

The Baptism of the Holy Spirit

1 Corinthians 12:12-13

Part 2

BI: To be born again is to be baptized by the Holy Spirit into the church. By this you were made complete in Christ, lacking nothing.

Last week we began thinking about the doctrine of the Baptism of the Holy Spirit from 1 Corinthians 12:12-13. There are many in the Christian community who believe that the Baptism of the Holy Spirit is a kind of second work of grace in which a person who has already been born again receives the Spirit of God with power at a time subsequent to his conversion. It may be a few days later, or weeks, or months, or even years. But what we learned last week (and our 1 Cor. text makes it clear) is that the baptism of the Spirit is *NOT* a second work of grace at all. It is in fact part of what God does for a person the very moment they trust in Christ for salvation.

And what exactly does the Spirit of God do? Paul says (1 Cor. 12:13), “For by one Spirit we were all baptized into one body...” That is, when God regenerates a man and causes him to be born again, he also saturates, or immerses him into the church by the power of the Holy Spirit. The Baptism of the Holy Spirit, then, is not a distinct work of grace apart from regeneration but one of the essential elements of regeneration. To be born again by the Spirit is to be Baptized in the Holy Spirit and made a member of Christ’s body.

Now, those who belong to a Pentecostal denomination (e.g. Assemblies of God), take exception to this view. They look at the amazing events of the book of Acts and conclude that since the disciples were already believers who had received the H.S. before Pentecost, and since Jesus told them to wait in Jerusalem until the H.S. comes upon them with power; and since there are examples of others in the book of Acts who received the Baptism of the Spirit after salvation, then we should conclude that receiving Baptism of the Spirit is a second work of grace after salvation wherein believers are granted more power for ministry, sudden growth in Christ, and even the power to speak in tongues.

Now this certainly sounds logical. But perhaps there is a better explanation. First of all, we need to understand that the Book of Acts is not only a record of transition in redemptive history (as we discussed last week), it should also be viewed as a transition of the ministry of the H.S.

Pentecost was a point of transition between the Old Covenant work and ministry of the Spirit and the New Covenant work and ministry of the Spirit. Certainly the H.S. did amazing things in the O.T. He was at work hovering over the waters of the earth at creation (Gen. 1). He also empowered people for service to God, leadership, and prophesy as seen in the lives of key figures throughout the O.T. But the work of the H.S. was a work that was generally less powerful and did not involve the indwelling of the Spirit in the lives of those who believed.

Yes the Lord used men like Samson, Moses, Joshua, Elijah and Elisha to do some amazing things by the power of the Spirit. Yes, there were a number of prophets who announced new revelation from God by the power of the Spirit. But this was NOT the normal experience of the

average faithful believer living in O.T. Israel. In fact, Moses indicated that he longed for the day when the H. S. would be poured out on all of God's people. He said, "Would that all the Lord's people were prophets, that the Lord would put His Spirit upon them!" (Num. 11:29).

Moreover, (as Wayne Grudem points out) "there was very little power over the dominion of Satan in the O.T. resulting in very little effective evangelism of the nations around Israel and *NO* examples of the ability to cast out demons. [Additionally] the Old Covenant work of the Spirit was almost completely confined to the nation of Israel" (*Systematic Theology* p. 770).

So you see, when the New Covenant came into being by the ministry of Jesus Christ, a major time of transition occurred not only in God's plan for redemptive history in general, but in God's purposes for the ministry of the H.S. as well.

Yes, we agree that the apostles were believers long before Pentecost. But they were believers whose interaction with the H.S. was similar to other key figures under the Old Covenant. God used them in powerful ways by the ministry of the Spirit, but their power was as temporary and limited as it was for all the other key figures in the O.T. Furthermore, they were *NOT* indwelt by the Spirit as believers are since Pentecost (e.g. Samson shook himself so that the Spirit would come upon him).

The first occurrence of New Covenant power of the Spirit happens in the ministry of Jesus. In fact, Jesus didn't have the Power of the Spirit upon his life before the formal beginning of His ministry. It was at His baptism that H.S. descended upon Him. From that point on, he will be empowered by the H.S. every day of His life to perform miraculous signs and wonders to authenticate His identity as Messiah and His message of salvation.

During the ministry of Christ, however, the apostles had only limited access to the power of the H.S. Nevertheless, Jesus promised His disciples that a day was coming in which they would be baptized in the H.S. That is, they would be fully immersed in the power of the Spirit in a new way.

Look at Acts 1:4-5. We read "Gathering them together, He commanded them not to leave Jerusalem, but to wait for what the Father had promised, "Which," He said, "you heard of from Me; for John baptized with water, but *you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit* not many days from now."

Then again in verse 8, Jesus says, "but you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be my witnesses both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and even to the remotest part of the earth."

This was going to be a tremendous time of transition for the ministry of the H.S. among men. And that is exactly what we find happening in Acts chapter 2. Verse 1 says that when they were all together in one place there came a sound from heaven like a violent rushing wind. And we saw last week the significance of that particular sound because the H.S. is often referred to as the Numa which can mean spirit, or wind.

Then there were tongues of fire that rested on each of them, followed by the miraculous ability to speak in other languages. And what I suggested to you last week is that God's purpose for all of that was not to set a precedent that would be normative for all believers ever-after, but to accomplish something very unusual; in fact, several unusual things.

1. God was fulfilling his promise to send the H.S. and he did it in a way that was totally unmistakable.

2. Second, He did it in a way that could have a natural explanation. It was a supernatural noise, followed by the supernatural ability to speak in languages that the apostles had never learned.

3. Third, He sent the Spirit in a way that communicated that God's new work of the Spirit would henceforth take place within a new kind of community. This new community would be the church, and it would not be made up of Jews only, but Jews and Gentiles from every nation. Remember, Jesus said that when they were baptized with the H.S., they would become his witnesses in Jerusalem... and where else? Judea, *Samaria*, and the uttermost parts of the earth!

Now, our Pentecostal brothers do make an important observation. Namely, that the scene at Pentecost was not the only occasion where we see the baptism of the H.S. occurring after people has already come to Christ. And they will point to three texts in Acts that demonstrate this. So let's take a few moments to visit these short sections of the book of Acts and see what we can learn.

I. The Samaritans in Acts 8:4-25

1. The first observation we should make here is that the author never refers to what happens here as the Baptism of the Holy Spirit. So that should give us pause from the very beginning.

2. Read 8:4-8

3. There lets skip to v. 14. Read 14-17

4. Notice that our Pentecostal brothers are correct in saying that these people were believers before they received the H.S. In fact, they had all been baptized in water. But then when Peter and John arrived, they prayed for them to receive the H.S. and sure enough the H.S.

5. It is important to notice, however, that there is no mention of speaking in tongues or tongues of fire appearing. They simply received the H.S. in the presence of the apostles.

II. The Home of Cornelius in Acts 10:

1. Background of the narrative.

2. Read 44-48

3. In this case, those who received the H.S. did speak in tongues. On the other hand, it is also clear that the coming of the H.S. did not happen *after* their conversion, but immediately upon their conversion. This is different from what happened with the apostles and with the Samaritans. My point is that the H.S. did not come upon everyone the same way or with the same manifestation of tongues.

III. The Disciples of John the Baptist in Acts 19:

1. Read Acts 19:1-7

2. Notice in this case that there was speaking in tongues, but there was also prophesying. There was no mention of prophesying in the other two instances. So once again, this is not normative.

3. Furthermore, this is the last instance in the Bible where anyone receives the H.S. in a miraculous way. So what can we conclude?

4. I believe that the best understanding of these three texts is that God, in His providence, chose to wait to give the New Covenant empowering of the H.S. to the Samaritans, the household of Cornelius, and to the disciples of John the Baptist until representatives of the apostles could be there to witness it with their own eyes. In fact, the coming of the Spirit occurred through their preaching, prayers, and personal ministry.

5. Someone will ask, why would God wait to give the H.S. until certain apostles were present? Well, think about this: if the leadership of the church was ever going to be convinced that God wanted Gentiles included, the highest leaders of the Jerusalem church needed to be there to see it. If they had not been there to witness the H.S. coming with power, then we can be sure that the gentiles would have been viewed, at best, as second class citizens in the church. (cf. John 4:9 “Jews have no dealings with Samaritans”).

6. So in each case, God was making it unmistakably clear that this new thing called the church was not simply going to be a Jewish community. It would be made up of Jews, Greeks, slaves, freemen, both male and female. That was the whole point of the Baptism of the Spirit. God was bring together people from all different walks of life into this new community called the church, so that now we are one with each other even as we are one with Christ. As Paul says, “For by one Spirit we were all baptized into one body...” (1 Cor. 12:13).

7. Now there is something else we should note here. I believe that what happened on the Day of Pentecost was indeed the Baptism of the Holy Spirit. It was the day when the H.S. united all who believe into one body. But that ministry was non-experiential. It is something that happened in heaven relative to how God views us. We are no longer simply individual Christians. We are now the body of Christ. So I don't think the experiential aspects of the narratives we have read are appropriately referred to as Spirit Baptism. Rather, I think we should see each of these cases as examples of Spirit Filling.

8. Notice in Acts 2 that the H.S. came in fulfillment of Jesus promise to baptize them. But then in verse four (4) we read, “And they were all *filled* with the Holy Spirit and began speaking in tongues...”

9. Yes, the H.S. does do something in the lives of believers after they are born again. And yes, what the Spirit does is often very experiential. Sometimes he fills us with wisdom to speak and act and make decisions. Sometimes he fills us with conviction or the uncanny desire to speak with someone about the gospel, or to encourage a brother or sister in Christ. Sometimes He moves us powerfully to give, and serve, and repent, and worship, and pray. But all of these are consistent with what the N.T. calls the Filling of the Spirit.

10. In fact, in Ephesians 5:18 we are commanded to be filled with the Spirit. Paul writes, “And do not be drunk with wine, for that is dissipation, but be filled with the Spirit.” The present tense imperative verb here could be more literally translated, “Be continually being filled with the Spirit” or “Be being kept filled with the Spirit.”

11. At the moment of salvation we are Baptized by the Spirit into the body of Christ. That is a no-experiential, sovereign work of God. Nevertheless, we are commanded to keep ourselves filled with the Spirit. This is how we as fellow members of the body of Christ can remain empowered for ministry to one another and to the world around us all the time.

12. This is how Peter preached such a powerful sermon in Act 4. The text says, “Then Peter, *filled with the Holy Spirit*, said to them (4:8). After that, they returned to the gathered church to explain what the Lord had done, and they all joined in prayer. After they had prayed they were again “filled with the H.S.” The text says, after they had prayed, “they place where they were meeting was shaken and they were all *filled with the Spirit* and spoke the word of God boldly” (Acts 4:31).

13. To be filled with the Spirit is to be empowered for ministry. And that is the condition we should strive to live in. That’s why in Ephesians 4, Paul tells us that it is possible to grieve the Spirit (Eph. 4:30). He also says that we have the ability to “quench the Spirit” (1 Thes. 5:19). How do we “grieve” and “quench” the Spirit? By sinning and tolerating sin in our lives and in our homes.

14. Do you wonder why God doesn’t use you more to minister to others, to share the gospel, to minister your spirit gift? Perhaps it’s because you frequently grieve the Spirit or quench the Spirit by your sinful words, choices, thoughts, and actions. Beloved we don’t have to live defeated, powerless lives! God has given you His Holy Spirit! Moreover, He has also given you the means to have your sinful heart cleansed and renewed every day through the blood and righteousness of Jesus Christ. That’s what the gospel is for!

15. We are to continually be being filled with the H.S. And when we are, our ministry in this church and outside of this church is a powerful, life changing thing.

16. Now, last week I said I would reveal to you something about the Baptism of the Spirit as it relates to one of the Feasts of the O.T. Now, if you’re like me you don’t know much about Pentecost, so we have to ask other people to help us. In his inimitable way, John MacArthur is known

around the world for his ability to make sense out of historical details in the biblical text. I've learned some things from him this week that I think will be helpful for us to know.

17. I want us to see that when the Spirit came at Pentecost, it was not in response to the Apostle's praying about it, or longing for it, or "tarrying" or fulfilling any conditions. The Spirit came at Pentecost because this was the specific time that God had ordained for Him to come as predicted by the Type of the established feast.

18. This becomes clear to us when we go back to the O.T. law and consider what it says about the feasts. In Leviticus Chapter 23 we learn that there were three major feasts prescribed by God in His law, and all three serve as picture of the work of Jesus Christ.

19. The first feast was the Passover. The Feast of Passover commemorated the day God set Israel free from slavery in Egypt by sending ten plagues. The final plague was a plague of death aimed at all the firstborn children of Egypt. God told them through Moses that if they wanted to escape the plague of death, they needed to kill a lamb, take its blood and paint it on the doorposts of their house, then roast the lamb and eat it together as a family. When the angel came and saw the blood, he would "pass over". That is, he would spare that household from the plague of death.

20. This was designed by God to be a picture of the blood of Christ that was shed for the forgiveness of our sins. We know this because Paul writes in 1 Cor. 5:7, "Clean out the old leaven so that you may be a new lump, just as you are in act unleavened. For Christ our Passover also has been sacrificed."

21. Not only that, but consider this. On what feast day did Jesus die on the cross? It was during Passover. The very night every family will killing their Passover lambs to prepare for the feast, Jesus was being sacrificed as the fulfillment of what the Passover lamb symbolized. It happened exactly according to God's perfect timetable.

22. The second feast established by Leviticus 23 is called the feast of First Fruits. God established that this feast would occur immediately after the Sabbath of Passover. Now, what day was the Sabbath? Saturday. So what day comes after Saturday? Sunday. So the Feast of First Fruits was always to take place on a Sunday.

23. On this established day, all the farmers in Israel would go out to their fields and cut some green stalks of Barley and bring them to the temple. They would give these green sheaves of grain (the "first fruits") to the priest who would wave them before the Lord and give thanks for the evidence of the crop to come.

24. Again, this feast was celebrated on Sunday. Now, on what day did Jesus rise from the dead? It was the Sunday after Passover; the very day when the people were thanking God for the evidence of good harvests to come.

25. This fact is lost the Apostle Paul. In fact, listen to what Paul says in 1 Cor. 15:20-23, “But now Christ has been raised from the dead, the first fruits of those who are asleep. ²¹ For since by a man came death, by a man also came the resurrection of the dead. ²² For as in Adam all die, so also in Christ all will be made alive. ²³ But each in his own order: Christ the first fruits, after that those who are Christ’s at His coming.”

26. Jesus is the perfect fulfillment of the Feast of First Fruits. It proclaims to us that Christ’s resurrection is the proof we too will be raised. His resurrection was the first fruits of God’s harvest. Ours will be the ultimate harvest! Do you remember what Jesus said? He said, “Because I live, you also shall live.

27. Jesus was crucified on the Feast of Passover and he rose again on the Feast of First Fruits. But there was yet another feast. It was the feast of Pentecost.

28. The word Pentecost means fifty (50). In the O.T. is it called the Feast of Harvest, the Feast of Weeks, and the Day of the First Fruits.

29. Now consider this. Fifty days after the Feast of First Fruits came the Feast of Harvest, which was also called Pentecost. This was a celebration of the wheat harvest, and once again, it was a first fruits kind of feast. But this time they were required to do something different. Instead of simply cutting off some stalks and bringing them to the temple as sheaves of grain, they actually took some of the grain, milled it, and baked it into two loaves.

30. Someone will ask, “Well what is that a picture of?” Listen now. It was a picture of the very thing that happened on the great Day of Pentecost found in Acts chapter two. The feast of First Fruits pointed to Christ, who is the first fruits of our resurrection. The Feast of Pentecost was also a first fruits celebration, only it symbolized the coming of the Holy Spirit who is the first fruits of our eternal inheritance.

31. How do we know that? Because of Paul. In 1 Cor. 5, and Eph. 1 he explains that the Holy Spirit is the guarantee of our inheritance. Eph. 1:13, “In Him, you also, after listening to the message of truth, the gospel of your salvation—having also believed, you were sealed in Him with the Holy Spirit of promise, who is given as a pledge of our inheritance.” Do you know what the word “pledge” is here? It is Arabon, which means engagement ring, pledge, guarantee, or first fruits.

32. The Spirit of God within you is the guarantee of your full final inheritance. And when did the Holy Spirit come to God’s people? He came right on time, at the second “first fruits” feast known as Pentecost.

33. Moreover, do you know why the feast of Pentecost required the worshiper to bake the grain into bread? I have no doubt it was because God wanted it to be the perfect picture of the church. When His Spirit would come, we would no longer be just a bunch of loose sheaves. No! We

would be brought together as one loaf. And from that moment through eternity we would be inseparable!

33. Beloved, let this sink into your soul! We serve a sovereign God! Everything that He does happens right on time, to the very day and hour. Nothing escapes His sovereign rule. And when we look back on the things He has done in the past, how can we conclude anything except that we are absolutely secure in His omnipotent hands.