

This is That

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The promise of the Holy Spirit is no less a promise today than it was on the day of Pentecost. God's Word tells us clearly that His promises do not change. Peter said, *"The promise is unto you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call."* Paul states, *"For all the promises of God in Him are yea, and in Him amen, unto the glory of God by us."* God has not withdrawn His promise of the Holy Spirit, but He can be received only by faith. Paul says *"that the blessing of Abraham might come on the Gentiles through Jesus Christ; that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith"* (Galatians 3:14).

Luke records, *"And God, which knoweth the hearts, bore them witness, giving them the Holy Ghost, even as He did unto us."* Some may say that God is not giving us a witness today, but we must say that He is doing the same thing today that He did at the beginning. The *witness of God* is the same thing as the *sealing* spoken of by Paul. To the Ephesians he said, *"...Christ: in whom ye also have trusted, having heard the word of truth, the glad tidings of your salvation; in whom also, having believed, ye have been sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise, who is the earnest of our inheritance to the redemption of the acquired possession to the praise of His glory"* (Ephesians 1:13,14). In II Corinthians 1:22, *"Who [God] hath also sealed us, and given us the earnest (guarantee or pledge) of the Spirit in our hearts."*

Has God's plan or His purpose changed because we live in this modern day and age? Of course not! God is still building His church. He is still calling out a people to be called by His name. If you are to partake of the life of God and be made a part of the body of Christ, the church, you must receive the Holy Spirit. (See I Corinthians 12:13.) *"We are being builded together in Christ for an habitation of God through the Spirit"* (Ephesians 2:22).

Every event and promise that is a part of God's plan of redemption is a "must" for us, that we might fulfill all righteousness. Jesus, speaking about His baptism by John the Baptist, said, *"Suffer it to be so now; for thus it becometh us to fulfill all righteousness"* (Matthew 3:15). The baptism in the Holy Ghost is not an experience we can take or leave; it is God's plan for everyone who obeys Him.

Even John the Baptist knew about the baptism of the Holy Ghost. Matthew 3:11 tells us that John proclaimed, *"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."*

Many today are told that they received the Holy Spirit automatically when they accepted the work of Christ as He died on the cross for the sins of the world. This mental acceptance is termed salvation. But if mental acceptance alone were salvation, then the receiving of the Holy Spirit, automatically or not, would have neither purpose nor meaning. Let us not confuse the work of the Holy Ghost with the person of the Holy Ghost, and His indwelling.

You must decide whom you are going to believe: those who tell you that you received the Holy Ghost when you believed in Christ, or the Scriptures which give us two examples of believers who believed that Christ was the Son of God, were baptized, and then received the Holy Ghost.

Let us look at these two examples. The first is the account of those in Samaria, who received the Word of God and were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus through the ministry of Philip. Acts 8:14-17,

"Then 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 they laid their hands on them, and they received the Holy Ghost."

The second example is of the disciples at Ephesus. Paul said to 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 upon them; and they spake with tongues, and prophesied" (Acts 19:2-6).*

"Baptized" vs. "Filled"

Some believers today are told that they are filled with the Holy Ghost but haven't been baptized with the Holy Ghost. Is there a difference between being filled with the Holy Ghost and being baptized in the Holy Ghost? Yes, there is a difference, but it's not what some think. Let us look again to God's Word.

Acts 1:5 tells us, *"For John truly baptized with water: but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost not many days hence."* Acts 2:4, *"And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance."* What happened in Acts 2:4 has to be the fulfillment of Acts 1:5. If it is not the fulfillment of the promise, then where do we find the fulfillment in God's Word? If it is the fulfillment of the promise, we can say we are "filled" when we are "baptized" with the Spirit.

To be filled with the Spirit, first, is to be baptized in the Spirit. After we are baptized, then to be filled is a place of allowing the Spirit to flow in and out through us, to do God's will in His ability. Acts 1:8, *"But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth."*

To be filled, then, is our experience when we are baptized in the Spirit, and as we stay in a position in which He can work through us, fulfilling God's work, we stay filled--or, as the term expresses, we *are filled* with the Spirit. God's command to us through the apostle Paul was to *"be filled with the Spirit."* This conveys to us the thought of staying filled, or staying always in the position where God's life can flow through us. But only as each believer moves in faith can he or she obey His commands. We must know God's plan and what He is doing; also, what to look for as the Scriptural evidence that the Holy Ghost has been received.

Faith Brings Evidence

Many have said that they receive God's promise by faith. Then they go on to say, "I don't need evidence," but they forget that unless faith brings forth evidence, it is not faith. Faith without works is dead (James 2:17). For someone to say, "I receive the Holy Ghost by faith" means that he shall bring forth the evidence accompanying the baptism of the Holy Ghost. Remember, Peter said he knew the members of Cornelius's household had received the Holy Ghost because he heard them speak with tongues and magnify God (Acts 10:45,46). Are men today more spiritual than Peter? Can they know by faith what Peter knew by what he heard?

No, the evidence has not changed, but man's heart has grown colder. God has chosen the foolishness of this world to confound the wise; and God has chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty (I Corinthians 1:27). Paul tells us in I Corinthians 14:2 that *"he that speaketh in an unknown tongue speaketh not unto men, but unto God: for no man understandeth him; howbeit in the Spirit he speaketh mysteries."* Paul in I Corinthians 14 is not doing away with tongues, but merely giving the order of usage in the church. He goes on to say in verses 20-22, *"Brethren, be not children in understanding: howbeit in malice be children, but in understanding be men."*

He then goes on to tell us what Isaiah 28:11 says, *"In the law it is written, 'With men of other tongues and other lips will I speak unto this people: and yet for all that will they not hear me, saith the Lord.' Wherefore tongues are for a sign, not to them that believe, but to them that believe not; but prophesying serveth not for them that believe not, but for them which believe."* This tells us that tongues are a sign, a witness against them that do not believe. Tongues are the evidence to those who obey and believe God's promise.

The Temple of the Holy Ghost

Paul asks in I Corinthians 6:19, *"What, know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own?"* God has designed us for His purpose. We are the temple of the Holy Ghost. This statement of God's Word would have little meaning if there were not an experience of the Holy Spirit coming into His temple. Each member of the body of Christ must experience the fulfillment of this statement of Paul's.

God's divine pattern found in the Tabernacle in the wilderness would have had no purpose without God's presence in the mercy seat over the Ark of the Covenant. To say we have received forgiveness of sin and been cleansed by the blood of Jesus, then not to go on to receive the promise of the Father would have as little meaning as the Tabernacle without His presence. The New English Bible translates Galatians 4:6,7, *"To prove that you are sons, God has sent into your hearts the Spirit of His Son, crying Abba! Father! You are therefore no longer a slave but a son, and if a son then also by God's own act an heir."*

Have You Received Since You Believed?

The testimony of the early believers was that they had received and were filled with the Holy Ghost. Today also, we must have the Holy Ghost, to give witness of the life of God and to be able to do a spiritual work. The early disciples not only spoke by the Holy Ghost, but also were directed by the Holy Ghost. Men were sent out to do the work of God by the direction of the Holy Ghost (Acts 13:2). Approval was given by the Holy Ghost (Acts 15:28).

Paul was stopped from going to Asia and Bithynia by the Holy Ghost. The Holy Ghost appointed men to be overseers (Acts 20:28). The Holy Ghost was in control in the church spoken of in Acts, and He is still in control in the church today. Paul tells us, *"For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God."*

"The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God" (Romans 8:16).

"...Even so the things of God knoweth no man, but the Spirit of God" (I Corinthians 2:11b).

"For the fruit of the Spirit is in all goodness and righteousness and truth: proving what is acceptable unto the Lord" (Ephesians 5:9,10).

"And grieve not the Holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption" (Ephesians 4:30).

If you have come to the place of faith in God, and you believe that the baptism in the Holy Ghost is for you, now start to put your faith in God's Word. Luke 11:9-13 tells us what to do, *"Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find: knock, and it shall be opened unto you. For everyone that asketh receiveth; and he that seeketh findeth; and to Him that knocketh it shall be opened. If a son shall ask bread of any of you that is a father, will he give him a stone? or if he ask a fish, will he for a fish give him a serpent? Or if he shall ask an egg, will he offer him a scorpion? If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children; how much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask Him?"*

Now you must ask in faith, believing that you will receive. Allow God to give you heavenly evidence. Acts 2:4 says that *"they spoke as the Spirit gave them utterance."* Tongues are God's evidence given by the Spirit (I Corinthians 12:7,10). Diverse kinds of tongues are a manifestation of the Spirit.

"He that believeth on Me, as the Scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water. (But this spake He of the Spirit, which they that believe on Him should receive; for the Holy Ghost was not yet given; because that Jesus was not yet glorified)" (John 7:38,39).

Commonly Asked Questions

Do I have to "tarry" for the Holy Ghost?

This question comes only out of wrong teaching. Nowhere in the Scriptures do we find, after the day of Pentecost, that the believer has to "tarry" to receive the Holy Ghost. The command Jesus gave his disciples to go tarry in Jerusalem until they were endued with power from on high, was given only because the Holy Ghost had not yet been given. The Scripture reveals that when the day of Pentecost was fully come, the Holy Ghost was given. We do not wait any longer for Him to come; He is here. Our part is to receive Him by faith.

I will say that each believer needs to wait until he or she is endued with the power--the indwelling of the Holy Spirit--but you are not waiting for the Spirit to be given. If there is a time of waiting, it is for one reason: you are allowing your heart to be prepared to receive the promise of God, that you might be a witness unto Him. No believer has the right to try to be a witness or co-laborer with God until he or she has been filled--been baptized with the Holy Ghost.

God's pattern is for each member of the body of Christ to be filled. This is normal, not the exception. If the early disciples needed His power to do God's work, things have not changed today. We must receive power if we are to labor in God, and not in our own strength. The epistles of Paul, John, James, Jude, and Peter were written to Spirit-baptized (filled) believers. The Spirit-filled life was expected, not questioned. Today we need more believers and fewer doubters.

Does the baptism of the Holy Ghost solve all my problems?

Will I be filled with joy all the time? Will my temper be done away with?

All these and many more questions are asked by the seeker. Scripture never tells us that the Holy Ghost is a cure-all. We are never told that when we receive the Holy Ghost we no longer have a will, or that we do not have to live by faith. We are told, *"When He, the Spirit of truth is come, He will guide you into all truth."* Jesus said, *"I will pray the Father and He shall give you another Comforter, that He may abide with you forever" (John 14:16).*

The Holy Ghost is God come to inhabit His temple, that our ability might be of God and not of man. John said, *"The anointing which you have received of Him abideth in you, and ye need not that any man teach you: but as the same anointing teacheth you all things, and is truth, and is no lie, and even as it hath taught you, ye shall abide in Him"* (I John 2:27).

The Spirit-filled life is always a walk of faith. The Spirit does not do away with our trials, but leads us through each one victorious. God has only one design, and that is that *you* be conformed to the image of His Son, not by imitation, but by being a partaker of His Word by faith. We are being built together for a habitation of God through the Spirit (Ephesians 2:22). The Spirit does not do away with our wills, passions or trials; but He does give us the ability to put our wills into God's will. Remember, God's design brings God's evidence and God's end results, *"that they might be one"* in God.

Justification is on the basis of what God has done for us. By faith we partake of what God has done, and this brings us to the ground of sonship. Now our standing is as sons. God has made every provision for our sonship. To be a son, one must be living in the life of God. Sonship is not separate from God, but in union with Him by the Spirit. Proof of sonship is that one is being moved or led by the Spirit.

Two Promises

Two promises made by God allow us to become partakers of the divine nature. The first was a Saviour; the second was the promise of the Spirit (Acts 2:17). A Saviour brings man to a right standing with God, and the Spirit gives us the ability to be a son. To be a son is to have the life of God and then to live in union with Him as He has designed. We have been made by God, for God. If we receive what Christ is and what He has done for us, He gives us power to be sons of God. *"And this is how we can make sure that He dwells within us: we know it from the Spirit He has given us"* (I John 3:24).

Adoption into the family of God is not just a legal transaction done by God in Christ on our behalf, to make us legally sons. God goes a step further and gives His life to those who have believed and been cleansed of their sins. God's ways are above our ways. What is impossible with man is possible with God. By new birth, we are brought from the kingdom of darkness into the Kingdom of His Son. *"You must be born anew,"* to enter the Kingdom of God.

Receive the Holy Ghost!