

THE WORK OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

PRAYER [We're talking about the HS; it's especially appropriate that we ask for his help]

I. INTRODUCTION (OVERVIEW OF PREVIOUS COURSES)

Well, welcome to Week 5 of the Systematic Theology 2 core seminar. My name is Charles Hedman, and I serve here as one of the pastors.

Over the last four weeks, we have taken a deep look at the person and work of the Holy Spirit. After an initial overview of Systematic 1, we took a look, in Week 2, at the person of the Holy Spirit and His relationship to the Father and to the Son, His personal properties, and personal activities.

Then, in Week 3, we began our look at the Work of the Holy Spirit, specifically the work of the Holy Spirit in the Old Testament, the work of the Holy Spirit in the Person of Christ, and the work of the Holy Spirit in the Christian.

Last week, in Week 4, we took a deeper look at the Holy Spirit at work in the believer, specifically the topics of conviction and conversion, union with Christ, and sanctification. We also spoke about the Holy Spirit's work in the life of the church inspiring and illuminating Scripture, raising up leaders to teach Scripture and producing unity and diversity in the church.

II. BAPTISM IN THE HOLY SPIRIT

Having spent time covering the primary work accomplished by the Holy Spirit, we want to spend time this week talking about certain phrases in Scripture dealing with the Holy Spirit that have been taken to mean different things.

The first phrase we want to consider is what it means to be "baptized with the Holy Spirit." This phrase appears in seven New Testament passages.

For example, in Luke 3:16, John the Baptist says, "**I baptize you with water. But one more powerful than I will come, the thongs of whose sandals I am not worthy to untie. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and with fire.**" And

in Acts 1:5, the Lord says, “**John baptized with water, but in a few days you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit.**”

This last verse shows that whatever baptism of the Holy Spirit is, it certainly happened at the day of Pentecost.

There are 4 primary ways the phrase “baptized with the Holy Spirit” has been interpreted over the history of the church.

The first way is the Pentacostal way. Pentecostals take these two verses and come up with the following position: 1) that baptism in the Holy Spirit is ordinarily an event *following* conversion;¹ and 2) that baptism in the Holy Spirit is made evident by the sign of speaking in tongues, because the disciples spoke in tongues at Pentecost.²

The positives associated with this view is that we may very likely see two works of the Holy Spirit in the book of acts, first with the disciples in Acts 2, then with the Samaritans in Acts 8, then in the home of Cornelius in Acts 10 and then finally in Ephesus in Acts 19.

However, the negatives associated with this view is that it seems to fundamentally misunderstand what happened at Pentecost. As we’ve seen, Pentecost is a unique redemptive-historical event. It’s no more repeatable as an event than the crucifixion, resurrection, or ascension. Which means we should no more anticipate a “personal Pentecost” than we will experience a personal crossing of the red sea or a personal Gethsamane.

Furthermore, while we see other conversions in Acts, several do not mention the speaking in tongues. Moreover, I Corinthians 12:30 makes clear that not all Christians are expected to speak in tongues and that speaking in tongues is a “gift” and not an indicator of someone who is more holy.

The second view as it relates to being baptized in the Holy Spirit is the view that it is solely that which happens when one first becomes saved and regenerated.

¹ Acts 8 is used to confirm a second experience of the Holy Spirit because the Samaritans believed and were baptized but did not receive the Holy Spirit until subsequently when Peter and John came and laid their hands on them. In the first place, there is no trick, such as the laying on of hands, to receive the Holy Spirit. There is not such a pattern in Scripture. Secondly, it seems that waiting for the Apostles from Jerusalem to receive the Spirit helped to solidify unity between the Samaritan and Jerusalem Christians and show that they are being incorporated together whereas they might have easily separated themselves as was there custom at the time. (See Carson’s *Showing the Spirit* on pp. 143-145.)

² I Corinthians 12:30 makes clear that not all Christians are expected to speak in tongues and that speaking in tongues is a “gift” and not an indicator of someone who is more holy.

Proponents of this view argue that such teaching aligns with, 1 Corinthians 12:13 which says, **“For we were all baptized in or by one Spirit into one body – whether Jews or Greeks, slave or free – and we were all given the one Spirit to drink.”** As far as Paul is concerned, they say, “Baptism in the Holy Spirit” refers to the activity of the Holy Spirit at the beginning of the Christian life when we’re given new spiritual life in regeneration and are...given a clear break with the power of sin.”³ Baptism in the Holy Spirit is not some second experience for only “extra-spiritual” Christians.⁴

The detractors of this view will, again, argue that it would appear both with the disciples and with the Samaritans, the outpouring of the Holy Spirit took place some time after their initial conversion. So, you have the disciples clearly converted in Acts 1 but told by Jesus to wait to go out to proclaim the gospel until they are empowered by the Holy Spirit. So, this is a clear problem.

The third view, one advocated by Sinclair Ferguson and others within the history of the church, is that baptism in the Holy Spirit *does* refer to a 2-stage entry into the fullness of the Spirit’s blessing. The first stage is regeneration of the Spirit (so, conversion-initiation), and the second stage is baptism with the Spirit. So, at some point during the period described by the Gospels, the apostles were regenerated. Later, at Pentacost, they experienced a new work of the Spirit; they were baptized and filled with the Spirit and spoke in other tongues as an evidence of this new stage of his activity in their lives. According to this view, while the 2-stage pattern emerges is not paradigmatic—or normative—of what we can expect for the church today. Pentacost is portrayed as a redemptive-historical event, not to be interpreted existentially and pneumatologically, but eschatologically and Christologically.

What is happening, this view argues, is an expansion of the gospel to all lands, as predicted by Acts 1:8. This 2-stage process, then, is the means by which the effects of the gospel are seen visibly to Gentiles and to the nations, as tongues of fire are seen and tongues are spoken. So, the gospel comes to Jerusalem on the Day of Pentecost. The gospel comes to Samaria in Acts 8. The gospel comes to Caesarea in Acts 10. And the gospel comes to Ephesus in Acts 19. All redemptive – historical acts that are once-for-all-time events.

³ Grudem.

⁴ Among those who hold the two-stage teaching on the baptism of the Holy Spirit, there is a thought that the Spirit is to be used at man’s disposal, as though we can effect his presence by our laying on of hands. It denies God’s grace that is sufficient for the start of a Christian’s life but there needs to be other steps and conditions to obtain a more fuller and victorious life.

As such, Christians today do not experience the two-stage entry of the Holy Spirit. Rather, at the point of faith and at the moment of conversion, Christians participate individually in the effect of the outpouring of the Spirit of Pentacost. It is a one-stage event wherein both the conversion of the disciples and the effects of Pentacost are given us in one fall swoop.

The detractors of this view will argue that to hold to such a view is making implicit assumptions that are not explicitly given elsewhere. Sure it is historical-redemptive, but can we definitively say that it cannot happen now. Moreover, according to Romans 8:9, “anyone who does not have the spirit of Christ in them does not belong to him.” If the Holy Spirit didn’t reside fully in the disciples, can we really say that they were converted?

The fourth view, advocated by many, including John Piper, is that the baptism of the Holy Spirit is a subsequent work of grace on an individual believer for the explicit purpose of receiving extra-ordinary spiritual power for Christ-exalting ministry.

Here, the argument is that in each instance in the book of Acts wherein the Holy Spirit is given, He is given for the explicit purpose of proclaiming the gospel and filling for the power of ministry. In Acts 1:8, Luke describes being baptized with the Spirit as receiving power for witness when the Holy Spirit comes upon you. Moreover, in Luke 24:49, Luke says that being baptized in the Spirit is being clothed with power from on high so that message of Christ can be taken effectively to all the nations of the world.

For Piper then, the baptism of the Holy Spirit is a subsequent and special empowerment of the Spirit to do mighty things for Jesus in Jesus’ name.

Detractors of this position would argue that there seems to be more going on in the baptism of the Holy Spirit than just empowerment. They would say that there is a second work of grace going on wherein the fullness of the Holy Spirit is given in the outpouring of the Spirit.

III. BEING FILLED WITH THE SPIRIT

The second phrase used repeatedly in Scripture that we should help to clarify is the phrase “being filled with the Spirit.” So, think of Acts 4:31, “And when they had prayed, the place where they had gathered together was shaken, and they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak the word of God with boldness.”

As there were 4 views of baptism in the Holy Spirit, so there are 4 main views on being filled with the Holy Spirit

For Pentecostals, being filled with the Holy Spirit is, as we spoke about earlier, speaking in tongues and is the mark of true conversion.

For both those who argue that the Holy Spirit baptism was a conversion ordinance in Acts as well as the view that the Holy Spirit baptism was a 2-stage redemptive-historical event, “filling with the Holy Spirit” is basic empowerment for the work of the ministry and the Christian life.

According to this view, then, being filled with the Holy Spirit often results in increased sanctification and increased power for ministry. It’s usually the result of using the means of grace that God has provided for our spiritual growth: Prayer, reading our Bibles, assembling together for the preaching of the Word and fellowship. Consider Acts 4:31, “**After they prayed...they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and spoke the Word of God boldly.**”

Thus, it’s appropriate to understand being filled with the Holy Spirit not as a one-time event but as an event that can and should occur over and over again in a Christian’s life.⁵ In Acts, Stephen’s life was marked as someone who was full of the Holy Spirit (Acts 6:5). Paul often prayed that the people He ministered to would receive more of the Holy Spirit (Eph. 1:17). And note that Paul prayed for all the saints in the church – not just the pastors, deacons, leaders.

But how can a Christian, who already has the Holy Spirit, be filled more with the Holy Spirit? Well, to answer this think of a balloon. A balloon is already filled with air, but if we blow more air into it, the balloon becomes more filled. We can be filled with the Holy Spirit and at the same time be able to receive much more of Him and His transforming power. It was only Jesus himself to whom the Father gave the Spirit without measure. John 3:34 says, “**For the one whom God has sent speaks the words of God for God give [him] the Spirit without limit.**”

The fourth view—that of Piper—argues that the filling of the Holy Spirit is synonymous with being baptized in the Holy Spirit, and thus, is continuous throughout the history of the church and is applicable to us today. So, we see in Acts 2, for example, that people are “filled with the Holy Spirit” ...

⁵ “Although I find no biblical support for a second-blessing theology, I do find support for a second-, third-, fourth-, or fifth-blessing theology.” (Don Carson, *Showing the Spirit*, p. 160.)

Questions or Comments? [If no one asks, ask the class to consider how often they pray to be filled with God's Spirit? Have they ever? Then exhort them to.]

IV. The Gifts of the Holy Spirit

There is a lot of discussion and some confusion surrounding the topic of spiritual gifts. If you've grown up in the church, chances are that some of you here have had diverse experiences regarding the issue. Sometimes it can be divisive in a church. But we've seen that it shouldn't be this way.

Turn with me to the book of Ephesians. In this magnificent letter, the apostle Paul sets out to show the reader the scope of God's eternal plan. He begins in chapter 1 laying out the wonders of the gospel of grace. It is 'in Christ' that we receive every spiritual blessing (1:3). The power of that gospel is put on display in chapter 2. Not only does it raise the spiritually dead to life, reconciling God to man (2:4-5), but it is thru the gospel that God destroys the wall of hostility between Jew and Gentile (2:14). In Christ, there is a new community, united not by race, ethnicity, or gender – but by Christ. Chapter three makes clear then, it's thru the church that God puts on display his manifold wisdom, his breathtaking glory (3:10).

That display isn't easy, is it? To maintain a unified, loving community of sinners? Paul recognizes the challenge and so in chapter 4, he exhorts the church to 'maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace' (4:3). How then do we do that? He goes on to write in 4:7 – "Grace was given to each one of us according to the measure of Christ's gift. Therefore it says, *'When he ascended on high he led a host of captives, and gave gifts to men.'*" Here, Paul reaches back to the OT, quoting Psalm 68:18 to make the point that the outpouring of spiritual gifts represents the downfall of Christ's enemies – the victory of the church.

From there, Paul notes a few of the spiritual gifts starting in v11:

Ephesians 4:11–16 "And he gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the shepherds and teachers, 12 to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ, 13 until we all attain to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to mature manhood, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ, 14 so that we may no longer be children, tossed to and fro by the waves and carried about by every wind of doctrine, by human cunning, by craftiness in deceitful schemes. 15 Rather, speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in every way into him who is the head, into Christ, 16 from whom the whole body, joined and held together by every joint with which it is equipped,

when each part is working properly, makes the body grow so that it builds itself up in love.”

Now this is not the only list of spiritual gifts in the NT. Other lists show up in 1 Corinthians 12, Romans 12, and 1 Peter 4. But from these lists we learn a number of things.

- 1) First, there doesn't seem to be a single comprehensive list of spiritual gifts in any one NT passage. The point is, you shouldn't feel like you've missed your calling if you can't find your 'gift' in a particular list. You can have more than one gift, but Jesus is the only who had all the gifts.
- 2) Second, there seems to be a priority on the word-related gifts. In each of the lists, the writer begins with and focuses on Scripture based gifts.
- 3) Third, the gifts are gifts given *by God*. He gives as he pleases. So in 1 Corinthians 12:11, Paul tells us that the “Spirit...apportions to each one individually *as he wills*.” We see the same thing in 1 Cor. 12:18 and Eph. 4:11. This is helpful in fighting any sense of *gift-envy*. Gifts are given by a good God who knows what He's doing and makes no mistakes in His assigning. Our job is not to buck against His design, but to be faithful. Besides, it's in the diversity of the gifts given that the body works best. And on a small scale, we get this in marriage. Today marks my one year anniversary so I'm going to brag on my wife for one second: She has awesome gifts that I don't have. So she naturally complements me in a way that is so helpful for me as I grow in life. In the same way, church we ought to be using our gifts to help our church grow. Which brings me to point...
- 4) Fourth, the purpose of spiritual gifts is to build up the church. We've already seen that in Eph. 4:12 – Christ gave gifts “to equip the saints for the work of the ministry *for the building up of the church*.” Or in 1 Cor. 12:7, Paul writes, “To each is given a manifestation of the Spirit for the common good.” Often times, the way gifts are discovered is in stepping in and serving. So I ask or identify a need in the church and then roll up my sleeves to help in order that *others* may be built up. We don't say, “Well, my gift is teaching, so I can't help out cleaning up. My gift is encouragement so I'm not going to evangelize. No! We should be looking for needs and ways to bless others so that they might know God and be built up.
- 5) Fifth, in all things, LOVE is the guiding principal in the exercise of the spiritual gifts. This is at the heart of Paul's argument in his discussion of

spiritual gifts in 1 Corinthians 12-14. It seems that the Corinthian Church had elevated the gift of tongues above others and many were clamoring to have the gift so they could be *really* spiritual and noticed. Just a side note: I find that interesting and encouraging: that tongues has seemingly always been the gift the churches struggle with. But our spiritual gifts aren't to make a name for ourselves – they are to love others and make much of God! That's why between two chapters on spiritual gifts – 1 Corinthians 12 and 14, is 1 Corinthians 13 – the love chapter. The way we should preach, encourage, give, serve, lead, exhort – whatever we do – is to do so *lovingly*.

Questions or Comments?

So what about the spiritual gifts of healing, miracles, or speaking in tongues?

Perhaps a good place to begin is to note that there is a broad spectrum of responses. On one end you have those who argue these gifts are normative for the church and should be a regular part of our weekly gatherings (Continuationists).

On the other end are those who argue that such gifts have absolutely ceased and would seek to disprove any claim of it happening today. (Cessationists).

And then there are many who fall somewhere in between. They don't expect it to be a normal part of a church's weekly gathering, nor would they feel compelled to disprove someone who said they had such a gift. If it happened, they would simply look to Paul's instructions in 1 Corinthians 12-14 to make sure the church was edifying and in good order.

Now we don't need to agree on this in order to be a church together – so there are different people who have different views. We each need to be convinced from Scripture and seek to show charity toward one another.

But let me offer one additional observation for us as we think this thru. As you read through Scripture from Genesis to Revelation, one thing you'll notice is that there is a concentration of miraculous events marking off key events in the history of God's people.

So, for example, in the Exodus – you have 10 plagues, the parting of the Red Sea, water gushing from a rock, manna falling from heaven, and other miracles. Other times when the Law is given, when prophets declare a word from God, during the exile or some key event in the storyline of Scripture, such signs seem to both *confirm* and *establish* God's relationship with His people.

The same is true in the NT. So in the Gospels with the coming of Jesus or in Acts 2 marking off the beginning of the church and the outpouring of the Holy Spirit - what happens? There's an apparent surge in miraculous events. Peter notes this in Acts 2:22; Paul and Barnabas' ministry is confirmed by miracles in Acts 14:3. Even later in 2 Corinthians 12:12 Paul argues that the mark of the NT apostle is confirmed by 'signs, wonders, and mighty works.' All this makes sense because the NT was being written (Eph. 2:20) and the gospel message confirmed. Once this foundation was laid, the signs are not mentioned as frequently (as in the pastoral epistles).

Does that mean that God cannot work in miraculous ways today? *Certainly not!* Does that mean he must? *Certainly not!* We should continue to pray for God to do miracles: to heal, for the Spirit to give new life to those spiritually dead, and for God to make Himself known. God can and will do as He sees fit. But we shouldn't assume that the primary way God must reveal himself today is thru the practice of these miraculous gifts. God has given us His word; He's given us His Spirit, and He is at work all around us.

Questions? Comments?

PRAYER