

I. John Comes Baptizing

A. The Ministry of John the Baptist

1. John the Baptist is the prophetic voice of one crying in the wilderness
2. John the Baptist preaches personal accountability for sin
3. Masses of people responded (the Billy Graham of his day?)

B. The Message of John the Baptist

1. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit
 - a. Why does this make sense to His audience?
 - b. Why should this be desirable for us?

II. Jesus Delivers the Promised Holy Spirit

A. The Promise

1. **Isaiah 44:3 (ESV)** *For I will pour water on the thirsty land, and streams on the dry ground; I will pour my Spirit upon your offspring, and my blessing on your descendants.*
2. **Ezekiel 39:29 (ESV)** And I will not hide my face anymore from them, when I pour out my Spirit upon the house of Israel, declares the Lord GOD.”
3. **Joel 2:28-29 (ESV)** ²⁸ *“And it shall come to pass afterward, that I will pour out my Spirit on all flesh; your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your old men shall dream dreams, and your young men shall see visions. ²⁹ Even on the male and female servants in those days I will pour out my Spirit.*

B. The Gift

1. John says Jesus will do it
2. Jesus says He will do it
3. Jesus does it

III. How to be filled with the Holy Spirit

A. Present your body to Him

1. **Romans 12:1-2 (ESV)** ¹ *I appeal to you therefore, brothers, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship. ² Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that by testing you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect.*

B. Confess/Repent

1. **Acts 2:38 (ESV)** *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.*

C. Ask

1. **Luke 11:9-13 (ESV)** ⁹ *And I tell you, ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you. ¹⁰ For everyone who asks receives, and the one who seeks finds, and to the one*

who knocks it will be opened. ¹¹ What father among you, if his son asks for a fish, will instead of a fish give him a serpent; ¹² or if he asks for an egg, will give him a scorpion? ¹³ If you then, who are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will the heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask him!”

D. Believe in Faith

1. Galatians 3:2 (ESV) *Let me ask you only this: Did you receive the Spirit by works of the law or by hearing with faith?*

E. Wait

1. Acts 1:4 (ESV) *And while staying with them he ordered them not to depart from Jerusalem, but to wait for the promise of the Father, which, he said, “you heard from me;*

Proof #2 Jesus Delivers the Promised Holy Spirit Mark 1:4-8

Why We Need Proof

As we look more closely this morning at this passage in the first chapter of the gospel of Mark, we are looking for the second proof Mark offers that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God. Mark's goal for this gospel is to secure our faith, to anchor our hearts, to establish our lives and our future on the fact that Jesus of Nazareth is God's uniquely chosen and empowered Savior who personally delivers us from the peril of perishing presented by sin.

Sin is not a myth. Sin is not some religious misconception meant to control weak-minded people crippled by fear. Sin is the real condition of every human heart that separates us from God and from His purpose in creating us. Sin subjects us to rightly deserved divine justice. Sin is the natural orientation of human affection away from God and toward self, away from right and toward evil, away from holiness and toward impurity, away from light and toward darkness, away from life and toward death.

Sin denies God in attitude, action, and affection. Sin threatens every human heart with judgment, condemnation, and death, from which we as natural and intentional sinners cannot save ourselves. You can hear the hopelessness of our situation in the apostle Paul's lament in **Romans 7:25**, "*What a wretched man I am! Who will rescue me from this body of death?*" And you can hear the exclamation and exaltation of gratitude as he affirms the answer in the next verse: "*Thanks be to God—through Jesus Christ our Lord!*"

Our every and only hope of rescue from the deadly consequences of sin rests in the fact that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, the divinely appointed and provided Savior, who, through his sinless life and substitutionary, sacrificial death on the cross takes away our sin and opens the floodgates of God's forgiveness!

Every confidence we sinners may have in the promises and mercy of God is anchored in the reality that Jesus is the Christ, the Messiah, the Savior, the Son of God. Mark has offered as first proof that Jesus fulfills Old Testament prophecy. His second proof is announced in the ministry and message of John the Baptist: **Jesus delivers the promised Holy Spirit.**

The Message of John Offers Proof

The ministry and the message of John

Mark tells us little about John compared to the other gospel writers because John is not the focus of Mark's gospel. The inclusion of John's ministry and message serves to tell us something important about Jesus, who **IS** the focus of Mark's gospel.

John enters the narrative about Jesus as the prophesied forerunner, the messenger sent ahead by God to prepare the way for the coming of the Lord. John's ministry is two-fold: he preaches and he baptizes. He preaches a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins.

Understand what is happening here. Israel has returned from their exile to Babylon, rebuilt Jerusalem and the temple and the nation, fought for their existence, and have again been captured and occupied by a godless foreign power. It has been four hundred years since God has spoken with a prophetic voice to His people. Suddenly John bursts on to the scene with the same message the prophets brought before the fall of Jerusalem and the exile of the nation.

“Repent!” he preaches. “Confess your sins and commit to God!” He is literally calling Israel to once again prepare to function as God’s holy remnant worthy of life and living under the reign of God the king. By baptizing them, a practice usually reserved for Gentile converts entering the covenant community, he calls them to make a public confession and commitment to being God’s covenant people worthy of divine favor and forgiveness.

And they are coming from all over the region to make just that commitment. They remember what happened the last time the nation refused the call to repent and return to God, and this time they come from the whole Judean countryside, and from Jerusalem, flocking to John, confessing their sins, committing themselves to covenant through baptism.

John looks very much like the Billy Graham of his day. Yet, all of this is not about John. John’s ministry is about his message, and his message is about Jesus. Look at John’s message in Mark 1:7, “***After me will come one more powerful than I, the thongs 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.***”

The meaning of the message

Have you ever stopped to wonder why that message made any sense to a Jew living in Jerusalem before the day of Pentecost? Christians have a historical reference point to refer to, the day recorded in Acts 2 when the Holy Spirit came upon 120 disciples of Jesus gathered in an upper room in Jerusalem fifty days after His resurrection. But, as John is preaching in the lower Jordan River valley near the Dead Sea, none of that happened yet. So how does a message about being baptized with the Holy Spirit make sense to a pre-Pentecost, pre-resurrection, pre-Calvary, pre-Jesus Jewish audience?

To answer that question we need to turn to the prophets Isaiah, Ezekiel, and Joel. These are not the only sources for an answer, but these three offer the most familiar answers. God speaks to Israel through these three men about a time that will come after Israel returns from captivity and they are restored to their covenant relationship with God.

Through Isaiah God promised, “. . . ***I will pour water on the thirsty land, and streams on the dry ground; I will pour my Spirit upon your offspring, and my blessing on your descendants.***”

Through Ezekiel God declared, “***I will sprinkle clean water on you, and you will be clean; I will cleanse you from all your impurities and from all your idols. I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit within you; I will remove your heart of stone and give you a heart of flesh. And I will put my Spirit in you and move you to follow my decrees and be careful to keep my laws.***”

Through Joel God made this commitment to His people after their exile: ***“And afterward, I will pour out my Spirit on all people. Your sons and daughters will prophesy, your old men will dream dreams, your young men will see visions. Even on my servants, both men and women, I will pour out my Spirit in those days.”***

God promised He would one day personally give Himself to His covenant people in a way He had not given Himself to them before. He would pour out His Spirit. The Spirit of God Himself would live in them.

Now you understand. These prophetic promises set up within Jewish people of Jesus’ day a hopeful expectation that one day God Himself would come, give them a new heart and a new spirit, a new desire and ability to fulfill covenant faithfulness. He would eventually “baptize” (or fully immerse, soak, drench) them in His Holy Spirit just as He promised.

The prophecy proclaimed that a messenger would come proclaiming, “Prepare ye the way of the Lord.” Then, presumably, the Lord, Yahweh Himself, would come, and what would He do? He would cleanse the people of their sins and idols and pour His Spirit into them.

The people who came to John to be baptized believed this sequence of prophetic events was playing out before their very eyes, and they wisely wanted in. And they were right.

Jesus is the meaning of the message

John says, ***“One comes after me that is mightier than I . . . He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit.”*** Who baptizes with the Holy Spirit, according to the prophetic promises? God does. Now listen, what does Jesus tell his disciples? Do you remember? John 16:6, ***“But I tell you the truth: it is for your good that I am going away. Unless I go away, the Counselor will not come to you; but if I go, I will send him to you.”***

Do you see it? God said, ***“I will pour out my Spirit.”*** Jesus said, ***“I will send him to you.”*** Do you know what that means? It means, if the Spirit of God is poured out on the people of God, then Jesus is God.

So, is the Spirit of God poured out on the people of God according to the promise of God and the claim of Jesus? Acts 2:4, ***“All of them were filled with the Spirit . . .”*** Peter explains the event as he is preaching in the street shortly after: ***This is what was spoken by the prophet Joel . . .”*** and he goes on to quote the verses we read a moment ago.

Here’s your second proof that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God: Jesus delivers the promised Holy Spirit, which God Himself said personally He would do for His people in the last days.

The meaning of the message for us

Now, I want to step back with you for a moment and consider another question. Why does God promise to fill His people with His Holy Spirit in the first place? Is it merely to develop a faithful army of servants who will loyally do whatever he tells them? Is it just to amass a choir of worshipers who will adore Him eternally? Is being filled with the Spirit just an empowerment to

do good in the world, be obedient to the word, share the gospel? It is some these, true, but it is more than any of these. **To be filled with the Spirit is God's way of allowing us to participate and share in the unbounded, unbroken, pure, holy, amazing love the Father and Son have with the Spirit for each other.**

Look with me at John 14:20. The context of this verse is the coming of the Counselor, the Spirit of Truth. Jesus tells His disciples, ***“On that day you will realize that I am in the Father, and you are in me, and I am in you.”*** Just as the Father and the Son and the Spirit exist in a relationship of pure, divine love, Jesus says, when the Spirit comes, we and the Father and the Son, through the Spirit, will live in a similar relationship of love.

Jesus prays for that day as he concludes his prayer in the upper room before he goes to the garden and is arrested. It's recorded in John 17:26: ***I have made you known to them, and will continue to make you known in order that the love you have for me may be in them and that I myself may be in them.*** And how does that happen? As we are filled with the promised Holy Spirit when Jesus Christ, the Son of God pours the Spirit into us.

How To Be Filled With the Spirit

The idea of pouring or being baptized with the Spirit carries in it the idea of an action that begins at some point and continues indefinitely. The expectation is that there will be a moment in a person's life when through faith Jesus fills them with His Spirit, and then continues to fill them indefinitely. That means we can come a first time to be filled, and then a second and a third and a fourth and on and on forever, and that Jesus will never get tired of filling us, for that is His plan as the Christ, the Son of God.

So, how can we be filled with the Spirit, for the first time or the millionth time?

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