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THE HOLY SPIRIT OF GOD

Reading: Acts 1:1-5 2:1-4

4. WHAT IS THE BAPTISM WITH THE HOLY SPIRIT ?

On one occasion Dr. R. Torrey was sharing a conference platform with a Dr. White. As they were talking together Torrey said to Whyte, *' what we all need is a new baptism of the Holy Spirit.'* Dr. Whyte, whispered, *' you mean filling do you not ?'* Later Torrey called at Whyte's private home and acknowledged it was best to speak of things of the Holy Spirit by their proper names. Let me begin this by stressing the importance of **vocabulary**. A great deal of confusion, I believe, is caused by failure on the part of many believers to use the terminology of the Bible. It's important to remember that every sport, every profession, every art has its own vocabulary and failure to recognise this will result in chaos and confusion. For example in the **Medical World**, the surgeon has a name for every different kind of instrument that he uses and it's no use the nurse saying, *' I'll call this instrument what I like.'* If she does the result will be chaos. In the **Musical World**, the conductor of the orchestra has a name for each of the instruments in the orchestra, and there is no use someone coming along and saying, *' It makes no difference to me what he calls the instruments, I have my own name for each of them. He may call it a flute, but I'm going to call it a clarinet.'* In the **Family World**, parents

have names for each of their children and there is no good a stranger coming along and saying, *' I don't care what you call your children, I have names of my own for them.'* Names and terms are important if we are going to avoid confusion and a disregard of this elementary fact by many Christians has produced complete confusion in the thinking of many in relation to the Baptism of or with the Holy Spirit. But what is the Baptism of the Holy Spirit ? In (2:12) a very important question is asked, *' What meanest this ?'* You see (Acts Ch 2) is all about the Baptism of the Spirit and there is much division surrounding this subject. For Charismatic's and many Pentecostalist's this is really the linchpin doctrine. *By linchpin, I mean, it holds all the other Charismatic teachings together.* They teach that the Baptism of the Holy Spirit is a distinct work of the Holy Spirit beyond, separate from, and in addition to salvation. They also believe that certain physical manifestations show that a person has experienced this baptism.

Initially, the proof was speaking in tongues. Now a variety of other physical manifestations, such as shouting, physical jerks, electric currents in the limbs, and sometimes falling into trances, are considered proof of the baptism. So Charismatics have now divided Christianity into two. These could be referred to as the *' haves,'* and the *' have nots.'* The *' haves.'* are those who have experienced the Baptism of the Holy Spirit and are going to heaven first class, the *' have nots.'* are those who have not experienced this baptism, and are going to heaven alright but its economy class. Now as always we need to ask, *' What saith the Scripture ?'* The idea of Spirit

Baptism occurs seven times in the New Testament, four times in the Gospels, twice in Acts (1:5 11:16) and once in the Epistles. We could classify these references as being ***Prophetical, Historical, and Doctrinal***. So what we want to do this is look at first of all at the,

(1) The Baptism with the Spirit viewed Prophetically

You see, there are a number of passages that look forward to this baptism. They speak of the Baptism of the Holy Spirit as yet to be and not as yet experienced or bestowed. Now these passages can be broken into two. There are some passages that relate to,

(a) The COMMENCEMENT of Christ's Ministry:

Do you recall that the promise of the baptism of the Spirit was made by John the Baptist in his ministry ? And, he made it to differentiate between his ministry and the coming ministry of the Lord Jesus. Look at, (Matt 3:11) Can you see here two distinct acts of the Lord Jesus ? One in grace, and the other in judgment. The fire here has nothing to do with the ' *cloven tongues like as of fire,*' as seen on the day of Pentecost. Why (3:12) makes it clear that John was referring to the fires of judgment. Look at (Mk 1:8) (Lk 3:16) (Jn 1:33) Now you see quite clearly from these passages that the Baptism of the Holy Spirit was yet to be. The Promise made of this Baptism was made at (a) We also see that it was made at,

(b) The CONCLUSION of Christ's Ministry:

Look at the statement made by Christ which promises the Baptism of the Holy Spirit. (1:5) Notice several things about this promise,

(1) This Baptism was to be experienced by ***all and not some..***

(2) This Baptism was yet to be, ' *ye shall be baptised with the Holy Ghost,*' future tense.

(3) This Baptism was limited to a point of time, ' *not many days hence.*' Now you will have observed that the testimony concerning the Baptism of the Holy Spirit extends from the appearance of John the Baptist to the Ascension of Christ. In the first four passages it is the Baptist who speaks, and in the last passage our Lord Himself speaks, but their testimonies are one. In all five passages, the announcement is prophetic, so that there was no Baptism of the Holy Spirit previous to our Lord's Ascension. That I think is clear enough. (1)

(2) The Baptism with the Spirit viewed Historically

And that brings us to the Book of Acts, and the problem we face is this. *If the Baptism of the Holy Spirit is not a subsequent second blessing, then why did the apostles receive the Spirit years after they were saved.* You see there are two main views in relation to the Baptism of the Holy Spirit.

The Baptism of the Spirit is an operation of the Spirit distinct from and additional to His regenerating work which is to be sought and obtained by the believer. This view maintains that the terms, baptised, filled, received, gift, are all used to describe the one and the same

experience. This view says that the Baptism of the Spirit is something that happens at some point after salvation and it is something that Christians must seek. The notion that one gets salvation at one point and the Baptism of the Spirit later is often referred to as the Doctrine of Subsequence. The other view says that,

The Baptism of the Spirit is an event occurring at the same time with the reception of Christ, which is never repeated and need not be sought. So the first view says that the Baptism is *After* conversion and the second view says that the Baptism is *At* conversion. But we are still left with this problem. If the Baptism of the Holy Spirit is not a subsequent blessing, then why did the apostles receive the Spirit years after they were saved ? Now this is an absolutely crucial problem and one that we have to look at in the light of what the Scriptures teach. Let's examine,

(a) The Experience of the Disciples AT Pentecost:

For those who hold that the Baptism of the Spirit is subsequent to salvation often point to (Acts Ch 2) They tell us that the apostles and the other disciples who experienced the Baptism of the Spirit and tongues in (Acts Ch 2) had already been saved. Here at Pentecost, they were receiving the power of the Spirit, which they would use to change the world. Now on some of these points this view cannot be faulted. We can be certain that the disciples mentioned in (Ch 2) at least some of them, had experienced salvation. These were the 120, including the apostles who were gathered in the Upper Room. How do we know that they were already saved ? Because

Christ told His apostles, '*Rejoice because your names are written in heaven.*' (Lk 10:20) The Lord Jesus had said to them in the Upper Room, '*He that is washed needeth not save to wash his feet..*' (Jn 13:20) There is no doubt that the Saviour was affirming their salvation. But although the disciples knew and trusted Christ, they were still Old Testament believers. They could not have understood or experienced the Spirit's permanent indwelling until the arrival of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost. You see there is,

(1) A TRANSITION WE NEED TO MARK HERE:

The Acts is a transitional period. My when the Holy Spirit came at Pentecost a new order was established, a new age was being inaugurated, and its inauguration was accompanied by extraordinary signs. *During that transition period the dead were being raised to life.* Are they still being raised ? *During that period prison doors were opened and the servants of God were set free.* Is that still happening ? *During that period the sick on whom fell even the shadow of Peter were healed.* Whose shadow has that same power to day ? *During that period they chose leaders by lot ?* Do we do that today ? *During that period they pooled their possessions, do we do that today ?* My this was a new era. (Acts 2) is one of the greatest transitions recorded in Scripture. It marks the end of the old age and the beginning of the new. Up to now, the Spirit of God was with God's people, but from now on He would indwell them. (Jn 14:17) As Merrill Unger put it, '*Pentecost is as unrepeatable as the creation of the world or of man, as once for all as the incarnation and the death, resurrection, and ascension of Christ.*' Yet

Charismatics would make this once for all event normative for all Christians for all time. They claim that what happened in this chapter in Acts should happen to everyone. If that were so, then everyone should also experience a mighty rushing wind and cloven tongues of fire. But of course, those phenomena are rarely if ever mentioned. In 1976 Pentecostals held a world conference in Jerusalem to celebrate ' *the ongoing miracle of Pentecost.*' Significantly, delegates had to have interpreters and headphones in order to hear and understand in their own languages. Clearly, although Charismatics point to Acts (Ch 2) as the basis for what they believe and practice, contemporary charismatic phenomena are not the same as what the disciples experienced in Jerusalem at Pentecost.

My on the Day of Pentecost the church was born. Sure, there were believers before Pentecost, but there was **no body** before Pentecost. But on the Day of Pentecost these believer units were constituted a spiritual body by the Baptism of the Spirit, and thereafter by this Baptism, everyone upon believing is incorporated into this body. My (Acts 2) presents a unique situation. The age of the Holy Spirit could not begin until Christ ascended. (Jn 7:37-39) *You see the apostles did not receive the Baptism of the Spirit until after their salvation for the simple reason that there was no Baptism of the Spirit until the Day of Pentecost and they were saved before Pentecost.* That's why the Baptism of the Spirit came as a subsequent blessing to them. There had to be a beginning somewhere. But since that time the Baptism of the Holy

Spirit has been the blessing of all who call on the name of the Lord at the time God saves them. (1)

(2) A DISTINCTION WE NEED TO MAKE HERE:

For it's important to distinguish between the experience of those who were already disciples of Christ before Pentecost, and that of those who were saved on that day. The distinction is between the 120, and the 3,000. Now if I were to ask you which experience is to be the norm for today. *How would you respond ?* Well, we live after Pentecost, like the 3,000. With us, therefore as with them, the forgiveness of sins and the gift of the Holy Spirit are received together. (2:38) Now that is (a) But what about,

(b) The Experience of the Disciples AFTER Pentecost:

Come with me to (Acts 8:14-17) For charismatics see this as evidence that one gets salvation at one point and the Baptism of the Spirit later. Certainly, there can be no question that we have here baptised believers. The question is this, ' *why was the Holy Spirit withheld when they believed ?*' Look at (8:16) Another translation puts it like this, ' *He had not yet fallen upon any of them.*' Now the Greek word for ' *not yet,*' signifies ' *something that should have happened but has not yet.*' In other words this verse is saying the Samaritans were saved, but for some peculiar reason, what should have happened the Holy Spirits coming had not yet occurred. **Why ?** Well, I think we get the clue in (8:14) Note the word ' *Samaria.*' Philip's evangelistic efforts were with the despised Samaritans. The hatred between Jews and Samaritans was

well known. (Jn 4:9) Now if these Samaritans had received the Holy Spirit at the moment of salvation, the terrible rift between the Jews and the Samaritans might have continued in the Christian Church. Pentecost had been a Jewish event, and the church born at Pentecost was made up exclusively of Jewish believers in Christ. Now if the Samaritans had started their own Christian group, the age long rivalry would have continued, with a Jewish church competing against Samaritan assemblies. *Do you see now why God withheld the Holy Spirit ?* He withheld the gift of the Spirit to the Samaritans until the Jewish apostles could be with them, so that everyone could see that God's purpose under the New Covenant transcended the nation of Israel and included even Samaritans in **one** church. My let us ever remember the transition that was going on in the early church. (Acts 2) presents a unique situation. It cannot be used to say that a believer is baptised with the Spirit sometime after salvation. The Holy Spirit came to baptise and indwell the disciples in (Acts 2) because that's when God planned for the Spirit to come. There had to be a beginning somewhere. (1) (2)

(3) The Baptism with the Spirit viewed Doctrinally

For when we turn to (Cor Ch 12) we discover Paul's classic doctrinal statement on the baptism of the Spirit. You say, '*what is the purpose of the baptism of the Spirit ?*' Well the answer is right here. The Baptism of the Spirit is,

(a) *Something which is CONSTITUTIONAL:*

Look at (1 Cor 12:13) That word, '*by,*' can be translated '*in or with,*' but whatever way we take it Paul is stressing that the Baptism in the Holy Spirit is a Baptism into the Body of Christ. What happened on the Day of Pentecost was this. These believer units were constituted a Spiritual Body by the Baptism of the Spirit, and thereafter by this Baptism everyone upon believing in Christ is incorporated into the Body. Did you notice here that this Baptism is not connected with our **State** as believers but with our **Standing** as believers ? My the real purpose of the Baptism in the Spirit is not that Christians may be energised for witness and service, nor that we may achieve ecstatic utterance or experience, the real purpose of the Baptism of the Spirit is to bring us into the Body of Christ. Literally, that word '*baptize,*' means '*to immerse.*'

But figuratively it means '*to be identified with.*' When the Holy Spirit came at Pentecost, He identified these believers with their glorified Head the Lord Jesus and formed the body which is the church. '*For by one Spirit were we all baptised into one body.*' So the Baptism of the Spirit is when God's Spirit takes a person and places him in the Body of Christ. Do you see how it happened in (Acts 2:2-3) ? These were the signs of the Spirit's arrival. Wind and Fire symbols of the Holy Spirit. (Jn 3:8 Is 4:4) There was,

(1) The Awesome Sound:

It was a sound like a wind. It was not wind but a sound like wind, something resembling a rushing hurricane.

‘ *And suddenly*,’ (2:2) The church was born suddenly. It came into being instantaneously. At the Rapture the church will leave just as quickly. (Rev 22:12) God has the sovereign right to determine when the church begins and ends and its beginning and ending have nothing to do with anyone’s prayers. (1)

(2) The Awesome Sight:

(2:3) The cloven tongues that sat on their heads weren’t actually fire, they appeared to be like fire. This was a testimony that each without exception had received the Holy Spirit. This was the Baptism of the Spirit and they all partook of it. The Holy Spirit identifying these believers with their glorified Head the Lord Jesus, and forming the body which is the church. (a)

(b) Something which is INITIAL:

There is a sense in which the Baptism in the Spirit is Historical and there is a sense in which it is Personal. But it is always associated with the idea of initiation into Christ and into the Body of Christ. Without doubt there is in (1 Cor 12:13)

(1) Something HISTORICAL:

When Paul says, ‘ *For by one Spirit*,’ He is referring back to Pentecost as the occasion when all believers were baptised into the Body of Christ. F. F. Bruce says, ‘ *The Baptism of the Spirit, was strictly speaking something that took place once for all on the day of Pentecost.*’

(2) Something PERSONAL:

For these words must also be taken to refer to the blessing personally received by all Christians at their conversion. As S. S. Short says, ‘ *The apostles Baptism in the Spirit occurred on the Day of Pentecost when the Body of Christ was initially formed. The Spirit Baptism of people since that occasion has occurred at their conversion, but in each case it has been when they were divinely incorporated into Christ’s body, their Baptism in the Spirit being the means of that incorporation.*’ My from God’s viewpoint we were baptised in the Spirit on the Day of Pentecost, from our viewpoint we were baptised the moment we believed. If you can answer the question, ‘ *when was I placed in the body of Christ ?*’ then you can answer the question, ‘ *when was I baptized with the Holy Spirit ?*’ The moment you believed. It’s a fact not a feeling. It’s all part of the salvation package.

When you are saved you receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. (2:38) The Spirit of God comes to live in you. You are sealed by the Holy Spirit. (Eph 1:13) You belong to the Lord. The Holy Spirit is ‘ *the earnest*,’ your down-payment of more blessings to come. You experience the Baptism of the Spirit into the body of Christ, the church. My it’s all part of the package. These sovereign acts of God are never repeated, never withdrawn, and they are guarantees that the believer is eternally secure and has a glorious standing in Christ. It’s just like a soldier entering the army. At the moment he becomes a soldier, he gets his gear. He gets a rifle, binoculars, combat boots, the whole package, everything

he needs to be an effective and successful soldier. Now the same is true with salvation and the package we receive with it. My we are never commanded to seek the baptism of the Spirit. Do you know why ? Why ask God to do something He has already done. Suppose you buy John a bike for Christmas. What would you think if John started asking you for a bike on the 1st January right after Christmas. My we don't need something more than Christ and salvation. As Christians we have the Holy Spirit. Our bodies are the temples of the Holy Spirit (1 Cor 6:19) God Himself indwells our bodies (2 Cor 6:16) All the resources we need are there. Paul says, '*And ye are complete in Him,*' (Col 2:10) Why do I want anything else then if I've got it all in the Lord Jesus ? Peter says, '*His divine power hath given unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness,*' How ? '*through the knowledge of him,*' (2 Pet 1:3) There is no point in seeking what is already ours. (a) (b)

(c) *Something which is UNIVERSAL:*

Look if you will at (1 Cor 12:13) When Paul says, '*For by one Spirit were we all*,' He is speaking of some who were quarrelsome and divisive: (1:10) carnal and walked as men: (3:3) guilty of gross immorality: (5:1) some who were taking each to court: (6:6) turning the Lord's Supper into an orgy of eating and drinking (11:21) yet of these Paul says, '*For by one Spirit were we all*,' they were a carnal crowd yet they had experienced the Baptism of the Spirit. My if this Baptism of the Spirit brings you into higher plane of Christian living, then tell me

what happened at Corinth ? For the Corinthian church was carnal yet they had experienced the Baptism of the Spirit. Why ? Because all believers are baptized, not some believers but all believers. *Far from this baptism being the special privilege of the spiritual elite among Christians, it's the birthright of all believers.* All believers are baptized by the Spirit and thus are all in one body. For this baptism makes all believers one. Isn't it strange that the issue of believers being united through the baptism of the Spirit has actually divided God's people ? That ought not to be for through this baptism we are made one. Dr. Harry Ironside tells the story of a Christian worker visiting at the palace of an English Duchess who was also a humble believer. On the Lord's Day morning a group of believers gathered around the Lord's Table and a brother spoke at the Table.

The Duchess whispered to her friend '*That is my coachman.*' Later the Christian worker said '*Isn't it hard for your pride to have to listen to your coachman speak ?*' She replied, '*In the church of God there is neither Jew nor Greek, bond nor free we are all one in Christ Jesus.*' Is this not what the Baptism of the Spirit reminds us of ? How we were placed in the body of Christ and have all become one ? My we don't have to go about seeking to create a unity. It's already there. What we should be concerned with is the outworking of that unity. We have all been baptised by the Spirit into one body. We're united to Christ and to each other. We are members of one body the church. Let us therefore appear as one for the eyes of the world are upon us.

