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B0528 – July 17, 2005 – Major Bible Themes
Chapter 18 - God the Holy Spirit: His Baptism

I. REVIEW OF SPIRIT'S PERSON AND WORK

Several weeks ago we looked at the Person of the Holy Spirit. In the last few weeks we have been looking at the Works of the Holy Spirit. When we study the individual members of the Trinity we can always break the study down into a study of the Person and then their Work. At present we are looking at the Holy Spirit. His works in our study:

1. the 3-fold convicting ministry (John 16:7-11),
2. regeneration (John 3:1-15),
3. indwelling (John 14:17),
4. baptism (Acts 1:5; 11:16; 1 Cor 12:13),
5. sealing (2 Cor 1:22; Eph 1:13; 4:30),
6. filling (Eph 5:18)

The 3-fold convicting ministry is the Holy Spirit's ministry of convicting more than the elect but less than every individual of the specifics of sin, righteousness, and judgment. Regeneration is God's giving eternal life to the one who believes at the moment they believe so they can enter the Millennial Kingdom. Indwelling is the Spirit's permanent presence in all believers during the Church and during the Millennial Kingdom. Indwelling was a temporal ministry in the OT and could be lost (1 Sam 16:14; Ps 51:11). It is conditioned upon obedience if that obedience is defined simply as the obedience of the gospel or the obedience of faith (Acts 5:32; 6:7). There are two examples of the indwelling coming sometime after believing; in Acts 8 it involved Samaritan believers and in Acts 19 it involved disciples of John the Baptist. In both cases there was the real threat of a rival church setting itself up against the already established church. God delayed the indwelling Spirit to make sure no schism took place. Even though the ministry of indwelling occurs at the same time as regeneration, baptism, sealing and initial filling this does not mean it is

not a distinct ministry. Finally we looked at the ministry of sealing. Again, the sealing ministry of the Spirit is a work of God for all believers. The Holy Spirit Himself is the seal. He seals us in the church, the body of Christ until the day of redemption, which is the pre-trib Rapture. Since it lasts until the pre-trib Rapture it follows that we are eternally secure.

This week we will look at the baptism of the Spirit and next week we close our study of the work of the Spirit with His filling. So, let's begin to look at the baptism of the Spirit. This is the most confusing of the works of the Spirit among believers. First, let's define the word "baptism".

II. BAPTISM DEFINED

The English word "baptize, baptizes, baptism, baptizing" are transliterations of the Greek words *bapto* and *baptizo*. The word means "to dip" or "to sink". It was used of dyeing fabrics. When applied to a person "baptism" identifies one with some sect. There are actually eight baptisms in Scripture. Five are "real" baptisms (done by God) and three are "ritual" baptisms (done by men).

8 Baptisms:

3 "Ritual" (done by men)

- 1) John's (Matt 3:1ff)
- 2) Christ's (Matt 3:13ff)
- 3) Believer's (Matt 28:19)

5 "Real" (done by God)

- 4) Fire (Luke 3:16)
- 5) Death (Mark 10:38-39; Luke 12:50)
- 6) Spirit Baptism (John 1:33; Acts 1:5; Rom 6:3-4; 1 Cor 12:13)
- 7) Moses (1 Cor 10:2)
- 8) Noah's (1 Pt 3:20-21)

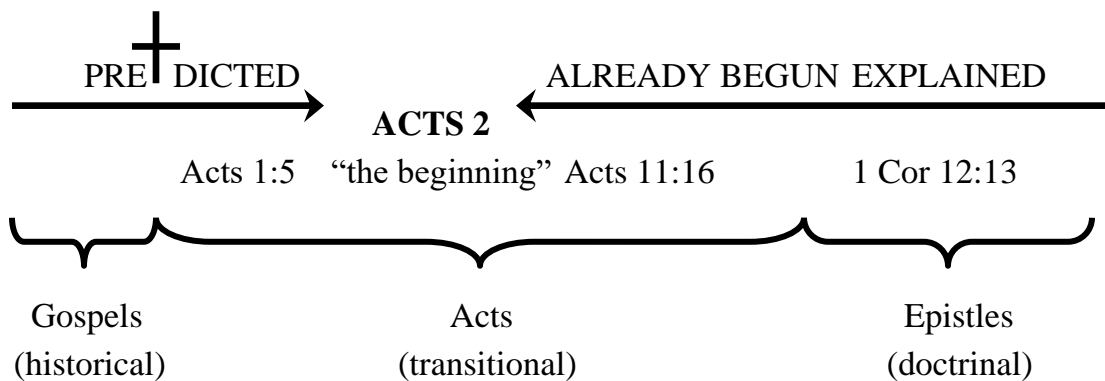
The baptism we are interested in today is #6: Spirit baptism. However, the Greek words *bapto* and *baptizo* are used of both the "real" and "ritual" baptisms. Context has to determine whether the "baptism" is "real" or "ritual". In the 1500's, there was so much disagreement as to how the words *bapto* and *baptizo* ought to be translated that they decided not to translate them at all, but to transliterate them. The early disagreement was about the "mode" of water baptism; *sprinkling* vs. *immersion*; a disagreement that cannot

be settled conclusively from Scripture although immersion better mirrors Spirit baptism.ⁱ Even so, it has often led to confusion of believer's baptism with Spirit baptism.

III. THREE CATEGORIES OF REFERENCES TO SPIRIT BAPTISM

There are 11 references to Spirit baptism in the New Testament. Significantly, there are none in the Old Testament. The gospel references are predictions of Spirit baptism (Matt 3:11; Mark 1:8; Luke 3:16; John 1:33). There are two references in Acts. The reference in Acts 1:5 says it's "just ahead" and the reference in Acts 11:16 says it's "already begun". The last five references are doctrinal explanations of Spirit baptism (1 Cor 12:13; Rom 6:1-4; Col 2:12; Gal 3:27; Eph 4:5)

1. Gospels - Spirit baptism predicted (Matt 3:11; Mark 1:8; Luke 3:16; John 1:33)
2. Acts - Spirit baptism "just ahead" (Acts 1:5) and "already begun" (Acts 11:16)
3. Epistles - doctrinal explanation (1 Cor 12:13; Rom 6:1-4; Col 2:12; Gal 3:27; Eph 4:5)



IV. SPIRIT BAPTISM: UNIQUE TO THIS DISPENSATION

Since the ministry of Spirit baptism did not begin until the day of Pentecost (Acts 2) and because its purpose is to join believers to the body of Christ which will be completed at the pre-trib Rapture then Spirit baptism is unique to this dispensation.

V. SPIRIT BAPTISM: UNIVERSAL FOR BELIEVERS

For all. This truth is brought out clearly in the central doctrinal passage on Spirit baptism.

1 Cor 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.

Paul is clearly talking of *all* believers and not all men indiscriminately. Therefore, *all* believers are *baptized into one body* just as *all* believers *were made to drink of* the one indwelling *Spirit*.

Not hindered by carnality. Just as carnality does not cause the Spirit to leave the believer so also, carnality does not cause one to miss out on Spirit baptism.

Never commanded. Neither believers nor unbelievers are ever commanded to be baptized by the Spirit. This is because once the door of Spirit baptism was opened for each group the door remains open (Jews – Acts 2; Samaritans – Acts 8; Gentiles – Acts 10; Disciples of John the Baptist – Acts 19). Therefore, the moment a person of any people group believes today they are automatically baptized by the Spirit.

VI. SPIRIT BAPTISM: OCCURS ONCE; NOT REPEATED

Occurs Once. After the transitional period of Acts Spirit baptism occurs once and is not repeated. If Spirit baptism did not occur at the moment of salvation then there would be believers running around who were not a part of the body of Christ (1 Cor 12:13). Spirit baptism is what joins a believer to the body of Christ. Therefore, if someone was saved but not Spirit baptized then they would be an out-of-the-body-believer.

Not Repeated. If Spirit baptism needed to be repeated this would mean that the person was once in the body and then was taken out of the body and needed to be rejoined to the body. However, the need for a second or third or fourth baptism of the Spirit is never taught in Scripture. If believers could be removed from the body of Christ this would mean that necessary parts of the body would be lost (Eph 4:16). Since no second baptism is ever mentioned or required then this assures us of our eternal security in His body.

VII. SPIRIT BAPTISM: TWO RESULTS

Put in Body of Christ. The result of Spirit baptism is that it puts the believer in the body of Christ, which is the Church (1 Cor 12:13; Eph 1:22-23).

1 Cor 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

Ephesians 1:22-23 And He put all things in subjection under His feet, and gave Him as head over all things to *the church*, ²³ *which is His body*, the fullness of Him who fills all in all.

Once in the body of Christ, the Church, we share a living union with all believers and Christ. There is no such thing as a lone ranger in the Christian life. There is a unity and dependence upon one another within the body of Christ. Along with Spirit baptism Christ dispensed a diversity of spiritual gifts to every believer through the agency of the Spirit. Believers are responsible to discover and use their spiritual gift(s) in order to promote unity. Functioning spiritual gifts keep the body of Christ healthy and they help the body of Christ grow up to the full stature of Christ (the context of 1 Cor 12:13 and Eph 4:7-16).

Put in Christ Himself. In addition to being put in the body of Christ, Scripture declares that all believers are put in Christ Himself. This was predicted in John 14:20.

John 14:20 ²⁰ "In that day you will know that I am in My Father, and you in Me, and I in you.

This is similar to the mystery of the indwelling Christ (Col 1:27).

Romans 6:3-4 Or do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus have been baptized into His death? ⁴ Therefore we have been buried with Him through baptism into death, so that as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, so we too might walk in newness of life.

Spirit baptism affects the co-death, co-burial, co-resurrection, and co-ascension of the believer. This "real" baptism frees us from the death penalty of sin and from the power of sin over our lives. We are no longer in bondage to sin so that we have to sin but now we are free to righteousness. In light of this, now we are called to live a holy life and we are not to let sin reign in our mortal bodies (Rom 6:1ff). The mechanism for doing this is being filled by the Spirit. This is the practical aspect. Since we are "in Christ" and He is "in us" there is a firm foundation for holy living.

VIII. CONFUSION CONCERNING THE SPIRIT'S BAPTIZING

There are at least six confusions;

Confusion on when the church began. Covenant Theologians agree that the Church began in the OT with Adam or Abraham. Therefore, the baptism of the Spirit simply refers to “conversion”.

The problem with this is that Covenant Theologians have set up a false theory based on the imagined covenants of grace, works, and redemption.ⁱⁱ These imagined covenants require that there be only one people of God; the elect. If such is true then this nullifies the possibility of two peoples of God; Israel and the Church and with this it nullifies the distinctiveness of Spirit baptism. Further, this approach doesn't exegetically deal with the fact that Spirit baptism clearly began in Acts 2 and not before. This is an example of one's theology controlling one's exegesis so that it is not exegesis (drawing out) but eisegesis (reading into)

Confusing the distinct ministry of baptism with simultaneous ministries of the Spirit such as regeneration, indwelling, and sealing. This occurs because people aren't careful in their study. Just because there are similarities between these ministries does not make them identical.

Confusing water baptism (ritual) with Spirit baptism (real). D.L. Moody held this position. He said that “God imparts the Spirit in baptism”. This view makes water baptism a second requirement for salvation. In short, this view says that when you are being water baptized you are also being Spirit baptized.

This confusion can come about when one overstresses immersion as the proper mode of water baptism. As I said earlier, one cannot be dogmatic about the “mode” of baptism. While immersion certainly does parallel Spirit baptism that does not mean they are the same thing or that they must happen at the same time. This confusion misuses Rom 6:1-4 by applying it to water baptism in some sense. Instead, the passage is only speaking of Spirit baptism and has nothing to do with water baptism. Water baptism is a baptism performed by men and is simply an illustration of Spirit baptism which is a baptism performed by God.

Requiring that Spirit baptism be accompanied by the experience of tongues as evidence of being Spirit baptized. Older Pentecostalism claimed that the events of the transitional Book of Acts were normative for the church age. When a person believes the baptism of the Spirit gives them power. Tongues are the evidence of the experience. Therefore, all who are genuine believers must speak in tongues.

This view has problems because the tongues were only manifested on three occasions in Acts (chapter 2, 10, and 19). It can be inferred that it also occurred in Acts 8. Does a person have to speak in tongues in order to verify that he has received the Spirit? Four passages are used to support that you do.

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. (Jews)

Acts 8:17 Then they *began* laying their hands on them, and they were receiving the Holy Spirit. (Samaritans)

Acts 10:46 For they were hearing them speaking with tongues and exalting God. Then Peter answered, (Gentiles)

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. (Disciples of John the Baptist)

The story of Acts involves four people groups: Jews, Samaritans, Gentiles, and Disciples of John the Baptist. A study of the transitional Book of Acts shows that the door into the Church opened first for the Jews in Acts 2. Accompanying this was the manifestation of tongues. After the church was persecuted and dispersed the door into the Church was opened to the Samaritans in Acts 8. Accompanying this new group's entrance was the manifestation of tongues. Awhile later the door into the Church was opened to the Gentiles in Acts 10. Accompanying this new group's entrance was the manifestation of tongues. Finally, the door into the Church was opened to the Disciples of John the Baptist in Acts 19. Accompanying this new group's entrance was the manifestation of tongues.

***Conclusions of Acts 2, 8, 10, and 19:**

1) Tongues in the Book of Acts were given to select groups of people and were not given in a general way. It was given to a select group of Jews, Samaritans, Gentiles, and disciples of John the Baptist and given only once to each group.

2) Tongues in the Book of Acts are given as an opener for each group. It was never repeated to another selection of the same group. Acts 2 Jews inaugurated with the apostles. After that no other Jewish group received tongues. Acts 8 Samaritans received it by the laying on of hands by Peter and John. In Acts 10 Gentiles received it and even when many Gentiles were converted by Paul on the missionary journeys did not one other Gentile convert ever speak in tongues. In Acts 19 the twelve disciples of John received it and no one else in this group received it ever. Tongues only manifested in the initial reception of each group and there are no further receptions because once it happened once for each of the 4 groups the door into the Church remains open for that group.

- 3) The one purpose of tongues in the Book of Acts was authentication, especially in relation to a new group being initiated into the body of Christ
- 4) Tongues in the Book of Acts is a historical account. The doctrine of tongues cannot be developed from Acts, but must be developed in the epistles. It tells us what happened, but not that it will always happen this way.

Therefore, one cannot make tongues a required evidence for receiving the Spirit.

The problem of two Spirit baptisms. Contemporary Pentecostalism has two Spirit baptisms. The first baptism is performed *by the Spirit* and puts all believers in the body of Christ (1 Cor 12:13). The second baptism is performed by Christ and puts people *in the Spirit* for experiences of power (Book of Acts). This second baptism may be repeated. Therefore, contemporary Pentecostalism sees two baptisms of the Spirit; one *by the Spirit* and the other *in the Spirit*. Tongues are the evidence of having this 2nd blessing. Tongues are not required for salvation in this modern view but are required to have power in the Christian life.

This view has at least three problems. First, all believers are said to have “every spiritual blessing” already in Eph 1:3. Second, Eph 4:5 states that there is only “one baptism”. The context militates that this is the Spirit’s work of baptism and not water baptism. Therefore, there cannot be two baptisms. Third, this view says only believers who speak in tongues have power in the Christian life.

From my perspective, it is far better to harmonize the passages by realizing there are two agents involved in the work of Spirit baptism. Christ is the ultimate agent because He sent the Spirit on the Day of Pentecost and the Spirit is the mediate agent because He does the work of baptizing believers into the body of Christ and Christ Himself.

Confusing baptism of the Spirit with filling of the Spirit so that baptism may occur subsequent to believing and not for all. This belief does not necessarily require tongues as evidence. “It considers baptism an infilling for special power.” R.A. Torrey and D. L. Moody were unclear in this area.

This view has problems because filling is commanded but Spirit baptism is not (Eph 5:18). The apostles were promised power in association with the baptism of the Spirit (Acts 1:5-9) but the promised power was not to do miracles. The context limits the application to their new ability to spread the gospel to such a vast geography according to Acts 1:8. The power is limited in the context, not absolute.

IX. CONCLUSION

In conclusion, 11 NT passages mention Spirit baptism. This is a “real” baptism because it is performed by God. The Gospels predict Spirit baptism as a future occurrence. The first reference in Acts, Acts 1:5 says it was “just ahead”. The second reference in Acts, Acts 11:16 says it had “already begun”. The Epistles give the doctrinal explanation and the key passage is 1 Cor 12:13. It is universal for all believers and takes place at the moment a person believes. It places all believers in the body of Christ so that we have the doctrine of unity and it places all believers in Christ Himself so that we avoid sin. Ephesians 4:5 says there is only “one baptism” so there cannot be two baptisms as modern Pentecostalism asserts. The only way to reconcile all 11 passages is to understand that there are two agents in Spirit baptism; Christ is the ultimate agent since He sent the Spirit on the Day of Pentecost. The Holy Spirit is the mediate agent since He is the one who directly baptizes believers into the body of Christ and Christ Himself. This is quite normal because all three of the members of the Trinity are involved in many of the same works in Scripture (e.g. creation, redemption, etc...).

ⁱ cf L.S. Chafer, *Systematic Theology; Vol 7*, pp 32-43.

ⁱⁱ This system was developed by Cocceius in the 1st half of the 17th century and is hardly mentioned in the 1648 Westminster Catechism.

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