

The Truth About *the* Holy Ghost

INTRODUCTION

"Did you receive the Holy Spirit when you believed?" (Acts 19:2). If not, you are missing out on a promise of God available to all that believe on Him, as the scripture has said (John 7:38, 39). All you have to do is repent, be baptized in Jesus' Name, and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost with the evidence of speaking in other tongues (Acts 2:38, 2:4).

WHAT IS THE HOLY GHOST?

The Holy Ghost, sometimes referred to as the Holy Spirit, is the Spirit of God. This Spirit of God, which is the same Spirit that dwelt in Christ (John 14:17, 18, Romans 8:9, 10), can, will and does take up residence within the human body. "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?" (I Corinthians 6:19). "Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you" (I Corinthians 3:16).

When the Holy Spirit takes up residence within the human body it is referred to as "receiving the gift of" or "being baptized with the Holy Ghost" (Acts 10:47, 11:16, 17). The purpose of the Spirits' coming is to comfort and teach, "But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you" (John 14:26). Accompanying the Holy Spirit infilling is a hunger for the truth of God's Word. The Holy Ghost is the Spirit of Truth and comes to lead and guide a believer into all truth (John 16:13).

The gift of the Holy Ghost is a good gift from God. All who believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, as the scripture has said, should receive (Luke 11:13, John 7:38, 39).

THE PROMISE OF THE HOLY GHOST:

"Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost, For 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" (Acts 2:38, 39).

The Holy Ghost was first promised in the Old Testament, "And it shall come to pass afterward, that I will pour out my Spirit upon all flesh; and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your old men shall dream dreams, your young men shall see visions: And also upon the servants and upon the handmaids in those days will I pour out my Spirit" (Joel 2:28, 29).

John the Baptist, the forerunner of Jesus Christ, echoed the promise, "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" (Matthew 3:11).

In the fourteenth chapter of John, Jesus promised His disciples that He would return to them after His ascension into heaven in the form of a Comforter, or Spirit of Truth, called the Holy Ghost. Earlier, Jesus referred to the promise as rivers of living water flowing from a believer, "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).

Luke records Jesus' assurance to us that the Holy Ghost is a good gift from God, and that He will gladly give it to us if we desire it and seek it. "And I say unto you, Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you, 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 unto your children; how much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him?" (Luke 11:9-13).

God desires men to have His Spirit dwelling in them. All man has to do is believe on Him as the scripture has said (John 7:38), repent and be baptized in the name of Jesus (Acts 2:38), and ask Him for the promised Holy Ghost, and he will receive it (Luke 11:10).

THE EARLY CHURCH RECEIVED THE HOLY GHOST:

Jesus, in another reference to the Holy Spirit infilling, gave His disciples a command, "And behold, I send the promise of my Father upon you: but tarry ye in the city of Jerusalem, until ye be endued with power from on high" (Luke 24:49). Approximately one hundred and twenty disciples obeyed Jesus' command, and on the day of Pentecost in the city of Jerusalem, nearly two thousand years ago, Jesus fulfilled His promise.

"And when the day of Pentecost was fully come, they were all with one accord in one place. And suddenly there came a sound from heaven as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting. And there appeared unto them cloven tongues like as of fire, and it sat upon each of them. And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance" (Acts 2:1-4).

The above passage records the beginning of one of the greatest experiences available to man, for the fulfillment of the promise had just begun with this first one hundred and twenty. Joel prophesied all flesh (Joel 2:28). Jesus said everyone that asketh receiveth (Luke 11:10). On the same day of Pentecost as the initial outpouring, Peter spoke of the continuance of the promise. Many curious people gathered around those who received to see what the meaning of all the commotion was. Peter took the opportunity to explain that this was that which was spoken of by the prophet Joel and that Jesus, who they had unjustly crucified, was Lord and Christ. They, being pricked in their hearts, besought Peter and the rest of the Apostles what they should do (Acts 2:37). Peter replied that if they would repent and be baptized in the name of Jesus they too would receive the gift of the Holy Ghost. He even took the promise further than the three thousand that accepted it that day (Acts 2:41), "For 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" (Acts 2:39). "All that are afar off" includes all nations from that day to this. The promise exists for all who desire it, because God is calling everyone to repentance (II Peter 3:9).

Many people believed and received the promise during the Apostles' day. The disciples having received power to be witnesses after that the Holy Ghost came upon them (Acts 1:8), carried the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ to the then known world. Philip took the message to Samaria where many people

believed and were baptized. When the Apostles heard Samaria had received the Word of God they sent Peter and John to pray for them to receive the Holy Ghost, "Then laid they their hands on them, and they received the Holy Ghost" (Acts 8:17). Thus the Samaritans, formerly considered excluded from eternal life by the Jews, became partakers of the promise of the Father.

Peter even delivered the message of the Lord Jesus to the gentile household of Cornelius. However, not until after God emphasized to him in a vision that the promise of God belonged to every man God had created no matter what nation, tribe or tongue. Finally, having perceived this truth of God, Peter went to Caesarea. While Peter was still speaking to them the things of Christ, the Holy Ghost fell on them that heard the Word (Acts 10:44). God proved once and for all that He is no respecter of persons (Acts 10:34).

God even allowed Saul, one of the persecutors of the early church, to be filled with His Spirit. Saul, whose name was changed to Paul, confessed he was the chiefest among sinners before God saved him (I Timothy 1:15). However, God filled him with the Holy Ghost (Acts 9:17) and made him a great missionary of the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ. He carried the message to many nations. In Acts chapter nineteen we read of him taking the truth of the Holy Ghost to followers of John the Baptist in Ephesus. Upon meeting them, Paul inquired if they had received the Holy Ghost since they believed. Finding out they had not even heard of there be any Holy Ghost, Paul explained the Word of God to them more perfectly. Then, upon the confession of their faith in Jesus Christ, he baptized them in Jesus' Name, laid hands on them, and they received the gift of the Holy Ghost. Saul, the persecutor of the Christian faith, became Paul the propagator of the gospel of Jesus Christ.

In the early church the promise of the Holy Ghost was available to all who obeyed God (Acts 5:32). Many did obey and many did receive. The promise is still available today to all who obey God. Thousands are obeying and thousands are receiving!

IS THE HOLY GHOST ESSENTIAL?

Yes, receiving the Holy Ghost is essential to obtain full Bible salvation. The Holy Ghost is a gift from God, as a result of obedience and faith in Him (Acts 5:32). If man obeys God's command to repent and to be baptized in Jesus' Name, he is promised the Holy Ghost (Acts 2:38). God does not break promises. If man obeys these commands, he will receive.

Jesus used the verb "shall flow" in reference to the Holy Ghost for those who believed on Him as the scripture hath said (John 7:38). John said those who believe on the Lord Jesus "should receive" the Holy Ghost (John 7:39). Peter said if you repent and are baptized in the name of Jesus Christ you "shall receive" the gift of the Holy Ghost (Acts 2:38). These scripture references all let us know that the Holy Ghost is a positive unqualified result of obedience to the commands of the Lord Jesus Christ. "He that saith, I know him, and keepeth not his commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him" (I John 2:4).

Jesus put it quite bluntly while talking to Nicodemus, "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" (John 3:5). Being born of the Spirit is a symbolic reference to being filled with the Holy Spirit. Jesus died on a cruel cross for our sins, He was buried in a borrowed tomb, and on the third day resurrected victorious over death, hell and the grave. This is the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ which man must obey. Everyone must die out to their

sins in repentance, be buried with Him in baptism, and resurrect to newness of life by being born of the Spirit. The Holy Ghost gives a believer a new life in Christ, ". . .but the spirit giveth life" (II Corinthians 3:6).

In Romans the eighth chapter, Paul talks about life in the flesh. He makes it quite plain that those who are filled with the Holy Spirit will be raptured and those who are not do not have the blessed hope of the soon appearing of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. "But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you. Now, if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his. And if Christ be in you, the body is dead because of sin; but the Spirit is life because of righteousness. But if the Spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, he that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by his Spirit that dwelleth in you" (Romans 8:9-11). For man to obtain the hope of full Bible salvation he must be filled with the Holy Spirit.

THE INITIAL EVIDENCE OF RECEIVING THE HOLY GHOST:

A person born of the Spirit will bear the fruit of the Spirit, "But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance: against such there is no law" (Galatians 5:22, 23). As they grow in the Spirit they will manifest the gifts of the Spirit, "For to one is given by the Spirit the word of wisdom; to another the word of knowledge by the same Spirit; to another faith by the same Spirit; to another the gifts of healing by the same Spirit; to another the working of miracles; to another prophecy; to another the discerning of spirits; to another divers kinds of tongues; to another the interpretation of tongues" (I Corinthians 12:8-10). However, when a person initially receives the baptism of the Holy Ghost he will speak with other tongues as the Spirit gives utterance. This evidence of the infilling of the Holy Spirit is separate and apart from the gift of tongues.

Isaiah prophesied of it, "For with stammering lips and another tongue will he speak to this people" (Isaiah 28:11). Jesus confirmed it, "The wind bloweth where it will, and thou hearest the voice thereof, but knowest not whence it cometh, so is every one that is born of the Spirit" (John 3:8, A.S.V., 1901 edition). Jesus spoke again of the evidence of them that believe, ". . .they shall speak with new tongues" (Mark 16:17).

Jesus said that you would hear the voice of every one that is born of the Spirit (John 3:8, A.S.V., 1901 ed.) and this was true on the day of Pentecost, "And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance" (Acts 2:4). Peter recognized that Cornelius' household had received the Holy Spirit, "For they heard them speak with tongues, and magnify God" (Acts 10:46). Paul laid hands on the Ephesians to receive the Holy Ghost, ". . .and they spake with tongues and prophesied" (Acts 19:6).

Even to this day when someone is born of the Spirit we hear the voice thereof. They speak with tongues as the Spirit gives utterance. The tongues will follow the infilling of the Spirit as a natural consequence.

CONCLUSION:

The baptism of the Holy Ghost is promised to all who ask for it and are willing to repent and be baptized in Jesus' name in order to receive it. The baptism is to be desired of all because without it you do not belong to Christ (Romans 8:9). When an individual receives the Holy Spirit he will speak in other tongues as the Spirit gives utterance.

Anyone having repented, been baptized in Jesus' name, desiring the Holy Spirit should ask God for it in faith believing. God desires for them to have it and if they submit their all to Him He will pour out His Spirit on them. Anyone not having repented of their sins, or not having been immersed in water in the name of Jesus, should do so. Then they also will have the opportunity to receive the Holy Ghost. Upon doing so they will embark on a whole new life of joy and peace in serving God. It is only by the mercy of God that man is able to live, walk, sing and worship in the Spirit. Anyone who does not take advantage of the opportunity is falling so short of the complete fulfillment God desires for man to have in Him. Yes, life in the Spirit is the ultimate for man on earth. And what is even more beautiful is that life in the Spirit is eternal!