# The Baptism in the Holy Spirit
# Luke 11:11—13

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What is your inner response when you hear Baptism in the Holy Spirit (BHS)? Do you think of it as an experience to receive, an experience to ignore, or an experience to reject? Your response to this is significant!

Now let's consider another aspect of the BHS:

> Within the Body of Christ, some people adhere to the doctrine of cessationism. Cessationists believe that the BHS and the "gifts of the Spirit" were a unique, unrepeatable experience for first-century Christians. They teach that once the Gospel gained a foothold in the world, the Lord withdrew such supernatural workings as a normative experience for Christians.
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> However, another group, called Continuationists, asserts that the Lord's promise to baptize Christians in the Holy Spirit and empower them with spiritual gifts remains relevant until the Lord's return.

I need to clarify something important about the work of the Holy Spirit. When you accept Christ, and you're Born Again, the Holy Spirit dwells within you; He takes residence in you. This work of the Holy Spirit is called regeneration. However, the work of regeneration is wholly independent of the BHS. Consequently, I feel compelled to make a disclaimer: If you have not been "baptized in the Spirit," you are just as much a Christian as someone who *has* experienced His infilling. The difference is this: in order to enjoy the fullness of God, it's important to recognize that God has ordained two independent expressions of the Spirit: one expression is the work of regeneration — being Born Again — and the other distinction is the act of being baptized in the Holy Spirit. The work of regeneration prepares you for eternity, while the act of Spirit baptism enables you for today.

The Holy Spirit actively participates in the conversion of sinners and their becoming Christians. It's the Spirit of God that convicts sinners of their sin, convinces them of righteousness, abides within them when they're converted, and then seals them unto the Day of the Lord. (John 6:44; 14:17;

Romans 8:9; 1 Corinthians 12:13). Every Christian on this planet has participated in this wondrous work of the Holy Spirit. Scripture calls this experience regeneration.

Now, I want to explain the difference between regeneration and what is called "The Baptism in the Holy Spirit. But rather than composing a definition of my own, I have secured a definition set forth by the Assemblies of God from its official website:

> The Baptism [in the Holy Spirit] is an empowering gift from God the Father that is promised to every believer (Matthew 3:11; Luke 11:13; 24:49; Acts 2:33, 38). It helps the Christian to live a holy life and also brings a new devotional attachment to Jesus Christ, making Him very real and precious. The primary purpose of the Baptism is to give greater power for witnessing (Acts 1:8). Other benefits include a greater joy in spiritual service, and a heightened sense of one's mission to the world (FAQ Baptism in the Holy Spirit, AG NEWS, May 9, 2019).

## The BHS is only for Christians

It's important to note that the BHS is a sacred experience that Christ gave exclusively to his followers, while unbelievers are prohibited from partaking of it. I want to illustrate this directly from Scripture:

> **1. Let's first hear what Jesus said about this in John 14:16—17**, "And I will ask the Father, and He will give you [Believers] another Advocate to be with you forever — (17) the Spirit of truth. The world cannot receive Him, because it neither sees Him nor knows Him. But you do know Him, for He abides with you and will be in you." In other words, you must be Born Again to receive this experience.
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> **2. Now let's look at Acts 2:38—39**, where the Apostle Peter preaches on the Day of Pentecost. He says to his audience: "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. (39) The promise is for you and your children and for all who are far off—for all whom the Lord our God will call." Again, this passage discloses how salvation precedes the BHS and that this experience remains viable until the "end of the age," which contradicts the cessationists' viewpoint. In fact, if the cessationists' perspective is accurate, why does Scripture predict a final outpouring of the Holy Spirit just before Christ returns?

When you assemble these Scriptures, they show a clear distinction between being Born Again and being filled with the Holy Spirit. Further, I want you to notice how this experience belongs fully to the Trinity—the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. For example:

Jesus called the outpouring of the Spirit "the promise of the Father."

Second, in Mark 1:7—8, John the Baptist said this: "After me comes the one more powerful than I, the straps of whose sandals I am not worthy to stoop down and untie. I baptize you with water, but he will baptize you with the Holy Spirit."

And third, the BHS is an experience that originates with our Heavenly Father and is poured out by the Lord Jesus Christ. This means that the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit are working together to grant you divine empowerment.

**Acts 1:4—8**. "Do not leave Jerusalem, but wait for the gift my Father promised, which you have heard me speak about. (5) For John baptized with a water, but in a few days you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit." (6) Then they gathered around him and asked him, "Lord, are you at this time going to restore the kingdom to Israel?" (7) He said to them: "It is not for you to know the times or dates the Father has set by his own authority. (8) **But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you**; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth."

But there's a great omission that many Christians make here. It's when they fail to accept Christ's offer of the Holy Spirit—the very One that can revolutionize their Christian life.

(**Question**) If Jesus were to walk into this worship service physically, would anyone run out the door? No. Nearly everyone would want to embrace him. Well, the Holy Spirit is exactly like Jesus, and He is the Person Jesus sent to abide and fellowship with us. The Holy Spirit is the representative of Christ on Earth today.

**(Transition)** Now, let's look at the Empowerment that the Holy Spirit offers Believers.

## The Empowerment of the Holy Spirit

For the next few moments, I want to read some Scriptures that speak of what the Holy Spirit offers Christians. John the Baptist utters the first four Scriptural references:

> Matthew 3:11 says, "As for me, I baptize you with water for repentance, but He who is coming after me is mightier than I, and I am not fit to remove His sandals; He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire."
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> Mark 1:8, "I baptized you with water; but He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit."
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> Luke 3:16, "John answered and said to them all, 'As for me, I baptize you with water; but One is coming who is mightier than I, and I am not fit to untie the thong of His sandals; He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire."
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> Again, John the Baptist said in John 1:33: "And I did not recognize Him, but He who sent me to baptize in water said to me, 'He upon whom you see the Spirit descending and remaining upon Him, this is the one who baptizes in the Holy Spirit.'"
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> This is what Jesus said in Luke 24:49: "I am going to send you what my Father has promised; but stay in the city until you have been clothed with power from on high."
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> Jesus also spoke these words in Acts 1:5; 8: "For John baptized with water, but you shall be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days from now. (8) But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth."
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> And then Peter said the following in Acts 11:16: "And I remembered the word of the Lord, how He used to say, 'John baptized with water, but you shall be baptized with the Holy Spirit.'"

You see, the BHS is about Jesus granting Christians supernatural power for everyday living.

**(Transition)** Paul said that everything must be established by the testimony of two or three witnesses. Therefore, for the next few minutes, I want to establish the precedence of speaking and praying in other tongues as God's pattern for evidencing a Spirit-filled life.

## The Baptism of the Holy Spirit in Acts 2

The first instance of believers receiving a special endowment of power occurred on the Day of Pentecost when the Jewish believers were filled with the Spirit (Acts 2:1–4). This serves as a model for subsequent believers.

> When the day of Pentecost came, they were all together in one place. (2) Suddenly a sound like the blowing of a violent wind came from heaven and filled the whole house where they were sitting. (3) They saw what seemed to be tongues of fire that separated and came to rest on each of them. (4) All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues as the Spirit enabled them.

Now, let's look at the Samaritans' infilling of the Spirit in 8:14–20. This is where Philip preached the message of salvation, the Samaritans became Believers, and the Apostles sent Peter and John to present the message of the BHS to them.

> When the apostles in Jerusalem heard that Samaria had accepted the word of God, they sent Peter and John to Samaria. (15) When they arrived, they prayed for the new believers there that they might receive the Holy Spirit, (16) because the Holy Spirit had not yet come on any of them; they had simply been baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. (17) Then Peter and John placed their hands on them, and they received the Holy Spirit. (18) When Simon saw that the Spirit was given at the laying on of the apostles' hands, he offered them money (19) and said, "Give me also this ability so that everyone on whom I lay my hands may receive the Holy Spirit." (20) Peter answered: "May your money perish with you, because you thought you could buy the gift of God with money!

Although the text does not specifically say the Samaritans spoke in tongues, it is evident that something observable occurred. Otherwise, why would Simon the sorcerer offer the Apostles money that would enable him to repeat such a phenomenon?

Next, let's turn to **Acts 10:44—48** and investigate the conversion of the first Gentiles.

> While Peter was still speaking these words, the Holy Spirit came on all who heard the message. (45) The circumcised believers who had come with Peter were astonished that the gift of the Holy Spirit had been poured out even on Gentiles. (46) For they heard them speaking in tongues and praising God. Then Peter said, (47) "Surely no one can stand in the way of their being baptized with water. They have received the Holy Spirit just as we have." (48) So he ordered that they be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ. Then they asked Peter to stay with them for a few days.

The final event I will point out concerns the disciples/Christians in Ephesus, as recorded in Acts 19:1–7. They were Christians who were totally unfamiliar with the gift of the Holy Spirit.

> While Apollos was at Corinth, Paul took the road through the interior and arrived at Ephesus. There he found some disciples (2) and asked them, "Did you receive the Holy Spirit when you believed?" They answered, "No, we have not even heard that there is a Holy Spirit." (3) So Paul asked, "Then what baptism did you receive?" "John's baptism," they replied. (4) Paul said, "John's baptism was a baptism of repentance. He told the people to believe in the one coming after him, that is, in Jesus." (5) On hearing this, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. (6) When Paul placed his hands on them, the Holy Spirit came on them, and they spoke in tongues and prophesied. (7) There were about twelve men in all.

## The Necessity of the BHS

You realize how important the Holy Spirit is to Christians when you understand that today, a primary duty of Christ involves baptizing believers into the Holy Spirit. Although Jesus serves as Prophet, Priest, and King, from the Cross until today, He has primarily functioned as our Priest. In the eternal kingdom, He will reign as King of Kings. As our High Priest, Jesus ministers as our Savior, Healer, Provider, and Deliverer. But along with that, He serves as our Baptizer in the Holy Spirit (Mark 1:8). The Spirit-filled life is imperative because it's inextricably linked to Christ's priestly position. Allow Him to continue His priestly ministry and baptize you in the Holy Spirit.

During the closing days of Christ's ministry on Earth, he made certain to show the disciples their need to receive the Paraclete—the Holy Spirit. Let me show you how he did it:

> In John 14, 15, and 16, just before his crucifixion, Jesus began emphasizing the importance of the Holy Spirit to the disciples. He told them how the Holy Spirit would

help, teach, and even reveal the future to them. But the early disciples weren't the only recipients of Christ's promise; the Holy Spirit is still available to Believers today.

In Luke 24, *following* his crucifixion, Jesus instructed his disciples to *wait in Jerusalem* for the arrival of the Holy Spirit. This was their primary directive. Wait! He commanded them to do this before they attempted any form of ministry! Here's how he phrased it: **"Stay in the city until you have been clothed with power from on high."** The only way they could perpetuate his works was with the Holy Spirit operating in and through them.

After his resurrection, he issued his final instructions to about 500 disciples who had gathered to witness his ascension into Heaven. Here again, he told his disciples that they would "**receive power *after* the Holy Spirit came upon them"** (Acts 1:8)—not ***before,* but *after!*** That's why we should desire that the Spirit inundate our lives!

This was the Apostle Paul's urgent command for the Christians in Ephesus. I want you to hear his words in Ephesians 5:18, and I'll read from several translations:

I'll start with the NIV: **"Do not get drunk on wine, which leads to debauchery. Instead, be filled with the Spirit."**

The Amplified Version translates it this way: **"Do not get drunk with wine, for that is wickedness (corruption, stupidity), but be filled with the [Holy] Spirit *and* constantly guided by Him."**

The Contemporary English Version says: **"Don't destroy yourself by getting drunk, but let the Spirit fill your life."**

The International Standard Version could be the most accurate, as it says: **"Stop getting drunk with wine, which leads to wild living, but keep on being filled with the Spirit."**

## Conclusion

You realize how important the Holy Spirit is to Christians when you understand that today, a primary duty of Christ involves baptizing believers into the Holy Spirit. Although Jesus serves as Prophet, Priest, and King, from the Cross until today, He has primarily functioned as our Priest.

In the eternal kingdom, He will reign as King of Kings. As our High Priest, Jesus ministers as our Savior, Healer, Provider, and Deliverer. But along with that, He serves as our Baptizer in the Holy Spirit (Mark 1:8). The Spirit-filled life is imperative because it's inextricably linked to Christ's priestly position. Allow Him to continue His priestly ministry and baptize you in the Holy Spirit.

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