

BAPTISM OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

INTRODUCTION

- Normally, a section on the baptism and filling of the Holy Spirit is not included in the doctrine of salvation portions of systematic theology books
- However, a doctrine that was once largely confined to Pentecostal, Assembly of God, and Charismatic churches has now affected nearly every Christian denomination
- Usually, the charismatic Christian considers the baptism of the Holy Spirit as a second work of grace, distinct from and subsequent to regeneration and conversion
- They believe that it is a work of the Holy Spirit that is available to all Christians but not appropriated by all Christians
- They teach a second blessing of grace – namely that Christians receive the Holy Spirit only in a limited sense at salvation and therefore need to seek the baptism of the Spirit in order to move to a higher level of spiritual life
- This is known as the charismatic doctrine of subsequence – i.e. that believers receive the Holy Spirit *subsequent* to salvation
- The question, “Have you received the baptism of the Holy Spirit?” highlights this doctrine
- Such a question suggests that there are two groups of Christians, those who have had this experience of “baptism in the Holy Spirit” and those who have not

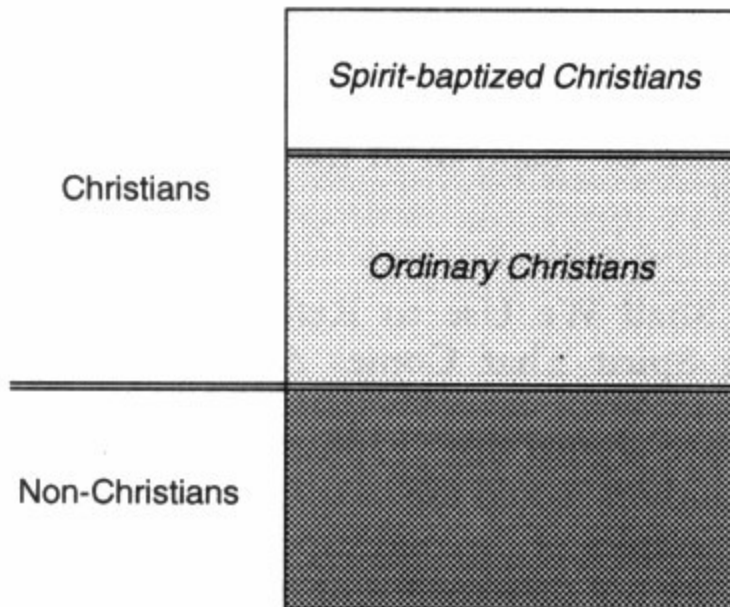


Figure 39.2: Christians Divided into Two Categories: Ordinary and Spirit-Baptized (Grudem, 776)

- They also associate speaking in tongues as a necessary sign or manifestation of this “baptism”
- They hold that this subsequent working of grace is accompanied by speaking in tongues and results in new spiritual motivation and power
- Gordon Fee: (1) the doctrine of subsequence, i.e. that there is for Christians a baptism in the Spirit distinct from and subsequent to the experience of salvation...and (2) the doctrine of tongues as the initial physical evidence of baptism in the Spirit
- Frederick Dale Bruner critiquing Pentecostal theology: Pentecostals believe that the Spirit has baptized every believer into Christ, but that Christ has not baptized every believer into the Spirit...The most

important characteristics of the Pentecostal understanding of the baptism in the Holy Spirit...are: (1) that the event is usually distinct from and subsequent to the new birth; (2) that it is evidenced initially by the sign of speaking in other tongues; (3) that it must be earnestly sought

- They say that Jesus' disciples were believers long before they Holy Spirit was given on Pentecost, yet they did not receive the Holy Spirit until after their conversion
- They see a pattern in the book of Acts where people are first born again and then later are baptized in the Holy Spirit; this biblical pattern, which includes a time gap between conversion and baptism of the Spirit, is then seen as normative for all ages

The Example of Jesus' Disciples

Acts 1:5 ~ for John baptized with water, but you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days from now.

Acts 1:8 ~ but you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be My witnesses both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and even to the remotest part of the earth.”

Acts 2:4 ~ And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit was giving them utterance.

- The assumption here is that, although the disciples were born again long before Pentecost, at Pentecost they received a baptism with the Holy Spirit that was subsequent to conversion and resulted in great empowering for ministry as well as speaking in tongues
- Thus, like the apostles, believers today should ask Jesus for the same baptism in the Spirit and follow the pattern of the disciples

The Example of Samaritan Converts

Acts 8:12-17 ~ But when they believed Philip preaching the good news about the kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ, they were being baptized, men and women alike. Even Simon himself believed; and after being baptized, he continued on with Philip, and as he observed signs and great miracles taking place, he was constantly amazed. Now when the apostles in Jerusalem heard that Samaria had received the word of God, they sent them Peter and John, who came down and prayed for them that they might receive the Holy Spirit. For He had not yet fallen upon any of them; they had simply been baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. Then they began laying their hands on them, and they were receiving the Holy Spirit.

- The assumption here is that these Samaritans were first born again and then later baptized in the HS

The Example of Cornelius' Household

Acts 10:1-2, 45-47 ~ Now *there was* a man at Caesarea named Cornelius, a centurion of what was called the Italian cohort, a devout man and one who feared God with all his household, and gave many alms to the *Jewish* people and prayed to God continually...All the circumcised believers who came with Peter were amazed, because the gift of the Holy Spirit had been poured out on the Gentiles also. For they were hearing them speaking with tongues and exalting God. Then Peter answered, Surely no one can refuse the water for these to be baptized who have received the Holy Spirit just as we did, can he?”

- The assumption here is that Cornelius and his family were God-fearers first but then were later baptized in the Holy Spirit

The Example of John's Disciples

Acts 19:6 ~And when Paul had laid his hands upon them, the Holy Spirit came on them, and they began speaking with tongues and prophesying.

- The assumption here is that John's disciples were already believers, but later received the Holy Spirit

- Advocates of the “second blessing of the Holy Spirit” suggest that believers today should follow the example of the disciples in asking for and seeking the baptism of the Spirit

How to Receive the Baptism of the Holy Spirit

Now that you are a Christian, you can ask for the baptism of the Holy Spirit. John the Baptist said, "I baptize you with water, but *he* will baptize you with the Holy Spirit" (Mark 1:8). Jesus is the One who baptizes us with the Holy Spirit, so let's ask Him to do that right now. Keep in mind this important point, though. We are asking Jesus for the promised gift of the power of the Holy Spirit for living the victorious life and for doing the things that God calls us to do for the glory of Jesus. We are *not* seeking tongues nor any other manifestation! Speaking in tongues is the *result* of receiving the power of the Holy Spirit, it is not the goal.

Just as you received salvation by faith, you also receive the baptism of the Holy Spirit by faith. When you ask Jesus to do this for you, believe in faith that you have received it:

"Lord Jesus, You said in Luke 11:13 that as a child of God I can ask for the gift of the Holy Spirit. You also said in Acts 1:4-8 that I will receive power when I am baptized with the Holy Spirit. So Lord, I am asking in Your Name, the Name of Jesus, for You to baptize me in the Holy Spirit right now, exactly like on the day of Pentecost. I might not feel any different, but I receive the gift of the power of the Holy Spirit right now, by my faith. Thank You, Lord! Amen."

Now that you have received the baptism of the Holy Spirit by faith (just as you received salvation by faith), let's take a look at some things that the Bible says about speaking in tongues. Notice that the Bible tells us to offer *all* of the parts of our body to God as instruments of righteousness:

Assuming that you have now been baptized with the Holy Spirit, you are now able to yield your tongue to Him to be used as an instrument of righteousness. The Bible calls this "praying in a tongue" (1 Corinthians 14:14) and "praying in the Spirit" (Ephesians 6:18).

In order to begin speaking in tongues for the first time it is usually helpful to praise God for a few moments in your native language so that your mind is in an attitude of worship. This often helps keep your mind from being too analytical as you begin speaking in tongues. Worship and love God out loud for a few moments from your heart, with a lot of feeling:

"Father, I *love* You! I *praise* You! I *worship* You! I *love* You with *all* of my heart!"

Now, in the same attitude of love and praise and worship, begin praising God some more but not in any language you know. Just begin making mixed-up syllable sounds that don't mean anything to you, trusting that as you do *your* part then the Holy Spirit will do *His* part. Give God lots of praise and love and worship from your heart, something like this:

"Ora ba *cashay* ha *lamba* sa dura *hemene* ro *boso*"

Some people will find it easy to speak in tongues for the first time, so if you are able to make a bunch of mixed-up syllable sounds, don't stop! Keep going for a minute or more so that your "prayer language" is flowing freely. Congratulations!

BIBLICAL UNDERSTANDING OF THE BAPTISM OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

- How do we explain these apparent “second blessings of the Holy Spirit” in Acts?
 - These events occurred in a period of transition between the Old Covenant and New Covenant
 - Under the Old Covenant, the ministry of the Holy Spirit was limited primarily to granting special grace to individuals to accomplish a certain task on behalf of God; thus only a select few believers were endowed by God with gifts for ministry (i.e. Bezalel in Ex 35:30-31; 70 elders who assisted Moses in Num 11:17; Saul, David, etc.)
 - But that pattern changed at Pentecost...under the New Covenant, the ministry of the Holy Spirit becomes much greater...indwelling, sealing, and granting believers power to work for the Lord
 - The disciples knew and trusted Christ and were saved, but were still Old Covenant believers...they had not received or experienced the Spirit's permanent indwelling
 - When the Holy Spirit came at Pentecost, a new order was established – from then on the HS came to every believer at the moment of faith and indwelt the believer in a permanent, abiding relationship
 - The few instances where there seems to be a “second blessing” in Acts represent those Old Covenant believers who had yet to receive the Spirit; thus, the subsequent episodes of Holy Spirit baptism beyond

the Day of Pentecost should be understood as an extension of Pentecost by which the whole body of Christ was gifted for ministry

- Acts is a transitional book and not everything that took place in Acts is normative for today
- “Acts reveals how a new epoch began – the church age, the era of the Holy Spirit. We Christians who live in that age receive the Spirit when we believe in Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior. The Spirit is a gift from God for every believer. That is taught again and again in the New Testament epistles. Yet nowhere do they substantiate the Pentecostal and charismatic doctrine of a second work of grace that is sought by the believer and evidenced by speaking in tongues” (MacArthur, *Charismatic Chaos*, 227)
- Also, the first believers did not think that the Samaritans, the God-fearers, and the Gentile disciples of John could be Christians
- So he baptism of the HS (in Acts 8, 10, 19) served as confirmation of their membership in the church
- Since each of these groups experienced the baptism of the Holy Spirit in the same way that the Jews had at Pentecost, their inclusion in the church could not be denied
- “Thus, the event in Acts 8, for example, was a kind of a ‘Samaritan Pentecost,’ a special outpouring of the Holy Spirit on the people of Samaria, who were a mix race of Jewish and Gentile ancestry, so that it might be evident to all that the full new covenant blessings and power of the Holy Spirit had come to this group of people as well, and were not confined to Jews only” – Grudem 774
- Furthermore, none of the above texts indicate that anyone was seeking or asking for the Holy Spirit
- The major objection to the Pentecostal understanding of baptism by the Holy Spirit is that the NT nowhere teaches a two-level or two-class Christianity
- It results in two classes of Christians: 1) saved with a baptism of the Spirit; 2) saved without the baptism of the Spirit
- This causes those “without the Spirit” to think they are of a lower class – i.e. incomplete without it which causes them to seek for the greater experience of being baptized in the Spirit and feeling as though they are not a complete Christian until they reach it
- It is better to understand that all Christians have been baptized in the Holy Spirit but not all Christians are at the same level of spiritual growth

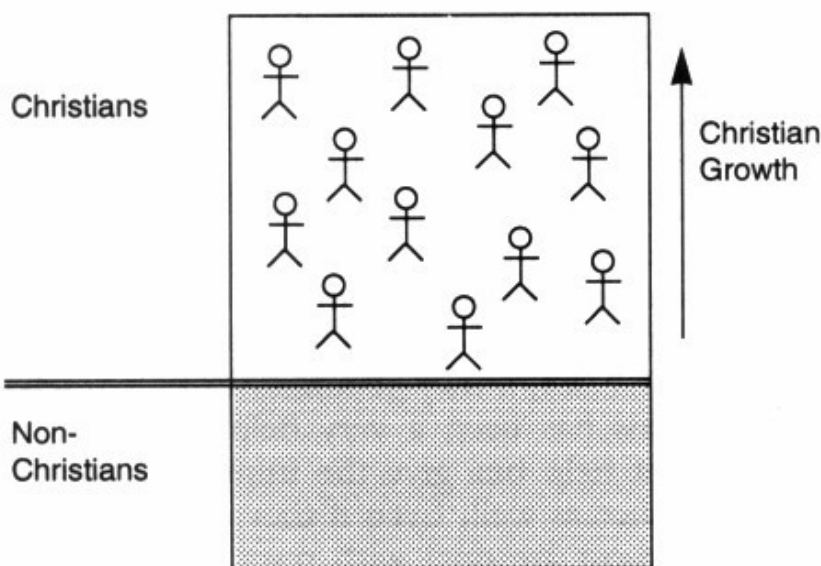


Figure 39.4: A Better Picture: Christians Have Experienced Varying Degrees of Growth, but They Should Not Be Divided into Two Distinct Categories (Grudem, 778)

What Does the Baptism of the Holy Spirit Mean in the New Testament?

- References by John the Baptist:

Mathew 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.

Mark 1:8 ~ I baptized you with water; but He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit.”

Luke 3:16 ~ 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.

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.’

- These words by John the Baptist indicate that the Holy Spirit had not yet been given, but Christ would one day give the Holy Spirit to those who believe in Him
- Jesus promises to send the Holy Spirit – Christ is the baptizer and the Holy Spirit is the agent of baptism

John 7:39 ~ But this He spoke of the Spirit, whom those who believed in Him were to receive; for the Spirit was not yet given, because Jesus was not yet glorified.

- References by Jesus and Peter in direct reference to Pentecost:

Acts 1:5 ~ for John baptized with water, but you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days from now.”

Acts 11:16 ~ 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.’

- What John the Baptist referred to and what Jesus promised actually took place

- References by Paul:

1 Corinthians 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.

- The baptism spoken of here is not water baptism; it refers to being immersed into the body of Christ (the church) by the indwelling of the Holy Spirit
- The word “baptize” (*baptizo*) means “to immerse, baptize, dip”
- Thus, believers at the moment of salvation are baptized with the Holy Spirit which gives new life and places them into the body of Christ
- Paul’s point is that the Corinthians received the Holy Spirit and became members of the body of Christ when they became Christians
- “‘Baptism in the Holy Spirit’ must refer to the activity of the Holy Spirit at the beginning of the Christian life when he gives us new spiritual life (in regeneration) and cleanses us and gives a clear break with the power and love of sin” (Grudem, 768)
- There is only 1 baptism of the Holy Spirit – this is not something believers receive repeatedly – they receive it once when they are born again
- “By this, the Son places all believers into the sphere of the Spirit’s power and Person, into a new environment, a new atmosphere, a new relationship with others, and a new union with Jesus Christ...Paul’s central point...is that baptism with the one Spirit makes the church one Body. If there were more than one Spirit baptism, there would be more than one church, and Paul’s whole point here

would be destroyed. He is using the doctrine of baptism with the Spirit to show the unity of all believers in the Body.” (MacArthur, 1 Corinthians, 312)

- There is no command or method for believers to seek or receive the baptism of the Holy Spirit since they do not need to ask for what they already have

- Characteristics of the Baptism of the Holy Spirit:¹

1. It is unique to the church age

- The baptism of the Holy Spirit did not occur in the Old Testament
- It is unique to the age which began when the church was founded at Pentecost (Acts 2)

2. It includes all believers in this age

1 Corinthians 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.

Romans 6:3, 5 ~ Or do you not know that **all** of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus have been baptized into His death?...For if we have become united with Him in the likeness of His death, certainly we shall also be in the likeness of His resurrection,

Galatians 3:27-28 ~ For **all** of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free man, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus.

- Every true Christian is baptized by Christ with the Holy Spirit at salvation – there is no such thing as a Christian who has not been baptized with the Holy Spirit

3. It brings believers into union with other believers in the body of Christ

1 Corinthians 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.

4. It brings believers into union with Christ

Romans 6:3, 5 ~ Or do you not know that **all** of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus have been baptized into His death?...For if we have become united with Him in the likeness of His death, certainly we shall also be in the likeness of His resurrection,

- The amazing truth of the baptism of the Holy Spirit is that when we trust in Christ, we are completely immersed in the Spirit and completely indwelt by Him
- God has given us everything we need...there is nothing more to put in us...He has put His very self into us!

DISTINCT FROM INDWELLING, SEALING, AND FILLING OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

Indwelling

- The Holy Spirit comes to indwell and live inside all true believers at the moment of salvation

John 14:16-17 ~ I will ask the Father, and He will give you another Helper, that He may be with you forever; that is the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it does not see Him or know Him, but you know Him because He abides with you and will be in you.

¹ Adapted from *The Moody Handbook of Theology*, 266-7.

Romans 8:9 ~ 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.

- This indwelling is permanent

Sealing

- The Holy Spirit is given at the moment of salvation as a seal to the person who believes in Christ, thereby identifying the believer as belonging to God
- This signifies ownership and security

2 Corinthians 1:22 ~ who also sealed us and gave us the Spirit in our hearts as a pledge.

Ephesians 1:13 ~ 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,

Filling

- Whereas the baptism is a one time event that occurs with all believers at the moment of salvation, the filling of the Holy Spirit is not a one time event but an event that can (and should) occur over and over again in a Christian's life
- Also, no command exist to be baptized with the Spirit, but there are commands to be filled with the Holy Spirit

Ephesians 5:18 ~ And do not get drunk with wine, for that is dissipation, but be filled with the Spirit,

- Literally, “be being filled” = continual present tense
- Thus, this is not a “one time” event but something that should occur over and over again in the life of the believer (for example see this in: Acts 2:4; 4:8; 4:31)
- The issue is control...who/what is controlling the believer?
- It is important to get the precise meaning of the word “filled” as Paul used it. When we think of filling, we usually picture a container into which something is poured or shoveled until it is full. That is not what Paul had in mind here. Paul was not speaking of being filled *up*; he had in mind the idea of being filled *through*, or permeated by the Holy Spirit's influence
- See the results of it in 5:19-6:4 (this is how you know if you are filled with the Spirit)

Colossians 3:16 ~ Let the word of Christ richly dwell within you, with all wisdom teaching and admonishing one another with psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with thankfulness in your hearts to God.

- A Spirit-filled Christian is one in whom the Word of Christ dwells

Galatians 5:16 ~ But I say, walk by the Spirit, and you will not carry out the desire of the flesh.

- Being filled with the Spirit involves yielding to the Spirit in our daily walk
- We surrender our wills, our minds, our bodies, our time, our talents, our treasures to the control of the Spirit
- Some conditions that must be met in order to be filled with the Spirit:
 - Confession of sin
 - Prayer
 - Instruction by God's Word