

### **The Baptism with The Holy Spirit**

*Matt 3:11 I indeed baptize you with water unto repentance: but he that cometh after me is mightier than I, whose shoes I am not worthy to bear: he shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost, and with fire.  
(KJV)*

John the Baptist came as a herald of the Christ. His preaching was filled with promise of the Messiah's coming. As he preached to the people and baptized those who repented, John told them that the Christ was coming to baptize with the Holy Ghost and with fire. What is this baptism with the Holy Ghost?

One thing we must notice is that this baptism is a baptism *with* the Holy Ghost, or *in* the Holy Ghost. Many times people speak of the baptism *of* the Holy Ghost as if the Holy Spirit did the baptizing. In reality, Jesus does the baptizing. "*He shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost.*" (Matt 3:11) The work of the baptism of the Holy Ghost is the work of Christ.

### **The Promise**

As John spoke to the people, his preaching was a familiar theme. That theme was concerning the coming King of Israel. John told the people that he came in fulfillment of Isa 40:1-8. John's ministry was in accord with Old Testament prophecy. Part of the prophecy concerning John's ministry was that he would tell the people that only God and His word would endure. Included in this message was the fact that the Spirit of the LORD would blow upon men and they would perish. With this in mind we can see that John's preaching about Jesus baptizing with the Holy Ghost was preaching that pointed men to the Scriptures and promises about the work of the Christ.

As we read the word of God we find that the Spirit is spoken of as "*that holy Spirit of promise.*" (Eph 1:13) The Holy Ghost came according to the promise of God. We find this promise several times in the writings of Isaiah the prophet: *Isa 32:13-18 Upon the land of my people shall come up thorns and briers; yea, upon all the houses of joy in the joyous city: Because the palaces shall be forsaken; the multitude of the city shall be left; the forts and towers shall be for dens for ever, a joy of wild asses, a pasture of flocks; Until the spirit be poured upon us from on high, and the wilderness be a fruitful field, and the fruitful field be counted for a forest. Then judgment shall dwell in the wilderness, and righteousness remain in the fruitful field. And the work of righteousness shall be peace; and the effect of righteousness quietness and assurance for ever. And my people shall dwell in a peaceable habitation, and in sure dwellings, and in quiet resting places.* (KJV) This prophecy speaks of the fact that God would pour out His Spirit on the people and that it would have an amazing effect upon the whole of creation. The effects of the pouring out of the Spirit would be seen in the reign of righteousness in the lives of men and in the earth. When John the Baptist preached that Jesus would baptize with the Holy Ghost, the people knew that he was speaking of the work of the promised Messiah who would come to rule the earth in righteousness and give peace to His people.

*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)* Again, 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 "Oneness" believers!) 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.

*Ezek 37:12-14 Therefore prophesy and say unto them, Thus saith the Lord GOD; Behold, O my people, I will open your graves, and cause you to come up out of your graves, and bring you into the land of Israel. And ye shall know that I am the LORD, when I have opened your graves, O my people, and brought you up out of your graves, And shall put my spirit in you, and ye shall live, and I shall place you in your own land: then shall ye know that I the LORD have spoken it, and performed it, saith the LORD. (KJV)* Here, too we have a prophecy that God will restore Israel and pour His Spirit out upon them. This promise speaks of the future of Israel when the LORD returns to raise the dead and to rule in the earth.

*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)* Once again 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.

It is abundantly evident from the Scriptures which are before us that John's preaching was preaching that would resonate with the people. It was doctrine that they would recognize because they were familiar with it. The King was coming. Their deliverer and Savior was near. The Kingdom of Heaven was indeed at hand. The promise of the outpouring of the Spirit was an Old Testament promise that was indeed gospel (good news) to the people. When the Messiah poured His Spirit upon the people, sin would be forgiven, captives would be set free, and the world would be changed into a righteous habitation.

### **The Promise Fulfilled**

*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) Acts 2:36-38 Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly, that God hath made that same Jesus, whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ. Now when they heard this, they were pricked in their heart, and said unto Peter and to the rest of the apostles, Men and brethren, what shall we do? Then Peter said unto them, 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) 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. 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)*

Another place where we see the promise fulfilled is Acts 10. In this chapter Cornelius had sent for Peter to come and preach for them. He and his family needed the Gospel, and God arranged for Peter to go and preach to them. Peter preached and told them that Jesus was the one who would forgive them of their sins and justify them. *Acts 10:44-48 While Peter yet spake these words, the Holy Ghost fell on all them which heard the word. And they of the circumcision which believed were astonished, as many as came with Peter, because that on the Gentiles also was poured out the gift of the Holy Ghost. For they heard them speak with tongues, and magnify God. Then answered Peter, Can any man forbid water, that these should not be baptized, which have received the Holy Ghost as well as we? And he commanded them to be baptized in the name of the Lord. Then prayed they him to tarry certain days. (KJV)* At this time the church was still a Jewish church. Peter was called into question about having fellowship with Gentile people. His defense was this, *Acts 11:15-18 As I began to speak, the Holy Ghost fell on them, as on us at the beginning. Then remembered I the word of the Lord, how that he said, John indeed baptized with water; but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost. Forasmuch then as God gave them the like gift as he did unto us, who believed on the Lord Jesus Christ; what was I, that I could withstand God? When they heard these things, they held their peace, and glorified God, saying, Then hath God also to the Gentiles granted repentance unto life. (KJV)* At this point we simply need to see that the Gentiles received the same *promise* that the Jews received. God had kept His promise to pour out His Spirit upon His people and to save all those who call upon Him.

### **The Baptism With The Holy Ghost Today**

The final question that needs to be asked is, "What is the relevance and significance of this doctrine for us today?"

Paul said, *Eph 1:13-14 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. (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 go 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. So, when a child of God believes the gospel and is saved, he is sealed with the baptism of the Spirit whom 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.

As the great apostle Paul spoke to the Galatian churches, he reminded them of this same truth. His aim was to defend the truth of justification by faith. For this reason he asked the question, *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 foregoing 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. Furthermore it would actually be equating water baptism with salvation if water baptism were the baptism referred to here.) 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.

Finally, this baptism with the Spirit is a great assurance to the child of God. Paul told the Roman church, *Rom 8:9-11 ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you. Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his. And if Christ be in you, the body is dead because of sin; but the Spirit is life because of righteousness. But if the Spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, he that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by his Spirit that dwelleth in you. (KJV)* All of God's children have the Spirit of God in them. The presence of the Spirit of God, in whom we were baptized upon believing in Jesus, is our assurance of our salvation. Remember, it is our seal of authenticity. *Rom 8:16 The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God. (KJV)* Because we have the Spirit of Christ in us, we know that we are partakers of the promise. This is not simply a subjective feeling. God lives within us and testifies to us of the fact that we are true believers. When we read the Scriptures about God's promises coming to those who believe we have assurance that we are partakers in that promise, because we have trusted Christ, have been baptized with the Holy Spirit and the Holy Spirit dwells within us giving us the knowledge of salvation according to God's promise (See Luke 1:77).

Let us thank God that He has given us such a promise and such a blessing. We can live our lives with full assurance that we belong to the Lord Jesus Christ and are forgiven of our sins. We have this assurance because He has given us the seal of the Spirit of God who has surrounded us, joined us to Christ, and lives within us.