



XII. SPIRIT BAPTISM

A. Introductory Thoughts

1. Though baptism seems quite simplistic in nature (Hebrews 5:12; Hebrews 6:2), there remains a good deal of confusion surrounding the subject.
2. On one hand, the Bible speaks of baptisms in the plural but later speaks of the “one baptism” (Ephesians 4:5).
 - a. Some say there must be only one baptism because of Ephesians 4:5.
 - b. Others see multiple baptisms but disagree as to what they are.
3. The differences in these matters vary from simple and somewhat harmless to heretical.
 - a. Some of the disagreements on baptism are just different ways of looking at the same doctrine.
 - b. But some teachings about these baptisms are absolute heresy. Specifically, we must beware of the false teaching on spirit baptism, a teaching which requires speaking in tongues in order to receive the Holy Ghost.
4. Regardless of where one lands on these subject matters, we must confess that there is more than one baptism.
 - a. What John the Baptist did was called a baptism.
 - b. What happened on the day of Pentecost was another baptism.
 - c. Etc.

B. Water Baptism

1. The baptism of Jesus Christ (Matthew 3:13-17)
 - a. There is no real argument about the mode of Christ’s baptism.
 - (1) He was dunked in the water.
 - (2) That is, He was fully immersed.
 - b. In fact, *baptism* means placing somebody or something entirely into some other medium—nothing else.
 - c. Jesus came up “straightway out of the water.”
 - d. Only immersion would explain these events.
2. Three elements of baptism
 - a. There are three main parts of any baptism:
 - (1) Administrator: He is the one doing the baptism. He is called the administrator because he is the one administering the baptism.
 - (2) Subject: The subject is the person getting baptized.
 - (3) Medium: The medium is what the subject is being baptized into.
 - (4) There is no baptism unless there is a *medium* into which the *administrator* baptizes the *subject*.
 - b. In the baptism of Jesus by John,
 - (1) John was the *administrator*.
 - (2) Jesus was the *subject*.
 - (3) The *medium* was water.



C. Baptism with the Holy Ghost

1. Compared with water baptism (Acts 1:5)
 - a. As John baptized in the past, the Jews were promised a baptism with the Holy Ghost.
 - b. What took the place of the water in the second baptism? It was the Holy Ghost. The same preposition *with* is used in both.
 - c. The Holy Ghost, or the Spirit of God, was the **medium** in this second baptism.
 - d. The **administrator** of the baptism with the Holy Ghost was Jesus Christ (Matthew 3:11).
 - e. The **subjects** of the baptism were the Jewish believers present in Jerusalem on the day of Pentecost (see Acts 1:5).
2. As a historical event
 - a. To understand the baptism with the Holy Ghost, one must understand that it was an event.
 - b. Acts 1:5 teaches that the baptism with the Holy Ghost would occur “not many days hence.”
 - c. This baptism occurred in Acts chapter 2 on the day of Pentecost.
 - d. Other groups were brought into the baptism with the Holy Ghost at a later date. But each group, after it was brought in, never had the baptism with the Holy Ghost again.
 - (1) The day of Pentecost gave the Holy Ghost to the Jews.
 - (2) The Samaritans received the Holy Ghost in Acts 8:14-17. After Acts chapter 8, the Samaritans were never mentioned as receiving this again.
 - (3) The Gentiles were baptized with the Holy Ghost in Acts 10:44-48. But that is the last you hear of this experience with the Gentiles.
 - (4) Finally, one little side group who had been following John’s baptism received the Holy Ghost in Acts 19:1-7.
 - e. The baptism with the Holy Ghost was an event that happened and after it happened it was over with.
 - f. The indwelling of the Holy Ghost now comes at salvation through faith, but we will consider that later.
3. Our reception of the Holy Ghost
 - a. According to Romans 8:9, believers already have and are already in the Holy Ghost.
 - b. The believer today is “in the Spirit” just much as the Jews were baptized into the Holy Ghost on the day of Pentecost.
 - c. The Holy Ghost was the **medium** of baptism into which they were placed. John basically said, “I put you in water and He is going to put you in the Holy Ghost.”
 - d. One at a time, believers are all brought into the baptism with the Holy Ghost.
 - e. Although we do not have a day of Pentecost, we have received the benefits given to those Jewish believers on the day of Pentecost.



4. One baptism
 - a. Many use Ephesians 4:5 to “prove” there is only “one baptism.”
 - b. Considering the verse in its context, Ephesians 4:4-6 is imperative.
 - c. People in different groups will emphasize different things in this passage.
 - (1) One group points to the “one body.”
 - (2) Another proclaims the “one baptism.”
 - (3) They often use the same passage to prove opposite doctrines.
 - d. However, they miss the point God is making. They totally misinterpret the word *one*. Paul did not use one as a number in this passage. Rather, it referred to unity.
 - e. The word *unity* is found only three times in the Bible.
 - (1) It is found once in Psalm 133:1 where it deals with brethren dwelling together in unity.
 - (2) Then, it is found two more times in Ephesians chapter 4.
 - a) In Ephesians 4:3, the subject is the unity we have in the Spirit.
 - b) In Ephesians 4:13, the “unity of the faith” is the “one faith” of Ephesians 4:5.
 - f. The word *one* in Ephesians 4:4-6 does not mean that each item listed occurs only one time or that it is used for only one thing. It means that it is united and undivided.

D. Spirit Baptisms

1. Different baptisms
 - a. Obviously, there are several baptisms in scripture.
 - b. Doctrinal error comes when baptisms are confused with one another.
 - c. One common problem comes when the baptism with the Holy Ghost is called Spirit baptism.
 - d. Unfortunately, two other Bible doctrines are also called Spirit baptism by different Bible teachers. Therefore, in common language, people sometimes call three different things Spirit baptism—and one of these is not even called a baptism.
 - e. Comparing three baptisms may help to clear the confusion.
 - (1) Water baptism

ELEMENTS	WATER BAPTISM
Administrator	Preacher or one baptizing
Subject	Believer
Medium	Water

- (2) Baptism of or with the Holy Ghost; Note: Some people call this Spirit baptism and this is part of the confusion.
 - a) They call it Spirit baptism thinking it is a repeatable event in the life of believers who can have their own Pentecost.



- b) To some, this is an empowering of the Spirit.
- c) To others, it is when the believer speaks in tongues.
- d) Many look upon it as a second blessing.
- e) The proponents of this second blessing use some typology and scriptural analogies to support their doctrine, but there is no direct teaching in the Bible that tells us to look for or expect this kind of experience.

ELEMENTS	WATER BAPTISM	BAPTISM WITH HOLY GHOST
Administrator	Preacher or one baptizing	Jesus Christ
Subject	Believer	Believers at Pentecost
Medium	Water	Holy Ghost

- f. Even after the mounting evidence, many will say they want another Pentecost.
 - (1) They think we have to replicate Acts chapter 2 in order to have the power of the Spirit.
 - (2) In their eyes, we need to speak in tongues and have the rushing of the mighty wind. They look at the word *fire* (Acts 2:3; Matthew 3:11) and think we need the baptism with fire. There are several problems with this.
 - a) There was “**a sound**...as of a rushing mighty wind” (Acts 2:2).
 - b) There were “**cloven tongues**...as of fire” (Acts 2:3).
 - c) Furthermore, if baptism with water means that you are immersed in water, and if baptism with the Holy Ghost means they were placed in the Holy Spirit, then what is baptism with fire?
 - d) There is a baptism with fire—it is hell (Matthew 3:10-12).
- 2. True Spirit baptism
 - a. The Bible does not talk as much about Spirit baptism. However, it is a Bible doctrine.
 - b. At the point of salvation, the Holy Spirit places us into Jesus Christ.
 - (1) When a soul trusts in Christ and is saved, he or she is in Christ (see Romans 8:1).
 - (2) This doctrine is clearly taught in scripture. However, some disagree with calling it a baptism.
 - (3) We agree that we were placed in Christ at the point of salvation. But what placed you in Him (see 1 Corinthians 12:13)?
 - (4) Consider the chart again:

ELEMENTS	WATER BAPTISM	BAPTISM WITH HOLY GHOST	SPIRIT BAPTISM
Administrator	Preacher	Jesus Christ	Holy Spirit
Subject	Believer	Believer	Believer
Medium	Water	Holy Spirit	Jesus Christ



- c. The New Testament teaches that we are placed in Christ by the Spirit (1 Corinthians 12:13). The body is the body of Christ. In other words, the Spirit placed us into the body of Christ at the time of salvation.
- d. Every true believer is in the body of Christ (Ephesians 5:29-30). But, how do we get in Him? We are baptized into Him, but not by water (Romans 6:3-4).
- e. What then is a Spirit baptism?
 - (1) Spirit baptism occurs when the baptizer or administrator is the Spirit, the subject is the believer, and the medium is Jesus.
 - (2) At salvation, we are placed into Jesus Christ by the Spirit.
 - (3) This is the baptism spoken of in Galatians 3:27.
 - (4) By one spirit are we all baptized into one body and that body is Jesus Christ (1 Corinthians 12:13).

E. Filling of the Spirit

- 1. The filling distinguished from other events
 - a. There is another Bible doctrine that some call Spirit baptism, but it is not Spirit baptism. That is the filling of the Spirit.
 - b. In review, there are three things that are sometimes called Spirit baptism.
 - (1) The experience of the day of Pentecost in Acts chapter 2
 - a) This event is not for us and the Bible never teaches us to seek it.
 - b) In scripture, it is called the baptism with the Holy Ghost, not Spirit baptism.
 - (2) The placing of believers into Christ by the Spirit at the point of salvation—this is truly Spirit baptism.
 - (3) The filling of the Holy Ghost— this is not even called a baptism in scripture, though many good people confuse the two.
- 2. The optional nature of the filling (Ephesians 5:18)
 - a. The filling of the Spirit is not the experience of all believers.
 - b. Else there would be no reason for Paul to command us to be filled with the Spirit.
- 3. The repetitive nature of the filling
 - a. The filling of the Spirit is not necessarily a onetime event.
 - b. The apostles were “filled with the Holy Ghost” in Acts 2:4-5.
 - c. Later, the same apostles were filled again (Acts 4:31).
- 4. The understanding of the filling
 - a. It involves enabling for service (Exodus 31:3; Luke 1:15, 41, 67; Acts 2:4; Acts 4:8, 31; Acts 9:17; Acts 13:9, 52).
 - b. It involves being filled with the word of God (Ephesians 5:18; Colossians 3:16).
 - c. Only in Acts 2:4 does the scripture associate this with speaking in tongues, but this is because of the intended purpose for the day of Pentecost rather than a companion to being filled with the Spirit.