Baptism of the Holy Spirit

1. The Promise (Matthew 3:11)
   1. John prophesied that Jesus would baptize with the Holy Spirit.
   2. There are a few commonly-misunderstood points that need clarification:
      1. This wasn’t a general promise to ALL people:
         1. The key is in understanding the ‘baptism of fire.’
            1. Often viewed as adjunct to Holy Spirit baptism (Ac. 2:3).
            2. Actually refers to hellfire (Matt. 3:10, 12).
            3. Limited for obvious reasons.
      2. This was a promise (to be administered by Christ), not a command.
      3. As we’re going to see, Holy Spirit baptism was limited to select instances in the first century.
      4. John wasn’t saying that Holy Spirit baptism would replace water baptism in the ministry of Jesus or the church:
         1. Jesus’ disciples baptized in water (John 4:1-2).
         2. Water baptism was practiced in early church (Ac. 8:36-37; 10:47).
   3. Having clarified these points, the main point here in Matthew 3:11 is that Jesus would administer what we call “Holy Spirit baptism.”
2. The Promise Restated (Acts 1:1-8)
   1. Jesus is specific as to the application, timing and purpose of Holy Spirit baptism.
      1. Application: the apostles would be the recipients. *This doesn’t necessarily mean that others wouldn’t receive it, but the Scriptures only specify the apostles*.
      2. Timing: “not many days from now” (vs. 5b) *in Jerusalem*.
      3. Purpose: it would initiate the ‘church age.’
         1. They were to wait in Jerusalem for the Holy Spirit.
         2. Once empowered by the Holy Spirit, they would begin to spread the gospel of Christ to the world.
         3. Compare Acts 1:8 to Matthew 28:19-20. Also John 16:7-13.
         4. Salvation was never the stated purpose of Holy Spirit baptism.
3. Two Instances of Holy Spirit Baptism (Acts 2, 10)
   1. The fulfillment of Jesus’ promise can be seen in Acts 2:1-4. *This was less than ten days after Jesus restated the promise of the Holy Spirit in Acts 1:4-6*.
   2. It’s very important to notice what constituted Holy Spirit baptism:
      1. Administered by Christ, from heaven. *Not a command*.
      2. It came suddenly and unexpectedly.
      3. Recipients were filled with the Holy Spirit (baptized/immersed).
      4. Recipients began to speak in tongues.
   3. And again, regarding the purpose, notice that this instance of Holy Spirit baptism resulted in the first gospel sermon and the establishment of the church. In other words, it initiated a new dispensation – the church age.
   4. Many religious people believe that Holy Spirit baptism is experienced by all true believers at some point in the conversion process. If this is true, then we should expect to see all converts experiencing it in the first century. But this is not what we find at all. Notice these examples:
      1. Those on the day of Pentecost (Acts 2:37-41). *Regarding the ‘gift of the Holy Spirit,’ we’ll consider this more in our next session.*
      2. An invitation given in Acts 3:19.
      3. General references to growth in Acts 4:4; 5:14; 6:1.
      4. The people in Samaria (Acts 8:12-13).
         1. These people *hadn’t* received the Holy Spirit (vs. 14-16).
         2. They received the Holy Spirit through the laying on of the apostles’ hands (vs. 17). *Wasn’t administered by Christ.*
         3. This proves that it wasn’t a regular occurrence.
      5. The eunuch from Ethiopia (Acts 8:35-39).
      6. Saul of Tarsus (Acts 9:17-19 🡪 22:16).
   5. Finally, we come in Acts 10 to a second instance of Holy Spirit baptism:
      1. Up to this point, no Gentiles had been saved.
      2. Peter is called to preach to a group of Gentiles for the first time.
      3. Read Acts 10:44-48.
      4. Notice how this matches what happened in Acts 2:1-4. Same thing.
      5. The question is: why did the Gentiles receive Holy Spirit baptism?
         1. Not for salvation. These Gentiles were saved by the words which Peter taught (i.e. obedience, Acts 10:6; 11:13-14).
         2. Peter taught faith (10:43) and baptism (10:47-48) 🡪 Mark 16:16.
         3. Christ administered Holy Spirit baptism to:
            1. **Prove to the Jews** that the Gentiles now had access to salvation in Christ. Notice the Jews’ reaction (10:45; 11:1-3, 18).
            2. Just as the instance of Holy Spirit baptism in Acts 2 initiated the church age, this instance **initiated the ‘Gentile Age.’**
      6. These are the only two instances of Holy Spirit baptism in Acts. This is further confirmed by Peter’s statement in Acts 11:15-17.
   6. The Holy Spirit had a critical role in the work of the early church, and even in conversion (as we’ll see later today), but Holy Spirit baptism was a very specific thing that only occurred on two instances (that we have record of).
4. There is One Baptism (Eph. 4:5)
   1. By the time Ephesians was written, there was just “one baptism.”
   2. This tells me that Holy Spirit baptism and water baptism cannot both be in existence today. That would be two baptisms.
   3. The book of Acts makes it clear that Holy Spirit baptism was for a specific purpose for a specific time. The ‘one baptism’ of Ephesians 4:5 is water baptism.