

Introduction



His Person



His Works



His Indwelling



His Baptizing

2

His Sealing



His Filling



His Gifting



His Helping



The Holy Spirit—Our Helper

Bethany Bible Church, Adult Sunday School Class, October 23, 2011

Baptism--Identified Together with Christ

“Therefore we were buried with Him through baptism into death, that just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life” (Romans 6:4).

We’ve been studying the Bible’s teaching on the ‘baptizing’ ministry of the Holy Spirit. And we began by seeking to clarify what the Bible *does not* mean by “the baptism of the Holy Spirit” (see the lesson notes titled “Baptism--Sorting Out The Terms”). Today, we take up what it *does* mean by this ministry.

This is what we earlier referred to as “the positional view” of the baptism of the Holy Spirit (that is, it has to do primarily with our spiritual position before God); and is best understood as a non-experiential work of the Holy Spirit (meaning that it happens whether the believer is aware of it or not--although many experiences do flow from it) that is universal among all believers since Pentecost--occurring at the time of their salvation--in which the individual believer is forever united to the saving work of Jesus Christ and to the church of all the redeemed.

I. THE MEANING OF ‘BAPTISM’ IN THIS IDENTIFYING WORK.

- A. The Greek word from which this work is derived--*baptizo*--has, of course, the literal meaning “to wash” or “to dip”. It’s with this sense of the word that we understand the ordinance of physical baptism in the church. But the word can also have the more figurative sense of an extraordinary experience somewhat akin to an ‘initiatory water-rite’¹. It suggests an experience that forever changes a person’s standing; and by which they are identified from then on. Just as a piece of cloth was permanently “identified” with a pot of dye once it was dipped (“baptized”) into it, so someone is permanently identified by that “baptism” experience.
- B. The New Testament gives us some examples of this figurative use of “baptism”. Mark 10:38, for instance, tells us how Jesus’ disciples wanted the privilege to sit at His right hand and His left in His kingdom. He said, “You do not know what you ask. Are you able to drink the cup that I drink, and be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with?”²; and He was there speaking of the experience of suffering martyrdom for His name. Another example is found in Luke 12:50, where Jesus speaks of His own betrayal unto death and the experience of the cross. There, He says, “But I have a baptism to be baptized with, and how distressed I am till it is accomplished!” Even the experience of the people of Israel in crossing the Red Sea was spoken of in this way. Paul wrote in 1 Corinthians 10:1-2 “that all our fathers were under the cloud, all passed through the sea, all were baptized into Moses in the cloud and in the sea . . .”--an experience that permanently identified them with the calling God gave to Moses.

II. THE SPIRITUAL SIGNIFICANCE OF THIS WORK.

- A. It’s important to remember that this “identifying” aspect of the baptism of the Holy Spirit is not something distinct from the event of Pentecost. Some have suggested a difference because of the fact that, in many English translations, different prepositions are used in connection with it. The New Testament passages that refer to the event of Pentecost before it happened (Matthew 3:11; Mark 1:8; Luke 3:16; John 1:33; Acts 1:5) and the one that described it afterward (Acts 11:15-16) are all translated by the phrase “with

the Holy Spirit". This is often said to refer to a baptism "with" the Spirit unto "power" or unto "witness". 1 Corinthians 12:13 uses the phrase "by one Spirit we were all baptized into one body"; and because of the preposition "by", this is often said to be a distinct baptism--a baptism "by" the Spirit unto "union" or unto "life". But a distinction between these two types of prepositional phrases shouldn't be pressed too much; because in the original language, the same Greek preposition "en" is used in all the above references. This fact might be seen, instead, as supporting the idea that the "baptism" spoken of in 1 Corinthians 12:13 is of the same type as, and in vital connection with, that which is spoken of regarding Pentecost.

B. The New Testament describes two basic results of the Spirit's ministry of "baptizing" the believer:

1. First, the individual believer is said to be "baptized into Christ". This is spoken of in Galatians 3:26-27; "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." Though the role of the Holy Spirit isn't directly mentioned in this verse, it is implied by the phrase "baptized into". Here, the believer is brought, by the Holy Spirit, into such complete unity with Jesus that he or she has "put on Christ". All that is true of the experience of Jesus on their behalf is now true of them; and this union with Christ stands as the basis of their salvation. "Or do you not know that as many of us as were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into His death? Therefore we were buried with Him through baptism into death, that just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life. For if we have been united together in the likeness of His death, certainly we also shall be in the likeness of His resurrection, knowing this, that our old man was crucified with Him, that the body of sin might be done away with, that we should no longer be slaves of sin. For he who has died has been freed from sin" (Romans 6:3-7).
2. Second, all individual believers are said to be "baptized into one body". Each believer shares a basic unity of value; because as Paul went on to say in Galatians 3:28-29, there are now no distinctions between us before God. "There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus. And if you are Christ's, then you are Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise." But there is also a basic unity of identity; because, as Paul writes in 1 Corinthians 12:12-13 (in the passage about spiritual gifts), "For as the body is one and has many members, but all the members of that one body, being many, are one body, so also is Christ. 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."

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In closing, note how this ministry of the Holy Spirit gives us the basis for the most complete unity in Christ we can possibly enjoy. As Paul wrote, "I, therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you to walk worthy of the calling with which you were called, with all lowliness and gentleness, with longsuffering, bearing with one another in love, endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. There is one body and one Spirit, just as you were called in one hope of your calling; one Lord, one faith, one baptism; one God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all" (Ephesians 4:1-6).

Praise God that it's not for us to "create" unity. Because of the ministry of the

Holy Spirit, our job is to endeavor to keep the unity we have already been given.

¹Walter Bauer, W.F. Arndt, F.W. Gingrich, and F.W. Danker, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*, Third Edition (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2000), p. 165.

²All Scripture readings are taken from the Holy Bible, New King James Version; copyright © 1982 by Thomas Nelson, Inc.