

BAPTISM OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

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INTRODUCTION:

- A. When discussing the necessity of baptism some will argue that passages that speak of it being for salvation is referring to “Holy Spirit Baptism”
- B. Let’s study what Holy Spirit Baptism is so we will know & we’ll be ready to answer them!

I. THE PROMISE OF THE BAPTISM OF THE HOLY SPIRIT:

A. The first mention of Holy Spirit baptism is in a prophecy by John :

1. When John baptized people in the Jordan he spoke of another baptism (**Luke 3:15-17**)
 - a. There is no doubt that John was administering water baptism... It was in the Jordan River! His was a baptism of repentance for the remission of sins
 - b. This baptism with the H.S. was something to be administered by Jesus, not John the Baptist, the apostles, or any other man... including ourselves! (**Jn 1:33-34**)
 - c. Notice as well that Jesus would baptize them not only with the Holy Spirit but also with fire... But we rarely hear of anyone speaking about “fire baptism”
2. The question should be answered: “Who was John making this prophecy to?”
 - a. Those who believe we are saved by being baptized with the Holy Spirit today will say that it is a prophecy made for anyone who would become a Christian
 - b. It’s not uncommon for a statement to be made in the scriptures using the pronoun “you” to a large group when only a specific part is intended (**I Cor 6:6-7**)
 - c. Right before Jesus ascended He referenced this prophecy by John and applied to the apostles and what was to occur on the day of Pentecost! (**Acts 1:4-5**)
3. What is this baptism of fire that John speaks of?
 - a. This idea of “winnowing fan” referred to a process of separating the wheat (good grain) from the chaff (weeds) – The chaff would then be gathered up & burned
 - b. The gathering of wheat referred to the Jews who’d accept Christ under the age of the Holy Spirit while the burning of the chaff with fire unquenchable referred to those who’d reject Him resulting in the total destruction of the nation of Israel
 - c. This was the context this prophecy was given in as John spoke of the axe being laid at the root of the tress... Calling for them to repent in view of this (**vs. 7-9**)

B. During Jesus’ ministry He made several promises to His apostles concerning the coming of the Holy Spirit:

1. When Jesus told His apostles that He would be leaving them they naturally became very worried; however, Jesus said He would send a Helper! (**John 14:16-18, 25-26**)
 - a. This helper, or comforter, that Jesus promises them is the coming of the Holy Spirit
 - b. Jesus calls the “Helper” the “Spirit of Truth” → What would be the function of the Helper? It’s not to go in & arbitrarily change the hearts of men to save them!
 - c. A two fold function: To teach them all things & remind them all Jesus taught them → A great comfort & help for these men considering what their task would be!
2. Jesus gives further comfort to His disciples with more promises (**John 16:5-15**)
 - a. Jesus and the Holy Spirit could not be with them at the same time – so Jesus is saying that they would be better off having the Spirit and with Him gone!
 - b. The Holy Spirit would come also to convict the world of sin, righteousness, & judgment → This certainly was done by the teaching He inspired!
 - c. The Spirit would act as a revealer guiding them into all truth → Jesus didn’t teach them all they needed to know in 3 years & they weren’t ready for it anyway!
 - d. As He worked in these roles, when the Holy Spirit came He would glorify Christ!
3. Jesus promised the apostles that they would be clothed with power! (**Luke 24:46-49**)
 - a. Jesus has died & been resurrected – He opens their minds so it all makes sense!
 - b. The idea of “clothed” best relays the meaning of the Greek word... It literally means “to be clothed with, to put on, in the sense of sinking into a garment”

- c. But notice the apostles weren't clothing themselves... They would be clothed! Holy Spirit baptism we can see is not something man did but was done to man!
- 4. Remember, these men would be the men to first preach the gospel of Christ!
 - a. They'd be heralding the greatest news ever told... God's plan for our salvation!
 - b. God's purpose was not for them to only reveal it for their time, but also for the rest of time as their teaching and actions would be recorded for the rest of time!
 - c. It would be imperative then that they get it right – That their teaching be not based on their own memories which could fail or from their own imaginations
- 5. As we think about these promises, remember what baptism means:
 - a. It's hard to think of baptism outside of the idea of being immersed in water because that's how it's most commonly used by us & the New Testament (**John 3:23**)
 - b. It means "to immerse" or "overwhelm" → There are several baptisms spoken of in the Bible... Used literally & figuratively and of our salvation & other things
 - c. In these promises of Jesus alone we can see how this baptism of the Holy Spirit could easily apply to the promises Jesus made! But we aren't left to wonder...

C. Both the prophecy of John and the promises of Jesus pointed the apostles to Pentecost:

- 1. Right before Jesus ascended into Heaven, He made one more promise (**Acts 1:4-8**)
 - a. Notice where Jesus points the apostles back to – The prophecy of John! The fulfillment of the baptism with the H.S. would soon take place in Jerusalem!
 - b. Jesus also speaks about the "Promise of the Father" which they heard from Him... This promise Jesus referred to is the H.S. coming upon them (**Lk 24:49**)
 - c. Note that the only conditions of receiving the H.S. was that they wait in Jerusalem
- 2. Jesus ties the prophecy of John and His own promises to what would soon take place at Pentecost... The H.S. would give them the ability to carry out the Great Commission

II. THE BAPTISM OF THE HOLY SPIRIT OBSERVED:

A. The apostles received what we call Holy Spirit baptism on the day of Pentecost:

- 1. While gathered together in Jerusalem as instructed, the Holy Spirit came! (**Acts 2:1-4**)
 - a. This pouring forth of the Spirit was obvious to all there – The room was filled with a sound like a mighty rushing wind and they saw divided tongues of fire
 - b. When this occurred they began to speak in tongues – This ability was given by the Holy Spirit & were actual languages not some heavenly jibberish! (**vs. 6-11**)
 - c. But who did this great event occur to? There were only 12 people that the Holy Spirit directly descended upon... It was the apostles only! (**vs. 14**)
- 2. The apostles did not only speak in foreign languages, but other things were evident:
 - a. Most of the apostles were untrained and uneducated men; however, they taught and wrote in a manner that would far exceed a well trained and educated man
 - b. Shortly after this we observe the apostles working miracles (**Mark 16:17-20**)
 - c. It is evident also that they had the ability to pass on gifts of the Holy Spirit to those who were already Christians (Spiritual gifts didn't come with salvation)
 - d. Finally, the apostles also spoke and taught through inspiration – The Holy Spirit directed their words whether verbal or written (**Heb 2:2-4**)
- 3. What those on Pentecost observed was the fulfillment of Jesus' promises and the prophecies of John: (**Acts 2:32-33**)
 - a. Notice that the pouring out was done by whom? This was administered by Jesus!
 - b. That which the thousands of people who gathered at Jerusalem witnessed were the results of the apostles being filled with the Spirit & the Spirit falling on them
 - c. This great event is consistent with the idea of "being clothed with the Spirit" & overwhelmed by the Spirit... thus this is what Holy Spirit baptism is like
- 4. Some might object – If the promise is that the Spirit would be poured out on ALL flesh would everyone not receive Holy Spirit baptism then? (**Acts 2:17**)
 - a. Hardly any one would actually contend that every single person receives Holy Spirit baptism as many think of it. Why? There's still lost and wicked people!

- b. **Illustration:** It was like water going over a fall, splashing, & flowing downstream
- c. At first the outpouring of the Spirit made a powerful splash there on Pentecost... As it continued downstream there were still mighty signs of the splash for some time (spiritual gifts)...The water continues to flow throughout time though the evidences may not be as visible upon first glance... but its still mighty today!
- d. The pouring out of the Holy Spirit would have both temporary and everlasting impacts – Some of what it caused was for a purpose for a short time and is no longer needed other effects are still present and at work today!

B. Cornelius' household is the only other occasion of Holy Spirit Baptism:

1. Consider God's intentions for saving man long before this event (**Joel 2:28-32**)
 - a. This is the passage Peter quoted to explain what was going on at Pentecost
 - b. God's plan was to pour out His spirit on **ALL** flesh & **WHOEVER** would call upon the name of the Lord would be saved! This salvation would be universal!
 - c. Jew and Gentile would come together for salvation under the exact same terms
2. God spoke to Peter in a vision showing him that this was His desire (**Acts 10:9-23**)
 - a. Cornelius was a god-fearing man who strove to do right! God heard his prayers & told him in a vision to send for Peter & Peter would tell him what he must do
 - b. During this time Peter is on a roof, praying, and was hungry! He sees a vision where unclean animals are presented and he's told, "Arise Peter, kill, and eat!"
 - c. Peter sees this vision three times & it ends. When Cornelius' men arrive seeking the Spirit instructs Peter to go with them doubting nothing... It is when Peter arrives in Caesarea that he puts it all together and understands (**vs. 15, 28**)
 - d. This event serves as the backdrop for the salvation of Cornelius' household and the outpouring of the Holy Spirit that occurred there... so keep it in mind!
3. While Peter was preaching Christ to Cornelius and his household the Holy Spirit descended upon them: (**Acts 10:44-48**)
 - a. Peter brought others from Joppa & this was crucial → These men learned a great lesson on God's desire to save all men & could later witness about this event!
 - b. Why did the Holy Spirit descend upon Cornelius and his household? Peter makes it clear... It showed that WATER baptism couldn't be withheld from these men!
 - c. The Spirit was "poured out" on the Gentiles **ALSO** – Also refers to whom? The Jews! The apostles & Cornelius represent the Jews & Gentiles, thus all flesh!
 - d. Notice too that this "baptism of the Holy Spirit" resulted in an outward sign that could not be missed... They began to speak in tongues and magnify God!
4. After this great event Peter returns to Jerusalem and recounts the event (**Acts 11:15-18**)
 - a. Why was this baptism of the Holy Spirit such a big deal? There was only **ONE** other occasion where it occurred and everyone knew that was the case!
 - b. Notice that Peter points all the way back to the beginning – Why would he do this if it occurred every time someone was saved? This was 7-10 years ago!
 - c. Good question – If this was a unique event what does that say about every other case of conversion aside from these two cases? Water or Spirit baptism?
 - d. The order is important! (**vs. 4**) → The Holy Spirit descended upon them as Peter began to speak! It was God's stamp of approval on their being baptized!
 - e. What is Peter being questioned about by them? Water Baptism! They weren't so concerned about Holy Spirit baptism! They understood that the Gentiles being baptized in water was about whether or not they were in or out of Christ!

C. Consider some lessons we learn about Holy Spirit baptism from these instances

1. One important lesson we learn is about the nature of Holy Spirit baptism:
 - a. We saw at Pentecost it was accompanied by divided tongues of fire, the sound of a loud rushing wind, and speaking in tongues... Something no one could deny!
 - b. We saw with Cornelius' household that they spoke in tongues and because it was just like what happened to the apostles the other would be true as well
 - c. Yet when many people talk about Holy Spirit baptism today it is much different!

- 1) They talk about being saved by accepting Christ into their heart as their personal Savior through prayer and feeling “changed” on the inside
 - 2) They speak of this Holy Spirit Baptism as something that is felt and not told!
 - 3) There aren’t any signs, sounds, or tongues of fire! Some do claim tongues but its not a real language but jibberish that’s not understood!
2. The example of Cornelius clearly shows us that water baptism saves!
 - a. Peter was sent to tell Cornelius the words by which he & his household would be saved. These words contained something they had to do (**Acts 11:14; 10:6**)
 - b. These words certainly included the message of Jesus Christ, the cross, and the empty grave; but they also contained a command for baptism! (**Acts 10:48**)
 - c. It is abundantly clear that this baptism was water baptism! If Holy Spirit baptism already saved them, why was the water baptism such a big deal? (**vs. 47**)
 3. Holy Spirit baptism is something that happened to men in both cases it is not something that was commanded for men to do! (**Acts 2:37-38**)
 - a. No one ever made a decision to be baptized in the Holy Spirit! It happened to men
 - b. When men are commanded to be baptized, it was a baptism that involved water!

III. What About The Baptism Of The Holy Spirit Today?

A. There came a point during the time in which the New Testament was written that only one baptism existed... the question is, which is it?

1. There was a time when there were two baptisms present (**Acts 2:1-4, 38, 41; 10:46-48**)
 - a. In Acts 2 the apostles, and the apostles only, were the recipients of the baptism of the Holy Spirit... Later Peter tells the thousands gathered there to be baptized
 - b. With Cornelius’ household they were baptized with the H.S., Peter observed that water baptism couldn’t be denied, & then commanded them to be baptized
 - c. Remember as well with Cornelius that the Holy Spirit baptism was not the most important event that occurred that day! It was God’s stamp of approval on them as Gentiles to show Peter it was okay to baptize them with water!
2. A little later Paul spoke of there being but one baptism – so which is it? (**Eph 4:4-6**)
 - a. Can’t have it both ways... He’s either talking about water baptism or H.S. baptism
 - b. If both baptisms are to be present today maybe Paul just missed something, maybe he wasn’t aware of H.S. baptism – No, wait, he wrote by inspiration!
 - c. Or maybe there was only one baptism being practiced, one baptism commanded of men, and one baptism that is for salvation! That H.S. baptism only occurred on special two occasions & was not directly poured out on all men for all time!
3. If Holy Spirit baptism is what we are to seek for salvation let’s answer a few questions:
 - a. Where are we commanded that we are to be baptized by the Holy Spirit?
 - b. What are the conditions upon which Holy Spirit baptism is to be received?
 - c. Since H.S. baptism was accompanied by signs by which no one could deny what took place... where are those signs when people are baptized by Him today?
4. We know baptism with the Holy Spirit would cease, because the Bible makes it clear that those things associated with Holy Spirit baptism would eventually cease! (**1 Cor 13:8-13**)
 - a. In both the cases recorded for us they immediately began to speak in tongues
 - b. Yet Paul says one day the speaking in tongues would cease – So either this time Paul speaks of hasn’t come yet, or else Holy Spirit baptism has also ceased!
 - c. Paul is talking about spiritual gifts... Those are the imperfect, childish, and incomplete things & he’s looking forward to a day when the perfect has come
 - d. Remember, these spiritual gifts were for the revealing and confirmation of the New Covenant... The perfect would be God’s will in its full revealed form (**Js 1:25**)
5. One might object: “But doesn’t the Bible teach we are baptized by the Spirit?”
 - a. This is the case and a couple of passages show this (**1 Cor 12:13; Titus 3:5**)
 - b. Jesus had taught that the Holy Spirit played a role in our being born again... But notice that the role He plays is coupled with the role of water (**John 3:3-5**)
 - c. It is not necessary to conclude that this is a Holy Spirit baptism like with the apostles and Cornelius household! It is worded differently

- 1) The Holy Spirit is the one doing the baptizing not the agent of baptism
- 2) They teach us that when we are baptized in water into Christ's death the Holy Spirit is the one responsible for somehow removing the sins
- 3) This is totally different from saying that while we are doing something else the Holy Spirit arbitrarily pours down upon us, changes us, & saves us!
- d. Peter speaks of how the Spirit is responsible for our conversion (**I Pet 1:22-23**)
- e. In Acts 2 we see both of elements together as the message the apostles preached through the Spirit touched the hearts of men and they were baptized into Christ for the remission of their sins & were added to the church thus entering the kingdom! (**Acts 2:4, 17, 33, 37-38, 41, 47**)

B. There is a baptism that is to continue always, throughout all time:

1. This baptism is the baptism of the great commission (**Mt 28:18-20; Mark 16:18-19**)
 - a. We know this is the baptism we're seeking because it's for the reason of salvation!
 - b. How long would this baptism last? Wouldn't it be as long as the great commission would last? Jesus promises His presence from this point to the end of the age
 - c. It is this baptism that Peter preaches on Pentecost and connects with a promise of salvation not only for that generation but all generations to come! (**Acts 2:39**)
2. The conditions and nature of this baptism are important for identifying it:
 - a. This is a baptism in which those who participated had a choice – It is “he who believed and it baptized” & “he who believes not” – This baptism is optional!
 - b. This baptism would come as a result of the preaching of the gospel and would be an action taken by those who believe in the message of the gospel
 - c. This would be a baptism that the apostles, and by implication others, would administer to people... Yet who is it that baptizes with the Holy Spirit? Jesus!
3. It is this baptism that we find the apostles, and other preachers of the gospel, teaching and preaching throughout the book of Acts!
 - a. Acts is the carrying out this commission – If we see people baptized for the same reason and under the same circumstances wouldn't it be the same baptism?
 - b. **Chart:** Notice what is present in every single one of these cases... yet it is this step in our salvation that men most often leave off! It doesn't make sense!
 - c. In some of these cases it's undeniable that it's water baptism being practiced because it's the only one possible (**Acts 8:15-16, 35-40; 10:47-48; 19:3-6**)
 - d. In the other cases we can rule out H.S. baptism since their nature & conditions do not match with the cases of the apostles at Pentecost & Cornelius

C. In other teachings of the NT we learn that it is water baptism that is for salvation:

1. Just about as plainly as possible Peter says that water baptism saves us: (**I Pet 3:20-21**)
 - a. Peter is comparing Noah's salvation and our salvation... Just as Noah was saved from the wickedness of this world, we are saved from our sins by water
 - b. You cannot miss the purpose here – It “now saves us!” and is the “answer of a good conscience toward God” - How plainer could God make this statement?
 - c. If water baptism is for salvation and the baptism of the great commission is for our salvation then the baptism of the great commission must be water baptism!
 - d. Is the power in the water? In Noah's case and ours the water is only powerful because it is the tool through which God chooses for us to carry out His will:
 - 1) Throughout the Bible we find examples of God carrying out His will, even in spiritual matters, through the use of physical tools
 - 2) **Illustration:** Israel marching around Jericho & saying, “We can't blow our trumpets... that'd mean we were trying to earn our victory!” – Absurd!
 - 3) The water in itself is not powerful... The power is in the blood of Christ and baptism is the tool God chose to use to have us contact His blood!
2. Several passages speak about how those who are saved have been washed in water:
 - a. **Heb 10:22; 2 Pt 2:22; Eph 5:25; Rev 1:5; 7:14; Tit 3:5-6; 1 Cor 6:11; Ax 22:16**
 - b. In both of the clear cases of Holy Spirit baptism it was not spoken of as being for

washing or cleansing from sin! In fact, Cornelius' household had to submit to another baptism for this purpose! These must be speaking of water baptism!

D. So, having made these observations, why do people insist on Holy Spirit baptism today?

1. There is only one reason that I can think of to explain why people reject water baptism as being essential for salvation – It's obvious connection to repentance! **(Romans 6:1-4)**
 - a. Many reject water baptism due to the misconceptions they've been taught... but at some point one had to decide for the first time it wasn't necessary
 - b. Baptism is inseparably tied to repentance – When one fully understands baptism and fully submits to it, it demands a death of self and a changed way of life
 - c. Think about it – If the Holy Spirit changes our hearts, takes our sins away, and causes us to do what is right... We are relieved from any responsibility and personal change! By that logic though if we don't do right whose fault is it?
2. Part of the appeal of Holy Spirit baptism is a draw toward “inward feelings” and highly emotional things in religion: **(Prov 14:12)**
 - a. These might be heard to talk about a strange but good feeling inside of them when they were baptized with the Holy Spirit... A feeling that words cannot describe
 - b. Others talk about a highly emotional & dramatic occasion where there was tongue speaking, spontaneous shouts of praise – a highly energetic & emotional time
 - c. Jesus never taught by using emotional highs or good feelings... In fact, He did the opposite – Cost of discipleship, very strict moral code, teaching on divorce
 - d. Did Jesus lose followers because of how and what He taught? Certainly! But it sifted those who were real seekers from those who seeking something else!
 - e. If we used emotionalism & good feelings we would have no problem filling this building and more... But we wouldn't be making true disciples of Christ!
3. Finally, people reach this conclusion because they fail to look at the context of a passage:
 - a. When studying a passage we should always consider who was speaking or writing, who they are writing to, and what are the circumstances behind what is written
 - b. If you just opened up your Bible to random places and decided to do whatever it said and apply it directly to you, you could do all sorts of wrong things!
 - 1) You might be compelled to take your family and begin wandering to a place you think God would show you... Not knowing where you were going
 - 2) You might take your only son on top of a mountain & sacrifice Him to God
 - 3) You might go out and find a harlot and marry her and have children with her
 - 4) You might decide you must go into town and find a man who has a donkey with a colt tied to it and take it telling Him that Jesus had need for it
 - 5) You might see some natural calamities and rumors of wars occurring and run off to the mountains and dwell in the caves for safety
 - c. The context of a passage is crucial to understanding it! Not everything in the Bible is for us to directly obey and some things are easily misunderstood if you don't consider the information around it... It takes time and effort to get things right!