

This is for the next couple weeks of class.  
Please pass it on

## **THE HOLY SPIRIT OF GOD AND THE CHURCH**

To find out the relationship that the Holy Spirit of God sustains the church of God one must make a close and careful examination of the first two chapters of the book of Acts. It is here that the apostles became, by the *power* of the Holy Spirit, that guides and judges of the Israel of God. It is in these two chapters that we see the preparation for His coming and His actual coming.

The apostles received a commandment to wait (Acts 1:4-5). It is as if Jesus had said, "You cannot do my work without my Spirit."

The apostles received from Jesus a promise of power (Acts 1:8). When the Spirit promised in verses 4 and 5 comes upon them, He would give the power necessary to witness on behalf of Christ. The word for power is *Dunamis*, which is the basis for our word "dynamite." Thus, the Spirit was to supply the disciples with the dynamism necessary for the fulfilling of their task.

The Apostles waited with prayer and supplication (1:14). They waited in the right place (the city of Jerusalem) (1:13). They waited in fellowship (1:14). They waited in study of the Scriptures (1:16-20).

In prayer, in meditation on God's word, in uninterrupted fellowship, the disciples waited for the Spirit, and the Spirit came.

***"YOU SHALL BE IMMERSSED IN THE HOLY SPIRIT" (Acts 1:5b).***

This promise of Jesus to the Apostles is one of the most controversial sayings ever to pass from the lips of our Savior.

Those who take their theology from John Calvin naturally view this passage as a command to wait fatalistically for the Spirit to come and give the apostles "an experience of grace" that would testify to their hearts of their salvation. They feel that unless and until one has been immersed with the Holy Spirit he cannot begin to look in the direction of God for salvation.

The Pentecostal and Holiness people are those whom they believe to be possessors of salvation to go on further and obtain the "immersion of the Holy Spirit" which will empower them to speak in tongues, prophesy and perform other things of miraculous nature.

The time-honored position among the brethren has been that this promise ("You shall be immersed in the Holy Spirit") was made to, and for, only the twelve apostles. That this is not true and can be shown conclusively from the scriptures. It is also contended that this was a special measure of the Holy Spirit given to guide the Apostles into all truth. That this too is incorrect we will see in this section.

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Please pass it on

Before we discuss what this promise is and means, let us clear some debris and see some things that it cannot be.

***It is not anything administered by anyone other than Jesus.*** In Matthew 3:8-12; Luke 3:13-17 and John 1:31-34, John the immerser declares that Jesus, and Jesus alone, would be the immerser with the Spirit and Fire. So, when we find something that we think might be the “immersion” of the Spirit, if anyone other than Jesus is the immerser, we know that we have the wrong thing.

***It is not anything that took place before Pentecost.*** In Matthew 3:11; Mark 1:8; Luke 3:16 and John 1:33, we read that Jesus is to immerse in the Holy Spirit. In John 7:39 we see that the Spirit is promised but not given because Jesus had not yet been glorified (Cf. Acts 2:33). Since we have already studied the fact that the Spirit was in existence and active in the Old Testament times, even in creation, we know that something new and unique concerning the Spirit is in view here. In Acts 1:4-5 the immersing in the Spirit is still to take place in the future: “not many days hence.”

***It is not the power to perform miracles.*** This is evident since the Apostles had performed miracles before this promise was given in Acts 1:4-5 (Cf. Luke 10:17-20). In the Old Testament many of the mighty men of God were miracle workers (Elijah and Elisha in particular). If the apostles had already performed miracles before Acts 1:4-5, than the promise has nothing to do with the performing of miracles.

***It is not inspiration.*** The apostles had spoken by inspiration before. This promise was made in Acts 1:4-5 (Matthew 10:19). Countless men and women had been inspired of God Before Christ came to the earth. Men such as Isaiah, Ezekiel, Elijah, Daniel, and other Old Testament prophets had been inspired of God. Therefore, we can see the promise made by John the Immerser and endorsed by Jesus was not inspiration. If this promise was inspiration then evil men had already received it (compare the lying prophet in 1 Kings 13, Saul the son of Kish, and Caiaphas).

***It is not the power to speak in tongues.*** We know this mainly because this power is not given by Jesus but by the Holy Spirit Himself (1 Corinthians 12:11). Jesus gave the Spirit to these Gentile Corinthians when they became Sons (Galatians 4:6; 3:14). The Spirit gave them power, miraculous and otherwise, as He willed. Also, before Pentecost Balaam’s ass was empowered to speak with the tongue of man and no one believes he was immersed with the Spirit.

This is for the next couple weeks of class.

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***It is not to be filled with the Spirit.*** This is evident from the fact that men and women were filled with the Spirit before Pentecost and no one was immersed in the Spirit before Pentecost. In Luke 1:15 the promise is made that John leaped within his mother's womb and Elizabeth was filled with the Spirit. In Luke 1:67 Zachariah, John's father, was filled with the Spirit and prophesied. So, these three, John the Immerser, Elizabeth, and Zachariah, were filled with the Spirit and all before Pentecost. A study of Ephesians 1:13; 5:18-19 and Colossians 3:16 will reveal that to be filled with the Spirit means to be influenced by the Spirit through the revealed word taking up its permanent abode in our heart fully. Any influence from the Spirit, miraculous or otherwise, could not be the fulfillment of the promise, "You shall be immersed in the Spirit."

***It is not a mere clothing with the Holy Spirit.*** There are those who believe this to be the best phrase to use in regard to this promise of Jesus. Luke 24:49 speaks of the Apostles being "clothed with power from on High." It is assumed that the "clothing" is by the Holy Spirit (i.e. that He is the garment) despite the fact that it plainly states that they will be "clothed with power." The person who can see no difference between the Spirit Himself and the power given by the Spirit cannot discern between the Spirit and the Word.

Consider also that many men were clothed with the Holy Spirit in the Old Testament (Judges 6:34 mg; 2 Chronicles 24:20 mg; 1 Chronicles 12:18 mg). Think this over! Men during the Mosaic era were "clothed" with the Holy Spirit, yet they had not received the "Immersion" of the Holy Spirit. Therefore, this promise is not merely a clothing with the Holy Spirit.

***It was not to make one a son of God.*** The Calvinists teach that one must be immersed with the Holy Spirit in order to become a son of God. In this connection they quote 1 Corinthians 12:13. Not knowing the scriptures, they apply a passage that talks of immersion in water to the immersing in the Spirit.

That this passage (1 Corinthians 12:13) relates to water immersion is evident from just a few considerations:

1. Galatian's 4:6 tells us God gives us the Holy Spirit *because we are sons*. That there is no time element between our becoming sons and the reception of the Spirit is of no consequence. This only shows God's promptness to give what He promises. In the plan and mind of God we become sons and then He gives us the Spirit.

This is for the next couple weeks of class.

Please pass it on

2. The Holy Spirit is the earnest of our inheritance (Ephesians 1:14) but only sons can inherit the Fathers possessions. Therefore, only sons can receive the Spirit.
3. Peter makes it clear in Acts 2:38 that the receiving of the Holy Spirit does not precede remission of sins, that it is an additional promise when obedience is rendered unto remission of sins.

When an elder is appointed by a congregation who submit to the stipulations laid down by the Spirit of God, he is to be ordained by the Holy Spirit. The elders at Ephesus were doubtless selected by Paul and the local congregation, and yet he addressed them as men made overseers by the Holy Spirit (Acts 20:28).

In John 4:1-2 we are told that Jesus made and immersed more disciples than John, although Jesus did not personally immerse any of them. If Jesus did not Himself immerse people, yet it is said of Him that He immersed because the apostles did it at His bidding, should we think it strange language for Paul to say the same thing about the Spirit? As Jesus immersed when the Apostles immersed, the Spirit immerses as we immerse.

***It is not a measure of the Holy Spirit.*** One passage is quite sufficient to destroy this theory forever. In John 3:30ff we read of Jesus and his testimony. The whole section deals with Jesus' authority to speak. The American standard (along with the Modern Literal version, **this is my 2 cent's**) should be followed in this section. In the 34<sup>th</sup> verse, the King James is very wrong and seldom is more so. The passage should read, "**For he whom God hath sent speaketh the words of God: for He giveth not the Spirit by measure.**"

This passage does not say the Father gives the Spirit, but that Jesus gives the Spirit without measure. Not too many believed the testimony of Jesus, but John The Apostle, writing many years after the glorification of Jesus, claims the giving of the Spirit by Jesus to be one of the proofs of His claim to be God's own Son and Prophet. (See John 7:38 and Acts 2:33).

This passage categorically states that Jesus does not give the Spirit by measure. This buries forever "the measure theory". Furthermore, how could one have a "measure" of the Spirit when the Spirit is a person? Either we have the Spirit, or we do not (see Appendix on John 3:30-36).

**John 3:30-36 appendix:**

**Application of verse.**

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**A.** Not too many believed the testimony of Jesus, but John The Apostle, writing many years after the glorification of Jesus, claims the giving of the Spirit by Jesus to all believers to be one of the proofs of His claim to be God's own Son and Prophet. (See John 7:38-39 and Acts 2:33, 38-39).

**B.** This passage categorically states that Jesus does not give the Spirit by measure. This buries forever "the measure theory". Furthermore, how could one have a "measure" of the Spirit when the Spirit is a person? Either we have the Spirit, or we do not (Romans 8:9)! *The reply usually is, "I really mean a 'Measure' of His 'power.' But if this is what we mean, let us say what we mean!* There is enough confusion in the world without using expressions which are misleading, especially when we can just as easily leave them alone. *Let us seek to determine when the scriptures speak of the Spirit as a gift and when it speaks of the gifts of the Spirit.*

The reply normally will be, "I Really mean a measure of His power or influence." Well, let us say what we mean. If we use unscriptural terminology, we will usually end up with unscriptural thought. Let us determine when the scriptures speak of the Spirit as God's gift to man and when it speaks of the gifts of the Spirit.

But granting that the King James was correct in its version of John 3:34, what would it prove? The words "unto him" are added to the text. If we left them out, it would leave the passage: "For he whom God hath sent speaketh the words of God: for Go giveth not the Spirit by measure."

There are those who believe since the scripture speaks of God giving Christ the Spirit without measure, it is necessarily implied that others receive the spirit by measure. This does not necessarily follow. James said, "Is any cheerful, let him sing psalms" (5:13KJV). Does this infer that the merry cannot pray or sing spiritual songs? Of course, it does not. Neither does John 3:34 infer a measure theory, even from the King James Version. **The wording of the promise.** Carefully read Matthew 3:1-12; Mark 1:1-8; Luke 3:1-9, 15-17; John 1:32-34; Luke 24:49; Acts 1:4-5, 8; 2:1-4, 33, 38-39.

The thesis of this author, based on the preceding verses, is that the statement "Ye shall be immersed with the Holy Spirit" is simply the promise of the outpouring of the Spirit by Jesus on the day of Pentecost one time for all, henceforth available for all men whom God calls (through the gospel, 2 Thessalonians 2:14). The Spirit then empowered whom He willed to the degree He willed (1 Corinthians 12:4-11). To establish this, we must examine the pertinent passages.

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John the Immerser speaks to a mixed multitude of people. Some he had immersed; some he refused to immerse. In Matthew 3:11 he declares, "I indeed immerse 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 immerse you with the Holy Spirit and with fire." This passage make it clear that Jesus would immerse more than twelve men with the Holy Spirit, unless we are to take a very singular view of it indeed. Luke 3:15-16 tells us the words which John spoke were addressed to all the multitude. It must be obvious that John led these people to believe they (i.e. those whom he immersed) would be immersed in the Holy Spirit. To make the first "you" different from the last "you" is without warrant by hermeneutics.