

PNEUMATOLOGY: DOCTRINE OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

PART 11

SPIRIT BAPTISM, PART 3

One of the problems with trying to nail down exactly what these groups believe is that these theologians variously interpret the relevant Scriptures used to determine their doctrines in different ways. As a result, they present doctrines that vary from one group to another. Should we expect anything else when individual experience and thought is the primary hermeneutic? That's what happens when literal hermeneutics are sacrificed on the altar of theology, emotion, and experience.

One argument they use that seems to have priority is their claim that the disciples and others were believers long before they were baptized in the Holy Spirit at Pentecost. That leads to their doctrine of a second blessing. They also use other examples from Acts such as Paul and the Samaritans to prove faith can precede Spirit baptism. Since those men received the Spirit long after they believed, that is normative practice for today. Salvation comes first and the baptism of the Spirit comes later. The problem with this theology is their failure to understand dispensational distinctions. Old Testament believers are not in the body of Christ and the Lord's disciples were Old Testament believers until they were baptized in the Holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost. The fact that they were Old Testament believers before Pentecost is not relevant to Spirit baptism which is the event that places them into the body of Christ. The dispensation of grace began on the day of Pentecost. Old Testament believers are not part of the body of Christ and they are not part of the bride of Christ and they are not part of the Church. If any of the disciples had died before Pentecost, they would not have been New Testament believers.

They seem to differentiate between receiving the Holy Spirit when first believing and getting the fullness of the Spirit later. They use various descriptive terms the Bible uses to describe the baptism of the Spirit: filling which they may call the infilling, outpouring or pouring out, falling, and coming on. "For many pentecostals the imagery of coming on, or upon, is particularly significant. 'The Holy Spirit may be *in* you, but is he also *on* you?' This kind of question is more than semantical [sic], because the latter is viewed as an additional operation of the Holy Spirit in relation to the believer. The pentecostal 'filling,' accordingly, is not only an internal moving but also an external coming of the Holy Spirit. As a result, one is both Spirit-filled and Spirit-endowed" [Burgess and Van der Mass, p. 356]. This all sounds like very profound theology—which perhaps it is—but is it biblical? I would suggest it is not.

Pentecostals will concur that all believers are indwelt by the Holy Spirit but not all are baptized in the Spirit. “By insisting that a distinctive baptism in the Holy Spirit experience is available to believers today, Pentecostals are not implying that Christians who have not spoken in tongues do not have the Spirit. Baptism in the Holy Spirit is only one of His several works. Conviction, justification, regeneration, and sanctification are all works of the same Holy Spirit. Each of these works is distinctive, having a unique nature and purpose. If the individual responds positively to the Spirit's convicting work, then justification and regeneration occur. At that moment, the Holy Spirit dwells within the believer, and from that moment forward it is correct to say the individual has the Spirit....Pentecostals insist that ‘all believers have the Holy Spirit, yet...all believers, in addition to having the Holy Spirit, may be filled with or baptized with the Holy Spirit.’ The baptism in the Holy Spirit is a unique experience available to the converted, regenerated Christian for a special, specific purpose.” [John W. Wyckoff in *Systematic Theology*, rev. ed., ed. Stanley M. Horton, p. 446-447].

From reading their theology texts, it seems to me they place a lot of emphasis on English translations without much exegetical consideration of the Greek. I know many of them do know Greek but they just don't seem to me to use it much. Their interpretive conclusions simply cannot be supported by literal hermeneutics and proper exegetical methods.

For example, most translations do translate the Greek ἐν as “by” in 1 Corinthians 12:13, but some translate it as “in.” Pentecostals heavily rely on the interpretation “by” because it supports their doctrine of a second blessing but is that translation all that accurate? Pentecostals do teach that people get baptized in the Holy Spirit upon belief, but they use this Corinthians verse to justify their theology of a second baptism of the Holy Spirit. I would suggest that the Greek word with the dative noun is better translated as “in” rather than as “by” or “with.” All three of these words are acceptable translations of the Greek. In the Greek text by Mounce, *Basics of Biblical Greek*, he teaches that “ἐν with the *dative* means *in* (p. 57, 2^d ed.). That is probably overbroad but it is a general interpretive principle. Using “in” is not only grammatically proper but it also better fits the overall teaching of the text. Christ does the baptizing into the Holy Spirit; it is not the Holy Spirit who is baptizing us. You will recall that Chafer defines βαπτίζω as the fact of being immersed in something without the idea of being taken back out and that fits the concept of Spirit baptism. We are baptized in the Spirit never to be taken back out. Βάπτω, on the other hand, has the idea of being dipped in and taken back out. The verses referring to Spirit baptism use βαπτίζω. The problem is many of the most widely read translations use “by” or “with” rather than “in” when they translate this Greek preposition with a dative noun. These include the KJV, NKJV, NASB, HCSB, and the RSV. Others use “in” including the NET Bible (1 Cor. 12:13 only) and the ESV (1 Cor.

12:13 only). Only the ASV is consistent in all three of these verses in its translation of the preposition using “in” rather than using “by” or “with.”

1 Corinthians 12:13 ¹³For by (ἐν) one Spirit we were all baptized (βαπτίζω) into one body, whether Jews or Greeks, whether slaves or free, and we were all made to drink of one Spirit.

Mark 1:8 ⁸“I baptized (βαπτίζω) you with (not present in manuscript) water (ὕδατι, dative noun); but He will baptize (βαπτίζω) you with (ἐν) the Holy (ἁγίω, dative noun) Spirit (πνεύματι, dative noun).”

Matthew 3:11 ¹¹“As for me, I baptize (βαπτίζω) you with (ἐν) water (ὕδατι, dative noun) 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 (βαπτίζω) you with (ἐν) the Holy Spirit (ἁγίω, dative nouns) and fire (πυρί, dative noun, ASV inserts “in” into the text).

In my opinion, the doctrine that 1 Corinthians 12:13 teaches a baptism by the Spirit after coming to faith is negated. Both the grammar and the theology defeat the concept of a second blessing or baptism by the Spirit. When dispensational distinctions are properly understood, the idea that Old Testament believers were in the body of Christ as believers prior to Pentecost is proven to be biblically inaccurate because the body of Christ and the Church universal did not exist prior to Pentecost.

They make the claim that believers should ask for and seek out the baptism in the Spirit. The basis for this is that the apostles asked for a baptism in the Holy Spirit. The problem is the Bible never says any of the disciples asked to be baptized in the Spirit. Jesus told them to wait for it and they would receive it at some point in the near future but I’m unaware of any place where they specifically asked Him for it.

For Pentecostals, the baptism of the Spirit is something that can be felt and experienced. “Since the essential meaning of baptism is immersion, pentecostals often emphasize that to be baptized in the Holy Spirit is to be immersed in the Holy Spirit. This signifies a total submergence within the reality of the Holy Spirit so that whoever is so baptized has a vivid sense of the Spirit’s presence and power” [Burgess and Van der Mass, p. 355]. This power then becomes a power for witness.

I would actually agree that this baptism is an immersion into the Holy Spirit which is a concept Chafer presented in his quote concerning the Greek word βαπτίζω I read earlier. What I would strongly disagree with is that this event results in a felt experience. This is where Pentecostals /Charismatics/and Word of Faith theologians get off track. They value emotion and experience over the Word of God and they use those experiences, imaginary or otherwise, and those emotions to define their Christian faith

and their theology. I suggest there is no true experiential feeling accompanying the baptism in the Holy Spirit. We may well experience a lot of feelings and emotions at the moment we come to faith and that would be perfectly normal for many people who undergo the new birth, but that doesn't mean the Spirit's baptizing, indwelling ministry results in a person actually feeling the presence and power of the Spirit.

The idea that the baptism in the Spirit provides the believer with power is part of the basis for the belief among Pentecostals that they can heal and perform various miracles. Because Jesus healed people and cast out demons and performed other miracles and because the apostles did the same, Pentecostals assume they can also do the same things today. They assume that all believers are endowed with the same powers the apostles were granted by the Lord. They rely on John 14:12 and Mark 16:17-18 for this theology but those Scriptures, in context, were addressed to the eleven apostles and not to believers in general. The doctrines specific to distinctive Pentecostal theology always seem to come down to an improper exegetical understanding of their proof texts, or, even worse, a deliberate and calculated imposition of Pentecostal theology into the text. Always. That is why literal hermeneutics are placed in the position of relative unimportance in the development of Pentecostal theological doctrines.

“Pentecostals have no hesitation in affirming this continuity in the *dunamis* of the Holy Spirit down to the present day. They lay much emphasis on the power of the Spirit as essential for anointed witness and believe that mighty works such as miracles of healing and deliverance are vital components of a full ministry. On this latter point pentecostals differ with many evangelical Christians who claim that miracles ceased with the apostolic times. Pentecostals view both a fully anointed witness and the working of miracles as inseparable: if the witness continues, so do miracles. Moreover, they maintain that both become truly effective through baptism in the Holy Spirit” [Burgess and Van der Mass, p. 360]. Their definition of “anointing” drives a wedge between believers. Those who are fully anointed witnesses are the more spiritual ones, the people more tuned into the Holy Spirit and more holy and effective than other, less anointed, people. It also reflects a disregard for the purpose of miracles which was simply to validate the message and the messenger as authoritative representatives of God.

Pentecostals base their doctrine of continuity from the gospels and Acts and on to today on Romans 15:4.

Romans 15:4⁴For whatever was written in earlier times was written for our instruction, so that through perseverance and the encouragement of the Scriptures we might have hope.

“Moreover, just as Paul believed that ‘whatever was written in earlier times [i.e., the Old Testament] was written for our instruction’ (Rom. 15:4, NASB), so Pentecostals similarly believe that whatever was written in Acts, as well as in the Gospels or the Epistles, was written for our instruction. There is sufficient reason, therefore, to conclude that Luke intended to teach Theophilus a model that he could consider normative for formulating Christian doctrine, practice, and experience” [Wyckoff, p. 436]

Was Paul suggesting that the Old Testament be taken out of context in order to justify Pentecostal theology? Of course not. This Scripture is referring to pleasing other people than ourselves and as the Hebrew Scriptures reveals those who unselfishly did that we can receive motivation from their example and have hope for the future. Understanding this Scripture in the way Assembly of God theologians do is a major departure from sound hermeneutical methods.

Another hermeneutical sleight of hand they use is to claim that the “exact phrase ‘baptism in the Holy Spirit’ is not found in the Bible. Nevertheless, it is biblical in that it originates from similar phraseology used by the biblical writers” [Wyckoff, p. 425]. The problem is they completely ignore the one Scripture, 1 Corinthians 12:13, that most nearly and clearly refers to the baptism of the Holy Spirit for all believers because they want to restrict the baptism of the Spirit to an event after regeneration.

At least the Assembly of God branch uses Acts 2:39 as the proof text for the baptism of the Holy Spirit evidenced by tongues. By examining the context of that Scripture, it is easy to see this is a theological imposition on a text that says no such thing.

Acts 2:37–40 ³⁷Now when they heard this, they were pierced to the heart, and said to Peter and the rest of the apostles, “Brethren, what shall we do?” ³⁸Peter said to them, “Repent, and each of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins; and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. ³⁹For the promise is for you and your children and for all who are far off, as many as the Lord our God will call to Himself.” ⁴⁰And with many other words he solemnly testified and kept on exhorting them, saying, “Be saved from this perverse generation!”

This Scripture is part of the sermon Peter preached to the nation of Israel to give them the chance to accept their Messiah. The Pentecostal claim is that this verse is an explanation of Joel's prophecy that Peter quoted. The languages spoken at that time were a sign of judgment to those Jews. This has nothing to do with the church. It is an abuse of Scripture to use this as a proof text for proving Spirit baptism as evidenced by tongues.

Pentecostal theology came out of the Wesleyan holiness movement. In that movement sanctification was thought to be a second work of grace that purified one's heart after salvation but before Spirit baptism. As a result of this doctrine, some Pentecostals believe the baptism of the Holy Spirit is a third blessing. Others stop at the second blessing because they feel the heart has been made pure at the moment of regeneration which is therefore not an issue of a second blessing. The question is how much of this is based on sound biblical exegesis? This idea of living a perfectly holy life is sometimes referred to as "the full gospel." This possibly gives the impression that the gospel Paul preached which simply places people into the body of Christ upon belief is somehow inadequate. I actually think they refer to the full gospel as the continuation of that which God begins at the new birth proceeding to the goal of spiritual growth, maturity, and service. If that sense represents their thinking, then I would concur with that; I'm just not sure of the real position. The problem is I couldn't find anything that really explains what they mean by "full gospel." The Assemblies of God does teach that sanctification is part of justification. "Sanctification includes all God's work in attempting to save men and women from the judgment to come" [Timothy P. Jenney, *Systematic Theology*, rev. ed., ed. Stanley M. Horton, p. 416]. We would not agree that sanctification is part of justification; sanctification follows justification. As much as I hate to say it, D. L. Moody and R. A. Torrey both taught that the baptism of the Holy Spirit was a second blessing that empowered the born again person for service.

I did find a definition of three works of grace with Spirit baptism being the third. "[The first was] salvation, by which a person was cleansed from the sins of the unregenerate life; [the second work of grace was] sanctification, which provided a victory over sin in this life in the Wesleyan sense [which refers to sinless perfection in this life]; and [the third work of grace was the] baptism of the Holy Spirit, which empowered the believer for service to God and people" [Timothy P. Jenney, *Systematic Theology*, rev. ed., ed. Stanley M. Horton, p. 404]. Earlier Pentecostals identified the baptism of the Holy Spirit as the second work of grace and this probably still varies today depending on you examine.

Pentecostals believe that speaking in tongues is the initial evidence of the Spirit baptism. [Note: I will speak more about tongues when I talk about spiritual gifts.] If a person isn't speaking in tongues, they haven't received the baptism of the Spirit. Yet, their doctrine is confused because some of them will admit that every believer has the Holy Spirit based on 1 Corinthians 12:13 but the Spirit baptism is a baptism for power which is a separate issue from the initial Spirit baptism. This is very confusing and not at all in accordance with Scripture.

They consider tongues to be their private prayer language and a way through which God is praised. There is no biblical support for the notion of a private prayer language.

They base the concept of praise on two passages in Acts. There is an interesting history concerning how Pentecostals got to this private prayer language business and I will relate that story when I talk about tongues as a spiritual gift.

Acts 2:11 ¹¹Cretans and Arabs—we hear them in our own tongues speaking of the mighty deeds of God.”

Acts 10:46 ⁴⁶For they were hearing them speaking with tongues and exalting God....

The problem for them is these verses have been taken out of context in order to support their theology. The Scriptures specifically identify the purpose for tongues and Paul related that purpose to tongues speaking in the churches. Further, tongues are always a known human language; biblical tongues are never unintelligible gibberish which Pentecostals refer to as a private prayer language. They seem to get this idea of a private prayer language from the Scripture that speaks about the tongues of angels as though that was some unknown to human beings kind of language. The problem with that position is twofold. One, how do they know the human induced gibberish is the language of angels? Two, when angels spoke to men, they always did so in a human language the men or women could understand.

1 Corinthians 13:1 ¹If I speak with the tongues of men and of angels...

Isaiah 28:11 ¹¹Indeed, He will speak to this people Through stammering lips and a foreign tongue,

1 Corinthians 14:21–22 ²¹In the Law it is written, “BY MEN OF STRANGE TONGUES AND BY THE LIPS OF STRANGERS I WILL SPEAK TO THIS PEOPLE, AND EVEN SO THEY WILL NOT LISTEN TO ME,” says the Lord. ²²So then tongues are for a sign, not to those who believe but to unbelievers; but prophecy is for a sign, not to unbelievers but to those who believe.

Tongues were and are a sign to unbelieving Jews. Isaiah was telling the Jewish people that because they wouldn't listen to the simple, plain truth of God's Word that was presented to them in Hebrew, then they would listen to strange tongues of judgment in the form of the Assyrians and later the Babylonians and others down through history. These are real human languages and not gibberish. Every time the gift of tongues is used in the New Testament, it seems that Jewish people are present to hear this sign of judgment.

I do not know whether or not Oneness Pentecostals are representative of all Pentecostal groups but one man who left that group had much to say about the devastating effects of tongues as a requirement for the baptism of the Spirit.

"...anyone who had not spoken in tongues had *not yet been saved*. This person was yet a sinner who would die in his or her sins unless at some point tongues flowed from his or her mouth. This remains the teaching of the United Pentecostal Church and most other Oneness Pentecostal groups....I believe that this doctrine of the necessity of tongues is, in terms of its direct effect upon people, the most psychologically harmful of all the teachings of the United Pentecostal Church and other 'apostolic faith' groups. One simply *must* speak in tongues to be saved and to be a part of God's 'holy community.' This, obviously, puts tremendous psychological and sociological pressure on people to speak in tongues. Quite literally, more could not be at stake than what is at stake in whether or not one speaks in tongues. Each night you go to bed not yet having spoken in tongues, you go to bed without God's salvation....From the Oneness standpoint, however, the only reason why someone has not spoken in tongues is that he or she is not yet salvation-worthy. This person has not yet 'completely yielded' to God, or does not yet have 'sufficient faith', or perhaps has not 'really repented of his or her sins. In any case, if individuals have not spoken in tongues, it is unquestionably their fault, not God's, for it is forever reiterated that God wants everyone to have the Holy Spirit and be saved (that is, to speak in tongues). Failure to speak in tongues, then, not only ostracizes a person from God's love and God's people; it is a direct indictment of his or her moral state....How vividly, and sadly, I recall the numerous people in my UPCI experience who vigorously 'sought' for the Holy Spirit for months and years on end. After nearly every service, these unfortunate souls would be up at the altar praying to God to save them, sometimes screaming, begging, and crying out to God to 'give them the Holy Ghost' to save them. Why God was holding back on them they did not know. They, and everybody else, only knew it was *their* fault" [Gregory A. Boyd, *Oneness Pentecostals & the Trinity*, pp. 198-199].