

Session 2

The Baptism Of The Holy Spirit

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1. One-stage views

George Whitefield (1714-1770)

"After having undergone innumerable buffetings of Satan, and many months inexpressible trials by night and day under the spirit of bondage, God was pleased at length to remove the heavy load, to enable me to lay hold on His dear Son by a living faith, and, by giving me the spirit of adoption, to seal me, as I humbly hope, even to the day of everlasting redemption. But oh! with what joy -- joy unspeakable -- even joy that was full of, and big with glory, was my soul filled, when the weight of sin went off, and an abiding sense of the pardoning love of God, and a full assurance of faith broke in upon my disconsolate soul! Surely it was the day of my espousals, -- a day to be had in everlasting remembrance. At first my joys were like a spring tide, and, as it were, overflowed the banks. Go where I would, I could not avoid singing of psalms aloud" (Journals, 58).

2. Two-stage views

i. The Reformed Sealers

Richard Sibbes, Thomas Goodwin, John Owen and Martyn Lloyd-Jones.

ii. The Wesleyans

John Wesley, John Fletcher, William Booth, Oswald Chambers.

iii. The Keswick Movement

Hannah Whithall Smith, F B Meyer, Andrew Murray, R A Torrey, A J Gordon, A B Simpson

iv. Classical Pentecostalism

The Assemblies of God denomination.

The classical Pentecostal view is clearly articulated in points 7. and 8. of the “Statement of Fundamental Truths” of the Assemblies of God:

Point 7. The Promise of the Father.

All believers are entitled to, and should ardently expect and earnestly seek, the promise of the Father, the Baptism in the Holy Ghost and fire, according to the command of our Lord Jesus Christ. This was the normal experience of all the early Christian Church. With it comes the enduement of power for life and service, the bestowment of the gifts and their uses in the work of the ministry (Luke 24:49; Acts 1:4,8; 1 Cor. 12:1-31). This wonderful experience is *distinct from and subsequent to* the experience of the new birth (Acts 10:44-46; 11:14-16; 15:7-9)

Point 8. The Evidence of the Baptism in the Holy Ghost

The Baptism of believers in the Holy Ghost is witnessed by the initial physical sign of speaking with other tongues as the Spirit of God gives them utterance (Acts 2:4). The speaking in tongues in this instance is the same in essence as the gift of tongues (1 Cor 12:4-10,28) but different in purpose and use.”

F F Bosworth and Gordan Fee

v. The Contemporary Charismatic View

3. An Integrative Approach From Scripture:

1 Cor 12:13 *“For we were all baptized by one Spirit so as to form one body—whether Jews or Gentiles, slave or free—and we were all given the one Spirit to drink.”*

If the baptism of the Holy Spirit happens at conversion, how do you explain incidences in the book of Acts where they appear like separate events?

i. The first disciples at Pentecost.

Weren't they already believers first and then had this baptism of the Holy Spirit in Acts 2?

Wayne Grudem in Systematic Theology, p772-773

"They [the first disciples] received this remarkable new empowering from the Holy Spirit because they were living at the time of the transition between the old covenant work of the Holy Spirit and the new covenant work of the Holy Spirit. Though it was a 'second experience' of the Holy Spirit, coming as it did long after their conversion, it is not to be taken as a pattern for us, for we are not living at a time of transition in the work of the Holy Spirit. In their case, believers with an old covenant empowering from the Holy Spirit became believers with a new covenant empowering from the Holy Spirit. But we today do not first become believers with a weaker, old covenant work of the Holy Spirit in our hearts and wait until some later time to receive a new covenant work of the Holy Spirit. Rather, we are in the same position as those who became Christians in the church at Corinth: when we become Christians we are all 'baptized in one Spirit into one body' (1 Cor 12:13) -- just as the Corinthians were, and just as were the new believers in many churches who were converted when Paul traveled on his missionary journeys"

ii. The Samaritans (Acts 8:4-24)

“.....who came down and prayed for them that they might receive the Holy Spirit.

¹⁶For He had not yet fallen upon any of them; they had simply been baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. ¹⁷Then they began laying their hands on them, and they were receiving the Holy Spirit.” Acts 8:15-17

Frederick Bruner “The Samaritans were not left to become an isolated sect with no bonds of union with the apostolic church in Jerusalem. If a Samaritan church and a Jewish church had arisen independently, side by side, without the dramatic removal of the ancient and bitter barriers of prejudice between the two, particularly at the level of ultimate authority, the young church of God would have been in schism from the inception of its mission. The drama of the Samaritan affair in Acts 8 included among its purposes the vivid and visual dismantling of the wall of enmity between Jew and Samaritan and the preservation of the precious unity of the church of God” (*A Theology of the Holy Spirit*, 176).

iii. The Ephesian disciples (Acts 19:1-10)

Beasley-Murray “There is . . . nothing improbable in the existence of groups of people baptized by followers of John the Baptist and standing at varying degrees of distance from (or nearness to) the Christian Church. There must have been many baptized by John himself who had listened to the preaching of Jesus and his disciples, who had received the gospel with more or less intensity of conviction and faith and regarded themselves as His followers, yet who had no part in Pentecost or its developments . . . In Paul’s eyes these men were not Christians --- no man who was without the Spirit of Jesus had any part in the Christ (Rom. 8:9). Probably Luke himself did not view them as Christians; his employment of the term . . . disciples, is a gesture in recognition that they were neither on a level with unbelieving Jews, nor classed with pagans. They were men who had paused on the way without completing the journey, half-Christians, occupying a zone of territory that could exist only at that period of history when the effects of John’s labors overlapped with those of Jesus” (*Baptism in the New Testament*, 109-11).

Conclusion:

1. Baptism in the Spirit is a metaphor that describes our experience of the Spirit at conversion: we are immersed and submerged in Him and forever enjoy His presence and power.
2. All Christians are baptized in the Spirit at the moment of the new birth, not subsequent to it.
3. Biblical usage demands that we apply the terminology of “Spirit-baptism” to the conversion experience of all believers. However, this in no way restricts the activity of the Spirit to conversion! The NT endorses and encourages multiple, subsequent experiences of the Spirit’s power and presence.
4. Evangelicals are right in affirming that all Christians have experienced Spirit-baptism at conversion. They are wrong in minimizing (sometimes even denying) the reality of subsequent, additional experiences of the Spirit in the course of the Christian life.
5. Charismatics are right in affirming the reality and importance of post-conversion encounters with the Spirit that empower, enlighten, and transform. They are wrong in calling this experience “Spirit-baptism”.