

THE BAPTISM OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

By Jerry Carmichael -

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Thank you to the committee for inviting me to speak on this subject today. I know that there are a lot of different views on this topic. The Personal Ministry of the Holy Spirit has been believed by some, debated by others, disbelieved by some, and debated by yet more others. The subject at hand has attracted much attention in Christendom. Some believe that the Holy Spirit died in the first century. Some believe that the various ministries of the Holy Spirit were only for the New Testament Christians. Others believe that everything the apostles did, we have the power and privilege to do today.

So, our question at hand is "What is the baptism of the Holy Spirit?" Which leads to more questions, like "When does it occur?" "Who receives it?" and "What is the importance of it?"

The phrase "Baptism of the Holy Spirit" is not found in the Bible. Since we are a part of the Restoration Movement, I thought about getting up and making that statement and saying "We speak where the Bible speaks, and we are silent where the Bible is Silent". And then sit down! But I thought the committee wanted more than that.

The Bible speaks of a baptism with the Holy Spirit, by the Holy Spirit, or in the Holy Spirit. It never refers to the "baptism of the Holy Spirit." When I took Greek at SCC we were taught about the difference in the prepositions used in Scripture. I remember hearing that there was a big difference if the spaghetti was in the child or whether it was on the child, or whether it was with the child, or whether it was on the child!

The phrase baptism with, in, or by the Spirit occurs seven times in the New Testament (Matthew 3:11, Mark 1:8; Luke 3:16; John 1:33; Acts 1:5-11:16; 1 Corinthians 12:13).

The next Question that arises then "Is this the same as water baptism"?

Let us examine each of these passages: reading from the New American Standard.

Matthew 3: 11 - "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."

A. It seems that there are three different aspects of baptism in this verse. (John McArthur)

1. "Baptized with water for repentance." Repentance is associated with baptism from the birthday of the church in Acts 2:38, "Repent and be baptized." Both are necessary in order to receive the Holy Spirit.

2. John's baptism symbolized cleansing with the Holy Spirit. This is in contrast to all the ceremonial cleansings that were commanded to the Jews, plus all their own ceremonial actions that they designed in addition to all the Levitical laws about cleansings.

3. All believers in Christ are commanded to be Spirit baptized with fire, because fire is used throughout this context as a means of judgment upon the unrepentant.

4. Mark 1:8 - John speaking, "I baptized you with water; but He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit."

B. Is this what happens when a person truly comes to Christ for salvation?

1. I don't think this is what takes place in infant baptism. Does it take place when someone comes to be baptized just to get the preacher off their back? Does it occur when a teenager gets baptized because everyone else at camp is doing it? I have seen situations where something tragic has happened and has caused people to get serious about their salvation, and they want to get baptized, even doing it at midnight because they don't want to wait until Sunday, and then in just a short time they quit coming to church, or get mad at someone in the church, and go back to living the way they were. All of these are serious questions.

2. 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.'"

3. When any of you were baptized was there a literal fire involved? The only time I know of when fire was involved in a salvation experience was when the apostles on the day of Pentecost had cloven tongues of fire on their heads in Acts 2:3!

4. John 1:33 - John speaking, "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.'"

Similar in text to the others. All four of these references are referring to the same statement that John the Baptist said about Jesus. Something miraculous was going to happen. Although Jesus never did baptize anyone, according to John 4:1-2 (His disciples did in His name or by His authority), the only account that we have of fire being involved was on the day of Pentecost when cloven tongues of fire sat upon the heads of the apostles.

Remember that Acts 1:26 and 2:1-4 is to be read in one continuous thought since there were no chapter and verse divisions. "They" and "them" refers to the twelve apostles, not to the 3000 who heard and were saved.

5. Acts 1:5 - Jesus speaking to the disciples, "for John baptized with water, but you shall be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days from now."

We know from the Scriptures that Jesus was here for 40 days after His resurrection. He appeared to over 515 people and spoke many things. There would be a ten day wait until the day of Pentecost came. So "not many days from now" is their waiting period for the Holy Spirit to descend with power to come upon, overwhelm, baptize them with the power that would be needed for the task that was before them of taking the gospel to the whole world!

By the way the birthday of the church took place on the first day of the week, since seven Sabbaths from the Passover were to be completed. Seven times Seven is 49, so the next day was Sunday! That became the day of worship for the early church, based on the resurrection and the day of Pentecost being on the first day of the week.

6. Acts 11:16 - Peter speaking, "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.'" Peter is recounting here what took place in Caesarea at the house of Cornelius. He explained to the apostles and brethren in Judea, who became Christians because of the Jewish Pentecost, that now the Gentiles had had their "Pentecost" and had heard the message of Christ, had believed it and now were baptized and had received the Holy Spirit. In Verse 17 Peter notes, "If God therefore gave to them the same gift as He gave to us also after believing in the Lord Jesus Christ, who was I that I could stand in God's way?" They had received the gift of the indwelling presence of the Holy Spirit just like had happened on Pentecost Sunday.

7. I Corinthians 12:13 - "For by one Spirit we were all baptized into one body, whether Jews or Greeks, whether slaves or free, and we were all made to drink of one Spirit."

Some very meaningful scholars declare here that water baptism is not being referred to, that it is only a spiritual baptism. It seems to me to be saying that baptism puts us into the body of Christ. Could it be that it takes both water baptism and Spirit baptism to put us into Christ? Many have gone through the form of water baptism and they go down a dry sinner and come up a wet sinner! Many others claimed that they have been baptized by the Spirit and that water baptism is not necessary to be saved. Many others say that they were baptized in water and never even heard anything about the Holy Spirit. There seems to be a lot of confusion in Christendom.

The word "baptize or baptism" occurs in many other passages, mostly without reference to the working of the Holy Spirit.

C. This leads us to investigate the question, 'What are the Ministries of the Holy Spirit?'

Without going into detail just think about these.

1. The Holy Spirit calls us to salvation.
2. He illuminates us, and convicts us of our sin.
3. He is our source of Power, liberty, unity, and fellowship.

4. He is the giver of all spiritual gifts.
5. He seals us, sanctifies us, regenerates us, teaches us, and guards us.
6. He indwells the believer.
7. He intercedes for us, and He helps us to produce fruit for God the Father and Jesus the Son.
8. He is the author of Scripture, the revealer of the Son, and the comforter who lives within us.

D. Who said that the Spirit died in the First Century?

None of these things can be true if that is the case. Speaking of the First Century, one of the most debated issues in Christian Theology is the question of what some people call the "extraordinary or miraculous gifts of the Holy Spirit. These usually are categorized in four major groups: (1) Apostleship, (2) Prophecy (3) Speaking and Interpreting Tongues and (4) Working of miracles.

1. Some believers hold firmly that these four gifts were limited to a period between Jesus' ascension and the death of the last apostle, Jesus' beloved disciple John (about 90 AD). People who hold this view are known as "cessationists",

2. Other Christians affirm the continuation of all of the gifts. They are called "continuationists."

3. Many others would fall in an in-between category of being "Open but cautious." They are just not sure.

4. Still other believers hold that some of the four gifts continue, while others have ceased. No matter which view we take, we must remember that according to Paul, the spiritual gifts are meant to promote the unity of the body. In Paul's letters, the unity of the body is necessary for the church's growth. The alternative is disunity and spiritual arrogance which only tears down the body of Christ. It is interesting that in the three chapters in I Corinthians (12-14) Paul through the inspiration of the Holy Spirit places Chapter 13 about LOVE!

E. What is the difference in the two views?

By definition: Cessation refers to the conviction that the extraordinary gifts that the Holy Spirit gives to the church ended with the closing of the Apostolic age. Continuation refers to the conviction that the Holy Spirit continues to grant extraordinary gifts to the church so it can continue in the world. In other words, everything the apostles did, all Christians should be able to do today. And if you don't do them you might not even be saved.

The main points of the Cessation view are:

1. The extraordinary gifts of the Holy Spirit were necessary to lay down the church's foundation- in other words, the teachings of the apostles, which is what we have recorded in the New Testament books.
2. Apostleship as a gift ended when the New Testament era apostles died. Since the church has already been founded, the presence of the apostles is no longer necessary, so therefore the gifts of the Spirit are not necessary.
3. Since the writings of the New Testament are finished, there is no need for new revelation. Thus the gift of prophecy is no longer necessary. The Bible is complete! Revelation is over!
4. Although God can and does do miracles, the gift of the working of miracles by individuals has ended along with the gifts of apostleship and prophecy.

The main points of the Continuation view are:

1. Although the foundation work, for example, writing the New Testament, of apostles and prophets has ended, they had other functions - for example, planting new churches or bringing the gospel to people who have never heard it. Don't we need the Holy Spirit for this task?
2. The extraordinary gifts of the Spirit aid the church in fulfilling its mission by providing encouragement, edification, and guidance. Certainly the church needs all of these things today.
3. Unlike Prophecy as an office in the Old Testament, prophecy in the church is a gift that any believer can have, though some have a special gift in that area. Prophecy today does not reveal God's will the way the Scriptures did. Prophecy today communicates God's word to his people for encouragement, edification and guidance. It is important that we consider the terms "Foreteller" to predict something and "Forth teller" who speaks forth the message of God.

4. In the Continuation view prophecy and all other gifts are dependent and subordinated to the authority of the Scriptures.

F. This brings up many other questions:

1. If the Holy Spirit "died" in the first Century, do we get the Holy Spirit today? YES WE DO! We receive the Holy Spirit when we go through the steps of conversion as given in the Scriptures. Putting all things together this includes (a) hearing, believing, repenting, confessing our sins and confessing Jesus as the Son of God, being baptized and then we receive the Holy Spirit. That is the norm for the church age. Then the Holy Spirit lives within us and helps us, teaches us, and all the other things that are important in the ministry of the Holy Spirit.

2. If the Continuationist viewpoint is true, why do we need new revelations? Is the revealed New Testament not enough to tell us how to live for Jesus? Is the Bible not sufficient? If we need new revelations in addition to the Holy Scriptures, then who is to say that those new revelations are truly from God?

3. If the Cessation view is correct, then are there no miracles done at all today? I know many people who would argue against that point. Me being one of them! (My testimony). If the Cessation view is correct, in that case we should quit our prayer lists in the churches where we list all those who are sick and those who have cancer, and those who are in the Nursing home and spend time asking God to heal them and raise them up!

4. **One of the greatest problems I have observed is that some teach that if you have not had the baptism of the Holy Spirit and have not spoken in tongues or raised the dead or whatever, then you are not even a Christian!** Some 'believe that you can even handle rattlesnakes in worship. You probably have heard Wendy Bagwell's story "Here Come the Rattlesnakes!"

5. This seems to me to negate all the spiritual truths that are given in the Bible as to pride, judgmental attitudes of others, and even self-righteousness. And that occurs in all spiritual groups in one form or the other.

It is easy for us to get Pharisaical in our Christianity.

Baptism means "identity" in its most basic form. Practically, the word means to change the identity of something by submerging it into something else long enough for the process to be complete. For instance, a cucumber dipped in vinegar long enough changes its identity into a pickle, and it can never go back.

Dipping molten metal into cool water changes the tenor of the metal in such a way that it can never be manipulated quite the same way again, even if re-melted.

When a person accepts Christ as Savior, the person becomes submerged into Christ, and is re-identified as part of Christ's body. This is strictly a spiritual process and happens as soon as a person trusts Christ as Savior and is obedient to the commands of salvation. The physical baptism is just a ceremonial representation of a spiritual operation. The physical baptism is a symbol and a testimony. Water baptism along with spiritual baptism is what saves us. **You cannot separate the two, can you?**

Look at 1 Pet. 3:21: Peter declares that baptism does save us! But it is not just taking a bath! It is an appeal to God for a good conscience that has been cleansed through the indwelling presence of the Holy Spirit. All of this happens within a short period of time as God's commands concerning salvation are carried out.

Baptism of the Holy Spirit was only recorded twice in the New Testament. (Acts 2 and Acts 10 & 11) Both of these times, it was as a sign. First to the Jews, second to the Gentiles.

Baptism in water as obedience to the commands of Christ (Mark 16:16, Matthew 28:18-20, read Luke 24:47 along with Acts 2: verses 5 and 38) continued to be taught, commanded and practiced. (Acts 10:47-48, Acts 22:16, Acts 19:5, Romans 6:3-13, 1 Peter 3:20-21, Galatians 3:27, Colossians 2:12) There are nine accounts in the Book of Acts where baptism is mentioned in the steps of salvation.

G. We conclude the following concerning the baptism of the Holy Spirit:

1. Though this particular ministry is popularly referred to as the baptism of the Holy Spirit, the Bible nowhere calls it such. The ministry is more properly spoken of as the baptism with, in, or by the Holy Spirit.

2. The baptism with the Holy Spirit first occurred at the Day of Pentecost and was repeated in the house of Cornelius in Caesarea.

3. It seems to be the ministry of the Holy Spirit that places the believer into the body of Christ at the moment of salvation.

4. If this is the case, then all true, obedient, believers have been baptized with the Holy Spirit.

5. The baptism with the Holy Spirit opens the door to the filling of the Holy Spirit which is directly experienced by the believer and is often repeated. This is where we have a major problem today. We need to be filled with the Spirit as the Scripture commands. What would happen in our churches today if all Christians were filled with the Spirit? There would not be the divisions among us that exist!

6. There can be many fillings of the Holy Spirit when we need that extra power to speak the Word of God in church, or in class, or even in the Kentuckiana Fellowship.

7. We can be filled with the Holy Spirit when we go to the hospital and be with a family who has just heard the doctor say, "There's not anything we can do!"

8. We can be filled when we preach that Christian's funeral who has served the Lord for 40, 50, or 60 years.

9. We can be filled with the Holy Spirit as we witness to someone who is going through a great trial. I think sometimes we neglect asking the Holy Spirit to be with us when we are ministering in the name of Jesus! Paul commanded us to "Walk in the Spirit! (Gal. 5:16). We are to be "Filled with the Spirit" (Ephesians 5:18). We are to "filled with the knowledge of His will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding. (Colossians 1:9). Read Romans 8 about the ministry of the Holy Spirit. In Romans 8 God is mentioned 19 times, Jesus Christ is mentioned 8 times, the Holy Spirit is mentioned 17 times, and the pronouns He or Him are mentioned 28 times. How important is the Trinity in this chapter? We are not to grieve the Holy Spirit, but yet sometimes we do by denying the work of the entire Trinity.

I John 5: 6-8. This is the One who came by water and blood, Jesus Christ; not with the water only, but with the water and with the blood. It is the Spirit who testifies, because the Spirit is the truth. For there are three that testify: the Spirit and the water and the blood; and the three are in agreement.

Let us strive to live Spirit controlled lives!

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