

The Baptism of The Holy Spirit

by

Michael D. Steere

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

Introduction:

I have wondered for several months as to this assignment being given to me. I have always considered myself strong in regard to an understanding of the baptism of the Holy Spirit, but the providence of our Father never ceases to amaze me. My son and some of my reading have caused me to wonder as to my position. (What I will call the "two times only theory.") Bro. Lee's call for the study on my part has given me fresh insight; a new concept and deeper appreciation for the baptism of the Holy Spirit. Now before you get all excited, please be aware that I have not joined the "Pentecostal" ranks nor do I believe the baptism of the Holy Spirit gives miraculous power.

The purpose and timing of such a study has indeed enhanced my relationship with my Father-Creator. This is an area where much confusion and misunderstanding have been to the detriment of the body of Christ. If the church in America (and probably worldwide) needs anything today it needs the indwelling of the living Lord of the universe. Such indwelling will bring about a new birth, regeneration and resurrection to individuals and thus to the entire body.

We seem to be caught up in a dangerous approach to what the Scripture message is all about. An approach which offers "seekers" salvation more on the "seeker's" terms than on the Creator's terms. An approach which provides the free gift of God without any necessary commitment to the things of God. God's plan is for men to be renewed, born again, regenerated, to become new creatures. Resurrected from the waters of immersion to become a creature with new thinking and new life style (2 Corinthians 5:17). That seems to have been lost in much of the present day "easy" approach to the message of Christianity. I will never forget the night I presented some very basic scriptural principles on stewardship to a sister body. Upon the finishing the preacher's only comment was, "you were pretty hard on them with that, most of them

won't like it." I fear many preachers take that view of their sermon preparation. The lifestyle in our churches shows it.

Could some of this problem be due to our failure to grasp fully the meaning of the baptism of the Holy Spirit? Have we in our desire to deal with the "Pentecostal" position misconstrued the scriptural presentation of the baptism of the Holy Spirit? Have we failed to capture the true meaning of ones relationship to the Creator-Father through the gift or indwelling presence of the very Spirit of God? The idea that the baptism of the Spirit only occurred twice, with the apostles at Pentecost and with the household of Cornelius, certainly does not enhance the scripture presentation of the baptism being for "those who obey Him" (Acts 5:32), thus being the very basis of our becoming "new creatures" (2 Corinthians 5:17). I find the scripture to give much more meaning and import to the baptism of the Holy Spirit than to the bestowing of miraculous manifestations. I guess my previous position was much like that of Bro. Russell Boatman. I had fallen into what he called, the "I thought you checked it out syndrome." Thanks, Lee, for making me check it out!

For hours on end I have been pouring over the pages of scripture and writings of men who have spent years in study. Books like *What the Bible Says about the Holy Spirit*; by Russell Boatman; *Baptism, A Biblical Study*, by Jack Cottrell; *Baptism in the New Testament*, by Beasley-Murray; the volumes on *The Power of the Holy Spirit*, by Don DeWalt; *Baptism in the Thought of St. Paul*, by Rudolf Schnackenburg; and *Baptism & Fullness*, by John R. W. Stott. Many other outlines, pamphlets and articles were perused and considered as well as material from the internet. I am deeply indebted to all these authors for their insights and comments. Theirs is a rich presentation. From the divinely inspired Word and from them, I have gleaned new insight and restructured my thinking on this matter of the baptism of the Holy Spirit.

John Stott in his little volume *Baptism & Fullness*, points out from Galatians 4:6 "because you are sons, God has sent the Spirit of His Son into our hearts." Again in Romans 8:14,15, "all who are led by the Spirit of God are sons of God. For you do not receive the spirit of slavery to fall back into fear, but have received the spirit of adoption as sons." All who have the Spirit of God are sons of God and all who are sons of God have the Spirit of God. It is impossible to have the Spirit without being a Son or to be a Son without having the Spirit. His Spirit

bears witness with our Spirit that we are children of God and we can cry out "Abba, Father"(Romans 8:15,16 & Galatians 4:6).

We "restorationists" speak, and properly so, of the indwelling of the Spirit, and of the gift of the Spirit. My task in this study is to help us understand the scriptural picture of the "baptism of the Holy Spirit" as being one and the same with the gift or indwelling of the Spirit of God. God lives in us to make us all He wants us to be, that was His plan from the beginning.

I. A DIVINE PLAN WITH GREAT PROMISE

Go with me to the Old Testament for a look at some of these promises. Those we will look at are by no means the complete list. In Isaiah 44:3 God says, "For I will pour out water on the thirsty land and streams on the dry ground; I will pour out My Spirit on your offspring and My blessing on your descendants." It is interesting that water is used by our Lord in speaking of the Spirit and this passage puts both water and Spirit together. This promise is twofold in nature. He will pour out His Spirit and His blessing on the descendants of the nation of Israel. I understand the blessings to be the answering of the two great needs of mankind. The dealing with guilt (justification) and the power to deal with sin in our lives (sanctification). Both were promised by God and both happened first at Pentecost and were there promised to all who follow the call of the Father as the gospel is delivered.

Ezekiel 36:25-27 also speaks of a twofold blessing as the Father will cleanse and put a new spirit within mankind. Man will be given a new heart as the old stone heart is removed and a heart of flesh takes its place causing man to walk in His statutes. Note the Father's words, "Then I will sprinkle clean water on you and you will be clean; I will cleanse you from all your filthiness and from all your idols. Moreover, I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit within you; and I will remove the heart of stone from your flesh and give you a heart of flesh. I will put My Spirit within you and cause you to walk in My statutes, and you will be careful to observe My ordinances."

Then God speaks through Joel (2:28-29): "It will come about after this that I will pour out My Spirit on all mankind; and your sons and your daughters will prophesy, your old men will dream dreams, your young men will see visions. Even on the male and female servants I will pour out My Spirit in those days." During the last days of time, when God raises up a new kingdom, there is a promise of something

never experienced in the old. His Spirit will be poured out on all humanity (understanding of course that He is poured only on those of humanity who desire His Spirit), male and female, young and old, slave and free. The promise seems to be universal, not limited to two small groups of mankind (Apostles and Cornelius's household) only. Reaching all of humanity as both genders, all ages, and free and slave are to be included.

When Jesus our Lord arrives on the scene such promises are still being made. The specific promise of the baptism of the Holy Spirit is found in at least five new Testament passages. The words "baptism in the Holy Spirit" are found seven times in all. In Matthew and Luke the message is practically word for word as John the Immerser is quoted by each. Let's look at Matthew 3:11-12, "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. His winnowing fork is in His hand, and He will thoroughly clear His threshing floor; and he will gather His wheat into the barn, but He will burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire."

One is coming who will baptize with the Spirit and fire. John the Immerser uses the analogy of the winnowing fork and the gathering up of the grain from harvest. The grain goes to the barns, the chaff to the fire. This promise seems to be very universal in scope. I think it is the pronouncement of the new covenant purpose, the sheep separated from the goats. Those not baptized in the Spirit (which comes with water baptism) will be baptized in fire. It is an either-or situation for mankind. It is impossible for me to see the fire being some kind of later granting of the Spirit. It just does not fit the context. Baptism of fire is judgment. And the universality of the promise, with the analogy of the harvest, paints a vivid picture of Christ gathering those who obey Him as they have received the Spirit. Having new lives, they become new creatures. Those refusing must face the fire of punishment and destruction. Mark and John both speak of the promise (Mark 1:7 & 8; John 1:33) from the Immerser but neither includes the analogy.

Jesus makes a similar promise as John notes in 7:37-39, "Now on the last day, the great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried out saying 'if anyone is thirsty let him come to Me and drink. He who believes in Me, as the Scripture said, 'From his innermost being will flow rivers of living water.' But this He spoke of the Spirit, whom those who believed in Him were to receive; for the Spirit was not yet given, because Jesus was not yet glorified." The living water can be drunk by any man who

believes in Him. This water is the Spirit and is provided as we drink of Him. This is interesting in that our text (1 Corinthians 12:13) speaks of us all (believers) being made to drink of the one Spirit.

In Acts 1 :4,5 Jesus reiterated the promise as He repeats the words of John to the followers gathered after His resurrection, followers who will momentarily see His ascension. "John baptized with water, but you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days from now." I realize this was spoken to the apostles. It certainly can also be a general promise to all. It depends on our understanding of the overall promise of the baptism of the Spirit. It becomes a matter of salvation for each individual. For salvation depends on one being in the Son and the Son being in him. Romans 8:9 says "But if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he does not belong to Him."

So the context of the entire body of scripture as to the promised baptism of the Holy Spirit seems to be a promise to all believers in the new covenant age. Continuity of the presented promises in both the Old and New Testaments seem to point to one grand out pouring that will be the very center of the New Testament age and the fulfillment of God's divine plan. People are empowered to be His people.

II. A PROMISE OF DIVINE PRESENCE

This presence, the Spirit of promise, obviously came at Pentecost. Jesus had promised his disciples the Helper, Comforter, would come and lead them. As He shared the Passover with them and concluded that meal with the institution of the Lord's supper, he noted that the Father abode in Him and He in the Father and they would come and abide with them (John 14:23). Now with His ascension into glory it is time for the Spirit to come and dwell in the hearts of men. He will abide with all his followers. The gift, the indwelling presence, was received as they are immersed in water.

As Peter delivers the great gospel message of Pentecost as recorded in Acts 2. He says in verses 17-21 that what is taking place in the very thing God had promised through Joel. He says in v 33 that this is what Jesus had promised. So as men's hearts are touched they cry out as to what they can do about their terrible plight. They are guilty of sin and oppressed with sin sickness. Peter's reply (v 38) tells them of deliverance from both maladies. If they repent and are baptized in the name of Jesus they shall receive remission of sins and the gift of the Holy Spirit. Note the two fold aspect of salvation and remember the

two fold aspect of some of the Old Testament promises. We will touch on this a little more later. Sins are forgiven and they receive the gift of the Spirit whose power, as he dwells within, will enable them to deal with sins oppression in their lives.

Note with me also that, "this promise is to their children and to all who are afar off—as many as the Lord our God will call to Himself." Acts 2:39.

This giving of, the pouring out, or baptism of the Spirit is vital, critical, to the basic promise of the New Testament era. It was not a matter of miraculous manifestations. It was the Spirit himself dwelling in each believer. Miraculous manifestations were given only to the apostles and those they laid their hands on. In the household of Cornelius (Acts 10 & 11) the issue was not the speaking in tongues. The issue was that they receive the same gift as the apostles had. It was the baptism in water so they could receive the remission of sins and the gift of the Holy Spirit just as those Jews on Pentecost had. As Dr. Cottrell says in his book, *Baptism A Biblical Study* on page 63, "At Pentecost the tongues established the message that this was the beginning of the new age outpouring of the Spirit. In Acts 10 the tongues were evidence that God wanted the Gentiles to be received into His church along with the Jews. Thus these events were meant to be exceptions to the rule in the sense that every miracle is an exception; this is what gives them their evidential value." The tongues merely showed Peter and those with him that this was God's desire.

In Samaria (Acts 8) the Spirit was received and then special manifestation was given by the laying on of the apostles' hands. In Acts 19, at Ephesus, the followers heard about the Holy Spirit and the need to be immersed in the name of the Lord Jesus. They were immersed in the name of Jesus, thus receiving the gift of the Spirit, and then were given special gifts by the laying on of Paul's hands.

Miraculous manifestations happened in the Old Testament age. Exodus 31:3 says, in regard to the tabernacle craftsman, "I have filled him with the Spirit of God in wisdom, in understanding, in knowledge, and in all kinds of craftsmanship." (Numbers 11 :17-30, as elders are given to assist Moses, says "I will take the Spirit who is upon you and will put Him upon them; "And the Spirit rested upon them v27 Eldad and Medad are prophesying in the camp would the Lord's people were prophets, that the Lord would put His spirit upon them.") In Numbers 24:2 "And Balaam lifted up his eyes and saw Israel camping tribe by tribe; and the Spirit of God came upon him." 1 Samuel 19:20-23 says,

"Then Saul sent messengers to take David, but when they saw the company of the prophets prophesying, with Samuel presiding over them, the Spirit of God came upon the messengers of Saul; and they also prophesied." Three times Saul sends messengers, each time the same result...he himself comes and the Spirit of God comes upon him and he goes along prophesying also. Spiritual manifestations were nothing new— and thus could not be the promise.

In Matthew 10:1 we read, "Jesus summoned His twelve disciples and gave them authority over unclean spirits, to cast them out, and to heal every kind of disease and every kind of sickness." The apostles performed miracles before Pentecost. Manifestations were not the new and great promise.

Such gifts we understand were for the developing and building up of the body of Christ. They were like scaffolding to a building. When no longer needed with the completion of the written word they were taken down. The body struggles today because some want to keep the scaffolding up and thus mar the true picture of what the building really is.

This gift or indwelling comes when one is immersed in the name of Christ. In an outline on the Holy Spirit, Dr. Cottrell points out what he calls the twofold aspect of salvation. The inner aspect: baptism in the Holy Spirit and the outer aspect: baptism in water. The two aspects cannot be separated as Paul states in Ephesians 4:5, "There is one baptism." Two aspects one baptism.

I know the indwelling presence of the Spirit and the remission of my sins (both happenings) simply on the basis of Almighty God's promise that such takes place with my immersion in water, an outward objective event. It is not a matter of subjective feelings, there is simply a faith awareness. There is no miraculous power endowed to show that the event has taken place. That seems to be a big part of our error. The baptism of the Holy Spirit is believed to be when the gifts are granted. That seems to be the search of many as they seek the baptism. Baptism in the Spirit is not always accompanied by spiritual manifestations. As Dr. Cottrell, in his Holy Spirit outline, points out: At Pentecost, Peter promised the gift of the Holy Spirit to all who were immersed. Thousands obeyed and yet only the apostles or those whom they laid hands on are seen performing miracles. Acts 2:43 speaks of the "wonders and signs taking place through the apostles." In Acts 4:33 we read, "And with great power the apostles were giving testimony..." And

again Acts 5:12 says "At the hands of the apostles many signs and wonders were taking place among the people..."

As we "restorationists" have long proclaimed, the manifestations from the Holy Spirit could only be passed along by the apostles through the laying on of their hands. This was done to those who were to have such powers. In Acts 6:6, the men chosen to serve tables had the apostles' hands laid on them. In Acts 8: 17 Peter and John lay their hands on those immersed by Philip who obviously couldn't pass them on but had them. In Acts 19:6 as Paul teaches the followers and baptizes them, they, who had known only the baptism of John, now had the gift having been immersed in the name of Jesus. But he lays his hands on them to give the manifestations.

The purpose of the baptism of the Holy Spirit is the indwelling gift, the very person of Christ within us that we might be regenerated to the newness of life. Only divine presence can provide the power we need to deal with the sickness of sin.

So God is present with every born-again believer as he dwells in the hearts of those who seek His will. God in us, the hope of the ages. Paul writes to the Romans (8:9-11). "However you are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if indeed the Spirit of God dwells in you. But if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he does not belong to Him. If Christ is in you, though the body is dead because of sin, yet the Spirit is alive because of righteousness. But if the Spirit of Him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, He who raised Christ Jesus from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through His Spirit who dwells in you."

This baptism of the Holy Spirit, the indwelling gift, is God's mark on the believer, His seal of redemption. Ephesians 1:13 "In Him, you also after listening to the message of truth, the gospel of your salvation—having also believed, you were sealed in Him with the Holy Spirit of promise." His power present with us shows us that we are indeed of the kingdom.

III. THE PRESENCE WITH DIVINE POWER

So the promise of a presence leads to divine power in the life of the individual believer. As He dwells in us we are empowered to be all He wants us to be. The divine presence brings life anew. He regenerates the individual who has been dead in sin. Jesus said to Nicodemus in John 3:5, "Ye must be born of the water and the Spirit;" a perfect

picture of what happens at our immersion as we are baptized in water and given the Spirit or baptized in the Spirit, immersed in His presence as we submit to Him.

Paul spoke of this to Titus when he said in 3:5, "He saved us, not on the basis of deeds which we have done in righteousness, but according to His mercy, by the washing of regeneration and renewing by the Holy Spirit." Here is the power of His presence. The power to give a new life. To overcome the sin sickness. To be raised from the dead so we might walk in the newness of life" (Romans 6:4). And Paul continues in the Romans 6 message, verses 6 & 7, "knowing this, that our old self was crucified with Him, in order that our body of sin might be done away with, so that we would no longer be slaves to sin; for he who has died is freed from sin"; Freed in the sense that its guilt and its constant urge can be dealt with.

The same line of thinking is presented by Paul in Romans 8. Look at verse 2, "For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has set you free from the law of sin and of death." Verse 6, "For the mind set on the flesh is death, but the mind set on the Spirit is life and peace." Verse 11, "But if the Spirit of Him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, He who raised Christ Jesus from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through His Spirit who dwells in you." And verse 13, "for if you are living according to the flesh, you must die; but if by the Spirit you are putting to death the deeds of the body, you will live."

And so 1 Corinthians says, "The first man, Adam, became a living soul. The last Adam became a life-giving spirit." Life, regeneration, newness, "Therefore if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creature; the old things passed away; behold new things have come." 2 Corinthians 5:17

The sanctifying power of the good news is the Spirit in us. His overwhelming power makes us (as our will submits) all God wants us to be., setting us apart to the glory of the Father. Note Paul's words to the body at Corinth, 1 Corinthians 6:11, "Such were some of you; but you were washed, but you were sanctified, but you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and in the Spirit of our God." In simple submission by faith, with repentance, we are justified and sanctified. In his prayer for the Ephesians in chapter 3 of that letter Paul prays, "that He would grant you, according to the riches of His glory, to be strengthened with power through His Spirit in the inner man." To the Thessalonians he said, in 1 Thessalonians 5:23, "now may the God of peace Himself sanctify you entirely; and may your spirit and soul and body be preserved complete, without blame at the coming of our Lord

Jesus Christ." Could we be struggling with the sin-sick self, failing to let the Spirit set us apart, not letting him be the power that will make us new and alive for our Lord? Have we pressed the baptism of the Spirit issue to the point of quenching His power within us as we fail to open our hearts to Him.

If I understand Galatians 5:22 correctly the fruit listed is produced in us only by the power of the Spirit. "The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control, against such things there is no law." God produces these things as we allow His Spirit to overwhelm us and control us. How dare we think we can produce such fruit (on the Godly level) without His abiding presence and power.

And so this power of the indwelling presence also brings unity. Let's return to the text we began with. It really ties all this together. 1 Corinthians 12:13, "for by one Spirit we are all baptized into one body, whether Jews or Greeks, whether slaves or free, and we are all made to drink of one Spirit." The New American Standard Bible translation makes this a little difficult to grasp if we are not keyed in. It uses "by" to translate the little preposition en. We can just as well use "in" or "with" as the translation word for the preposition en. Is the Spirit the element or the agent. He could be either and not really change the meaning. Beasley-Murray is probably right when he says, in *Baptism in the New Testament*, page 167, "basically the meaning is not greatly effected" either way. We understand the meaning here is being baptized in the Holy Spirit which fits the continuity of the entire body of scripture. Baptism gives us the power to do the will of our Lord. Doing His will unites us in a common bond to all others who are functioning with the same power, sacrificing their bodies to the one Lord. Dr. Cottrell points out in his book, *Baptism a Biblical Study*, on page 100, "there is only one body and we all come into it the same way, namely: by one Spirit we were all baptized into that body."

So in conclusion let's look at what the scripture presents. In both the Old and New Testament promises, concerning the coming Spirit, we find a universal promise that provides the power for the man of faith to become all God desires him to be. That promise is presented at Pentecost in the person of the Holy Spirit who is given as a gift at ones immersion into the name of Jesus Christ. Such immersion being proceeded by faith and repentance. We see the picture of the individual receiving this indwelling as being justified (sin remitted) and sanctified (gift of the Holy Spirit) at the same time. The picture of this being the

baptism of the Holy Spirit is enhanced when we consider the fact, contrary to much teaching, that the baptism is not for the special manifestations or performing of miracles but for the salvation of mankind. Such salvation comes as the believer receives justification and the indwelling power to deal with the sin problem in his life. With the power of this presence the fruit is produced in me that makes me a new creature. Once dead to sin I am now alive in Christ. Once a slave to sin I am now free to be all He created me to be. Denying such power would leave us cold, stonehearted, fruitless and unchanged. We dare not deny the very presence of God in us. "For all who are being led by the Spirit of God, these are the sons of God. For you have not received a spirit of slavery leading to fear again, but you have received a spirit of adoption as sons by which we cry out, "Abba, Father." Romans 8:14 & 15

All scripture quotes are from the New American Standard Bible.