

Introduction



His Person



His Works



His Indwelling



His Baptizing

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His Sealing



His Filling



His Gifting



His Helping



The Holy Spirit—Our Helper

Bethany Bible Church, Adult Sunday School Class, October 9, 2011

Baptism--Sorting Out The Terms . . .

In defining the work of the Holy Spirit in our lives as followers of Jesus, it's vital that we make sure that Scripture remains the interpreter of our experience rather than allowing our experience to become the interpreter of Scripture.

This lesson introduces us to a wonderful aspect of the Holy Spirit's ministry in the life of the believer--that is, the Spirit's ministry of 'baptizing' the believer. But to deal with it properly, we have to begin by clarifying a matter over which many sincere believers disagree. There are several forms that this difference of opinion has taken; but it can basically be summed up in this question: Is the "baptism of the Holy Spirit" (1) a work that He always performs for the believer "positionally" at the time of salvation, or (2) an event that the believer should seek from Him "experientially" some time after salvation? The position of this study is toward the first option; but the second option--sometimes called "the second blessing"--has been held to and taught by several very reliable Bible teachers; such as R.A. Torrey, D.L. Moody and D. Martyn Lloyd-Jones. It's a position typically held by Pentecostal Christians.

It's very important to clarify that this difference of opinion is an "intramural" discussion between genuine believers--all of whom love the Lord Jesus Christ, and all of whom hold to the authority of Scripture, and all of whom desire the fullness of the Holy Spirit. But a faithfulness to the authority of Scripture requires that we be governed by what *it* mean by "the baptism of the Holy Spirit".

I. WHAT IS "SECOND BLESSING" VIEW OF BAPTISM?

- A. R.A. Torrey--a key proponent of the second blessing view--pointed to such passages as Matthew 3:11, Acts 1:5 and 2:3-4 for its beginning at Pentecost; but went on to point to Acts 10:44-46 and 11:15-17 to show that the experience of Pentecost can be repeated in the life of the believer *after* Pentecost. His three main points are that (1) "the baptism of the Holy Spirit is a definite experience of which one may and ought to know whether he has received it or not" (see Luke 24:49; Acts 1:4); (2) that it "is an operation of the Holy Spirit distinct from and additional to His regenerating work" (Acts 1:5; 8:14-17); and (3) it is "always connected with, and primarily for the purpose of testimony and service" (Acts 1:5, 8; 1 Corinthians 12).¹
- B. Those who hold to a "second-blessing" view of the baptism would stress that it is not something that is essential for salvation. But they would nevertheless emphasize that it *is* essential for vital Christian living. Anthony Hoekema--who was *not* an advocate of this position--further explained with these words: ". . . though the Spirit regenerates a man and enables him to repent and believe in Christ at the time of conversion, the Spirit does not come into the believer's heart as a Person who fills his life completely and who now dispenses the full complement of His gifts until the time of the Spirit-baptism (a shorter way of saying, 'baptism in the Holy Spirit'), which is an experience distinct from and usually subsequent to conversion. In other words, though the Spirit touches a person's life at the time of conversion, He does not come into one's life in His totality until the time of the Spirit-baptism. In Neo-Pentecostal circles, one is not considered to have available to him the full power of the Holy Spirit until he has experienced Spirit-baptism; hence all Christians are urged to seek

such a Spirit-baptism.”²

II. HOW DOES THE BIBLE SPEAK OF “BAPTISM” IN THE SPIRIT?

- A. Many who hold a “second blessing” view testify to the enriching experience they had as they received the baptism of the Holy Spirit; and speak of the benefits that this experience has had in their lives and ministry. Without question, there is a genuine experience that is being described. But it is the Scriptures--not the experience itself--that must be our guide in understanding that experience. Various Scripture passages do indeed touch on this issue; but an important way to differentiate between them is by identifying those that are “descriptive” (that is, that report the occurrence of something), and those that are “instructive” or “theological” (that is, that explain the nature or purpose of something).
- B. There are four instances in which some form of the expression “to be baptized in the Spirit” occurs in the Gospels (Matthew 3:11; Mark 1:8; Luke 3:16; and John 1:33); and another is found in Acts 1:5. These all describe the event of the outpouring of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost; which was promised in Joel 2:28-29 and fulfilled in Acts 2:16-21. Another “baptism in the Spirit” is described in Acts 11:15-16 in the household of Cornelius (a Gentile). But as Peter described this event, he said, “Then I remembered the word of the Lord, how He said, ‘John indeed baptized with water, but you shall be baptized with the Holy Spirit’”³ (v. 16; a clear reference to Pentecost). That this is not to be viewed as a “second Pentecost”, but rather as an extension of the first and only Pentecost, is shown by the fact that Peter then said, “If therefore God gave them [that is, the Gentiles] the same gift as He gave us when we believed on the Lord Jesus Christ, who was I that I could withstand God?” These passages are all, then, describing the “baptism of the Spirit” in a descriptive sense as the one-time event of Pentecost--at which time the church was born. It first involved the Jews; but the same event was later said to have extended to the Gentiles so that both Jews and Gentiles would be one church.
- C. There are two New Testament passages that use the word “baptism” in a spiritual sense; and both of them are “instructive” or “theological” in purpose. One is 1 Corinthians 12:13; which says, “For by one Spirit we were all baptized into one body--whether Jews or Greeks, whether slaves or free--and have all been made to drink into one Spirit.” Note that this cannot be referring to a post-salvation experience that some believers may or may not have had; because it repeatedly says “all” experience it. The second is Galatians 3:26-27; which says, “For you are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus. For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ.” Note that this is describing a positional reality rather than a perceptible experience. And again, note that it is universal in nature--applicable to “all” who are “sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus”.

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In our next lesson, we’ll talk in further about the “positional” view of “baptism in the Spirit”. But in conclusion, it seems best to affirm the reality of the experience that R.A. Torrey described at the beginning of our study (see I.A.); but to see it as the “filling” of the Spirit (Ephesians 5:18) rather than the “baptism” of the Spirit, so as not to confuse individual, repeatable experiences with passages that speak describe Pentecost. And if we see things *that* way, then as someone once said, it’s *very* desirable to have a second blessing of the Holy Spirit; . . . and a third . . . and a fourth . . . and a fifth . . .

³R.A. Torrey, *The Person and Work of The Holy Spirit* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1973), pp. 171-9.

²Anthony A. Hoekema, *Holy Spirit Baptism* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1972), pp. 10-11.

³All Scripture readings are taken from the Holy Bible, New King James Version; copyright © 1982 by Thomas Nelson, Inc.