**The Holy Spirit in the Baptismal Measure**

**🡺 HSB PROMISED BY JOHN**:

Matthew 3:11, Mark 1:8, Luke 3:16, John 1:32

**What John’s Promises Mean**:

John’s address to these Jews informed them that Jesus would baptize them with **both the Holy Spirit and fire**. As Matthew 3:12 explains, baptism of fire describes God’s separation of evil people from good people and was therefore to be given to unbelievers and to the unfaithful. The Parable of the Tares explains what will happen at this time, Matthew thirteen. Since John spoke to the same group about receiving two **opposing** baptisms we can be assured that he meant Jews from among whom were to come future disciples and also those who would reject Jesus.

This passage does not suggest that all Christians were to receive either the Holy Spirit baptism or the baptism of fire. John spoke to those before him and not necessarily to future Christians. Jesus did send the Holy Spirit in a baptismal measure, but only to certain few a of that generation. Baptism of fire was in readiness for certain of those Jews also -- for those who would not respond to the Gospel message. We cannot conclude, therefore, that John’s promise of Holy Spirit baptism was to any more than a limited number of those to whom he spoke. In order to ascertain that Holy Spirit baptism is for later generations of Christians, (as some claim today) further evidence must be produced from other passages of scripture.

The principle at work in this selection of verses is important in determining the truth from scripture. Every scripture has a context that limits its meaning. We should be very careful not to add conjectures of our own to the context of a passage. Those in the audience of John were the only ones addressed by John, therefore the only ones that we can prove to be proper recipients of the promises made by John unless he specified that others were to be included in what he had to say. The fact that all generations will be tried by the baptism of fire in the last day does not prove that all generations were to receive the baptism of the Holy Spirit.

**🡺 HSB PROMISED BY JESUS**:

John 14:16-18, 26; John 15:26-27; John 16:7-13; Luke 24:49; Acts 1:4-8

**Explanation Of Jesus’ Promises About Holy Spirit Baptism**

**Why HSB Was To Be Given**:

John 14:16-18 To comfort the apostles after Jesus left them.

John 14:17, 26 To guide the apostles into all truth and help them remember what Jesus had taught them. (See also 16:13)

John 15:26 To testify of Jesus as an aid in helping the apostles be eye-witnesses.

John 16:14 To glorify Christ.

Mark 16:20 To confirm the word spoken by signs and miracles

**When HSB Was To Be Given**:

John 16:7 Jesus was to send the Holy Spirit after He left. Since the H.S. was to be a comforter to take His place, it stands to reason He would send the Spirit soon after He left. See John 7:37-39.

Luke 24:49, Acts 1:3-5 Jesus told His disciples to wait in Jerusalem for the power which was the Holy Spirit in the baptismal measure. This they were to receive “not many days hence.”

**The Recipients Of HSB**:

John 13:1 This Holy Spirit discourse was given by Jesus to His disciples at the Passover feast when He instituted the Last Supper. [His promise was not given to the public at large.]

Matthew 26:17-20 This passage specifies that the twelve disciples were the only ones present at the time of the promise.

**🡺 HSB IN ACTS CHAPTER TWO**:

The promissory passages above are fulfilled in Acts two and therefore become a **confirmation** of God’s plan to establish the kingdom on Pentecost. In Acts 2:15 Peter indicates that the apostles’ experience was a fulfillment of Joel’s prophecy concerning mankind’s reception of God’s Spirit.

The **outward manifestations** of Holy Spirit baptism in Acts two were fire-like tongues above the heads of the apostles and their ability to speak in languages that they had not previously learned. Most of the audience realized that what they were witnessing was miraculous and at the same time received the information necessary for them to believe in Jesus and to obey Him.

Other **characteristics** of Holy Spirit baptism include:

1. It was sent from God directly to the recipients (not given through the laying on of hands of the apostles).

2. Holy Spirit baptism was wholly at the discretion of God (the apostles did not know when it would come). It was not sent at their request; instead, they were told to go to Jerusalem and wait for it.

3. Holy Spirit baptism was a promise to the apostles and not a command for the them to obey. The difference is that Holy Spirit baptism was received in a passive circumstance whereas water baptism is received as an active mode in obedience to a command.

**🡺 HSB IN ACTS CHAPTER TEN**:

That the reception of the Holy Spirit by **Cornelius** and his family was Holy Spirit baptism is verified in Acts 11:15-16. Verses 1-18 of this eleventh chapter tell of Peter’s trip to Jerusalem and his explanation in defense of the events that happened in chapter ten—of his preaching the word to the Gentiles, Cornelius and his family. As Peter makes his explanation he describes Cornelius’ reception of the Holy Spirit in terms of what happened in Acts two, calling the events of Acts ten the same as what fell “upon us at the beginning” and recalling the event in terms of their being “baptized with the Holy Spirit.”

The whole story of Peter’s contact with Cornelius, beginning in Acts 10:9 and continuing through Acts 11:18, is recorded to reveal how Jewish Christians such as Peter, James and John (Galatians 2:9) came to understand that the gospel was to be preached to the Gentiles as well as to the Jews as in Acts two. A sign (Holy Spirit baptism) was given to the apostles in Acts two in order to confirm to them that it was time to begin preaching the gospel to the Jews at Jerusalem. The same sign was was needed and given in Acts ten to confirm to Peter that he should preach to Gentiles and baptize them into the kingdom of God. The astonishment of Peter’s Jewish-Christian companions, Acts 10:45, shows that such a confirmation was needed. In both cases Holy Spirit baptism served as a **sign** to the Apostles that preaching should open up the kingdom of God to those present. Peter was the preacher in both cases and was fulfilling Christ’s intent that he use the keys of the kingdom, opening up the church to the Jews first and then to the Gentiles, Matthew 16:18-19.

What happened in **Acts chapter ten** was the same as that in **Acts chapter two**. This is elementary from three observations:

1. Peter describes what happened to Cornelius as being the same as what happened to the apostles “in the beginning”, 11:15.

2. The outward manifestations were much the same (unsolicited control of the recipients resulting in speaking in tongues) What happened in these two occurrences was an overwhelming of the recipients by God’s Spirit. The Holy Spirit took control and manifested Himself in speaking in tongues.

3. the purpose of each was to signify that the kingdom was now opening to those present, first Jews (Acts two) and then Gentiles (Acts ten).

The occurrence of Holy Spirit baptism during these two events (Acts two and Acts ten) was **unique** and mustbe considered different from other instances of man’s reception of God’s Spirit. In Acts eleven when Peter describes what had happened to Cornelius earlier, he describes it as being similar to what happened in “the beginning,” revealing two things: (1) that it was the same as that which happened to the apostles in Acts chapter two and (2) because Peter deliberately skips over the intervening chapters and refers to the beginning of the church, we know that the people who were receiving the Holy Spirit during the period between Pentecost and Cornelius’ conversion, Acts 2:38, 5:32, 8:14-20, and 9:17, were receiving a measure of the Holy Spirit different than in Acts two and ten. Peter skips what occurred in the four passages above because what happened in Acts two and ten was different in measure, manifestation and purpose. The reception of God’s Spirit in Acts two and in Acts ten are the only two records of Holy Spirit baptism in the Bible.

**🡺 NOTE ON BEING “FILLED WITH THE SPIRIT**”:

Filled with the Spirit (Acts 7:55, Acts 11:24) is not the same as Holy Spirit baptism. The following passages show that people were filled with the Spirit before Jesus was crucified: Luke 1:15, 41, 67; and Luke 4:1. Acts 1:5-8 shows that the baptismal measure of the Holy Spirit was not given until after Jesus was crucified and risen. Since people were “filled with the Spirit” before His crucifixion, being “filled with the Spirit” is something other than the baptism of the Holy Spirit. Most occurrences of the phrase describe the enthusiasm and dedication of someone who is involved in some spiritual endeavor.

**🡺 CONCLUSIONS ABOUT HOLY SPIRIT BAPTISM**

There are only **two verifiable occurrences** of Holy Spirit baptism in the New Testament. A mistake one must be careful to avoid is confusing other measures of the Holy Spirit with baptism of the Holy Spirit. Confusing one measure of the Holy Spirit with another results in confusing manifestations and purposes as well.

Holy Spirit baptism came directly **from heaven**, not from men. Both occurrences of Holy Spirit baptism were sudden and surprising, the recipients entirely passive at the time. Jesus sent the Holy Spirit in baptismal measure from heaven, so men can not administer the Holy Spirit in the baptismal measure, nor can they do anything to receive it.

Holy Spirit baptism has **nothing to do with salvation**. In the account of Cornelius’ conversion, Holy Spirit baptism served as a sign that Cornelius was acceptable for entrance into the kingdom through water baptism and had no direct association with his salvation. Holy Spirit baptism was a promise, not a command to obey, and therefore is not part of what we are told to do in order to be saved. Nowhere in the New Testament is there any indication that Holy Spirit baptism had anything to do with anyone’s salvation.

There are **four** **baptisms** mentioned in the New Testament: (1) baptism in water - Acts 8:36 (2) baptism in fire - Matthew 3:11 (3) baptism in the Holy Spirit - Matthew 3:11 (4) baptism of suffering - Matthew 20:22; however, Ephesians 4:5 explains that there is but **one baptism for Christians**. Of these four baptisms, only water baptism is always directly associated with the process of salvation. See John 3:3-5, Acts 8:38, Acts 10:47, Hebrews 10:22, 1Peter 3:21, Romans 6:3+ and Colossians 2:12-13. Since it is a necessary ingredient in salvation, **water baptism** is the only baptism which has a purpose and application that is universal enough to be the “one baptism” of Ephesians 4:5.

Reception of the Spirit of God at the time of water baptism, Acts 2:38 and Romans 8:11, **should not be confused** with the baptism of the Holy Spirit given only to the apostles and to Cornelius, nor should it be confused with the reception of the Holy Spirit in the form of miraculous gifts as listed in 1Corinthians 12:8-10. These last were given by the laying on of the apostles’ hands, Acts 8:12-25, and the former measure was given only at water baptism. Noticing the difference in the mode of reception as well as the difference in purpose for each measure of the Holy Spirit will help one to distinguish which measure of the Spirit he is reading about in scripture.

**🡺 SUMMARY**

Based upon information in this study of Holy Spirit baptism, one should conclude that the measure of the Holy Spirit for us today is not Holy Spirit baptism and that Holy Spirit baptism was a temporary manifestation of God’s Spirit which served to aid in the beginnings of the church.