

IS SALVATION AND THE BAPTISM IN THE HOLY GHOST SYNONYMOUS?

There is much confusion in the minds of many concerning the above question. If you answer yes, depending upon what side of the fence you're on then even more confusion comes. If you say the act of Salvation at the same time causes one to simultaneously receive the Baptism of the Holy Ghost then it makes me wonder why Paul asked the Ephesians, "Have you received the Holy Spirit since you believed?" (Acts 19:2) Then if you say on the other hand one is not saved until baptized in the Holy Ghost, then you make repentance and faith in the blood of Jesus of no consequence. Let's take a look at some biblical examples to see if we can shed light on the subject.

One cause of confusion is the misunderstanding of the conversation of Jesus and Nicodemus.

1. BORN OF THE SPIRIT

When Jesus was approached by this Jewish Rabbi he was told:

" Verily, verily, I say unto thee, except a man be born again he cannot see the Kingdom of God."

"...Verily, verily I say unto thee, except a man be born of water and of the Spirit he cannot enter into the Kingdom of God". St. John 3:3, 5.

Jesus contrasts natural birth and spiritual birth. This is why He coins the phrase "Born Again". Alluding to the fact that man was born once to natural life then in order to see the Kingdom of God he must be born again. This is why I believe that both the reference to "born of the water..." (verse 5) and "born of the flesh." (verse 6) are referring to man's first birth.

Many say born of the water refers to water baptism. But a baby is enclosed in water in its mother's womb thereby making his first birth a "water birth".

The Lord also says, we must be born of the Spirit. I believe this refers to the operation of salvation.

Paul says:

"For by one Spirit are we baptized into one body...and have been all made to drink into one Spirit." 1 Cor. 12:13.

When a person repents and calls on the name of the Lord, the Holy Ghost whom I believe is the drawing agent (John 6:44) puts that believer into the Body of Christ. This again is not water baptism where one is baptized or immersed into water but here one is immersed into the Body of Christ. Then as a result we drink into the Spirit. Someone will say, "Aha, that means being

Spirit filled!” Let me ask you this: because one drinks, does that assure that one is filled? Of course not. Jesus said in Rev. 22:17.

“..And let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will let him take of the water of life freely”.

Again no reference to filling but it seems the reference again is to drinking. In St. John 7:37, Jesus said:

“If any man thirst let him come unto me and drink”.

All of these scriptures I believe refer to salvation and the fact that when one is saved or “Born of the Spirit” that though that one is not filled or Baptized with the Spirit, they also are not totally devoid of the Spirit. This is why I believe “born of the Spirit” is a term synonymous with salvation.

It is after we are saved that we receive the Spirit in baptismal portion.

2. THE SAMARITAN’S EXPERIENCE

Philip according to Acts 8:5 preached Christ to the Samaritans. Verse 12 says:

“But when they believed Philip preaching the things concerning the Kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ, they were baptized, both men and women.”

No one can argue the fact that the Samaritans were saved.

In the words of Jesus:

“He that believeth and is baptized (in water) shall be saved.” Mark 16:16

Yes, the Samaritans were saved. But yet the Bible says the Apostles at Jerusalem sent to Samaria Peter and John.

“Who when they were come down prayed for them that they might receive the Holy Ghost.” Acts 8:15

The term received the Holy Ghost is of course referring to the Baptism of the Holy Ghost. Se we see that the Samaritans were saved but not yet filled. They did not get filled until Peter and John laid hands on them (Acts 8:17) and of course they were saved already.

3. SAUL’S (PAUL’S) EXPERIENCE

Saul was stopped by Jesus and acknowledged Jesus as Lord (Acts 9:6). Saul was saved and commissioned on the Damascus Road. After asking, “Who art thou Lord...” Jesus said...

“I am Jesus whom thou persecute. But rise and stand upon thy feet: for I have appeared unto thee for this purpose, to make thee a minister and a witness both of the things which thou hast seen, and of those things in which I will appear unto thee: Delivering thee from the people, and from the Gentiles, unto whom I now send thee, to open their eyes, ...that they may receive forgiveness of sins...” Acts 26:15-18.

After the vision of Saul and Ananias the Bible says when Ananias got to where Saul was, he greeted him as “Brother Saul”. Ananias knew Saul was now saved. But listen as Ananias speaks further:

“...Brother Saul, the Lord...hath sent me that thou mightiest receive thy sight and be filled with the Holy Ghost.” Acts 8:17

Ananias would not have been sent by Jesus for Saul to receive the Holy Ghost if he received all he needed when he got saved. After salvation he needed to be filled with the Holy Ghost.

4. THE EPHESIAN’S EXPERIENCE

We’ve already cited the fact that Paul asked the Ephesians.

“Have you received the Holy Ghost since you believed? Acts 9:2

The response of the Ephesians was that they had never heard of the Holy Ghost. But my approach to this story is not the Ephesians but Paul. Of course they wouldn’t be filled if they had not heard of the Holy Ghost. However, Paul not knowing this I believe asks the question assuming they are saved but not knowing that the act of salvation is followed by the baptism of the Holy Ghost. Why? Because this is what happened to him. It was not until Paul laid hands on them, after they were saved that they received the Holy Ghost.

After looking at and understanding the experiences of Nicodemus, the Samaritans, Saul (Paul) and the Ephesians we must conclude that the Baptism of the Holy Ghost comes after one has been saved.

THE HOLY GHOST IN AND UPON BELIEVERS

In order to get a good look at the full picture we must discuss the fact of the Holy Ghost moving both upon and filling certain persons prior to the Day of Pentecost. On the day of Pentecost two things happened.

1. They were all filled with the Holy Ghost

“And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost and began to speak with tongues as the Spirit gave them utterance.” Acts 2:4

2. He came upon them or they were baptized in the Holy Ghost. Peter quoted Joel when he preached on the Day of Pentecost making special reference to “...*I will pour out of my Spirit upon all flesh.*” Acts 2:17

- a. John the Baptist told the multitude,

“I indeed baptize you with water unto repentance but He that cometh after me... shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost and with fire.” Matt. 3:11

John realized that he was a forerunner of the One who would not just baptize in water as he did but (baptizo - Greek) “immerse”, baptize them in the Holy Ghost.

- b. Jesus himself made reference to John as quoted by Luke in Acts 1:4-5

“And being assembled together with them commanded them not to depart from the city of Jerusalem but wait for the promise of the Father which saith ye have heard of me”.

“For John truly baptized with water but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost not many days hence...”

On the Day of Pentecost the Lord did fulfill his promise, because it was confirmed later by Peter.

- c. Peter said:

“And 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 baptized with water but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost.” Acts 11:15,16

It is crystal clear that Peter equates the Spirit falling on or upon them as the Baptism of the Holy Ghost!

In the book of Acts, chapter two, two things are happening here: (1). Baptism and (2), Filling. They are used just about in the same breath and many times are not distinguished from each other. However this does not seem to be the case before Pentecost. Let’s look and see what the Bible says about this before Pentecost.

I. THE SPIRIT UPON (Old Testament)

- A. Moses

Because of the vastness of the people of Israel and their burdens, the Lord spoke to Moses to charge seventy elders and bring them to the Tabernacle.

“And I will come down and talk with thee there: And I will take of the Spirit that is upon thee and will put it upon them and they shall bear the burden of the people with thee, that thou bear it not thyself alone.”
Num.11:17.

The Lord putting upon these men the Spirit that was upon Moses would supernaturally enable them to help lead this nation.

Well the day came and the Bible says:

“And the Lord came down in a cloud, and spake unto him, and took of the spirit that was upon him, and gave it unto the seventy elders; and it came to pass, that when the spirit rested upon them they prophesied and did not cease.” Numbers 11:25

What a marvelous impartation of the Spirit of God upon the lives of these chosen men. So powerful and miraculous until even the two who were missing and were in the camp also prophesied. (Num. 11:26). A young man ran and told Moses. Thinking something ought to be done. Joshua asks Moses to stop them. But hear the words of Moses:

“Enviest thou for my sake? would God that all the Lord’s people were prophets, and that the Lord would put his Spirit upon them!” Num. 11:29

Moses said his desire was to see all of God’s people with the Spirit upon them.

B. King Saul

1. In looking for his father’s lost donkeys, Saul the son of Kish of the tribe of Benjamin goes to the prophet Samuel. Samuel tells Saul about God’s choice of him as King of Israel and then gives him a prophetic sign of things that will happen when he leaves him. He tells him that he is going to meet a company of prophets having musical instruments and Saul says:

“...and they shall prophesy: And the Spirit of the Lord will come upon thee and thou shalt prophesy with them, and shalt be turned into another man.” 1 Sam. 10: 5, 6.

It seems that the same thing will happen to Saul that happened to the elders. The Spirit of God upon these prophets will come on Saul and enable him to do as the prophets are doing.

2. On another occasion we read about the Spirit of God coming upon Saul.

“And the Spirit of God came upon Saul when he heard those things and his anger was kindled greatly.” 1 Samuel 11:6

The Ammonites had threatened to put out all the eyes of the men of Jabesh-Gilead. When Saul heard of it, God’s Spirit moved upon him and he gathered the men of Israel 300,000 in number to fight the Ammonites. It was God’s Spirit coming upon him that did it!

3. Even the messengers of Saul who were sent to kill David had a marvelous experience with the Spirit of God:

“And Saul sent messengers to take David: and when they saw the company of the prophets prophesying, and Samuel standing as appointed over them, the Spirit of God was upon the messengers of Saul and they also prophesied.” 1 Sam 19:20

And when it was told Saul, he sent other messengers, and they prophesied likewise. And Saul sent messengers again the third time, and they prophesied also.”

After three attempts with each failing because the Spirit of God came upon his messengers, Saul goes himself:

“Then went he also... and the Spirit of God was upon him also and he went on and prophesied.” 1 Samuel 19:23

Time and time again we see God’s Spirit coming upon them and changing their course of action. Oh, if we today would allow the Spirit to rest upon us in fullness, how many of our modern day Saul’s would be stopped in their tracks.

C. Others upon whom the Spirit of the Lord came.

1. David – 1 Sam. 16:13
2. Balaam – Num. 24:2
3. Othniel – Judges 3:10
4. Gideon – Judges 6:34
5. Jephthah – Judges 11:29
6. Samson – Judges 14:6, 19, 15:14
7. Elisha – II Kings 2:9

In all of the aforementioned examples the Spirit of the God is said to have “come upon or on” these men enabling them like Saul to prophesy: like Samson to kill a lion: like the Judges to win wars. But it seems strange to me that with all this power upon them allowing great works, these men still had character deficiencies.

Just go down the list:

1. Saul – disobedient to God – 1 Samuel 13:13
2. David – committed adultery and murder – 2 Samuel
3. Samson – loose with women – Judges 16th chapter
4. Balaam – counseled Balak to cause Israel to commit adultery – Numbers 31:8, 16

Time would fail to cite instances where just because the Spirit moved upon them periodically to do great works it did not ensure a change of character only the enablement to do works of power for that time.

II. THE SPIRIT WITHIN (*Old Testament*)

It has been said by many that the Holy Ghost did not “fill” individuals until the Day of Pentecost. Let’s see what the Bible says.

- A. Joseph – Genesis 41:32
Joseph was a man of great character.
 1. When no one was around he resisted the advances of Potiphar’s wife though it got him in trouble. (Genesis 39:7-12)
 2. He was mindful of others though he was in jail. (Genesis 40:5-22)
 3. He did not seek to retaliate against his brothers for selling him into slavery. (Genesis 45:1-15)

It was the testimony of Pharaoh after Joseph interpreted his two dreams that would lead not only to Egypt’s deliverance but also that of the children of Israel:

“Can we find such a one as this man in whom is the Spirit of God?” Gen. 41:38

The Bible says Joseph had the Spirit in him.

- B. Joshua – Numbers 27:18

God himself testifies of Joshua and says:

“...Moses take thee Joshua the son of Nun, a man in whom is the spirit and lay thine hand upon him,... Numbers 27:18

Notice that even before the laying on of hands, God said the Spirit was in Joshua.

- C. Ezekiel – Ezekiel 2:2; 3:24

D. Daniel – Dan. 4:8-9, 18: 5:11-14; 6:3

Now let's look at some New Testament examples before Pentecost.

III. UPON NEW TESTAMENT BELIEVERS: (*Before Pentecost*)

A. Mary – Luke 1:35

In the visitation of Mary by the angel Gabriel, Mary wonders how she will conceive not having been touched by a man. Hear the Word of the Lord:

“And the angel answered and said unto her, The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee...” Luke 1:35

Because of the power coming upon and overshadowing Mary, she would be supernaturally enabled to conceive and birth the Son of God.

B. Simeon – Luke 2:25

“And behold there was a man in Jerusalem whose name was Simeon: the same was just and devout and waiting for the consolation of Israel: and the Holy Ghost was upon him.” Luke 2:25

We find the Spirit upon this man revealing to him before he would die that he would see the Messiah. So we see him coming to the temple at the time of the circumcision of Jesus “by the Spirit” and the prophecy is fulfilled.

IV. FILLED (NEW TESTAMENT): (*Before Pentecost*)

A. John the Baptist: Elizabeth and Zacharias

As Zacharias fulfills his duty of burning incense, the Angel of the Lord is sent to bring him a message. It is a message about a son to be born to him and his wife. Elizabeth, though she is barren and they're both advanced in years. Zacharias is given the name John, and the Angel speaks further:

“For he will be great in the sight of the Lord, and shall drink neither wine nor strong drink. And he shall be filled with the Holy Ghost, even from his mother’s womb.” Luke 1:15

What a marvelous though different experience! Filled from his mother’s womb!

Further in the same chapter we find pregnant Mary going to see Elizabeth;

“And it happened when Elizabeth heard the greeting of Mary, that the babe leaped in her womb and Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit.” Luke 1:41

God is still not finished. After the birth of their son, Zacharias, having been smitten with dumbness because of unbelief (Luke 1:18-20) is asked what the name of the boy is to be. When he writes out the name “John” his tongue is loosed and the Bible says:

“Now his father was filled with the Holy Spirit, and prophesied..” Luke 1:67

Three are now said to be *“filled with the Spirit”* and all of this is before Pentecost.

Now there is something very important that if you have not noticed it by now you’re probably thoroughly confused. What is it? Just recall all of the names we have studied and see what station that they had in life.

1. Moses – Prophet
2. 70 Elders – Leaders of Israel
3. Saul – King
4. David – King
5. Samuel – Priest/Prophet
6. Balaam – Prophet
7. Joseph – Patriarch / Prime Minister
8. Othniel, Samson, Gideon – Judges
9. Elisha, Elijah – Prophets
10. John the Baptist – Prophet
11. Elizabeth and Zachariah – His Parents
12. Mary – Mother of Jesus

Now what is it about these people that is so unique? Not one of them is just a regular face in the crowd, but all are leaders and pivotal in the life of the nation of Israel. They are all Priests, Prophets, and Kings, leaders or parents of special children (hence John the Baptist and Jesus). The rule before Pentecost was except for a few exceptions (i.e. Saul’s servants) regular people were not privileged to have the spirit of God upon them or within.

V. NEW THING AFTER PENTECOST

The prophetic utterance of Joel was echoed by Peter on the Day of Pentecost:

“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 daughters shall prophesy..young men..old men...And on my servants and on my handmaidens I will pour out of my spirit: and they shall prophesy.” Acts 2:17,18

Notice that the Lord says I’m going to do it different in the last days. No longer will anyone be excluded from having an experience with my Spirit because they’re not leaders. But men young and old; women and children will have my Spirit poured out upon them!

Another difference I believe also is that it seems before Pentecost when the spirit moved upon or filled individuals it was not a work of permanence but only for a point in time. Jesus takes the pains to say to the disciples: “That he may abide with you forever.”(John 14:16). And even John the Baptist was told to look for one upon whom the Spirit would descend and remain. Why? Because up until this time, the Spirit would come and not remain.

So we see that the coming of the Spirit upon or within prior to Pentecost was not the same. Someone else wants more proof. Let’s look at St. John the 7th chapter.

“(But this spake he of the Spirit which they that believe on him should receive: for the Holy Ghost was not yet given because Jesus was not yet glorified.)” John 7:37-39

It’s the high day of the Feast of the Tabernacles. Jesus says any man can now come to Him and drink, resulting in the giving of His Holy Spirit. But yet the scripture says He is speaking of the future because the Holy Ghost was not yet given because Jesus was not yet glorified. Certainly we know from previous study that this must refer to the spirit given in a new manner because we’ve already cited scriptures that speak of the Spirit moving in the lives of men and women. The key phrase is “Not yet glorified”. Jesus said to the Apostles later that the Spirit would be “given” after He went to the Father (John 14:12-16; 15:26; 16:7). Given how? I believe to all men and women in a permanent way so that he (The Holy Ghost) would abide with us. This is what was missing before Pentecost.

On the Day of Pentecost Peter says:

“This Jesus has God raised up. Therefore being by the right hand of God exalted, and having received of the Father the Promise of the Holy Ghost, he hath shed forth this, which ye now see and hear.” Acts 2:32, 33.

He tells us Jesus now exalted or glorified is doing what He promised in John. This is a “new thing” in the dealing of God with man. Nothing like this has ever happened before. This marks a new beginning! A beginning that Peter again speaks of:

“And as I began to speak, the Holy Ghost fell on them as on us at the beginning!!” Acts 11:15

Peter calls the Day of Pentecost “the beginning”. The beginning of what? The beginning of the spirit coming both upon and within men women and children in a more permanent way. No longer do you have to be a certain class or profession but all flesh qualifies. And no longer will He come and go or only come upon or within but now as He did on the Day of Pentecost, they were baptized in and filled with the Holy Ghost.

His must be thoroughly understood before you can fathom why the Day of Pentecost is so important in understanding that we unlike David, Samson, or Elizabeth or Zacharias, have been afforded a greater experience than anybody before Jesus was exalted.

This great new beginning is not in any way rendered unimportant by the fact of the spirit working upon and within for periods of time before Pentecost. But having dealt with those instances in the light of them we see how much more we are highly favored because we through the “new beginning” have something greater and longer-lasting than they.

As we can see from our study, the Baptism of the Holy Ghost is the second most important experience that a believer will ever have. Certainly, the glorious experience of receiving Jesus as Savior is the greatest. But without the Baptism of the Holy Ghost that John the Baptist and Jesus Christ himself taught about, the newly converted believer, though ready for heaven, is powerless as an effective witness.

With this experience being as important as it is, it is important that the newly converted person receive this Baptism and know that he has genuinely received.

The Holy Ghost

We believe the Holy Ghost, or Holy Spirit is the third person of the Trinity, proceeds from the Father and the Son, is of the same substance, equal in power and glory, and is together with the Father and the Son, to be believed in, obeyed, and worshipped. The Holy Ghost is a gift bestowed upon the believer for the purpose of equipping and empowering the believer, making him a more effective witness for service in the world. He teaches and guides one into the truth (St. John 16:13; Acts 1:8; & 8:39).

The Baptism of the Holy Ghost

We believe that the Baptism of the Holy Ghost is an experience subsequent to conversion and sanctification and that tongue-speaking is the consequence of the baptism in the Holy Ghost with the manifestations of the fruit of the Spirit (Galatians 5:22-23; Acts 10:46, & 19:1-6). We believe that we are not baptized with the Holy Ghost in order to be saved (Acts 19:1-6; St. John 3:5). When one receives a baptismal Holy Ghost experience, we believe one will speak with a tongue unknown to oneself according to the sovereign will of Christ. To be filled with the Spirit means to be Spirit controlled as expressed by Paul in Ephesians 5:18-19. Since the charismatic demonstrations were necessary to help the early church to be successful in implementing the command of Christ, we therefore, believe that a Holy Ghost experience is mandatory for all men today.

THE BAPTISM IN THE HOLY GHOST (*Pneumatology*)

The Holy Ghost is received through faith in Jesus Christ; an honest and prepared heart is the necessary prerequisite for the Baptism of the Holy Ghost. The process of sanctification denotes ethical purification with the idea of separation; namely, “the separation of the spirit from all that is impure and polluting, and a renunciation of the sins towards which the desires of the flesh and the mind lead us.”

We, therefore, believe that before a believer can be filled with the Holy Ghost, he must first be sanctified. When we speak of a believer as being holy or sanctified, it does not necessarily mean that they have no faults or failings. It implies that the person is mature, according to the scripture (1 Cor. 2:6; Heb. 5:15), it also means that they are fully equipped for their task (II Timothy 3:17).

We do not believe that one receives the baptism in the Holy Ghost in order to be saved, but once one is saved, he/she should claim his/her inheritance, namely the baptism “in” the Holy Ghost. In other words, at the time of conversion the Spirit indwells the believer as “**resident**.” In the Holy Ghost baptismal experience, He (the Holy Ghost) becomes “**president**,” in complete control of the believer’s body, life, and ministry. This baptismal moment can take place at the point of the sinner’s conversion. Others may require more time to reach this point of total surrender to the Spirit.

It should be noted that in the salvation experience, the Holy Ghost is the baptizer; the repentant sinner is the baptizee (the one being baptized); and the body of Christ is the element into which the baptizee is being baptized (1 Corinthians 12:13). In the Holy Ghost baptismal experience, however, the baptizer is Jesus Christ himself (St Matthew 3:11); the born-again believer is the baptizee (the one being baptized); the Holy Ghost is the element into which the believer is being baptized. The Holy Ghost experience is evidenced by speaking in other tongues (glossolalia) according to (Acts 2:4); and the impartation of spiritual power (Acts 1:8). The Greek word is “dunamis,” which expresses an active, explosive, moving, vitalizing power that energizes the believer to witness both “unto” God (Acts 1:8) and “for” God (Acts 4:31

And finally, please note **the baptism in the Holy Ghost is a gift bestowed upon the believer, subsequent to his conversion and sanctification, for the purpose of equipping and empowering him/her for more effective witness and service in the world.**