

Is The Baptism With The Holy Spirit A Second Blessing?

(Note that much of this material has been imported from the author's article on [The Baptism With The Holy Spirit](#).)

The issue that is before us is an issue that is of great importance to the Christian Church today. For approximately one hundred years there has been a movement that seems to major on emphasizing the working of the Holy Spirit in the lives of saints. Many (possibly most) of those who are involved in this movement believe “in the baptism with the Holy Ghost subsequent to a clean heart.” (See http://www.churchofgod.org/about/declaration_of_faith.cfm) In other words, the belief is that one is baptized with the Holy Spirit after they are saved. The question that we must ask the Scriptures is whether or not this doctrine is true.

The Seal of The Spirit

“After that ye believed, ye were sealed with that holy Spirit of promise, Which is the earnest of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, unto the praise of his glory.” (Eph 1:13,14) KJV

What is the sealing of the Spirit? Often we think of the seal in the terms of a seal on a jar, or on an envelope. We think of it in terms of security. The context speaks to us of security. We must, however, take Biblical terms and use them in the manner for which they are intended and not go halfway with them. The seal is the Spirit. There is security provided by the Spirit being our seal. The Spirit seals us until Christ comes to redeem our vile bodies and make them like His glorious body (See Php 3:20,21; 1Pet 1:3-9; Rom 8:23). The seal is something that is enduring, however, it is not a seal of the jar lid sort. The seal is a sign of authenticity. It bespeaks of the genuine nature of that which is sealed. For instance, if I were to buy a car, I would receive a bill of sale. The bill of sale needs to be notarized before I can register the car in my name. When I get the bill of sale notarized, it is stamped with the “Great Seal of The State of _____.” The seal is placed on the bill of sale to authenticate that it is a document that is genuine and not a forgery. In Jesus’ day, the seal was usually made in wax by impressing it with a signet ring. That ring had a particular motif that was unique to the authority who owned it. Thus, when a seal was set on the tomb of Jesus, it was declared off limits by the authorities. The seal declared that the order to not open the tomb was an official government order. When a child of God believes the gospel and is saved, he is sealed with the Spirit which God promised in the Old Testament. Remember, Paul stated that the seal was with the Holy Spirit of *promise*. The Spirit within us testifies to the authenticity of our faith.

What did the Old Testament Scriptures promise us concerning the Spirit of God? We must learn this to know what the sealing with the Spirit of promise is and what it means to us. Let us look at some of the places where we can read of God's promise of the Holy Spirit. (For a more extensive treatment of this promise see the authors article “The Baptism With The Spirit.”) Below are several passages that present to us the promise of the Holy Spirit.

Isa 44:1-8 Yet now hear, O Jacob my servant; and Israel, whom I have chosen: Thus saith the LORD that made thee, and formed thee from the womb, which will help thee; Fear not, O Jacob, my servant; and thou, Jesurun, whom I have chosen. For I will pour water upon him that is thirsty, and floods upon the dry ground: I will pour my spirit upon thy seed, and my blessing upon thine offspring: And they shall spring up as among the grass, as willows by the water courses. One shall say, I am the LORD's; and another shall call himself by the name of Jacob; and another shall subscribe with his hand unto the LORD, and surname himself by the name of Israel. Thus saith the LORD the King of Israel, and his redeemer the LORD of hosts; I am the first, and I am the last; and beside me there is no God. And who, as I, shall call, and shall declare it, and set it in order for me, since I appointed the ancient people? and the things that are coming, and shall come, let them shew unto them. Fear ye not, neither be afraid: have not I told thee from that time, and have declared it? ye are even my witnesses. Is there a God beside me? yea, there is no God; I know not any. (KJV)

In this passage, we have a promise of the outpouring of the Spirit of God upon the people of

Israel. The promise from God is a promise that in that day He will deliver and bless His people, and the people would take the name of the LORD unto them. That is, they would declare Him to be their God and their spiritual husband. (Compare this with Acts 2:38 and the command to be baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. This is nothing more than a call for them to identify themselves with the Christ who had poured out the Spirit in fulfillment of the above prophecy. What a marked contrast between this simple truth and the heresy of “One-ness” professors!) John was telling the people that the promised redeemer was coming to save Israel. The baptism of the Holy Ghost is a fulfillment of God’s promise.

Ezek 11:19-20 And I will give them one heart, and I will put a new spirit within you; and I will take the stony heart out of their flesh, and will give them an heart of flesh: That they may walk in my statutes, and keep mine ordinances, and do them: and they shall be my people, and I will be their God. (KJV) Ezek 36:25-26 Then will I sprinkle clean water upon you, and ye shall be clean: from all your filthiness, and from all your idols, will I cleanse you. A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you: and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you an heart of flesh. (KJV)

Note that once again we have before us a promise of God giving His Spirit. This promise is to the end that men would be changed to ones who would love and worship God instead of idols.

Zech 12:9-10 And it shall come to pass in that day, that I will seek to destroy all the nations that come against Jerusalem. And I will pour upon the house of David, and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the spirit of grace and of supplications: and they shall look upon me whom they have pierced, and they shall mourn for him, as one mourneth for his only son, and shall be in bitterness for him, as one that is in bitterness for his firstborn. (KJV)

Here, too, we have a promise of God pouring out His Spirit upon His people at the time of the end. At this time they shall be delivered, restored, and saved.

After many years of expecting God to send His blessing and John declaring that the blessing was at hand, Jesus stated that the blessing of the outpouring of the Spirit was near. Jesus stated before He ascended to Heaven, *Acts 1:4 wait for the promise of the Father, which, saith he, ye have heard of me. (KJV) Luke 24:49 And, behold, I send the promise of my Father upon you: but tarry ye in the city of Jerusalem, until ye be endued with power from on high. (KJV)* Jesus let His disciples know that God was soon to fulfill the promise that He had given them so many years before. Finally, on the day of Pentecost, it came. *Acts 2:1-4 And when the day of Pentecost was fully come, they were all with one accord in one place. And suddenly there came a sound from heaven as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting. And there appeared unto them cloven tongues like as of fire, and it sat upon each of them. And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance. (KJV)*

Acts 2:16-21 But this is that which was spoken by the prophet Joel; And it shall come to pass in the last days, saith God, I will pour out of my Spirit upon all flesh: and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams: And on my servants and on my handmaidens I will pour out in those days of my Spirit; and they shall prophesy: And I will shew wonders in heaven above, and signs in the earth beneath; blood, and fire, and vapour of smoke: The sun shall be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood, before that great and notable day of the Lord come And it shall come to pass, that whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be saved. (KJV) The Holy Spirit fell upon the people and they were baptized in the Spirit. As the saints began to praise God, some observers mocked and stated that the saints were drunken. Peter’s defense was two-fold: it was too early in the morning to be drunken, and this was the fulfillment of the Old Testament promise that God had given. The PROMISE had arrived!

The wonderful thing about this blessing is the fact that it is a universal promise. The promise is available to all who call upon the name of the Lord. This statement is a quote of Joel 2:28. Peter mentioned that the outpouring of the Spirit was in fulfillment of the promise in Joel 2. He also told

those men to call upon the name of the Lord to be saved. This is especially interesting to note when you contrast the present day misrepresentation of Acts 2:38 which people use to teach baptism in Jesus' name in order to obtain the forgiveness of sins. One thing is certain, Acts 2:38 does not contradict the plain statement "whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved." When Peter said, *Acts 2:38 Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost. (KJV)* he was simply stating that men must receive Jesus as the Christ and embrace Him as the true King of Israel. Not only so, but one of the things that is characteristic of those upon whom the Spirit is come is the fact that they identify themselves with the Lord who poured out His Spirit (See Isa 44:5). If this is characteristic of those who have received the promise, is it any wonder that Peter would tell the Jews who rejected Christ that they must repent, accept Jesus as their Messiah, and identify themselves with Christ to be saved? Salvation is not through the identifying, but those who deny the Lord are denied of Him (See Matt 10:32,33). No one need think himself to be forgiven of sin if he will not confess Jesus as the Christ and as his savior. This is simply another part of Scripture being fulfilled which says, *Isa 44:3-5 I will pour water upon him that is thirsty, and floods upon the dry ground: I will pour my spirit upon thy seed, and my blessing upon thine offspring: And they shall spring up as among the grass, as willows by the water courses. One shall say, I am the LORD's; and another shall call himself by the name of Jacob; and another shall subscribe with his hand unto the LORD, and surname himself by the name of Israel. (KJV)*

Seeing that the Holy Spirit of promise is the seal (sign of the genuine nature) of our redemption, and that the promise of the Spirit is to everyone who believes Jesus, we must ask ourselves one more question. That question is this: when does the believer receive the seal of the Spirit? Is it received simultaneously with regeneration, or is it sometime subsequent to the new birth? The text that states to us that the Spirit is the seal of our redemption sets the time of the sealing, too. *Eph 1:13 after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that holy Spirit of promise. (KJV)* The apostle Paul asked the question of the Galatians, *Gal 3:2 This only would I learn of you, Received ye the Spirit by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith? (KJV)* Paul reminded the Galatians that their receiving of the Spirit and blessing came through faith, not works of the law. He also told them that the reason Jesus died was that we could receive the promise of the Spirit through faith. *Gal 3:13-14 Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us: for it is written, Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree: That the blessing of Abraham might come on the Gentiles through Jesus Christ; that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith. (KJV)* Finally, Paul lets us know that this receiving of the Spirit was not an indwelling alone, but a baptism. *Gal 3:26-29 For ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus. For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus. And if ye be Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise. (KJV)* It is important to note that the baptism in Gal 3:27 is of necessity a Spirit baptism. The word "for" is a word that joins the statement to be made with the foregone statements. We have believed in Christ and have put on Christ when we were baptized with the Spirit into Christ. This baptism happens when we become children of God by faith in Christ. In Christ there is equality and no distinctions. (This would not be so if the baptism were water baptism into the local body, for we know that God has placed different people in different positions of authority in the local body.) This baptism is part and parcel of our belonging to Christ and being of Abraham's seed. In short, the baptism of the Spirit comes to everyone who believes in Christ to the saving of his soul: and that according to the promise of God of which we have already studied. As a matter of fact, we are told that the only ones who do not have the Spirit of God are the ones who are not saved. *Rom 8:9 Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his. (KJV)* It can be safely concluded, then, that the baptism with the Holy Ghost is not a "second blessing" but occurs at the very moment one believes and is born again.

A Consideration of Two Texts That Seem to Support The Doctrine of The Second Blessing

The following passages seem to support the doctrine of the second blessing. The question we must ask is, "Do they indeed support the doctrine of the second blessing?" The first thing we must note is the fact that it has already been determined from the Scriptures that the Baptism with the Holy Spirit is not a second blessing. At the same time, we must do justice to hard texts that seem to point in the other direction. They cannot be dismissed. Let us now examine these two texts.

Acts 8:14-17 Now when the apostles which were at Jerusalem heard that Samaria had received the word of God, they sent unto them Peter and John: Who, when they were come down, prayed for them, that they might receive the Holy Ghost: (For as yet he was fallen upon none of them: only they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus.) Then laid they their hands on them, and they received the Holy Ghost. (KJV) As we study this passage we must first understand the context. The disciples had stayed in Jerusalem until persecution caused many of them to flee to other places. As they fled, they preached. As they preached, people were converted. In Samaria folks believed on Jesus. Let us not forget that the Samaritans and Jews were not friendly to one another. We must also recall that the Jewish people had a very strong spirit of nationalism, and especially was it strong in relation to their religious views. The Scriptures show us evidence that it was difficult for the early church to accept that there were those who were not of Jewish descent who could be saved. It is no wonder that, when the church at Jerusalem heard of converts at Samaria, they sent some down to look into the matter. When Peter and John arrived in Samaria, they prayed for the new converts and laid their hands upon them. When this was done, the Samaritan believers received the gift of the Spirit.

Why did this happen in this manner, and what did it signify? First of all, this happening demonstrated to the Samaritans their acceptance into the body of Christ. They were received as true Christians by the apostles who were chosen by Christ to be His witnesses. There should be no doubt that this caused them much comfort. Not only so, but this action demonstrated that the apostles and the Jerusalem church were willing to share the honor of the gifts of the Spirit with the Samaritans. The laying on of hands signified their willingness to share with the Samaritans the blessings that they had enjoyed because of Jesus (compare Num 27:18-23). This happening was not something that was normal. In other words, we need not expect the coming of the Spirit to happen in this manner as a matter of course. These events happened in this manner because God was working through this to emphasize the unity that is in the body of Christ. This unity was taught by Paul when he said, "*As the body is one, and hath many members, and all the members of that one body, being many, are one body: so also is Christ. For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free; and have been all made to drink into one Spirit.*" (1 Cor 12:12,13) KJV

Acts 19:1-7 And it came to pass, that, while Apollos was at Corinth, Paul having passed through the upper coasts came to Ephesus: and finding certain disciples, He said unto them, Have ye received the Holy Ghost since ye believed? And they said unto him, We have not so much as heard whether there be any Holy Ghost. And he said unto them, Unto what then were ye baptized? And they said, Unto John's baptism. Then said Paul, John verily baptized with the baptism of repentance, saying unto the people, that they should believe on him which should come after him, that is, on Christ Jesus. When they heard this, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. And when Paul had laid his hands upon them, the Holy Ghost came on them; and they spake with tongues, and prophesied. And all the men were about twelve. (KJV) What happened here? First of all, we must see that these disciples were ignorant of the Holy Ghost. How could that be? If there baptized with John's baptism, or unto John's baptism, they should have heard of the Holy Spirit. John preached and told men that they should believe on Jesus, who would baptize them with the Holy Ghost (Matt 3:11,12). The preaching of John was calculated to lead men to faith in Jesus. It is obvious that these people had not heard the gospel message correctly. Because of this, they did not receive Jesus as their savior. They

were not true disciples of Christ. Having heard the truth, they evidently embraced it, as they were baptized into Christ. After that, Paul laid hands on them and they received the Spirit. This happening can easily be explained by the fact that the laying on of hands and the receiving of the Spirit happened for the purpose of giving these people the assurance that they needed that their faith was indeed genuine and was honored by God.

While these may not be what some would call “water tight” explanations, we can at least say that they are as plausible as any other we know of. These explanations also seem to fit well with the facts that we know. What we must realize is that passages such as these do not change the fact that the baptism with the Holy Spirit is not a second blessing, but occurs when one is converted. The occasional obscure passage must never be used to negate that which is plain and easily understood.