

The Baptism & Filling With The Spirit

Phrases such as *'the Baptism with the Spirit'* or *'the filling with the Spirit'* today have entirely different meanings to various groups of Christians. Yet, until the turn of the Twentieth Century this problem hardly existed amongst Christians and Bible teachers. What does the Bible and orthodox historic Christianity teach concerning these phrases?:

There are many 'baptisms' in the Bible: *water baptism*, *'baptism of repentance'* or *'of John'* (Mk.1:4; Matt.21:25); *'baptism with the Spirit'*; *'Baptism into death'*, (Rom.6:4); etc. However, the Bible teaches there is only *one* baptism that places one into the body of Christ: *'...one Lord, one faith, one baptism...'* (Eph.4:5). *'For by one Spirit are we baptised into one body, all made to drink into one spirit'*, (1Cor.12:13). The word *'by'* here is the Greek word *'en'* and is perhaps better translated *'in'* or *'with'* since in all other cases with baptism this is so. The word *'into'* (*'eis'*) - carries the meaning: *'with the intention, purpose, aim; in order to* - ie. to be made members of the body of Christ.

For 1900 years orthodox Christianity taught 1Corinthians 12:13 as synonymous with the 'Baptism with the Spirit' - meaning to place into the body of Christ *at conversion*. At the turn of the Twentieth Century the new Pentecostal movement found difficulty with this Scripture because of their new teaching of 'the Baptism with the Spirit' as being a *subsequent* experience to salvation.

The *'Baptism with the Spirit'* is mentioned directly in only six places, (Matt.3:11; Mk.1:8; Lk.3:16; Jn.1:33; Acts 1:5; 11:16). All these Scriptures are repetitions of, and referring to, the one event in Acts 2 when the Holy Spirit came to earth for the first time to permanently *indwell believers*, beginning with the Jews in Jerusalem: *'I [John the Baptist] 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). Acts 1:5 has the same message but adds *'not many days hence'* - again looking to the soon coming Acts 2.

There are two important aspects that will help the reader understand this *'Baptism with the Spirit'*. The first is the phrase *'the promise'* which is mentioned in several Scriptures and is the 'coming' of the Holy Spirit to *indwell* believers: *'...I send the promise of my Father upon you: but tarry ye in the city of Jerusalem...'*, (Lk.24:49); *'...wait for the promise of the Father...'*, (Acts 1:4). This *'promise'* of the Holy Spirit coming to earth to *indwell* believers for the first time then happened *transitionally* - first to the Jews, (Acts 2); then the Samaritans (Acts 8); then the Gentiles (Acts 10); and finally to disciples of John the Baptist, (Acts 19). Thereafter *'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'*, (Acts 2:39). This *'promise'* of the 'Baptism with the Spirit' is historically documented in the book of Acts as the receiving of the Holy Spirit *at conversion* - to *'as many as the Lord our God shall call'* and *'through faith...to them that believe'*, (Gal.3:14,22).

The second aspect to understanding *'the Baptism with the Spirit'* is mentioned in Jn.16:7: *'Nevertheless I tell you the truth; 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'*, (Jn.16:7). The Holy Spirit could not come to indwell any believer before Acts 2 because Jesus had not yet ascended. Any operation of the Holy Spirit before Acts 2 was a sovereign empowering for God's specific purposes but not an indwelling. *In the Old Testament the Holy Spirit came 'upon' people and was with them but never indwelt believers.*

The book of Acts shows the *transitional* history of the Holy Spirit coming to every group of believers on earth, (see diagram at end). *These were not second experiences, for the Holy Spirit came upon and indwelt these people for the first time!* - the Jews in Acts 2; the Samaritans in Acts 8; the Gentiles in Acts 10; and disciples of John the Baptist in Acts 19.

In **Acts 2** the Holy Spirit came upon the disciples, *indwelt* and filled them *for the first time*. This was accompanied by the miracle of speaking real languages they did not know, yet were *known* earthly dialects to the hearers. In verse 4 the word 'tongues' (*'glossa'*) means known languages. In verse 6 the word translated *'language'* is the Greek word *'dialektos'* - from where we derive the word *'dialects'*. The same Greek word *'dialektos'* is translated *'tongue'* in verse 8. In verses 9-11 these known dialects are listed as groups of languages.

After receiving the indwelling Holy Spirit, Peter preached to the crowd of mostly Jews that they could also receive *'the promise'* of the *'gift of the Holy Ghost'* if they were to *'repent...for the remission of sins...'* This was not a second experience but speaking of salvation.

In Acts 8 *'Philip...preached Christ unto them'* and the Samaritans received the Holy Spirit for the first time *in conversion*. Pentecostals attempt to link 'tongues' with this passage but no tongues are mentioned.

In Acts 10 the Holy Spirit next came to the Gentiles. Again, *the Gospel is preached* (vs.34-44) and they receive the Holy Spirit *for the first time*. This was the *same* experience as at Acts 2 as proved in verse 45 and 47: *'on the Gentiles also was poured out the gift of the Holy Ghost...which have received the Holy Ghost as well as we* [the Jews in Acts 2]. (See also Ch.11 and 15: *'the Holy Ghost fell on them* [the Gentiles] *as on us* [the Jews] *at the beginning.*') With verses 45 and 47 in mind, the 'tongues' (the same *'glossa'*) mentioned in Acts 10, were again *known* languages as at Acts 2.

In Acts 19 we read of the last occasion in the transition of the coming of the Holy Spirit to all people groups. Here a special group of followers of John the Baptist were *indwelt* with the Holy Spirit *for the first time*. They spoke with known earthly languages as at Acts 2 and 10, and prophesied, (vs.6).

Acts 19 is misused by some who would seek after a subsequent reception of the Holy Spirit in the believers life.*

Paul meets disciples of John the Baptist and asks the question: *'Have ye received the Holy Ghost since [when] ye believed?'* Some mistakenly see the word *'since'* as showing the necessity of a subsequent work of the Spirit after salvation. However, the tense of *'Have you received'* refers to *a set time in the past*. Thus the word *'when'* is arguably more accurate than *'since'*. Paul was asking whether these disciples of John had received the Holy Spirit at the exact *same time* (indicative mood) in the *past* (aorist tense) when they believed. A literal translation from the Greek is: *'did you receive the Holy Ghost having believed?'* The answer given must have startled Paul: *'they said unto him, We have not so much as heard whether there be any Holy Ghost'*. These people were not disciples of Jesus but of John the Baptist and believed in His *'baptism of repentance'*. *They had never received the Holy Spirit!* Paul urged them to believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, (vs.4). He did not say *'have you received the baptism with the Spirit?'* but rather *'have you received the Holy Spirit when you believed?'*

In all four cases of the 'Baptism with the Spirit' in Acts *the recipients were receiving the Holy Spirit for the first time* and were being saved according to the New Testament salvation *'promise'* of the coming of the Holy Spirit to earth. The Old Testament Saints were not *indwelt* with the Holy Spirit. Even the disciples before Acts 2 were still as Old Testament believers until the overlap between the Old and New covenants was complete with the coming of the indwelling Spirit in the book of Acts. Today, no one can enter the kingdom of Heaven without the indwelling Holy Spirit: *'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).

Misinterpretations of the 'Baptism with the Spirit' were introduced at the turn of the Twentieth Century when some small groups tried to seek a *repetition* of Acts 2.** Pentecostal Statements of Faith read that this so called subsequent experience is for those 'who ask for it'. Yet nowhere in Scripture did anyone seek such a subsequent experience! The 'Baptism with the Spirit' as a *subsequent* reception of the Holy Spirit is unorthodox and cannot be found in *any* writings of the early church fathers. It fails to take into account the historical progression from the Old Testament workings of the Holy Spirit to a new transition of events in the book of Acts, where the Holy Spirit came to indwell various groups of believers from Jerusalem to the *'uttermost parts'*.

To add error to error some groups also introduced further additions such as seeking a *'baptism of fire'*. This is taken from Matthew 3:11: *'...He shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost, and with fire.'* The tragedy of this should shock those who seek such a baptism, for the verses following speak of *judgement* and burning with *'unquenchable fire'*! If one searches out the word *'fire'* in Scripture we find it refers to *judgement* - as in the literal fires of Hell; punishment; or of trials and judgements to purify the believers life and works.

Still others say the *'sealing'* in Ephesians 1:3,13; 4:30 is a subsequent work of the Holy Spirit. The word *'sealed'* means a *'closing up; to make fast; to secure; authenticate'*. In this there is no limit or time. The Scriptures in Ephesians in context show that the *'sealing'* of the Holy Spirit takes place *at conversion: 'In whom ye also trusted, after [when] that ye heard the word of truth, the Gospel of your salvation: in whom also after [when] that ye believed, ye were sealed with that Holy Spirit of promise...And grieve not the Holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption'*, (Eph.1:13;4:30). The word *'after'* is best translated *'when'* as the Greek clearly refers to a past (aorist) event *at conversion*.

The *'Baptism with the Spirit'* is also often confused with the *'filling'* by the Spirit. The *'Baptism with the Holy Spirit'* occurs once at salvation but the *'filling'* by the Holy Spirit *continues* moment by moment from salvation, (see diagram). It is a continuous experience as we yield to the control of the Holy Spirit *within: 'And be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess; but be filled with the Spirit'*, (Eph.5:18). The tense here shows not a second experience but a *continuous* and repeatable action. It is the same tense used in 1Thessalonians 5:17: *'Pray without ceasing.'* The Greek word for *'filled'* is *'Pleroo'* and shows a meaning *to control*, (eg. Acts 5:3: *'Satan has filled ('pleroo') your heart'*; Jn.16:6: *'sorrow has filled your heart'*; see also Rom.1:29; Phil.1:11; Lk.2:40; Acts 2:28).

Confusion in understanding the Spirit *baptism* from the *filling* occurs when some attempt to teach that Paul was *'saved'* on the Damascus road and then later received a *'Baptism with the Spirit'* (Acts 9). However, Paul was not later *'baptised in the Spirit'* but rather *'filled'*! (vs.17) The Corinthian Christians were baptised in the Spirit. Yet at the time Paul was writing to these believers they were not *'filled'* but were in fact behaving carnally like unsaved people. They were not controlled by the Holy Spirit as in Ephesians 5:18.

Any emphasis on the *'Baptism with the Spirit'* should be - *how do we receive the Holy Spirit?* The answer is found in *the Gospel* and not in any subsequent experience. An added tragedy is the addition of unknown tongues as a sign of this *'Baptism with the Spirit'* which has caused enormous confusion and heresies concerning the *'necessity'* of this *'sign'* as evidence of salvation or a higher spirituality. Such teaching separates Christians into classes - those that have and those that have not.

In summary, there is only *one* baptism that puts us into the Body of Christ. The *'promise'* of the Holy Spirit was the *indwelling* Spirit in Acts 2, 8,10 and 19 to the various groups of people on earth after Jesus ascended to Heaven. All these were receiving the Holy Spirit *for the first time* and being saved in the same way we today are saved - they heard and believed the Gospel. In Acts 2 they *'repented'*. In Acts 8 they *'believed'*. In Acts 19 they *'received'*. Thereafter all believers *'afar off'* are similarly *indwelt* with the Holy Spirit *at conversion* and *filled continuously* as they experience His work *from within*.

When we receive the Holy Spirit at salvation *we have all of Him!* We were *'blessed with all spiritual blessings'*, (Eph.1:3). May we not seek after *'something more'* and grieve the Spirit who is already within us, for we are *'the temple of the Holy Spirit'*! (1Cor.6:19) As believers saved by Grace *plus nothing*, it is not a matter of seeking more of the Holy Spirit but rather Him having more of us!

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* Prominent Pentecostal author David Wilkerson in an audio tape *'Baptism With The Spirit'* misquotes and takes out of context Scriptures from Acts 19. In an attempt to teach that the *'Baptism with the Spirit'* is a subsequent experience to salvation he says these men in Acts 19 were *'disciples of Jesus'*. However, the text shows clearly these people had not believed in Jesus Christ but were disciples of John the Baptist and believed in the repentance that John preached. These disciples had never received the Holy Spirit and were thus baptised again. Yet Wilkerson later contradicts himself and acknowledges that one *'cannot be saved without receiving the Holy Spirit.'*

** You can read these articles on our website *'Pentecostal/Tongues Roots - The Amazing Facts'*; and *'The Other Side of Azusa St.'* by this ministry. At http://taministries.net/?page_id=131

Baptism With The Spirit

- Many Baptisms ('repentance', 'water', etc), but only *one* Baptism into the body of Christ, (Eph.4:5; 1Cor.12:13).

- Jn.16:7 - The Holy Spirit (*'the promise'*) could not come until Jesus ascended.

'Baptism with the Spirit' (the *'promise'* of the Holy Spirit)

Matt.3:11

Mk.1:8

Lk.3:16

Acts 1:5

—————▶ all referring to —————▶ Acts 2



Acts 2 - Jews receive Holy Spirit



Acts 8 - Samaritans receive Holy Spirit



Acts 10 - Gentiles receive Holy Spirit



Acts 19 - Disciples of John receive Holy Spirit



The Filling by the Spirit

Eph.5:18 (*continuous filling/control from within...*)