

Baptized with the Holy Spirit
Mark 1:8
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"I have baptized you with water, but he will baptize you with the Holy Spirit". Mark 1:8

Every four years, Americans will go through an election cycle and you hear campaign promises. Have you ever wondered, on an average, how many campaign promises are made by a presidential candidate? The number is about 200.

And do you know how many promises are actually fulfilled. Some statistics say about 67% are fulfilled.

Here we see John the Baptist is on a campaign trail, a preaching tour, a time of preparing the way of the Lord. Jesus has not even arrived but John the Baptist makes a *startling* promise about Jesus. John makes just *one* promise. When Jesus comes, He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit.

Before we unpack our text, let me review about what we have been seeing so far:

1. Mark's Gospel begins with the introduction about the gospel of Jesus Christ, the Son of God.
2. Before Jesus Christ arrived in ancient Galilee, God sent a messenger to prepare. That messenger was John the Baptist - to prepare the way.
3. Last week, we saw how John the Baptist accomplished his task of preparing the way. How? By preaching a message of repentance by water baptism. And people responded by repenting. People confessed their sin. And according to Mark's Gospel, John the Baptist concludes his mission with an *announcement* and a *promise*. The announcement was that someone greater and mightier than himself will come. And along with the announcement of Jesus' arrival, John the Baptist makes a promise – the baptism of the Holy Spirit.

The people in John's day were familiar with water baptism – immersion in water. But John says Jesus will immerse them with the Holy Spirit. This is unprecedented news for the people in John's day and for us. They had heard about water baptism.

However, being immersed with the Holy Spirit is new. What is to be expected when you are filled with the Holy Spirit?

This verse is important because never before has such a thing been promised for all

believers – both Jews and Gentiles. In the Old Covenant we see a few people being immersed in the Holy Spirit. Moses was filled with the Holy Spirit. Joshua, Samson, King David and the prophets but this is a promise for all disciples of Jesus Christ. If water baptism is significant, the baptism of the Holy Spirit is even more significant because the Holy Spirit baptism *precedes* water baptism.

All the four Gospels – Matthew, Mark, Luke and John tell us about the John the Baptizer and this promise. The Gospel of John records John baptizing others but does not mention the promise of the Holy Spirit. The Gospels of Matthew and Luke both mention the promise of the Holy Spirit and they add an additional detail. Matthew and Luke record the words of John the Baptist this way, “*I have baptized you with water, but he will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and with fire*” (Matthew 3:22, Luke 3:16).

Before we expound this text, here is a question we should consider.

Is the baptism of the Holy Spirit to be understood as a doctrinal truth for all believers or is the baptism of the Holy Spirit an experiential reality in the lives of the early believers and today or both – meaning it is both doctrinal and experiential?

The Bible’s answer is that it is both.

From a doctrinal perspective, Paul says in 1 Corinthians 12:3 “*For in one Spirit we were all baptized into one body—Jews or Greeks, slaves or free—and all were made to drink of one Spirit*”. But was John the Baptist speaking about a doctrinal truth or experiential truth?

John the Baptist had given a glimpse of what immersion looks like through water baptism. People were immersed in the Jordan river. What happens when you are fully immersed in water? You get wet. You feel the presence of water. You are refreshed. In the same way you can expect divine refreshment when the Holy Spirit baptizes you or fills you. You can expect to see evidence or the fruit of the Spirit in your life – “*love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control*”. You can expect to grow in these virtues day by day as the Holy Spirit fills you.

Sadly, in some church circles, the baptism of the Holy Spirit is associated with obsessing or being fixated with speaking in tongues or languages. Some groups even conclude that if you don’t speak in tongues then you don’t have the Holy Spirit.

Simply not true!

Hear Jesus in John 7:37-39 “*On the last day of the feast, the great day, Jesus stood up and cried out, “If anyone thirsts, let him come to me and drink. ³⁸Whoever believes in me, as the Scripture has said, ‘Out of his heart will flow rivers of living water.’” ³⁹Now this he said about the Spirit, whom those who believed in him were to receive, for as yet the Spirit had not been given, because Jesus was not yet glorified.* You will be a blessing to others in many ways when you receive the Holy Spirit. Paul says, “*no one can say “Jesus is Lord” except in the Holy Spirit.* 1 Corinthians 12:3 If you believe in Jesus Christ as Lord, then you have the Holy Spirit.

So how do some groups conclude that every believer must speak in a language if they are baptized by the Holy Spirit?

Well, they conflate *narrative* with *normative*.

Just because something is *described* in the Bible as a work of the Holy Spirit, it automatically does not become normative for every believer. I wish churches would pursue the fruit of the Spirit *first*.

What I would have you consider is at least *three* normative patterns when you are filled with the Holy Spirit.

1. Conviction of sin *precedes* being baptized by the Holy Spirit.

How do you that you know that your repentance is genuine? By the conviction of sin.

Puritan Thomas Watson writes in his book *On Repentance* that the eye is made for both seeing and weeping. Have you seen your own sin and then grieved and wept for your sin? Godly grief results in repentance. And all that is by the Holy Spirit.

When Peter told the people to repent on the day of Pentecost, it was a response to a question they asked. Why they were struck in their conscience. They realized they had sinned against God by killing their Messiah.

And Peter said to them, “Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins, and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. They were convicted, they repented and then received the Holy Spirit. Acts 2:38

2. Witnessing *follows* being baptized by the Holy Spirit.

Jesus tells his early disciples that the purpose of the baptism of the Holy Spirit was not always speaking in a foreign or an unknown language (as some claim by speaking gibberish). The baptism of the Holy Spirit was to *witness* for Gospel of Jesus Christ. Look at Acts 1:4. This is Jesus speaking to his disciples. And while staying with them he (Jesus) ordered them not to depart from Jerusalem, but to wait for the promise of the Father, which, he said, “*you heard from me; ⁵ for John baptized with water, but you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days from now. ⁸ But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth.*”

Jesus quotes directly from Mark 1:8. The consequence of being filled with the Holy Spirit is to witness for Jesus Christ.

In Acts 2, we see the early disciples being filled with the Holy Spirit and speak in languages. Peter preaches and three thousand people are convicted of their sin and they receive gift of the Holy Spirit. Nothing is said about any one of the three thousand speaking in a tongue.

In Acts 4:8, we see Peter “*filled with the Holy Spirit*” and the result? He preaches the Gospel and tells the religious leaders that “there is salvation is no one else” except Christ.

In Acts 4:31, after Peter and John are released. All the believers gather and pray and what do we see ? “*they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and continued to speak the word of God with boldness*”.

In Acts 6, we see that Stephen, one of the first deacons was *full* of the Holy Spirit. (Acts 7:55) and he witnessed to a very angry crowd and martyred.

In Acts 8, we see the people of Samaria receiving the Holy Spirit. You see signs and wonders.

In Acts 9, we see that Ananias was sent to Paul to be filled with the Holy Spirit. And what does Paul do after being filled the Holy Spirit? “*And immediately he proclaimed Jesus in the synagogues*” Acts 9:20

In Acts 10, we see the household of Cornelius – a Gentile centurion. He and his

household receive the Holy Spirit. And they speak in languages.

In Acts 11, we see Barnabas was a man full of the Holy Spirit and many people were added to the Lord because of his witness.

In Acts 13, we see Paul and Barnabas spreading the Gospel and many coming to Christ and there was much persecution but “*the disciples were filled with joy and with the Holy Spirit*”

In Acts 19, we see that there were some disciples of John the Baptist, who didn’t even hear that there is a Holy Spirit (Acts 19:2). And then they were baptized in the Holy Spirit.

All these signs had a very specific function - to witness to unbelievers *and the fulfillment* of the promise by John the Baptist.

Paul commends the church in Thessalonica that the whole church was an evangelizing church – “*..your faith in God has gone forth everywhere*” 1 Thessalonians 1:8.

Martin Lloyd Jones, the famous British preacher said “two things that the church needs for Gospel proclamation – preaching and the testimony and witness of God’s people”.

3. A heart of thankfulness and praise is *evidence* of the Holy Spirit.

When the early disciples were baptized with the Holy Spirit and received the gift of languages, what did they do? They were praising God for his greatness. The visitors at Jerusalem on the Day of Pentecost spoke different languages but they hear the disciples speak in their own language. “*we hear them telling in our own tongues the mighty works of God*” Acts 2:11.

And do not get drunk with wine, for that is debauchery, but be filled with the Spirit,
¹⁹ *addressing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody to the Lord with your heart,* ²⁰ *giving thanks always and for everything to God the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ,* ²¹ *submitting to one another out of reverence for Christ.* Ephesians 5:18

The Holy Spirit convicts you, assists you, guides you, turning us from sin and sanctifying us to be more like Jesus, helps us to witness for Jesus.

Lastly, why do Matthew and Luke say “and with fire”?

Jesus not only baptizes but judges. Jesus has power to fill with the Holy Spirit but also has power to judge those who are unrepentant.

What does having the Holy Spirit mean for you as believers?

It means that you ought to bear fruit for God. Bear fruit in keeping with repentance.

There are two ways we can live as children of God. Walk in the flesh or walk by the Spirit. And God desires to give you the Holy Spirit (Luke 11:13). Ask God!

The real problem is God’s people attempting to do His work in the power of the flesh rather than the power of the Spirit. – Francis Shaeffer.

But when the goodness and loving kindness of God our Savior appeared, ⁵ he saved us, not because of works done by us in righteousness, but according to his own mercy, by the washing of regeneration and renewal of the Holy Spirit, ⁶ whom he poured out on us richly through Jesus Christ our Savior, ⁷ so that being justified by his grace we might become heirs according to the hope of eternal life. Titus 3:4-7

----- Discipleship Questions-----

MESSAGE SUMMARY: Baptized with the Holy Spirit. Mark 1:8

HEAD: These questions help you examine the truth of God's Word.

1. What do you see as key ingredients in receiving the Holy Spirit? Acts 1:8, 2:38, 8:14-15, 10:47, 19:2, Mark 1:15

HEART: These questions help you wrestle with what you believe.

2. Do you believe you have the Holy Spirit in you? What are some evidences of the work of the Holy Spirit?
3. What is God convicting you of and to believe in light of this message?

HANDS/HABITS: These questions help you bring the truth into your everyday life and develop behaviors that change your habits.

4. For personal reflection: Do you desire to be filled with the Holy Spirit? What will you do about it? Luke 11:13