

The ‘Baptism with the Spirit’ and 1Corinthians 12:13

Pentecostal writers often select 1Corinthians 12:13 to show that the ‘baptism’ mentioned in this scripture is different to the ‘Baptism with the Spirit’ mentioned in the Gospels (Mk.1:8; Lk.3:16; Jn.1:33) and in Acts (1:5). The argument is that in 1Corinthians 12:13 the *Holy Spirit does the baptising* into the body of Christ *at salvation* and that this is different to a *subsequent* experience, ‘the baptism with the Spirit’, as occurred in Acts 2, where *Jesus does the baptising*.

The relevant scriptures are:

Matt.3:11 ***‘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’.*** (Also mentioned in Mk.1:8; Lk.3:16; Jn.1:33; Acts 1:5)

1Cor.12:13 ***‘For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free; and have been all made to drink into one Spirit’.***

The Pentecostal argument is that because 1Corinthians has ‘by one Spirit’, therefore this baptism is by the Holy Spirit, in contrast to the other references to the ‘Baptism with the Spirit’ (eg. Matt.3:11) which have ‘with the Holy Ghost’ and the baptizer being Jesus.

There are a number of considerations here:

I. The Greek word for ‘with’ or ‘by’ in all the scriptures above, including 1Corinthians 12:13, is the *same* Greek ‘*en*’ which can be translated as different words including ‘in’, ‘by’ or ‘with’.

Other related considerations are:

II. The ‘Baptism with the Spirit’ in Acts 2 is said to be the ‘*promise*’ of the Holy Spirit. A study of this ‘promise’ teaches clearly that this is the Holy Spirit and that it is with salvation (Acts 2 & 10), ‘*by faith*’ and ‘*to them that believe*’ (Gal.3:14,22). This promise is to *all* who are ‘*called*’ to salvation, (Acts 2:39).

III. There is much confusion between the two terms ‘Baptism with the Spirit’ and the ‘filling’ by the Spirit.

IV. History: The Pentecostal distinction between 1Corinthians 12:13 and the scriptures mentioning the ‘Baptism with the spirit’ is a relatively new one introduced in the 20th Century.

I. The Greek word for ‘with’ or ‘by’ whether to do with the ‘Baptism with the Spirit’ or in 1Corinthians 13:12, is the same Greek ‘*en*’. Although it is literally translated as ‘in’, it can be translated other words including ‘by’ or ‘with’.

Many of the literal translations translate the Greek word ‘*en*’ as ‘*in*’. (For example: 1534 William Tyndale; Tyndale (Rogers, Coverdale); Wycliffe NT 1385; Youngs Literal Translation 1898; American Standard Version (1901); English Standard Version, etc.).

In 1Corinthians 12:13 the construction in the original Greek is the preposition ‘*en*’ used with the dative case (‘*en*’ + dative). Although literally this is ‘in one Spirit’, grammatically it could be described as ‘*with (by means of) one spirit*’. The same ‘*en*’ is used in *all* other places to do with the ‘Baptism with (in) the Spirit’. In *every case* the baptizer is Jesus.

It is simply a fallacy that 1Corinthians 12:13 has the Holy Spirit as the baptiser and that therefore it is different to the Baptism with the Spirit' elsewhere.

Translators have the option of translating 'en' as 'in', 'with' or 'by'. Some would prefer to translate in a literal sense and have 'in'. Translations of 1Corinthians 12:13 that use 'by' (e.g. KJV) instead of 'in' are simply showing 'by means of' or 'by the instrumentality of'. It does not mean personal agency, that is, that the Holy Spirit did the Baptising. If this is what Paul meant he would have probably used the preposition 'hupo'. (1) Greek expert, A. T. Robertson, in his monumental Grammar of the Greek New Testament cites many examples of 'en' with the dative being used in an *instrumental sense* but gives no examples of it being used for personal agency. *In 1Corinthians 12:13 the Spirit was the 'instrument' that Christ used to baptize believers into the body but the Spirit was not the personal Agent.* That is, He was not the Baptizer except in the sense that He was the 'agent' or 'instrument' that Christ used to do this work.

Thus the argument that 1Corinthians 12:13 is different to the 'Baptism with the spirit' because the word 'by' (KJV) shows the Holy Spirit doing the baptising - this argument is flawed. The Holy Spirit is not the baptiser but the 'instrument' or the 'means'. Far too much is made of the use of the translation 'by' to somehow show a difference to the 'baptism with the spirit'. The Greek construction simply does not show a difference between 1Corinthians 12:13 and the 'Baptism with the Spirit' (Matt.3:11; Mk.1:8; Lk.3:16; Jn.1:33; Acts 1:5) being two separate baptisms.

The Amplified Bible sums the case up well by showing an expanded view of 1Corinthians 12:13: *'For by [means of the personal agency of] one [Holy] Spirit we were all, whether Jews or Greeks, slaves or free, baptized [and by baptism united together] into one body, and all made to drink of one [Holy] Spirit'*.

Although the Greek construction in 1Corinthians 12:13 does not show clearly who the baptiser is as in other scriptures with the 'Baptism with the Spirit', it does show the Holy Spirit as the instrument and means as in other scriptures with the Baptism with the Spirit.

In Mark 1:8 '**...He [Christ] shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost**' - here it is obvious that Christ is the agent since Christ is the subject and the Holy Spirit is the 'means' (or 'sphere') that the Lord uses to baptize. Similarly, with other scriptures that deal with the 'Baptism with the Spirit'. For example, Matthew 3:11 could be paraphrased grammatically: *'John baptized with water but Jesus [the agent] will baptize with the Holy Spirit [the instrument/means]'*.

Although the 'agent' is unnamed in 1Corinthians 12:13 it is assumed by many Greek commentators that Christ is the unnamed agent as He is the agent in all the other scriptures to do with the 'Baptism with the Spirit'.

In summary: To create two separate baptisms here and therefore a subsequent receiving of the Holy Spirit as a 'baptism with the Spirit' apart from 1Corinthians 12:13 is to falsely assume 'by' (in 1Corinthians 12:13) is somehow different to 'with' (in Matt.3:11, etc.); and to falsely assume the 'baptisers' are different in the two scriptures. We must also bear in mind that the Bible is clear that there is **'one baptism'** essential to salvation, (Eph.4:5). In 1Corinthians 12:13, as in the other scriptures with the 'Baptism with the Spirit', *the Holy Spirit is the instrument.* Believers are placed into the body of Christ, which work first began at Pentecost with the Baptism with the Spirit.

II. Further consideration must be given to a vital key that links the 'Baptism with the Spirit' to salvation and therefore 1Corinthians 12:13. The 'Baptism with the Spirit' in Acts 2 is said to be the '**promise**' of the Holy Spirit. The 'promise' was the coming of the Holy Spirit to indwell believers first beginning at Acts 2: **'...I send the promise of my Father upon you: but tarry you in the city of Jerusalem...'** (Lk.24:49); **'...wait for the promise of the Father, which, says he, you have heard of me. 5 For John truly baptized with water; but you shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost not many days hence'**, (Acts 1:4,5).

This 'promise' then came *transitionally* - first to Jews (Acts 2), then the Samaritans (Acts 8), then the Gentiles (Acts 10) and finally to the disciples of John the Baptist (Acts 19). This 'Baptism with the Spirit' was not like any previous reception of the Holy Spirit. *It was an indwelling*. The Holy Spirit could not come in this way until Jesus had ascended: **'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). Any operation of the Holy Spirit before Acts 2 was not a *permanent* indwelling. The Gospel of John is absolute on this point: **'And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you forever; Even the Spirit of truth; whom the world cannot receive, because it sees him not, neither knows him: but you know him; for he dwells WITH you [present], and shall be IN you [future]'**, (Jn.14:16,17). The words '**abide**' and '**forever**' express the *permanency* of the indwelling. The word '**with**' is '*para*', literally 'near; beside'. The present tense here shows this would be the sphere of the Holy Spirit until Acts 2. The word '**in**' is clearly contrasted against '**with**'. This word '**in**' is in the *future* tense - looking forward to Acts 2. Thus the *present* '**with**' and the *future* '**in**' show clearly *different operations* of the Holy Spirit *before* and *after* Acts 2.

There are many who say the disciples were 'saved' before Acts 2 and then 'baptised with the spirit' in Acts 2 as a *subsequent* event and that the same is possible for every believer today. But this negates the obvious *historic* nature of the new operation of the Holy Spirit to indwell various groups of *unsaved* people at the hands of the apostles who bestowed the Holy Spirit. There is no question about salvation before Acts 2, but the necessary ascension of Jesus then enabled the Spirit of Christ to come and only then permanently indwell believers from that time onwards. There is an obvious historical and *transitional* aspect of the coming of the Holy Spirit, first to the Jews (Acts 2), then the Samaritans (Acts 8), then the Gentiles (Acts 10) and finally the disciples of John (Acts 19).

It must also be realised that in every event where the 'Baptism with the Spirit' was bestowed, *it was to unbelievers and the Gospel was preached!* In Acts 2 Peter preached that the Jews should '**call on his name**' (vs.21); that Jesus was the Messiah '**approved of God**' by His miracles (vs.22); that He was risen from the dead (vs.24,31); and that Jesus is '**both Lord and Christ**' (vs.36). The Jews were convicted and asked what they must do next (vs.37). Peter answered that they were to '**repent...for the remission of sins**' and receive '**the promise**' of the '**gift of the Holy Ghost**', (vs.38,39).

Similarly, in Acts 8 - Philip to the Samaritans '**preached Christ unto them**' and they received the Holy Spirit for first time in conversion.

Again, in Acts 10 Peter preached a very full salvation Gospel message of Gods character (vs.34); the fear of God (vs.35); Jesus is Lord (vs.36); the word of God (vs.37); the Messiahship of Jesus by proof of his miracles (vs.38); and belief and faith in His name and remission of sins (vs.43).

Finally in Acts 19 Paul preaches to a select group of people who only knew of John's Baptism and had never heard of the Holy Spirit. Paul constrained them to '**believe on him which should come after him, that is, on Christ Jesus**', (vs.4).

All the cases of the 'Baptism with the Spirit' above involved salvation and the Gospel of Christ being preached.

But the scriptures go further and extends this same 'promise' of the Baptism with the Spirit to *all* those who are '*called*' by God in salvation!: '**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**', (Acts 2:39). This Holy Spirit Baptism 'promise' is to all those who God calls. No one can be saved unless God 'calls' them, (Rom.8:28-30; Mk.2:17).

If the 'promise' of the father, called the 'Baptism with the Spirit' in scripture, was given to unsaved people, then why are there some who today teach that this is a *subsequent* or *post conversion* experience? Further, why is it any different to 1Corinthians 12:13 which teaches clearly a baptism which puts people into the body of Christ *at conversion*?

Some may at this point ask the question: 'But what about the various actions of the Holy Spirit before and after Acts 2...what about the fillings'. This will be answered below in point No. III.

III. There is much confusion between the two terms 'Baptism with the Spirit' and the 'filling' by the Spirit.

As previously stated: any operation of the Holy Spirit before Acts 2 was not a *permanent* indwelling. It was not the Baptism with the Spirit because Jesus had to ascend first and the 'promise' was not given till Acts 2. Anything before Acts 2 is not a *permanent* indwelling, (Jn.14:17).

But what about the various fillings and operations of the Holy Spirit before and after Acts 2? The confusion between the 'baptism with the Spirit' and the 'filling' by the spirit often occurs because of the misunderstanding of the word 'fill'. The Greek word is '*pleroo*' and it essentially refers to a *control* by the Spirit. It is not a literal pouring in or a literal filling as of a cup being filled. The word '*pleroo*' refers to a *control* by the Holy Spirit. This is clear if one does a simple word study of the word '*pleroo*' in the New Testament. Here are some examples of '*pleroo*' that show the idea of control: '*filled with wisdom...*' (Lk.2:40); '*sorrow has filled your heart...*', (Jn.16:6); '*Satan filled your heart...*' (Acts 5:3); '*the disciples were filled with joy, and with the Holy Ghost*' (Acts 13:52); '*filled with all unrighteousness...*' (Rom.1:29); 'filled with all knowledge...' (Rom.15:14); (see also 2Cor.7:4; Phil.1:11; Col.1:9; 2Tim.1:4).

Even before Acts 2 and any Baptism with the Spirit, John the Baptist was '*filled with the Holy Ghost*' (Lk.1:15); and '*...Elisabeth...was filled with the Holy Ghost*' (Lk.1:41).

In the Old Testament people were empowered and had the Holy Spirit come 'upon' them. But it was not permanent. Sampson had the Holy Spirit leave him (Judges 16:20); Saul also had the Holy Spirit leave him (1Sam16:14). David prayed that God would not take the Holy Spirit from him, (Ps.51:11).

The Holy Spirit was empowering and filling people before the Baptism with the Spirit. But this was never a permanent indwelling. Jesus said the Holy Spirit was '*with*' the disciples before Acts 2 but would be '*in*' them at Acts 2, (Jn.14:16,17).

But what about John 20:22,23 when the disciples 'received' the Holy Spirit? '*And when he had said this, he breathed on them, and said unto them, Receive you the Holy Ghost: 23 Whosoever sins you remit, they are remitted unto them; and whosoever sins you retain, they are retained*'. This passage matches and is referenced in many Bibles with the *commissioning* of the disciples by Jesus, (Matt.28, Mk.16, Lk.24). It was obviously an empowerment of the Holy Spirit by Jesus but it was *not* the Baptism with the Spirit which could only come after Jesus had ascended into Heaven. Why would the Holy Spirit come upon and fill the disciples at Acts 2 if they had already the indwelling Spirit in John 20:22? Whatever occurred in John 20:22 was not a permanent indwelling - that was to be future and from Acts 2 onwards. John 20:22 was obviously an empowerment and a commissioning as the following verse 23 demonstrates. Many commentators believe that John 20:22 was prophetic of what would happen at Acts 2 considering that the verses before and after had a future fulfilment.

Some Pentecostals quote the eminent teacher, Martyn Lloyd Jones, in an attempt to bolster the teaching that the Baptism with the Spirit is a *subsequent* experience. Lloyd Jones was an exception amongst evangelical scholars who contested that the Baptism with the Spirit was separate to 1Corinthians 12:13. Although he was a gifted teacher in many areas, he was not a Greek scholar and sadly attempted to use arguments from the Greek language that were in error. He died before he could be corrected.

Lloyd Jones taught that the '*by*' in 1Corinthians 12:13 showed a different operation of the Spirit. But as we have seen the word '*by*' (KJV) is the same Greek word as the '*with*' used in the scriptures for the Baptism with the Spirit.

Lloyd Jones also confused the Baptism with the Spirit and the filling with the Spirit and failed to distinguish between the obvious differences in scripture. Lloyd taught: ‘...*you can believe without receiving the Holy Spirit...*’. In referring to the Baptism with the Spirit he said ‘*If you grieve the Holy Spirit you will lose it...but thank God you can receive it again...it may be repeated many times...they were filled on the day of Pentecost, but they were filled again...this can happen many, many times*’. He quotes many great names who received Holy Spirit empowerings which Lloyd Jones equates as the Baptism with the Spirit, but in each case they were not talking about a ‘Baptism with the spirit’. He also says the ‘baptism with fire’ is for believers, yet the verses following Matthew 3:11 plainly show the context is judgement and not for believers.

Lloyd Jones also taught that John 20:22 (where the disciples ‘received’ the Holy Spirit) could not have had a future element. He said: ‘*If you consult the learned authorities on the whole question of Greek Grammar and the meaning of the words, you will find that they are unanimous in saying that in the Greek the word ‘receive’ in verse 22, is the aorist imperative. And the authorities are also unanimous in saying that the Greek imperative never has a future meaning. This is a purely technical point, but a very important one...I defy you to find a single exception - the authorities are all agreed in saying that the Greek aorist imperative never has a future meaning - and I would emphasise the word ‘never’...*’ (2)

However, Martyn Lloyd Jones misunderstood the authorities he was quoting. There are in fact numerous New Testament example of aorist imperative which refer to future events! The aorist tense does not refer to time but is like a ‘snap shot’ of an action that has or will take place. It looks at the action as a whole whether it is past, present or future. Examples of aorist imperative referring to future events are numerous but two examples will suffice: ‘***But you, when you pray, enter into your closet, and when you have shut your door, pray to your Father which is in secret; and your Father who sees in secret shall reward you openly***’, (Matt.6:6). Both the ‘*enter*’ and ‘*pray*’ are aorist imperative that refer to future events.

Grammatically, the events in John 20:22 could have been fulfilled there and then, or later.

‘The filling by the spirit’ must not be equated with the ‘Baptism with the Spirit’. This is best shown by Ephesians 5:18: ‘***And be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess; but be filled with the Spirit***’. Whereas the Baptism with the Spirit was a once event as is 1Corinthians 12:13, the filling with the spirit as described in Ephesians is a continuous action. The word ‘*filled*’ is the Greek word ‘*pleroo*’. The tense here shows it is a *command* and a *present and continuous repeatable* action.

Christians can be Baptised with the Spirit yet not ‘filled’ at any time. The Corinthian Christians were saved but not filled - that is, they were not influenced or controlled by the Holy Spirit at all times.

IV. The Pentecostal distinction between 1Corinthians 12:13 and the scriptures mentioning the ‘Baptism with the spirit’ is a relatively new one introduced in the 20th Century. History is often a good teacher. Many new teachings can be traced to a time and to a person. The ‘faith once delivered’ (Jude 3) is not ‘new’. It was delivered ‘once’ to the apostles and to the church fathers and is written in Scripture for all to see.

For 1800 years there was no distinction between the Baptism with the Spirit and salvation. But late in the 19th Century there were some new teachings that emerged from the holiness camps. A study of the Holiness movement in the late 1800’s show a clear progression of changes in theology broadly summarised as the following: In seeking holiness and in an attempt to eradicate sin, individuals sought a ‘crisis point’ of sanctification...This led to second states or ‘stages’ of sanctification...This then led to the doctrine of entire sanctification...This then gradually led to various subsequent experiences such as a ‘Baptism with the Spirit’. The lines between the various views eventually blurred until the dawn of the 20th Century which saw the term ‘Baptism with the Spirit’ take on a new development - the new unique Pentecostal doctrine of tongues as being the ‘evidence’ of that experience having occurred. (3)

Conclusions:

I. 1Corinthians 12:13 uses the same Greek proposition 'en' that is used for the Baptism with the Spirit. Both have the Holy Spirit as the 'instrument' or the 'means' of Baptism. Believers are placed into the body of Christ, which work first began at Pentecost with the Baptism with the Spirit.

II. The scriptures teach the 'Baptism with the Spirit' as the 'promise' that was given transitionally and historically first in Acts 2 to the Jews, then the Samaritans in Acts 8, then the Gentiles in Acts 10. The Bible clearly shows in each case this '**promise**' was given to unbelievers and '**by faith**', '**to them that believe**' (Gal.3:14,22) and to *all* who are '**called**' to salvation thereafter, (Acts 2:39).

The Bible teaches clearly this was an permanent indwelling, (Jn.14:16,17).

III. The 'Baptism with the Spirit' is not the same as the 'filling' with the Spirit. The word 'fill' has the meaning of *control*. There were 'fillings' and empowerments before the Baptism with the Spirit in Acts 2. Whereas the Baptism with the Spirit was a once event as is 1Corinthians 12:13, the filling with the Spirit as described in Ephesians 5:18 is now a command and a continuous repeatable action.

IV. The Pentecostal distinction between 1Corinthians 12:13 and the scriptures mentioning the 'Baptism with the spirit' is a relatively new one introduced in the 20th Century. For 1800 years there was no distinction between the Baptism with the Spirit and salvation.

Final thought: If we are indwelt with the Holy Spirit we have the full person of God the Holy Spirit. '**But you 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).

The issue is not how much of the Holy Spirit we have but how much of us does He have! As believers we do not need a 'Baptism with the Spirit' but rather we need to be 'filled' from within. Seeking the Holy Spirit from without must so grieve Him who is already permanently within. If we want more of Him we must surrender and diligently seek Him through prayer and His word.

'He that believes on me, as the Scripture has said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water', (John 7:38).

Terry Arnold

(1) Dana and Mantey say the following: '*Hupo*' is most frequently used for expressing agency. In fact, agency is expressed with the aid of '*hupo*' more frequently than it is by all the other methods combined' - A Manual Grammar of the Greek New Testament, by H. E. Dana and Julius R. Mantey, P.112.

(2) '*Joy Unspeakable*' By Martyn Lloyd Jones; Kingsway Publications

(3) For the history of this see article '*The Foundation and History of the Pentecostal Movement*' by Terry Arnold