

THE BIBLICAL TERMINOLOGY RELATED TO BAPTISM WITH THE HOLY SPIRIT IN THE BOOKS OF LUKE THROUGH ACTS

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Abstract. The Holy Spirit is not just a power or an influence of God, but a Being, just like God the Father. He is not made of “flesh and bone” (Luke 24, 39) and hence cannot be intercepted through the five senses of sight, hearing, smell, touch and taste. The Holy Spirit has at times manifested itself visibly through multiple symbols such as water, the dove, fire, oil and wind. The fact that the Holy Spirit manifested through certain symbols does not imply that He has remained at the level of these symbols; instead, the way in which He is presented in the Bible as a whole as having the traits of a person shows that the Holy Spirit is a divine Person.

The aim of this article is to highlight the manner in which the terminology used in regards to the baptism of the Holy Spirit wholly describes His characteristics. Because the space of this article is limited, we will not refer to all terms which relate to the baptism with the Holy Spirit, but we will limit ourselves to those found in the Lukan writings.

Keywords: baptism, Holy Spirit, the promise, the gift, receiving the Holy Ghost.

Introduction

The Holy Spirit is more than just a power or an influence of God. He is a Being, just like God the Father, respectively God the Son. As such, He is a spirit and therefore cannot be perceived by the humans' five senses.

Although the Holy Spirit was revealed to the people through various symbols (fire, the dove, wind, water, oil), none of those could describe the Holy Spirit in all His grandeur, nor do they diminish His attributes of a divine Person.

According to the descriptions in Holy Scripts, the Holy Spirit has reason, feelings and His own will. Moreover, the Holy Spirit is God, an aspect demonstrated by the fact that He possesses unique features of God (He is omnipotent, omniscient, omnipresent and eternal), as well as the fact that both the Old and the New Testament exchange the phrase “The Spirit said...” with the phrase “The Lord said...” Referring to the basics conducted by the Holy Spirit in the life of the believer, it is important to mention that these basics are repentance, the new birth, sanctification and the baptism with the Holy Spirit.

The Terminology for the Baptism of the Holy Spirit

It is easy to observe that when it comes to the baptism of the Holy Spirit, the terminology used by Luke the Evangelist is varied¹; eight different concepts are mentioned in the present study, as follows: “the pouring of the Holy Spirit,” “the coming of the Holy Spirit,” “the baptism of the Holy Spirit,” “the gift of the Holy Spirit,” “the promise of the Holy Spirit,” “the filling with the Holy Spirit,” “dressing up with power from above” and “receiving the Holy Spirit.”

In the Old Testament writings, more specifically in the gospels of Matthew and John, the phrase “the coming of the Holy Spirit” is used when referring to the work that the Holy Spirit² will unwind. However, as this phrase is not used in Lukan writings, we will not analyze it in this study.

1. “The pouring of the Holy Spirit”

The verb “to pour” appears in the Bible (DCV³) ninety times, being used with the meaning of “pouring oil” ten times, “to pour out like a drink” eleven times, “to pour water” two times, “to pour richly blessing” one time in Mal. 3,10, “to pour the wine of rage” two times and to “pour the Holy Spirit” eleven times (Isa 29,10; 32,15; 44,3; Ezek 39,29; Joel 2,28,29; Zech 12,10; Acts 2,17;18,33; Rom 5,5).⁴

The Greek term used for “to pour” (the Spirit) is ἐκχέω (ekchéō)⁵ and occurs three times in the New Testament (Acts 2,17; 18,33). It is important to note that the verb ἐκχέω in the New Testament is used exclusively for “the initial coming of the Holy Spirit over someone,” that is, for the baptism with the Holy Spirit.⁶

¹ Anthony D. Palma writes that in the book of Acts alone there are “more than seventeen references about the Holy Spirit,” apud Anthony D. PALMA, *Duhul Sfânt: o perspectivă pentecostală/ The Holy Spirit: A Pentecostal Perspective*, the Publishing House A.G-S.U.A., Bucharest, 2015, p. 101.

² This expression is often used in the Old Testament (Num 24,2; Judg 11,29; 14,6,19; 15,14; 1 Sam 10,6, 10; 11,6; 16,13; 19,20,23; 2 Chr 15,2; 20,14). In the New Testament the phrase appears in Matt 3,16 and we can find it in the following Johannine passages: John 15,26 – “But when the Helper comes...”, John 16,7-8 – “And when he is come, he will reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgement,” John 16,13 – “However, when he, the Spirit of truth, has come, He will guide you into all truth”. The expression is also used in 1 Cor 2,12 (“but the Spirit who is from God”).

³ DCV – *Bible*, Dumitru Cornilescu Version (Bible in Romanian language), 1923.

⁴ The other meanings of the verb “to pour” are as follows: “to pour water into a vessel” (used six times); “to pour chrism” (used three times), and “to pour water over the hands of somebody” (used one time); the other usages of the verb are about the pouring of a face/idol.

⁵ *NT Cornilescu with numbers Strong*, apud www.ebiblia.ro.

⁶ John F. TIPEI, *Duhul Sfânt: o teologie biblică din perspectivă pentecostală*, the Publishing House Metanoia, Oradea, 2003, p. 190.

The verb was taken from Septuagint, where it is used in reference to the Holy Spirit (Ezek 39,29; Joel 2,28-29; Zech 12,10) and where the texts mention that the Holy Spirit will be poured like abundant water that will flow over the dry earth (Isa 32,15; 44,3). The association of the Greek verb ἐκχέω (“to pour”) with the preposition ἐπί (“over”) clearly shows that the allusion is to a “pouring” of the Holy Spirit like a downpour, meaning rain which is poured heavily, bringing large amounts of water to the earth.

As indicated by the aforementioned texts, the promise of the “pouring” of the Holy Spirit appears in the prophecies of the Old Testament in six verses and was released through four prophets, independent of each other, as found in the following references: Isa 32,15; 44,3; Ezek 39,29; Joel 2,28 and Zech 12,10. All of these prophecies clearly show that this “pouring” of the Holy Spirit will have the following characteristics:

- a) It will be “from above” (“until the Spirit is poured upon us from on high” Isa 32:15a);
- b) It will be “over them” (“upon us” Isa 32,15a);
- c) It will produce an essential transformation; the desert will be turned into fertile earth and the orchard/meadow into wood (Isa 32,15b), respectively the dry land will be flooded by water/rivers (Isa 44,3);
- d) It will be first poured over “the house of Israel” (Ezek 39,29), but it will be available to be poured over “any being” regardless of social nature (the sons and the slaves will take part of this pouring, as indicated in Joel 2,28);
- e) It will bring certain gifts: “shall prophesy,” “shall see visions,” “shall dream dreams” (Joel 2,28b).

In the Lukan writings it can be easily observed how the Old Testament promises which characterized “the pouring” of the Holy Spirit had come true in the Church of Jerusalem as well as on other occasions when baptism with the Holy Spirit took place, as follows:

- a) The Holy Spirit came from above (“suddenly there came a sound from heaven” Acts 2:2).
- b) It came above them (“one sat upon each of them” Acts 2,3). Also, the term appears in the context of the “pouring” (gr. ἐκχέω)⁷ of the Holy Spirit *above* Nations (Acts 10,45).
- c) The transformation produced by the Holy Spirit with His pouring is not difficult to explain. The hearts of those baptized with the Holy Spirit were reinvigorated and their whole lives authorized to become authentic witnesses of the Lord Jesus Christ (as the disciples were promised in Acts 1,8). As the Holy Spirit was at work in the primary Church (in Jerusalem, Acts 2; in Samaria, Acts 8; through the nations, Acts 10; and in Ephesus, Acts 19), changes took place in regards to depth (the hearts were changed,

⁷ NT (New Testament) Cornilescu with numbers Strong, apud www.ebiblia.ro.

respectively the characters of the people) as well as dimension (thousands of people gave up their old lives and started to follow the way of God).

- d) The pouring of the Holy Spirit began with the Jewish people in the “upper room” in Jerusalem (Acts 2,18) and then continued in Samaria (Acts 8) and throughout all the nations (“the gift of the Holy Spirit had been poured out on the Gentiles also,” as indicated in Acts 10,45);
- e) Simultaneously with the pouring of the Holy Spirit were also given supernatural gifts (for example, the gift of prophecy mentioned in Acts 19,6).

Thus, a simple analysis of the term used for the “pouring” of the Holy Spirit shows that the baptism with the Holy Spirit is exclusively of divine origin (“comes from above”) as well as any process of pouring which assumes that the vessel from which a liquid is poured has to be superior to the container in which it is poured. Moreover, the term “pouring” highlights the fact that the baptism with the Holy Spirit is not a simple work, because it is not just a “dripping,”⁸ but a pouring, meaning that it is a large-scale work, especially due to the fact that this “pouring” of the Holy Spirit is not simply a pouring “in” but a pouring “over” (over the Jews, as well as over the Gentiles), baptism with the Holy Spirit being available to any man.

2. The coming of the Holy Spirit

The verb “to descend” appears three hundred and five times in the *Bible* (DCV). Of these instances, twenty times it is in reference to God the Father who descended to visit a man or a nation, eight times in reference to the Lord Jesus who descended from heaven (referring to His future descent at His return), and eleven times it is mentioned in connection to the Holy Spirit⁹. It is significant to remark that in reference to the Holy Spirit the verb “to descend” is used only in the New Testament. Based on His eleven appearances, we can conclude that the Holy Spirit has descended over the following:

- a) the human Jesus, after He got baptized in the Jordan river (Matt 3,16; Mark 1,10; John 1,32-33) and also while praying (Luke 3,22);
- b) Mary, in order to be able to conceive Jesus (Luke 1,35);
- c) The disciples, so as to strengthen them (Acts 1,8);

⁸ Ioan BRIE, „Învățătura despre botezul cu Duhul Sfânt: prelegere catehetică”, in *Plērōma Theological Journal*, year XIV no. 1, Bucharest, 2012, p. 251.

The online version: <http://bisericaemanuelsibiu.ro/download.php?f=invatatura-botez-duh-sfant.pdf>

⁹ In Genesis we are told that in Jacob’s dream “the angels descended” on a ladder (Gen 28,12), and in John 1,51 we find the promise that the Lord’s angels will descend over the Son. The angel from Bethesda who was descending from time to time is mentioned in John 5,4.

- d) the Samaritans who got in advance the Word and who were baptized in the water (Acts 8,16);
- e) the Gentiles from Cornelius's house who heard the Word (Acts 10,44; 11,15);
- f) the twelve disciples of John from Ephesus (Acts 19,6).

In the Greek language, when referring to the Holy Spirit descending on the Lord Jesus at His baptism, the term *καταβαίνω* (*katabainō*) is used in place of the verb “to descend,” the former Greek term having the following meanings: “to descend, to let down, to come down.” By comparison, when referring to the baptism with the Holy Spirit in the Lukan writings, the following Greek terms are employed:

- *ἐπέρχομαι* (*epérchomai*, meaning “to come, to arrive”¹⁰ and found in Acts 1,8 (“you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you”) and also in Acts 19,6 (“when Paul had laid hands on them, the Holy Spirit came upon them, and they spoke with tongues and prophesied”);
- *ἐπιπίπτω* (*epipíptō*), meaning “to fall on something; to get close at high speed (to something or someone); to lean (on somebody or something); to catch, to include, to possess.”¹¹ The term is found in Acts 8,16 (“For as yet He had fallen upon none of them. They had only been baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus.”) and then again in Acts 10,44 (“While Peter was still speaking these words, the Holy Spirit fell upon all those who heard the word”), respectively in Acts 11,15 (“And as I began to speak, the Holy Spirit fell upon them, as upon us at the beginning”).

As it can be noticed, the verbs *ἐπέρχομαι* and *ἐπιπίπτω* are used in all contexts in conjunction with the preposition *ἐπί* (“over”) which clearly indicates that the Spirit comes “from above” and “over” disciples (Acts 1,8), Gentiles (Acts 10,44), and the twelve disciples of John from Ephesus (Acts 19,6). Based on the significance of the two verbs, we can conclude that the difference between them only consists in the fact that the descent referred to by the verb *ἐπέρχομαι ἐπί* is not that dramatic, a fact that can be noticed in Acts 19,6 – “ἦλθε τὸ πνεῦμα τὸ ἅγιον ἐπ’ αὐτούς”.¹²

Therefore, the expression “to descend the Spirit over” clearly highlights the fact that the baptism with the Holy Spirit comes from above (from God) with the purpose of empowering the authentic Christian. Moreover, if we refer to the time when this descent took place, it is easy to notice that it was not an immediate consequence of the baptism in water¹³ (because in Cornelius's house, as mentioned

¹⁰ *NT Cornilescu with numbers Strong*, apud www.ebiblia.ro.

¹¹ *NT Cornilescu with numbers Strong*, apud www.ebiblia.ro.

¹² John F. TIPEI, *Duhul Sfânt*, p. 191.

¹³ For more details about the difference between the water baptism and the moment of receiving the Holy Spirit, we recommend Caleb Otniel Traian NECHIFOR's “Differences Between the Water

in Acts 10,45-48, the people who were “listening to the Word” had not been baptized in water at the moment when the Holy Spirit descended over them, nor of the conversion (because the Samaritans from Acts 8 received the Word, had the conversion, and were baptized in water; however, the apostles Paul and John came from Jerusalem to pray for them to receive the Holy Spirit “For as yet He had fallen upon none of them. They had only been baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus, as stated in Acts 8,16). Regarding the moment in which “the Holy Spirit came above” the twelve disciples of John from Ephesus, we are told that “When Paul had laid his hands upon them, the Holy Ghost came on them” (Acts 19,6). Hence, in the instance at Ephesus, “the descent of the Spirit” (respectively the baptism with the Holy Spirit) was not linked to the baptism of John, nor with the baptism in water in the Name of Jesus Christ, but to the laying of the apostle Paul’s hands accompanied by prayer.

3. The baptism with the Holy Spirit

The term *baptism* appears ninety-one times¹⁴ in the Bible, but most instances are in reference to the baptism in water. Regarding baptism with the Holy Spirit, we can find six references in the New Testament. The first ones are in the context in which John the Baptist introduced the Lord Jesus on the occasion of His baptism in the Jordan River when John plainly stated, “I indeed baptize you with water unto repentance: but he that cometh after me is mightier than I, whose shoes I am not worthy to bear: He shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost, and with fire” (Matt 3,11; Mark 1,8; Luke 3,16; John 1,33).

This promise of the baptism with the Holy Spirit is taken over by the Lord Jesus Christ after His resurrection, before ascending to heaven; in both instances He reminds the disciples that “John truly baptized with water; but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost not many days hence” (Acts 1,5).

Moreover, after “the Holy Ghost descended over the Gentiles” in Cornelius’s house, the apostle Paul describes to the other disciples the way the event unfolded, highlights the coming of the Holy Spirit in Cornelius’s house, and quotes: “Then I remembered the word of the Lord, how he said, ‘John indeed baptized with water; but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost’” (Acts 11,16).

The verb βαπτίζω (*baptizō* - baptism) translates “to sink, to dive, to baptize”¹⁵. The baptism with the Holy Spirit means a total immersion of the believer in the Holy Ghost. More specifically, in all the passages mentioned above,

Baptism and the Moment of Receiving the Holy Spirit”, in *Sacra Scripta*, IX, 2 (2011), Cluj-Napoca, pp. 189-195. ISSN: 1584-7624.

¹⁴ *Bible* (DCV), apud www.ebiblia.ro.

¹⁵ *NT Cornilescu with numbers Strong*, apud www.ebiblia.ro.

the expression “baptized with the Holy Spirit” emphasizes an authorization given by the Holy Spirit, independent of the water baptism (an observable aspect due to the fact that the water baptism was performed by man, namely by John the Baptist, while the baptism with the Holy Ghost was given by the Lord Jesus (Matt 3,11). In the house of Cornelius “those who were listening to the Words” were baptized with the Holy Ghost, before being baptized in water (Acts 11,15-17). Also, Luke 3,16, Acts 1,5 and Acts 11,16 all mention that the baptism with the Holy Ghost is a subsequent experience of the conversion.¹⁶

4. The gift of the Holy Spirit

The concept of “gift”¹⁷ referring to the Holy Spirit appears fifteen times in the Bible, twelve times as the verb “to give” and three times as the noun “gift.” In the Old Testament it is found in Neh 9,20 (“Thou gravest also thy good spirit to instruct them”). Then, in the New Testament,¹⁸ it is used for the first time by the Lord Jesus in Luke 11,13; here, the Holy Ghost is likened to “the good gifts” offered by a dad to the son who asks: “If you then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will *your* heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask Him!”.

In all passages that mention the Holy Spirit which was given or will be given, both in the New Testament as well as in the Septuagint (Neh 9,20), the Greek verb δίδωμι (*didōmi*) is used, meaning “to give, to offer something,”¹⁹ respectively the Greek noun δωρεά, -ᾶς, ἡ (*dōreá*), meaning “gift.”²⁰ Throughout these passages we can observe some characteristics of the gift of the Holy Spirit, as follows:

- a) Although it is a gift, it is offered following one’s request, as indicated in Luke 11,13 (“give the Holy Spirit to those who ask Him!”);
- b) It is given to those who listen to God, as mentioned in Acts 5,32 (“and *so* also *is* the Holy Spirit whom God has given to those who obey Him”);
- c) It can be given by the laying of hands (Acts 8,18);
- d) It can only be obtained following one’s repentance and forgiveness of sins, but it is not an immediate consequence of these two: “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” (Acts 2,38). It should be noted that the apostle Paul emphasizes that repentance, forgiveness of

¹⁶ John F. TIPEI, *The Holy Spirit*, p. 187.

¹⁷ *Bible* - DCV, apud www.ebiblia.ro.

¹⁸ All these passages are the following: Luke 11,13; John 7,39; Acts 2,38; 5,32; 8,18,20; 10,45; 15,8; 19,2; Rom 5,5; 2 Gal 5,5; 1 Thess 4,8; 1 John 3,24; 1 John 4,13.

¹⁹ *NT Cornilescu with numbers Strong*, apud www.ebiblia.ro.

²⁰ *NT Cornilescu with numbers Strong*, apud www.ebiblia.ro.

the sins and water baptism are needed, and only afterwards (not at that particular moment) will they receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.

- e) It is given for free (Acts 8,20);
- f) It is given regardless of race, both to the converted Hebrews as well as to the Gentiles: “And they of the circumcision which believed were astonished, as many as came with Peter, because that on the Gentiles also was poured out *the gift of the Holy Ghost*” (Acts 10,45).

Therefore, by using the terms “to give,” respectively “the gift of the Holy Spirit,” it is emphasized that the baptism with the Holy Spirit is the gift of the Holy Ghost. In other words, the baptism with the Holy Spirit is not a consequence of our personal merits but is offered for free, through His grace, with no regard to racial or religious distinction. Although it is a gift, it needs to be asked for and it is given only to those who seek it and sincerely desire it, namely to those who persevere in prayer in order to receive it.

5. The promise of the Father

The term “promise” appears in the Bible one hundred and forty-two times.²¹ The promise that the Holy Spirit will be sent on the earth has been present since the Old Testament. In the New Testament we find some expressions²² which are very relevant for our study, as follows:

- “The promise of My Father” (ἐπαγγελίαν τοῦ πατρὸς μου)²³ is mentioned in Luke 24,49.²⁴ By using this expression, the Lord Jesus assures His apprentices that the initiator and guarantor of the baptism with the Holy Spirit is God the Father, at the same time reminding us that baptism with the Holy Spirit is a promise of God, made both to the Jews and to the Gentiles;
- “This promise” (meaning the promise of the baptism with the Holy Ghost) is available to all believers who will call on the Name of God, as

²¹ For more details about using this term in WTT and BYZ we recommend NECHIFOR Caleb Otniel Traian, *Profeții mesianice: promisiuni, împliniri și așteptări legate de promisiuni/ Messianic Prophecies: Promises, Fulfillments and Expectations Regarding the Promises*, Mega Publishing House, Cluj-Napoca, 2018, p. 232.

²² In addition to the expression that we will discuss, there is the Pauline expression “the promised Spirit” (Gal 3,14 and Eph 1,3).

²³ *SBL Greek New Testament*, apud www.ebiblia.ro.

²⁴ The expression “the promise of the Father” linked to the baptism with the Holy Spirit appears in Acts 1,4 where Luke the Evangelist states: “and, being assembled together with them, commanded them that they should not depart from Jerusalem, but wait for *the promise of the Father*, which, saith he, ye have heard of me.”

found in Acts 2,39: “For *the promise* is unto you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call.”

- “The promise of the Holy Spirit” was given on the Day of Pentecost when the Apostle Paul indicated the manner in which the promise of the Father was fulfilled, namely the fact that after the Lord Jesus was taken up to Heaven, He received from God the Father the promise of the Holy Spirit and then “He poured what you see and hear,” meaning the baptism with the Holy Spirit (Acts 2,33)²⁵.

Therefore, through the expression “the promise of the Father” we understand that God the Father is the initiator and also the supporter of the baptism with the Holy Ghost, as well as the fact that this baptism is a promise of God for every believer, regardless of the historical period in which he lives. Thus, if a Christian starts to question God’s willingness to baptize him with the Holy Spirit, he indirectly questions God’s faithfulness, respectively His power to fulfill the promises that He made.

6. The filling with the Holy Ghost

When referring to the concept of the “filling with the Holy Ghost,” two expressions are found in the New Testament, namely:

- “To be filled with the Holy Ghost,” an expression that first appears in the Old Testament (in Exod 31,3; 31,35), and then in the New Testament, where the Greek term πλήθω (*pléthō*) is used which is translated “to fill, to realize something.”²⁶ In the New Testament this verb occurs six times— three times in the context of the supernatural birth of John the Baptist²⁷ and the other three instances in the Lukan writings, as follows:
 - At Jerusalem, on the Day of Pentecost, when the Holy Ghost descended over the one hundred disciples gathered in the upper room, baptized them and filled them with the Holy Ghost as they started to talk in other languages. We find this recorded in Acts 2,4: “And they were all

²⁵ This fact confirms the promise of the Savior through which He assures the disciples that before the Holy Spirit is sent on Earth, He first needs to be glorified (John 7,37, 38), respectively to ascend to heaven, stating: “It is expedient for you that I go away, for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send him unto you” (John 16,7). The Lord Jesus said to the disciples that once He will ascend to heaven, He will ask the Father to give them a Comforter who will remain with them eternally (John 14,16). For a more detailed description of the promises of the Lord Jesus, see: NECHIFOR Caleb O. T., *Profetii mesianice/ Messianic Prophecies*, p. 232.

²⁶ *SBL Greek New Testament*, apud www.ebiblia.ro.

²⁷ In Luke 1,15 (John the Baptist was filled with the Holy Spirit ever since he was an embryo); in Luke 1,41 (Elisabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit after Mary’s greeting and the babe leaped in her womb) and in Luke 1,67 (his father Zacharias was filled with the Holy Spirit and prophesied).

filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance”;

- Acts 4,31 states: “And when they had prayed, the place was shaken where they were assembled together; and they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and they spake the word of God with boldness”;
- In the case of Saul of Tarsus: “And Ananias went his way, and entered into the house; and putting his hands on him said, ‘Brother Saul, the Lord, even Jesus, who appeared unto thee in the way as thou camest, hath sent me, that thou mightest receive thy sight, and *be filled with the Holy Ghost*’” (Acts 9,17);
- In Mic 3,8 we find the phrase “to be full of the Holy Ghost,” an expression that appears first in the Old Testament (Mic 3,8) and then in the New Testament, where the Greek term πλήρης, -ες (*plērēs* translated “full, complete”)²⁸ is used and occurs nine times. These usages of the term can be found in the following instances: one time referring to the Lord Jesus²⁹, seven times in connection to the ministers of the primary Church who were “full of the Holy Ghost”³⁰ and another time when all Christians are commanded “to be full of the Ghost” (Eph 5,18).

It is unanimously accepted that the term πλήθω (“to be filled with the Holy Ghost”) as well as the term πλήρης (“full of the Holy Ghost”) generally describe an absolute dependence of the Christian on the Holy Ghost, due to the fact that the filling must be continuous and that the Christian has an obligation to be full of the Holy Ghost.

The problem that arises in this context is how the terms πλήθω (“filled with the Holy Ghost”), respectively πλήρης (“full of the Holy Ghost”) describe the initial baptism with the Holy Ghost and in what measure this aspect highlights a later filling with the Holy Ghost.

Studying narrowly all the contexts in which these two terms are used (πλήθω, respectively πλήρης), we can affirm that these are cases in which the verb πλήθω (“to be filled”) describes the initial baptism with the Holy Spirit as a one-time experience (in Acts 2,4 and again in Acts 9,17); then there are other cases in

²⁸ *SBL Greek New Testament*, apud www.ebiblia.ro.

²⁹ Luke 4,1 (“Jesus, being filled with the Holy Spirit”).

³⁰ Peter, being filled with the Holy Spirit confronts the religious and political leaders who hold him responsible for healing the crippled man at the Beautiful Gate (Acts 4,8); Deacons who were chosen to “serve at tables” were full of the Holy Spirit (Acts 6,3-5); Stephen was filled with the Holy Spirit when he was martyred (Acts 7,55); “For he was a good man, and full of the Holy Ghost and of faith, and much people was added unto the Lord” (Acts 11,24); Paul is full of the Holy Spirit when God frees Elymas the sorcerer through him (Acts 13,9) and the apostles Paul and Barnabas “were being filled with the Holy Spirit” even when they were rejected in Antioch (Acts 13,52).

which this verb refers to a later filling with the Holy Spirit, whose aim is for the Christian to receive a distinctive power of a concrete work which will be done by God through him (for example, in Acts 4,31, where as a consequence of this filling the apostles “spoke the word of God with boldness”).

If we refer strictly to the term πλήρης (“to be full of Ghost”), we can affirm that in all the contexts in which it appears it refers to the effect that it has in the Christian’s life– a repeatable experience of being filled with the Holy Ghost (after the initial filling through the baptism with the Holy Spirit) or as a result of the ongoing refills with the Holy Ghost, so that the Christian is constantly full with the Holy Spirit. Going through all the Lukan passages that use this term, we can outline an opinion on how being full of the Holy Spirit is the effect of the initial baptism with the Holy Ghost, respectively of a further filling with the Holy Ghost, as stated below:

- In Acts 4,8, when the Apostle Peter confronts the religious and political leaders who hold him accountable for the healing of the paralytic at the Beautiful Gate of the Temple, we understand from the text that Peter was full of the Holy Ghost. But from where did the Apostle Peter have this fullness of the Holy Spirit? It was from the first and the most recent filling in Peter’s life which had been performed by the Holy Ghost after the initial baptism with the Holy Spirit on the Day of Pentecost, as mentioned in Acts 2,4, a context in which it is clearly stated that “they were all filled with the Holy Spirit.” It is significant to note that, after having been freed by the authorities who questioned them and forbade them to speak in the name of Jesus, the apostles (including Peter) needed to be filled again with the Holy Ghost; as a result, the place shook after they finished praying, as stated in Acts 4,31: “the place was shaken where they were assembled together; and they were all filled with the holy Ghost and they spake the word of God with boldness.”
- In Acts 6,3-5 we are told regarding the elected deacons who “serve tables” that they were full of the Holy Spirit; we can understand that they were among all of those from Acts 4,31 who were filled with the Holy Ghost; hence, they have become “full of Spirit” after a further filling.
- In Acts 7,55 Stephen was full of the Holy Spirit when he was being martyred.
- In Acts 11,24 Barnabas is also full with the Holy Spirit, as the verse states: “For he was a good man, full of the Holy Spirit and of faith. And a great many people were added to the Lord.”
- Paul was full of the Holy Spirit when God freed Elymas the sorcerer through him (Acts 13,9).
- Paul and Barnabas “were filled with joy and Holy Spirit” right when they were rejected in Antioch of Pisidia (Acts 13,52).

It is easy to observe that in none of the cases mentioned above (Acts 4,8; 6,3; 7,55; 11,24; 13,9) there is no initial baptism with the Holy Spirit. Moreover,

Anthony Palma thinks that the term used in the Pauline writings (Eph 5,18) does not refer to the initial filling with the Holy Spirit.³¹

7. The Spirit of God came upon

The term “the Spirit of God came upon” occurs twice in the Old Testament, as indicated below:

- In the case of Gideon, whom “the Spirit of the Lord came upon” (Judg. 6,34).
- In the case of the prophet Zechariah: “And *the Spirit of God came upon* Zechariah the son of Jehoiada the priest, and said unto them, ‘Thus says God’” (2 Chron. 24,20).

In the Old Testament, the Holy Ghost is also portrayed as similar to a mantle in the case of the prophet Elijah, a mantle that was received by his minister, the prophet Elisha (2 Kings 2).

The fact that the Holy Spirit involves offering a power is not difficult to understand, and this fact is written in the Old Testament in Mic 3,8 “But truly I am full of power by the spirit of the Lord,”³² as well as in the New Testament. In the New Testament, the Greek term for *power* (associated with the Holy Ghost) is δύναμις, -εως, ἡ (*dýnamis*, and it translates “power”). The term appears in nine distinctive passages,³³ of which we only mention the Lukan ones:

- In the case of Virgin Mary: “The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Highest will overshadow you; therefore, also, that Holy One who is to be born will be called the Son of God” (Luke 1,35).
- When the Lord Jesus was tempted: “Jesus returned in the power of the Spirit to Galilee” (Luke 4,14).
- In reference to the baptism with the Holy Spirit, in the following instances:
 - “But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you” (Acts 1,8).
 - “Give me this power also, that anyone on whom I lay hands may receive the Holy Spirit” (Acts 9,19).

³¹ Anthony D. PALMA, *Duhul Sfânt: o perspectivă pentecostală/ The Holy Spirit: A Pentecostal Perspective*, p. 103.

³² Zech 4,6 states that the Holy Spirit assumes a power which is more than a normal power. (“Then he answered and spake unto me, saying, this is the word of the Lord unto Zerubbabel, saying, *Not by might, nor by power, but by my spirit, saith the Lord of ghost.*”).

³³ Of the nine occurrences of the term, four are in the Pauline epistles, as follows: the phrase “through the *power of the Holy Spirit*” is found in Rom 15,13-19; the phrase “in demonstration of the Spirit and of power” occurs in 1 Cor 2,4; and the phrases “to be strengthened” and “*with power, with the Holy Spirit*” are found in 1 Thess 1,5.

Therefore, through the expression “endued with power from on high” it is shown to us that the baptism with the Holy Spirit touches the exterior of the Christian, similar to a vesting with power. Through the baptism with the Holy Spirit, the Christian is endued with the power of God.

8. Receiving the Holy Ghost

The term to “receive the Holy Spirit” is found in the New Testament thirteen times, as follows: twice in the Johannine³⁴ writings, five times in the Pauline³⁵ Epistles, and seven times in Acts. In all of these instances occurring in Acts, the Greek verb λαμβάνω (*lambánō*) is used and is translated “to get, to get in hand, to catch.” These passages describe the manner in which the Holy Spirit was received, namely the promise that the Holy Ghost will be received in different contexts:

- The promise of the Lord Jesus that they will receive a power when the Holy Spirit will come upon them, found in Acts 1,8 (“But you shall *receive* power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you”);
- In Jerusalem, the promise mentioned in Acts 2,38 (“Repent,” said Peter to them, “Repent, and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit”);
- At Samaria, the promise found in Acts 8,15 (“they came to the Samaritans and prayed for them, to receive the Holy Spirit”), in Acts 8,17 (“Peter and John laid hands on them, and they received the Holy Spirit”), and in Acts 8,19 (“anyone on whom I lay hands may receive the Holy Spirit”);
- The promise for the Gentiles given in Cornelius’s house mentioned in Acts 10,47 (“Can anyone forbid water, that these should not be baptized who have received the Holy Spirit just as we have?”);
- At Ephesus, the promise written in Acts 19,2 (“He said to them, ‘Did you receive the Holy Spirit when you believed?’”);

Therefore, the term mentioned above presents us, human beings, as consignees of the baptism with the Holy Spirit. Moreover, to receive the gift of the Holy Spirit the believer must give his approval.

³⁴ In John 7,39 (“But this spake he of the Spirit, which they that believe on *him* should receive: for the Holy Ghost was not yet *given*; because that Jesus was not yet glorified”) and in John 14,17 (“Even the Spirit of truth; whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him: but ye know him; for he dwelleth with you, and shall be in you”).

³⁵ In 1 Cor 2,12 (“Now we have *received*, not the spirit of the world, but the spirit which is of God; that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God.”); in 1 Cor 6,19 (“What? Know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own?”); in Gal 3,2 (“This only would I learn of you, *Received* ye the Spirit by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith?”) and in Gal 3,14 (“that the blessing of Abraham might come on the Gentiles through Jesus Christ; that we might *receive the promise of the Spirit* through faith”).

Conclusion

After the analysis performed on the terminology used to describe the baptism with the Holy Spirit, we can conclude that the baptism with the Holy Spirit is as follows:

- 1) *The promise of the Father* (Luke 24,49). The one who initiated this work is God, not the human; therefore, He is directly interested in keeping His promise to all the believers who listen to Him.
- 2) *The gift of God* (Acts 2,38; 5,32). It is extremely important to note that the baptism with the Holy Spirit is not given in exchange for certain merits of the Christian, but it is a present and, thereby, it goes without saying that it is free, bestowed only by the Grace of God.
- 3) It is an experience well fixed in time and space, it has a supernatural character, it always takes place after the conversion and after the renewing, but is distinct from the conversion, respectively the new birth. The baptism with the Holy Ghost is always received after the conversion, but it never overlaps it, nor is it a consequence of it. The baptism with the Holy Spirit is a distinct experience from the water baptism; in some cases, it can take place before the water baptism, but it is never a natural consequence of it.
- 4) The baptism with the Holy Spirit emphasizes the filling with power for the work of confession of the Lord Jesus (by renewed character and by the spoken word), as mentioned in Acts 1,8. The aim of the baptism with the Holy Spirit is the empowerment of the believer for the progress of the service work intended by God to take place through that Christian. The baptism with the Holy Spirit represents the descending of the Holy Spirit over the believer, his filling with power, and his receiving specific abilities to serve others.

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