

# The Person and Work of the Holy Spirit

## 4: Baptism and Fullness of the Holy Spirit

Baptism of the Holy Spirit – what do we learn from the Book of Acts?

Amongst some Pentecostal/charismatics there is a teaching – based in particular on the book of Acts that ‘baptism in the Spirit’ is a ‘second-stage’ experience that Christians have and sometimes it is claimed that the sign of being baptised in the Spirit is the ability to speak in ‘tongues’.

### 1) Acts 2 – Day of Pentecost:

The disciples and other believers received the ‘outpouring of the Spirit’. They were already followers of Jesus – now they received the Holy Spirit.

“All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues as the Spirit enabled them” Acts 2:4

### 2) Acts 8 Samaritans

Philip goes down to Samaria and preaches the gospel - v12 and a number believed the gospel.

Then Peter and John arrive,

“They prayed for them that they might receive the Holy Spirit because the Holy Spirit had not yet come upon any of them; they had simply been baptised into the name of the Lord Jesus. Then Peter and John placed their hands on them and they received the Holy Spirit”. V15-17

They were already believers in Christ and then subsequently received the Holy Spirit – a second stage experience

### 3) Acts 10 Cornelius

Peter goes to Caesarea and preaches the gospel to Cornelius – a ‘God-fearer’. As he does so

“While Peter was still speaking these words, the Holy Spirit came on all who heard the message...they heard them speaking in tongues and praising God” 10:44-46

When they received the Holy Spirit – they also began to speak in tongues.

### 4) Acts 19 Paul in Ephesus

In Ephesus Paul encounters some ‘disciples’ and asked, “Did you receive the Holy Spirit when you believed?” 19:2

“No, we have not even heard that there is a Holy Spirit” v2

“On hearing this they were baptised into the name of the Lord Jesus. When Paul placed his hands on them, the Holy Spirit came on them and they spoke in tongues and prophesied” 19:5-6

Some disciples – who subsequently received the Holy Spirit and this was evidence by them speaking in tongues.

However...

Practical Problem – it inevitably causes division within the Body of Christ:

- Between those who supposedly have not been 'baptised in the Spirit' and those who have
- Between those who can/do speak in tongues and those who can't/don't

At its most extreme it can split churches.

Even more importantly – is it true?

1) Regarding tongues:

- What happens on the day of Pentecost is that those present spoke in other languages – 2v6
- In Samaria when they received the Holy Spirit – there is no mention of tongues
- In 1 Corinthians 12 – Paul asks a series of rhetorical questions – all expecting the answer no:

“Are all apostles (answer-no)? Are all prophets? (no) Are all teachers? (no) Do all work miracles? (no) Do all have gifts of healing? (no) Do all speak in tongues? (no) (v29-30)

Earlier in the same chapter he writes “There are different kinds of gifts but the same Spirit” (v4)

In other words – the Holy Spirit gives different gifts to different people – there is no biblical warrant for saying that those who are baptised with the Holy Spirit will or must speak in tongues.

To insist on this can be very damaging..... and WRONG!!

2) Baptism in the Spirit as a second stage experience:

- **The uniqueness of Jesus' disciples.**

They lived through the vital events of salvation – they knew Jesus before he died, through the crucifixion and resurrection, the ascension and Pentecost. Their experience was unique and different to ours – they lived through the unfolding of events that we now receive altogether when we hear the gospel message proclaimed – thus there were inevitably stages to their experience, in a way that there are not for us. Theirs was not a 2 stage experience – more like a 4 stage experience.

- **The significance of Acts 1:8**

Jesus describes the outward movement of the gospel from Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria and the ends of the earth – these are marked by significant outpourings of the Holy Spirit in Acts.

Acts 2 – Pentecost – the Holy Spirit is out-poured on Jewish believers (Jerusalem and Judea)

Acts 8 the Holy Spirit is out-poured on Samaritan believers. Why here does there is a delay between profession of faith and the out-pouring of the Holy Spirit? To ensure that the Samaritan church is also clear that it is under 'apostolic authority'.

The Jews and Samaritans had been divided and hostile to each other for 100's of years, the great and likely danger was for there to be 2 churches – Jewish and Samaritan. It is only when the apostles arrive that the Holy Spirit is out-poured, making it clear to all that both Jewish and Samaritan believers were under apostolic authority. (So for example, there is no hint of 2-stage experience or delayed reception of the Holy Spirit when Philip leads the Ethiopian official to Christ later in the same chapter)

Acts 10 – the Holy Spirit is out-poured on Gentile believers (to the ends of the earth). Here there is no 2-stage experience because the apostle Peter is present. This again is a crucial moment in the spread of the gospel because it now comes to the Gentile world and the out-pouring of the Holy Spirit makes it abundantly clear to all that God now makes no distinction between Jews and Gentiles who are 'in Christ'. But once again the presence of an apostle makes it clear that there is 'one' Church – not a Jewish church and a Gentile church.

Acts 19 – There is nothing in the text to show that these people were Christians. Luke describes them as 'disciples' but they had only received John the Baptist's baptism – as Paul says 'A baptism of repentance' – see v5 they had not been baptised into the name of the Lord Jesus.

These 'disciples' were Old Testament believers in God who had not heard or believed the gospel – as soon as they do, they respond with faith are baptised into the name of the Lord Jesus and receive the Holy Spirit.

- **All Christians have been baptised in the Spirit**

"For we were all baptised by one Spirit into one body – whether Jews or Greeks, slave or free – and we were all given the one Spirit to drink" 1Cor 12:13

"You however, are controlled not by the sinful nature but by the Spirit, if the Spirit of God lives in you. And if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he does not belong to Christ" Romans 8:9

If you do not have the Holy Spirit – you are not a Christian.

All Christians have the Holy Spirit.

In his letters Paul never makes a distinction between Christians – between those who are Christians but do not have the Holy Spirit and those who do.

Such teaching can be harmful within a congregation – inevitably leading to division and feelings of 1<sup>st</sup> class/2<sup>nd</sup> class Christians – which is very sad and hugely ironic – the work of the Spirit is to bring unity amongst God's people – "we were all baptised by one Spirit into one body".

Between 1 Cor 12 and 1 Cor 14 where Paul writes at length about 'spiritual gifts' comes chapter 13 describing 'the most excellent way' – namely – of love. In the Corinthian church, the misuse and wrong attitudes to Spiritual gifts had led to division and problems of 'superiority/inferiority', Paul writes chapter 13 to put these things into proper perspective and to tear down such attitudes.

"If I speak in the tongues of men and of angels but have not love....

"Love does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud...it is not self-seeking..."

## **‘Baptism in the Spirit’ and ‘Being Filled with the Spirit’**

The New Testament teaches that all Christians have received the Holy Spirit and that not all Christians speak in tongues. We are baptised in the Spirit when we become Christians – a one-off event.

However, all Christians are commanded to ‘go on being filled’ with the Spirit.

Ephesians 5:18 (the tense used here has the idea of ‘continue to be....’)

There is no 1<sup>st</sup> class-2<sup>nd</sup> class distinction between Christians – but we can and do experience more of the Holy Spirit and his power and presence at work amongst us – hence Paul’s command to go on being filled with the Holy Spirit.

## **The Holy Spirit ‘unites’ the believer to Jesus**

By the indwelling presence of the Holy Spirit – Jesus dwells in the hearts and lives of his people. Jesus is seated at God’s right hand but the Holy Spirit so mediates his presence to us that Jesus himself can say, “I will not leave you as orphans; I will come to you....you are in me and I am in you(John 14:18,20)....we will come to him and make our home with him (John 14:23)...If a man remains in me and I in him he will bear much fruit (John 15:5).

However, the far more common expression of the Christian’s relationship with Jesus used in the New Testament is that we are ‘in Christ’. This expression is used around 160 times in the New Testament to speak of our being united to Jesus and it is the Holy Spirit who effects this union.

It is both objective and subjective, fact and experience, it is our status and it is a vital, warm life-transforming reality and this is THE great work of the Holy Spirit in our lives.

**Question: When are we/were we united to Christ?**

**3 answers – Eph 1 before foundation of world, 2 on the cross 3 when we become Christians – Holy Spirit actualises – makes effective and real to us our union with Christ.**

“He will bring glory to me by taking from what is mine and making it known to you” John 16:14

“The work of the Spirit is essentially a ministry of uniting us to Christ and then unfolding to us and in us the riches of God’s grace which we inherit in Christ” Ferguson

“We cannot understand this unity in its depth and intimacy. It far transcends our thought. In inner power it surpasses every union that can be found among creatures... Christ gave himself and all his benefits to the church through the Holy Spirit. He keeps nothing for himself. It is a fullness which we receive in Christ, a divine fullness a fullness of grace and truth, a fullness which is never exhausted... it is a long,broad, deep stream of grace and it bears believers along from beginning to end into eternity... it is all grace and nothing but grace which comes to the church in Christ.”  
Herman Bavinck.

**Justification and sanctification.**

**Justification – united – like marriage – we take his name, his righteousness – he takes our sin – state never change.**

We grow as his life pours into ours, his righteousness imputed and imparted.

Romans 6 union with Christ is Paul's answer to why we do not continue to sin

Or Gal 2:20

It is not just that Jesus accomplished salvation for us, on our behalf through his death and resurrection, but that also through his life of godly obedience, he also accomplished for us holiness and righteousness. It is not just that when we become Christians we have Christ's righteousness 'imputed' to us – but also through our union with Christ – his righteousness is also imparted into us. (This is what the image of Jesus as the vine, the believer as the branches points to).

Jesus makes 'available to us, by union with him, the sanctification (holiness) he had accomplished in our humanity... our sanctification is Christ's sanctification of himself in our humanity progressively applied to and realised in us through the ministry of the Holy Spirit" Ferguson

"Sanctification can be ours only by means of the resources of Christ, brought to us through the Holy Spirit as he takes what is Christ's, reveals it to us and thus conforms us more and more into his likeness from one degree of glory to another" Ferguson

Out of our union with Jesus "the principle of spiritual life and holiness in believers is derived and by virtue of their union with him real supplies of spiritual strength and grace, whereby their holiness is preserved, maintained and increased are constantly communicated to them" John Owen