question is how this event connects to the later, fiery arrival of the Holy Spirit on the Day of Pentecost in Acts 2. We can distinguish the difference between the two events of John 20 and Acts 2 in this way:

> **John 20 (The Breath):** This was for the disciples' regeneration and inner transformation. It was the moment they were spiritually reborn as the new temple of God, receiving the indwelling Spirit.
>
> **Acts 2 (The Wind/Fire):** This was for their empowerment and public mission. The Spirit came upon them externally with explosive power, equipping them with the boldness and spiritual gifts needed to preach the Gospel to the world—very similar to how the Spirit descended on the 70 elders in the wilderness.

Also remember that the Holy Spirit was actively present and at work in the Old Testament, using the Hebrew word "*ruach"* (meaning breath, wind, or spirit) to describe God's active power.

**Key Roles in the Old Testament**

- **Creation:** The Spirit of God participated in the creation of the universe, hovering over the waters in **Gen 1:2.**

- **Empowerment:** The Spirit came upon specific leaders, judges, craftsmen, and prophets—such as Moses, Bezaleel, and David—to give them special wisdom, skill, or strength for a task.
- **Inspiring Prophecy:** The Spirit spoke through prophets to reveal God's message to Israel (**2 Sam 23:2**)

When talking about the Spirit in the context of Israel's journey through the wilderness, the most famous event occurs when Moses grew overwhelmed by the constant complaining of the Israelites in the desert and cried out to God that the burden was too heavy. In response, God commanded Moses to gather 70 of Israel's elders at the Tent of Meeting, and where God physically shifts the burden of leadership from Moses to a broader group of people:

> *"I am not able to bear all this people alone, because it is too heavy for me. And if You treat me like this, kill me, please, right now—if I have found favor in Your eyes—and do not let me see my wretchedness." And YHWH said to Moses, "Gather to Me seventy men of the elders of Israel, whom you know that they are elders of the people and officers over them, and bring them to the Tent of Meeting, that they may stand there with you. And I will come down and talk with you there, and I will take of the Spirit that is upon you and will put the same upon them. And they shall bear with you the burden of the people, that you may not bear it yourself alone."* **Num 11: 14-17 BLB**

**The Outpouring on the 70 Elders**

> *"And Moses went out and spoke to the people the words of YHWH, and he gathered seventy men of the elders of the people and placed them around the tabernacle. And YHWH came down in the cloud, and spoke to him, and took of the Spirit that was upon him, and placed it upon the seventy elders. And it came to pass, when the Spirit rested upon them, that they prophesied—and they never did again. And two men had remained in the camp—the name of one was Eldad and the name of the second Medad. And the Spirit rested upon them, and they were among those listed who had not gone out to the tabernacle, and they prophesied in the camp. And the young man ran and told Moses and said, "Eldad and Medad are prophesying in the camp." And Joshua son of Nun, Moses' assistant from his youth, answered and said, "My lord Moses, restrain them." And Moses said to him, "Are you zealous for my sake? If only he would make all people of YHWH prophets, and that YHWH would put His Spirit upon them."* **Num 11: 24-29 BAB**

**The Manifestation and Eldad & Medad**

**The Sign:** As soon as the Spirit rested on the elders, they temporarily prophesied. This served as a public, visible sign to the nation that God had genuinely authorized them to share leadership with Moses.

**The Camp Exception:** Two of the chosen elders, Eldad and Medad, had stayed behind in the main camp rather than walking out to the Tent of Meeting. Despite this, the Spirit still descended upon them, and they began prophesying right in the middle of the camp.

**Moses' Response:** When a young Joshua grew protective of Moses' authority and asked him to stop them, Moses replied with a famous, forward-looking statement: *"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!"* This we will see in the prophecy in Joel 2.

**Nehemiah's Reflection on the Wilderness**

Centuries later, the Old Testament looks back at this exact wilderness era and highlights that God's Spirit was given to the collective community for guidance and instruction, not just leadership power.

*In **Nehemiah 9:20**, during a corporate prayer recounting Israel's history, it states:*

> *" You gave Your good Spirit {Ruackaka} to instruct them. You did not withhold Your manna from their mouths, and You gave them water for their thirst."* **(BAB)**

**Prophet Isaiah and the Wilderness Shepherding**

Similarly, Isaiah looks back at the Exodus and wilderness wanderings, describing God's presence as a protective force:

> *" Then His people remembered the days of old, the days of Moses. Where is He who brought them through the sea with the shepherds of His flock? Where is the One who set His Holy Spirit among them... Like cattle going down to the valley, the Spirit of the LORD gave them rest. You led Your people this way to make for Yourself a glorious name.."*
> **Isaiah 63:11, 14 BSB**

**Old Testament vs. New Testament**

There is a distinct difference between the manifestation of the Holy Spirit in the Old Testament and the New Testament.

- **Temporary vs. Permanent:** In the Old Testament, the indwelling of the Spirit was often selective and temporary, given for specific assignments. In the New Testament, the Spirit permanently indwells all believers after Pentecost.
- **Corporate Outpouring:** Prophets like Joel looked forward to a time when God would pour out His Spirit on all people, which was fulfilled in the New Testament.

The central message is that the baptism in the Holy Spirit is evidenced by Scripture, sustained by continual fullness, and expressed through a life of worship, holiness, liberty, and active ministry.

## 1. The Promise of the Father

Before His ascension, the Lord Jesus commanded His disciples to wait for the promise of the Father:

> *"And behold, I am sending the promise of My Father upon you. But remain in the city until you have been clothed with power {dynamin} from on high."* **Luke 24: 49 BLB**

This promise was also spoken through Joel:

> *"And afterward, I will pour out My Spirit {Ruahi} on all people. Your sons and daughters will prophesy, your old men will dream dreams, your young men will see visions. Even on My menservants and maidservants, I will pour out My Spirit {Ruahi} in those days."*
> **Joel 2: 28-29 BAB**

The baptism of the Holy Spirit is therefore grounded in God's promise and must be understood by the Scriptures.

## 2. The Bible Evidence of the Baptism in the Holy Spirit

The baptism in the Holy Spirit must have Bible proof. Experiences, feelings, joy, and anointings may prepare the heart, but the clear biblical evidence must remain the foundation. The scripture below gives the original pattern:

> *"And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak with different tongues, as the Spirit was giving them the ability to speak out."* **Acts 2: 4 NASB**

Peter explained that this was the fulfilment of the promised outpouring: "This is that."

The same evidence appears again in the house of Cornelius. When the Holy Ghost fell on all who heard the word, the Jewish believers knew that the Gentiles had received the gift of the Holy Ghost

> *"While Peter was still speaking these words, the Holy Spirit fell upon all who heard his message. All the circumcised believers who had accompanied Peter were astounded that the gift of the Holy Spirit had been poured out even on the Gentiles. For they heard them speaking in tongues and exalting God. Then Peter said, "Can anyone withhold the water to baptize these people? They have received the Holy Spirit just as we have!"* **Acts 10**: **44-47 BSB**

A third witness appears in Ephesus:

> *"And when Paul laid his hands on them, the Holy Spirit came upon them, and they spoke in tongues and prophesied."* **Acts 19: 6 BSB**

These three witnesses establish the biblical pattern.

This does not magnify tongues above Christ. Rather, it magnifies the Giver of tongues and the Lord Jesus whom the Holy Spirit reveals. The baptism in the Spirit is shown in Acts with the accompanying sign of speaking in tongues, while the gift of tongues described in **1 Cor 12** refers to an ongoing spiritual gift distributed as the Spirit wills.

## 3. The Purpose and Value of Tongues

Speaking in tongues is not given for display but for communion with God.

> *"For one who speaks in an unknown tongue does not speak to people but to God; for no one understands him or catches his meaning, but by the Spirit he speaks mysteries [secret truths, hidden things]."* **1 Cor 14: 2 AMP**

The same passage teaches,

> *"One who speaks in a tongue edifies himself; but one who prophesies edifies the church [promotes growth in spiritual wisdom, devotion, holiness, and joy]."* **1 Cor 14: 4 AMP**

Through this utterance the believer is drawn into praise, worship, and spiritual strengthening.

The Holy Spirit is the great magnifier of Jesus and the great illuminator of Christ. When He fills the believer, He brings liberty to worship, boldness to speak, and power to glorify God. The

believer should seek not merely an initial experience, but a continual filling and an ongoing life in the Spirit.

### 4. Life in the Spirit: Leaving the Old Order

Life in the Spirit means moving beyond first principles and going on to maturity,

> *"not laying again the foundation of repentance from dead works"* **Heb 6: 1 BSB**

The believer must not return to the old order of striving under the law of sin and death, because Christ has brought His people into a new order of love, liberty, purity, and faith.

The Holy Spirit makes believers living epistles of Christ,

> *"having been inscribed not in ink but with the Spirit of the living God, not in tablets of stone but in tablets of fleshly hearts."* **2 Cor 3b BLB**.

The *"letter killeth, but the spirit giveth life."* The ministration of condemnation is done away, and the Spirit brings a new covenant life in which God works within the believer

> *"For it is [not your strength, but it is] God who is effectively at work in you, both to will and to work [that is, strengthening, energizing, and creating in you the longing and the ability to fulfill your purpose] for His good pleasure."* **Phil 2: 13 AMP**

This life is not produced by human effort. The law is like a pump that depends on outward pressure and can fail, but the baptism in the Spirit is like a spring that flows continually from God. As the believer beholds the Lord, they are changed:

> *"And we, who with unveiled faces all reflect the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into His image with intensifying glory, which comes from the Lord, who is the Spirit."* **2 Cor 3: 18 BSB**

The whole life becomes a Sabbath rest, for

> *"For whoever enters God's rest also rests from his own work, just as God did from His."* **Heb 4: 10 BSB**

### 5. Victory, Purity, and the Indwelling Power of God

The Spirit-filled believer is called to reign in life by Jesus Christ. Scripture declares,

> *"Anyone born of God refuses to practice sin, because God's seed abides in him; he cannot go on sinning, because he has been born of God."* **1 John 3: 9 BLB**

God's life within the believer is stronger than sin, temptation, and every opposing power.

> *"You, little children, are from God and have overcome them, because greater is He who is in you than he who is in the world."* **1 John 4: 4 BSB**

Temptations will come, but God provides victory and a way of escape. Job said,

> *"But He knows the way that I take [and He pays attention to it]. When He has tried me, I will come forth as [refined] gold [pure and luminous]."* **Job 23: 10 AMP**

The Holy Spirit does not come with condemnation; He reveals the blood of Christ, brings comfort, and makes the believer conscious of cleansing, help, and overcoming power.

## 6. What It Means to Be Full of the Spirit

Acts 6 shows that Spirit-filled people are needed even for practical service. The apostles chose men of honest report, full of the Holy Ghost and wisdom, to serve tables **Acts 6:3**. Yet men such as Stephen and Philip were lifted by the Spirit into mighty ministry. Philip became an evangelist, and Stephen, full of faith and power, did great wonders and miracles among the people **Acts 6: 8**.

To be full of the Spirit means to be full of God's life, wisdom, power, love, and boldness. It requires continual prayer and constant feeding on the Word. The Word hidden in the heart keeps the believer from sin, quickens the whole being, and causes faith to rise. Ministers and servants of God must give themselves to prayer and to the ministry of the Word.

Fullness of the Spirit also brings persecution and purity. After Jesus was anointed by the Spirit, opposition arose. After Pentecost, the apostles were imprisoned. The enemy is stirred when Spirit-filled believers move in the power of God, yet persecution refines the church and reveals the reality of Christ within.

## 7. The Active Life of the Spirit-Filled Believer

The baptism with the Holy Spirit must produce activity. The Spirit-filled believer learns the voice of God, follows divine leadings, and becomes available for ministry in ordinary situations. Whether through a conversation, a need encountered in public, or a burden placed on the heart, the Spirit leads believers into obedience and fruitfulness.

The order of Spirit-filled ministry may be seen as ministration, operation, and manifestation: the believer ministers in obedient faith, the power of God operates by the Spirit, and the result becomes visible in manifestation. Peter and John, after receiving the Holy Spirit, encountered the lame man at the Gate Beautiful. They ministered in faith, the power of God operated, and manifestation followed. Likewise, believers are called not only to know truth, but to act upon it in the name of Jesus.

The Spirit-filled life is humble, obedient, and compassionate. It is not a place for bravado or self-display, but for grace and blessing.

> *"We who are strong ought to bear with the shortcomings of the weak and not to please ourselves."* **Rom 15: 1 BSB**

Believers must be

> *"Listen carefully: I am sending you out like sheep among wolves; so be wise as serpents, and innocent as doves [have no self-serving agenda]."* **Matt 10: 16 AMP**
>
> *"But I want you to be wise about what is good and innocent about what is evil."* **Rom 16: 19 BSB**

## 8. Practical Exhortation

Be filled with the Spirit. Live in the Spirit, walk in the Spirit, and keep communion with the Spirit. Do not make God second. Separate yourself from every earthly touch that hinders obedience and allow God to bring you to the end of yourself. Begin with God now.

Enter into the promises of God. The inheritance of the believer is not a powerless life, but a life clothed with power from on high. As faith centres in the Lord Jesus,

*"…Whoever believes in Me, as the Scripture has said: 'Streams of living water will flow from within him.'" He was speaking about the Spirit, whom those who believed in Him were later to receive."* **John 7: 38 – 39 BSB**