

## Chapter 7

### *The Holy Ghost - God's Promise Do You Have It?*

The goal of every Christian believer is to be "saved". How to be saved or what it means varies from one church denomination to another. The fact that no two denominations seem to agree in total, causes confusion to those seeking salvation. As a result they are forced to "pick and choose" according to their limited knowledge. One church believes in "three works of grace", another believes there are only two while a third believes in a one time experience that lasts for a life time. Some believe that once "saved" they can never be lost. Most believe that by simply "believing on the Lord Jesus Christ" as their personal Saviour, they are then saved. Another group contends that you are first "saved" (escape the damnation of hell) then at some later point they are sanctified -- set apart for God's use. To them being saved consists of believing on the Lord Jesus Christ followed by some form of water baptism and at a later time the Holy Spirit envelops them in a mystical way as an authority for service unto God. However, to them, this "Holy Spirit" experience is not essential to salvation. This Spirit experience may be associated with speaking in tongues, as it is believed by Pentecostal believers, while others reject the necessity of speaking in other tongues, in either case, they believe the Holy Spirit is an extra blessing God confers on the individual. With this wide range of beliefs, it is no wonder many are confused and are willing to 'take the easiest way out', a salvation that takes the least effort on their part. If one is willing to exercise an open mind and accept the Bible's teaching, the confusion will cease and every believer will walk the same path.

The purpose of this writing is to establish what the Bible teaches concerning salvation, particularly the role of the Holy Ghost or Holy Spirit, as many prefer to call it. The foundation of the church is built on the teachings of "*the Apostles and Prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone*". (Eph. 2:20). Our guide to truth is the Apostles Doctrine and not the thoughts and opinions of men. The scriptures define the

Holy Ghost: what it is, who it is, its purpose, what it does, how it is received, and the evidence of its presence. Perhaps one of the most important questions the scriptures will answer is; 'Is the Holy Ghost essential to salvation, and if so, how can one know they have received it?'

John Baptist, as part of his ministry, pointed out he would baptize with water, but one greater than himself, that is Jesus Christ, would baptize them with the Holy Ghost and with fire. (Luke 3:16). Some years later, the Apostle Paul, encountered some believers who were converts of John and asked if they had received the Holy Ghost since they had believed. They professed that they had not heard of the Holy Ghost so it was evident they did not have it. Paul asked how they were baptized and proceeded to instruct them about Jesus Christ. When they had received Paul's instruction they were baptized in the Name of the Lord Jesus, *"And when Paul had laid his hands upon them, the Holy Ghost came on them; and they spake with tongues and prophesied"* (Acts 19:1-6). This passage of scripture establishes the fact of the necessity of water baptism in the Name of Jesus Christ, and the filling with the Holy Ghost evidenced by speaking in other tongues.

In the early part of his ministry, Jesus had an encounter with a very learned man, Nicodemus, and instructed him *"You must be born again before you can see or enter the Kingdom of God"* Jesus further explained that this "New Birth" consisted of being born of water (baptized) AND of the Spirit (the Holy Ghost). This New Birth has two parts, water baptism and receiving the Holy Ghost which constitutes ONE NEW BIRTH. Water baptism alone or receiving the Holy Ghost alone are INCOMPLETE by themselves, but must include both water baptism AND the Holy Ghost if the New Birth is to be a COMPLETE birth (John 3:3-9). When a birth take place, life begins for that new born. By the same reasoning, spiritual life begins when one is BORN FROM ABOVE. In short, one is not saved or spiritually alive until they are fully Born Again.

In Romans 6:1-6, water baptism is referred to as being buried with Christ, dead to the old way of life, while the Holy Ghost is likened to *"Rising again to walk in the*

*newness of life*". This phrase implies a 'spiritual resurrection' enabling one to begin a new life free from sin's guilt. (Note: Water baptism is for the remission of sin and is applied to one who has repented by turning FROM sin and through their faith in the shed blood of Christ, is cleared of the charges of guilt. They are dead to sin and ready to receive the "Spirit of Life" (Acts 2:38).)

The last words of Jesus to His Apostles were, they were to return to Jerusalem and wait for the "*Promise of the Father which ye have heard of me*". (Acts 1:4) The Apostles could not move forward UNTIL the promise had been fulfilled in them. The Promise was the Holy Ghost. Many will argue that the disciples received the Holy Ghost after Jesus' resurrection and before his final ascension. They point to John 20:22 where Jesus breathed on them and said receive ye the Holy Ghost. This was not a 'present time experience' but a promise that would be fulfilled 'not many days hence' on the day of Pentecost. This is further proved in John 7:37-39 where Jesus speaks of living water flowing from out of the belly and is identified with the Spirit, which he said they should receive, for the "*Holy Ghost was NOT YET GIVEN because Jesus was NOT YET GLORIFIED*" (vs 39). Note this verse used the term "Spirit" synonymous with "Holy Ghost". Receiving the Holy Ghost as a future event is also seen in Acts 1:5 where the believers would be "*--Baptized with the Holy Ghost not MANY DAYS HENCE*". That day was the Day of Pentecost, 10 days following the ascension of Jesus into heaven (Acts 2:1-4).

Jesus speaks of the Holy Ghost as "*the promise of the Father*" (Acts 1:4 / Luke 24:49). On the day of Pentecost Peter quotes from the prophet Joel (Joel 2:28-32), "*That in the last days, saith God, I will pour out of my Spirit upon all flesh - - -*" (Acts 2:16-17). The Prophet Ezekiel prophesies in Ezek.36:25-27, "*-- And I will put MY Spirit within you and cause you to walk in my statutes, and ye shall keep my judgments, and do them*". Also Isaiah speaks "*-- I will pour MY Spirit upon all thy seed, and my blessing upon thine offspring*". (Isa.44:3) See also Zec.12:10. These Old Testament promises were to Israel as a nation, but they rejected their Messiah, Jesus Christ, and as a

nation forfeited their claim to these promises (Luke 19:41-44 / Matt.23:37-39). This promise being denied the nation Israel, was given to those individuals who believed in Jesus, first to the Jews and later to the Gentiles (Acts 8 and Acts 10).

There is one thing of special note in those prophetic promises. God said that He would pour out “**HIS SPIRIT**” upon **ALL FLESH**. The Holy Ghost poured out on the Day of Pentecost was God’s own Spirit, and He God, would do the pouring. (2 Cor.1:21-22) As we will see more fully later, this Holy Ghost is also the Spirit of Christ. (John 14:16-18) Are there two Spirits? No! There is but **ONE** spirit which makes God’s Spirit, the Spirit of Christ and the Holy Ghost one and the same thing. “*For by **ONE SPIRIT ARE WE ALL BAPTIZED INTO ONE BODY—***”. (1 Cor. 12:13)

How then can we define the Holy Ghost? It is the Spirit of God/Christ that comes to dwell (live - abide) within us. It empowers us with the ability to subdue our spirit to fulfill the will and desire of His Spirit.

On the Day of Pentecost the Holy Ghost was poured out in a rather unexpected manner. If those 120 in the upper room had been fully acquainted with the scriptures, they may not have been so mystified by the arrival of the Holy Ghost. (Acts 2:1-4) Speaking in tongues was God’s method. Why did He choose tongues? Perhaps it was because the tongue is the most unruly member of our body and with His Spirit he captures control of our being. God used tongues to divide mankind at the tower of Babel who were opposed to Him (Gen.11:6-9), and then used the same method to join believers into a single body by giving them the language to speak. Isaiah gave the method centuries before it happened. (Isa. 28:11-12). “*For with stammering lips and another tongue will He speak to His people. To whom he said, this is the rest wherewith ye may cause the weary to rest—*”. Tongues are God’s doing. Many in this latter Day Pentecostal environment, are using all manner of ways to give the Holy Ghost, all of which are in error. The only valid way to receive the Holy Ghost is by God’s initiative. **He and HE ONLY** gives His Spirit when the heart is ready to receive Him. Teaching one to speak

some phrases; breathing on the candidate; just believing it's there or laying on of hands per-se, is not God's method. When one receives the Holy Ghost it is because God fills them with His Spirit and they will speak with other tongues **"AS THE SPIRIT OF GOD GIVES THEM UTTERANCE"**. IT IS AN ACT OF GOD AND NOT MAN.

Much is made of speaking in tongues. The power of God is not in the tongues spoken, but in His spirit that comes to dwell in the person. Tongues are a sign, a very important sign to be sure, but the power of the Holy Ghost is **CHRIST IN US**. The initial evidence of the presence of the Holy Ghost at the New Birth is speaking in other tongues. This is verified in the book of Acts in each instance where the Holy Ghost was received by a person or a number of persons. The real proof of the Holy Ghost, beyond the first sign of life, is the life or conduct one expresses in the days following birth. When a baby is born, the cry is the first sign of life, after that activity determines the life present. Do not confuse the **"Gift of Tongues"** with receiving the Holy Ghost. Though they may sound the same, there is a difference. Speaking in other tongues when receiving the Holy Ghost is God's business, however, the gift of tongues is one of several gifts that God gives and can be used at will by the possessor of that gift.

On the Day of Pentecost, Peter gave the formula for salvation. Acts 2:38 says **"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"**. This is NOT in conflict with the great commission Jesus gave to His disciples in Matt.28:19. Instead it is the implementation of this commission to preach and baptize. Jesus' instructions were to use the NAME (not names) of the Father, of the Son and of the Holy Ghost. Each of the above are titles of the ONE NAME to be used. If we knew in reality the Name of the Father, Son and Holy Ghost there would be no problem in using the proper name. The NAME is JESUS. Peter knew this and gave instruction that following repentance, baptism in the NAME OF JESUS CHRIST was the next step. Water baptism does not end the process. Next Peter says that the candidate was to **"Receive the GIFT of the Holy Ghost"**. Notice the word "receive". To receive this

wonderful gift is the responsibility of the candidate to open their heart and permit Christ to enter. God gives His Spirit, but we must be prepared to receive it. The next word is “GIFT”. A gift is something given by the giver. It is not earned, worked for or begged for. It is given purely as a gift and only God gives this precious gift to the repentant and believing individual. Too many spend too much time working for something that is to be freely received as a gift. Peter declared this Gift was, “*for you (Jews), your children and all who were AFAR OFF*”. God had to convince Peter in a most dramatic fashion who the “afar off” were in Acts chapter 10.

Since the book of Acts is a historical account of the beginning and progress of the church, we can observe how and what role the Holy Ghost played in this growing church. Is there a common thread of action? Acts chapter two describes the first occurrence of the Holy Ghost filling individuals. It was accompanied by “*Speaking in other tongues as the Spirit gave utterance*”. Following the upper room experience of the Holy Ghost filling the one hundred and twenty gathered together, many other believers were added to the church during those early days. There is no reason to believe these newly added believers did not experience the same thing as the 120 on the Day of Pentecost. The next occurrence of receiving the Holy Ghost is in Acts chapter 8. Philip went to the city of Samaria where a large group of people gave ear to Philip’s ministry. His message was the **Kingdom of God (new birth) and the NAME of Jesus**. They believed Philip’s message and were baptized in the Name of the Lord Jesus (Acts 8:12-16). The one thing missing was the Holy Ghost. Peter and John were summoned and when they arrived in Samaria they laid hands on these newly baptized converts and they received the Holy Ghost (vs 16). Something visible happened as seen in verse 18. What they received was the “Gift of God” (vs 20). The people of Samaria were neither Jews nor Gentiles and represented the beginning of the expansion of the church to people other than Jews.

The next move of the Holy Ghost was to the Gentiles as a people. Cornelius with his house is chosen and Peter has an extraordinary vision from God, a vision he later understood to mean that the Gentiles would be privileged to receive this marvelous Gift of

the Holy Ghost. While Peter was preaching to Cornelius, that believers could receive remission of sins through the Name of Jesus, something wonderful happened, the Holy Ghost fell on Cornelius and those who "heard the Word". They began to speak in tongues and magnify God. In order to fulfill the New Birth requirements, Peter **COMMANDED** them to be baptized in the **NAME OF THE LORD**, which is Jesus Christ. When Peter returned to Jerusalem, he defended his trip to the Gentiles by confirming Cornelius and his house had received the Holy Ghost the same way they did in the beginning. (Acts 11:15-17) The rest of the Apostles then remembered John Baptist's words "*--- Ye SHALL be baptized with the Holy Ghost*" and were convinced that "*God also to the Gentiles granted repentance unto life*".

If you will notice that with Philip at Samaria, they were baptized in the Name of Jesus, but when Peter and John came laying hands on them, these baptized believers received the Holy Ghost thus completing both parts of the New Birth, water and spirit. The New Birth was not a birth **UNTIL** both parts had been completed. With Cornelius, he and his house received the Holy Ghost, speaking in other tongues, but were commanded to be baptized in the **NAME OF THE LORD** (Jesus). As with those in Samaria, Cornelius' New Birth was not complete until water and Spirit had been accomplished. This is further proof that one is not completely "saved" until they are baptized in the Name of Jesus **AND** filled with the Holy Ghost evidenced by speaking in other tongues. One without the other is simply not enough. It must be noted also that receiving the Holy Ghost was not always accompanied with the laying on of hands. In the case of Cornelius, laying on of hands was not mentioned at all. The last description of receiving the Holy Ghost is found in Acts 19:1-6. Paul, finding certain disciples, asked if they had received the Holy Ghost since they had believed.

Let us note that the Holy Ghost is not some add-on experience, an option one can take or leave as a matter of choice. The Holy Ghost is the **MAIN EVENT** for believers. These believers at Ephesus professed that they did not know about the Holy Ghost. "*How were you baptized?*" is the next question asked by Paul. They responded by saying

they were baptized unto John's baptism. Paul answered that "John's baptism was unto repentance, that is a change of heart, but pointed to one greater than himself, Christ Jesus. When they heard this, without any argument, they were baptized in the NAME OF THE LORD JESUS. Paul laid hands on them and they received the Holy Ghost, speaking with tongues and prophesying (vs 5-6). Once again we see the combination of water baptism in the Name of Jesus and being filled with the Holy Ghost speaking in tongues to complete ONE NEW BIRTH. This incident proves that if one is baptized in error, they must be baptized over according to the scriptures before they can be "saved".

The historical records in the Book of Acts relating to receiving the Holy Ghost and Jesus' command to be Born Again, are proof of the necessity of having the Holy Ghost to be saved. There is, however, one more powerful scripture that expresses the absolute

necessity of having the Holy Ghost. To be saved, truly saved, one must become the possession of 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".* (Rom.8:9) Two things are evident in this verse. **First, the Spirit of God and the Spirit of Christ are ONE AND THE SAME SPIRIT.** Since there is only ONE SPIRIT (Eph. 4:4-6), then Jesus must be God, and God (Spirit) must be in Jesus. See John 14:1-20. To see Jesus is to see the Father, *"for the Father dwelleth in me"*. (vs 9-10) The second point is simply, without the Spirit of Christ (the Holy Ghost), one has no claim to Christ, nor does Christ have claim to them.

Finally beside being the Spirit of God/Christ, what is the Holy Ghost and what does it do?

1. The Holy Ghost is LIFE, Eternal life. There is no hope of eternal life without it. ***“And this is the record, that God has given to us eternal life, and this life is in His Son. He that hath the Son hath life; and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life.”*** (1John 5:11-12) What does it mean to have the Son of God? It means to have His Spirit, the Holy Ghost. (Rom.8:9 / John 1:4 / John 17:2-3 / Gal. 3:27-29 / John 4:4). The Holy Ghost is the quickening power of God that resurrects us from the deadness of sin and trespasses. (Eph.2:1-4)

2. The Holy Ghost is God’s SEAL on the believer that they are God’s possession purchased with His shed blood. By having the seal of the Holy Ghost, a testimony is presented to the world that this soul belongs to God. (Eph.1:13 / 2 Cor. 1:21-22) It is also the EARNEST (proof) of our inheritance or Christ’s assurance we have an inheritance reserved in heaven for us. (Eph. 1:14 / 1 Pet. 1:4-5)

3. The Holy Ghost is God’s power in us. The ‘dunamis’ (dynamite power) to fight Satan and the power to overcome self and the world. ***“Ye shall receive power after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you.”*** (Acts 1:8) With this power comes authority to preach and witness in His Name and by His authority. No one is ready to face Satan, live for God or minister in His Kingdom until they have been endued with the power of the Holy Ghost. Many are preaching, working miracles, casting out demons etc., to no avail, simply because God does not know them. Why does God not know them? Because they are ministering without His authority and without possessing His Spirit, the Holy Ghost. They are not on God’s payroll and are, at the day of judgment, commanded to depart because “I never knew you”. (Matt. 7:21-23)

4. Having the Holy Ghost is to be made a partaker of His Divine Nature. (2 Pet.1:4) To be in Christ one becomes a NEW CREATURE. Old things are passed away and all