

The Baptism of the Holy Spirit

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I. Introduction

The Baptism of the Holy Spirit is an important subject to understand because it has to do with the empowering of the Holy Spirit in the life of a believer. To be empowered by God is critical because of the negative influences and as the Apostle Paul says; *“in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation, among whom you appear as lights in the world.”* (Philippians 2:15) Not only do we have to live in this world with all its pressures and negative influences we have a responsibility to be “salt and light.” To experience inner strength through the powerful Holy Spirit is critical to the life of the believer.

“Baptism of the Spirit must not be confused with the “filling of the Spirit,” which recurs repeatedly to empower believers to proclaim God’s ord boldly (Acts 2:4; 4:8, 31; 9:17; 13:9).⁶⁷ Here is further reason why one cannot be a Christian without having a changed life; the indwelling Spirit guarantees that the process of sanctification will begin (cf. Rom 6–8).”¹

II. Related Passages of Scripture

- A. 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.”* (NASU)
- B. Mark 1:8 - *“I baptized you with water; but He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit.”* (NASU)
- C. Luke 3:16-17 – *“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.”* (NASU)
- D. John 1:33 – *“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.’”* (NASU)
- E. Acts 1:5 – *“for John baptized with water, but you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days from now.”* (NASU)

⁶⁷ See especially J. D. G. Dunn, *Baptism in the Holy Spirit* (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1970). The response by H. M. Ervin (2 [Peabody, Mass.: Hendrickson, 1984]) points out a few problems and ambiguities in Dunn’s arguments but otherwise fails to overturn his general thesis. See R. B. Gardner (*Matthew*, BCBC [Scottsdale, Penn.: Herald, 1991], 66–69) for a good discussion of the meaning of baptism in this context. Also cf. D. S. Dockery, “Baptism,” *Dictionary of Jesus and the Gospels*, ed. S. McKnight et al. (Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 1992).

¹Blomberg, C. (2001, c1992). *Vol. 22: Matthew* (electronic ed.). Logos Library System; The New American Commentary (79). Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers.

- F. *Acts 11:16-17 - "And I remembered the word of the Lord, how He used to say, 'John baptized with water, but you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit.'" (NASU)*

III. The Meaning of the Word Baptism

- A. Meaning of the word baptism: The Greek verb *baptizein* means *to dip* or *to submerge*. It can be used of clothes being *dipped* in dye; it can be used of a ship *submerged* beneath the waves; it can be used of a person who is so drunk that he is *soaked* in drink. When John says that Jesus will baptize men with the Holy Spirit, he means that Jesus can bring God's Spirit to us in such a way that we are saturated and our lives are being flooded with that Spirit."²

IV. The Meaning of Baptism of the Holy Spirit

- A. A person must first become saved:
1. A person must believe in their hearts (Romans 10:9) that Jesus is the Christ before the Spirit of God comes into their lives. *"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."* (Titus 3:5; NASU)
 - a) *"Therefore having been exalted to the right hand of God, and having received from the Father the promise of the Holy Spirit, He has poured forth this which you both see and hear."* (Acts 2:33; NASU) They were 'soaked' with the Holy Spirit. They were brought under His influence.
 2. The same meaning is stated in Ephesians 1:13-14 - *"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, who is given as a pledge of our inheritance, with a view to the redemption of God's own possession, to the praise of His glory."* (NASU)
 - a) There is one baptism that takes place at the point of salvation. This baptism is first the immersion of a believer into Christ death and resurrection (Romans 6:3-6) as a result of their acceptance of Jesus as the Christ the Son of the living God. After a believer identifies with Christ' death and resurrection "by confessing with their mouth and believing in the hearts" the Holy Spirit comes as a seal "for the day of redemption" (Ephesians 1:13-14; redemption meaning the rapture – God uses this seal, Holy Spirit in us, to separate the wheat from the tares). This seal signifies that the believer is immersed in the Spirit with all spiritual blessings (Ephesians 1:3) which takes place in their inner being so that

²*The Gospel of John : Volume 1.* 2000, c1975 (W. Barclay, lecturer in the University of Glasgow, Ed.). The Daily study Bible series, Rev. ed. (84). Philadelphia: The Westminster Press.

Christ dwells in their hearts (Ephesians 3:16-17). At that point a believer is positionally (Ephesians 1:3) baptized into the Spirit of God. Romans 8:9 says that if this did not take place a believer is not saved; *“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.”* The ‘Spirit of Christ’ is a reference to the Holy Spirit because He is the Helper of Christ (John 14:16).

- b) John 1:33 – *“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.”* (NASU)

B. Salvation is to be ‘soaked’ with the Holy Spirit positionally:

1. This baptism first took place at Pentecost (Acts 2:1-4) based on His promise in Acts 1:5. It became available to all those who believed that ‘Jesus is the Christ the Son of the living God.’
 - a) Acts 1:5 – *“for John baptized with water, but you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days from now.”* (NASU)
 - Mark 1:8 - *“I baptized you with water; but He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit.”* (NASU)
 - b) 1 Cor 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.”* (NASU) The issue here is that some see this verse as saying that baptism is done by the Spirit because other baptism is done by Christ. In other words there is a possibility for two baptisms rather than just one which is done by Christ in the sphere of the Spirit. This second is done by the Spirit in the sphere of the body of Christ. The body of Christ meaning the church.
 - This passage is not providing for us evidence of two baptisms. As explained above baptism in the Spirit takes place at the point of salvation. The believer who is Spirit filled now becomes a part of a church. Their responsibility is to serve in the church (Ephesians 4:12-13; ‘one body’). The question is how do they serve in the ‘one body’ the church the body of Christ?
 - As the Helper of Christ the Holy Spirit provides spiritual gifts (1 Corinthians 12:3,11 and 1 Peter 4:10) which is the means by which a believer can serve the body of Christ as He (the Holy Spirit) fits the body together fitly (Ephesians 4:16). As a result the believer is immersed (baptized) into the church through the use of the spiritual gifts (1 Corinthians 12:12-26) which are designed for the ministries of the church determined by Christ (1 Corinthians 12:5) because the church is His body (Ephesians 1:22-23).
 - Another way of explaining: The believer is baptized into ‘one body’ which is the body of Christ because they were first saved by the blood of Jesus, who once they were saved the Holy Spirit baptized them. Once this has transpired the Holy Spirit who guided them into the sphere of His body the church through the use of spiritual gifts. This takes place because there is *“one Lord, on faith, one baptism.”* (Ephesians 4:5). This is why the person can now grow to spiritual maturity (Ephesians 4:13). “One baptism may refer to the baptism in the Spirit that places all believers into the body of Christ, the church (1 Cor. 12:13). It may also refer to water baptism, the sign or seal that a person is a member of the

body of Christ. At the time of the early church, public baptism clearly identified a person as a Christian.”³

C. Baptism of the Holy Spirit is also progressive, called sanctification:

1. This baptism that begins at salvation, where a believer is given all spiritual blessings (Ephesians 1:3) and extends into a spiritual maturing process (salvation worked out in fear and trembling; Phil. 2:12-13) so that the believer lives under the total influence of the Spirit. They functionally become fully immersed, therefore, living in the sphere of the Spirit.
 - a) *“Or do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus have been baptized into His death? Therefore we have been buried with Him through baptism into death, so that as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, so we too might walk in newness of life.”* (Rom 6:3-4; NASU)
 - b) After a believer is baptized into the Spirit of God, they are challenge through the ministry of the Holy Spirit and their service in the local church to “work out their salvation in fear and trembling” (Philippians 2:12-13; Ephesians 4:13). This working out is a sanctification process that leads the believer to become drunk in the Spirit (Ephesians 5:15-18). As a result, the believer is no longer positionally full of the Spirit, they are now functionally full of the Spirit. (Galatians 5:22-25).
 - c) Believers live under the influence of the Spirit (because they are immersed into Him – baptized) who not only convicts them of sin He regenerates a new convert from death to life (Titus 3:5), He guides them into truth (John 16:13) by illuminating the Word of God (1 Corinthians 2:10-15), He sanctifies (sets them apart; Romans 8:9-11), He transforms their life (2 Corinthians 3:18), a believer that is committed to walk in the Spirit can become drunk with the Spirit (Ephesians 5:15-20; 1 Thessalonians 5:14-21) and bear fruit (Galatians 5:22-25).
2. Believers are baptized by the Holy Spirit to live godly. The church is responsible to grow believers into the fullness of Christ (Ephesians 3:14-19; 4:13). Because one of God’s major mechanisms for spiritual growth is the church, the Holy Spirit directs them how to function in the church so that each believer lives in Christ functionally. Whether a believer is just saved or in the church they are influenced by the work of the Holy Spirit in their life.
3. The evidence of the transforming work of the Holy is known by the their fruit (Matthew 7:15-23); good godly character development (2 Peter 1:3-11).

V. Conclusion

The Charismatic view is not supported by scripture because the manifestation of the baptism of the Spirit does not have to be speaking in tongues. Speaking in tongues is not even mentioned as a part of the list of fruit in Galatians 5:22-25 (this fruit is due to a believer being baptized in the Spirit). So to be baptized in the Spirit, which is different than being filled with the Spirit, is a process that begins at salvation and matures through

³Radmacher, E. D., Allen, R. B., & House, H. W. (1999). *Nelson's new illustrated Bible commentary* (Eph 4:5). Nashville: T. Nelson Publishers.

sanctification to spiritual maturity. Even those who were filled with the Spirit did not always speak in tongues. We see this in Acts 4:31; 6:3; 9:17-18; 13:9. Speaking in tongues is actually a fulfillment of Isaiah 28:11 which were fulfilled at Pentecost when the Jews gathered before God as Peter preached the gospel in Acts 2. So the Charismatic view that states that when a believer is baptized with the Spirit they speak in a tongue is not supported by Scripture.

I believe, as I have explained, that there is only one Agent for the baptism of the Holy Spirit and He is Christ. It is because of the baptism He provides the Holy Spirit who leads a believer to become involved in the church to grow in the fullness of God (Ephesians 4:13). The believer is not baptized again by the Spirit to become involved in the church. The Spirit provides them spiritual gifts who directs their involvement. It is as a result of everyone's involvement that everyone grows into the fullness of Christ (Ephesians 4:13; 1 Corinthians 12). It is for this He died (John 10:10) and it is for this we must live (Galatians 2:20; Colossians 3:1-4; Philippians 2:21).