

(The Names of Jesus) 14. The Baptizer

by A.B. Simpson

Transcript

“Upon whom you see the Spirit descending, and remaining on him, the same is He who baptizes with the Holy Ghost.” (John 1: 33.) This is one of the names given to our dear Lord. And it is especially becoming that we should greatly honor the Holy Ghost; for He never honors Himself, but ever holds up the person of Jesus Christ, and hides behind the glory of Him whom He loves to reveal. It is not, however, of the Holy Ghost directly that this passage speaks, but of Him who sends the Holy Ghost, “He who baptizes with the Holy Ghost,” our blessed Lord, to whom we owe this most precious gift of the New Testament dispensation.

In What Sense Does Christ Baptize with the Holy Ghost?

The Spirit is His gift as He is the Father’s gift. The greatest gift of the New Testament was Jesus; the greatest gift of Jesus was the Spirit. The Father sends the Son; the Son baptizes with the Spirit; and the Spirit brings both the Father and the Son into our heart and life.

1. Jesus is the giver of the Holy Ghost inasmuch as He has removed the hindrances to the coming of the Spirit into our hearts. The great hindrance was sin. The Holy Ghost is just the presence of God, and God cannot dwell in an unholy temple any more than Noah’s dove could rest upon the earth while the floods of judgment and the carcasses of corrupt flesh covered the earth. Not until the flood was passed and all flesh had died, and the earth was cleansed by its great baptism of judgment, could the dove rest, not merely for a moment upon the boughs of the olive trees, but all over the land, to fly abroad and build its nest and rear its broods wherever it could find a sheltering branch. So the Holy Ghost, under the Old Testament, could not rest in the hearts of men. Often He visited them, even as the dove went forth from the ark; often He revealed the olive branch of peace and covenant; often He came to the hearts of men with divine light, life and help; but the human breast was not His home until after Jesus had finished His work of atonement. But when, through the cross of Calvary, the judgment of sin was accomplished, and, in the death of the Substitute, sinful man was recognized as dead to the flesh, as judged, as crucified; then He went forth to rest and reside on earth and to make the hearts of men His home.

Just as soon as it was demonstrated by the ascension of Jesus that sin was judged and God was satisfied for guilty man, immediately the Holy Ghost came down from heaven. And so in the individual life, just as soon as sin is confessed and judged and the blood of the great sacrifice is appropriated and Jesus Christ accepted as the propitiation and the cleansing of the heart, the blessed Comforter loves to come into the holy temple of our inmost being to dwell as our Guest, our Friend, our Guide, our Master, the Representative to us of God, and the Executive in us and for us of His holy will. To Jesus we owe all this.

But for His redeeming work, the blessed presence of God could never come to dwell within us; but now the message has gone forth to every sinful soul, "Repent, and be baptized . . . in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost."

Beloved, have you accepted the great atonement? Have you received the cleansing blood? Have you been reconciled and sanctified, and has the way been opened by the precious blood of the great High Priest into the Holy of Holies of your inmost being, for the Shekinah of His glory to shine within and reveal the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus? Is there any cloud of sin hiding and hindering that divine indwelling? He is able to clear it all away. Come to His blessed feet, come to His sprinkled blood, come to His throne of grace, come to the great Sacrifice, come to the cross of Calvary, come to the great High Priest, come to Jesus, and He will cleanse you by His blood, and baptize you with His Holy Spirit.

2. Jesus baptizes with the Holy Ghost inasmuch as He received the Holy Ghost into His own person, and for three and a half years walked through Galilean Judea "in the Spirit," which He now gives to us; He received the third person of the Godhead into personal union with Himself so that He could send Him forth, not as another Spirit, but as His own Spirit. This is very precious and truly wonderful. The Holy Ghost is not to us now what He was under the Old Testament, purely the Spirit of Deity; but He is, if we can understand what it means, the Spirit that dwelt in the human and divine Christ; the Spirit that (if we may say it with reverence) was softened and in some sense humanized by union with Jesus; the Spirit that loved John and Mary, that took the little children to His bosom, that had compassion for the multitude, that wept for Jerusalem, that said to the poor woman, "Go and sin no more," that whispered, "Let not your heart be troubled," that talked with the woman of Samaria, that forgave and restored Peter, that over-looked all Thomas' unbelief, that bore so patiently the shame of the judgment hall and endured the agony of the cross, that walked and talked on the way to Emmaus, so simply, and yet with such human tenderness and nearness. And so Jesus received Him and spoke all His words, and did all His works through the Spirit; and now He gives to us the very same Spirit that dwelt in Him. In Romans the apostle speaks of the Spirit of Christ, and says, "If Christ be in you, the body is dead because of sin; but the Spirit is life because of righteousness," and "If any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his."

Beloved, He is waiting today to give you His very own Spirit, to breathe upon you and say, "Receive the Holy Ghost." You may take Him warm from the bosom of Jesus, sweet as the breath of His love, pure as the light of His holiness, mighty as the strength of His omnipotence, and, in some sense, colored and softened by the very humanity of our incarnate Lord.

3. Jesus baptizes with the Holy Ghost in the sense that He distinctly sent Him on the day of Pentecost from heaven to earth. It was His promise that He would do so. "If I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send him unto you." And so Peter, speaking of His coming, says, "Having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Ghost, He has shed forth this, which you now see and hear." This was a distinct and actual transaction which involved the most stupendous issues and relations. On that day and in that moment a real person, a divine person, actually changed His residence and removed from heaven to earth, and has ever since resided, not in heaven, but in this world. With the sound of that mighty rushing wind, a procession as glorious as the ascension of Jesus took place. The Holy Dove, the mighty Paraclete, came down from heaven to return no more until the dispensation of the gospel shall have closed; and from that hour His residence has been in this world in the hearts of Christ's people and the sacred sanctuary of His body, the Church.

Let us fully realize this. The Spirit is not now in heaven, and we never need ask Him to come from heaven; but He is present, and we have only to receive Him, for He has already come. The mighty baptism has been commanded and imparted; and, just as the air is charged with electricity and you have but to absorb it from the atmosphere, just as the atmosphere is saturated with moisture and the cool pitcher has only to absorb the dew; so the Holy Ghost is all around us. The spaces about us are filled with His presence. His ear is within whispering distance of every heart, and we have but to become receiving vessels adjusted to His touch, and He flows in to fill every channel of our being as naturally as the air enters the open lungs, as the light floods the lifted window, as the sun shines wherever there is any object to receive his radiance. Beloved, the Holy Ghost has come; the day of Pentecost is past; the Spirit of God is here; will you receive Him?

4. But there is yet a personal baptism with the Holy Ghost which must come to each heart for itself. To each of us must be applied personally the great atonement, to each of us must come the actual presence of the Comforter, and Jesus is the One that will bring this to pass. It is not the Holy Ghost to whom you are to pray, but it is the Savior. It is He that baptizes with the Holy Ghost. Go to Jesus for Him, put yourself at His dear feet, take Him as your Savior, take Him as your Sanctifier, trust Him to give you this most precious gift, claim it, and refuse to let Him go without its fullness. Hold fast to His loving feet, claim your birthright, your redemption right, what He so longs to give you, obey His voice, follow His directions, thank Him for the faintest touch that answers your prayer, follow on in the light that He gives, even in a gleam of radiance, and you shall know the Lord in all the fullness of His glory and love, and eternally praise Him who baptizes with the Holy Ghost.

What Is Involved in This Great Baptism and Blessing?

It is different from the conversion of the soul and the work of the Spirit in regeneration. That is the birth of the soul; this is the baptism. Just as Jesus Himself was born of the Spirit in Mary's bosom, but thirty years later was baptized of the Spirit on the banks of the Jordan, so each of us is born of the Spirit in the moment of our conversion, but we are baptized of the Spirit when we yield ourselves fully to Christ, and, like Him on Jordan's banks, enter upon our life-work for God.

It is a direct personal coming of God's Spirit into the heart and a complete possessing of it by the Spirit for God and His holy will and work. The first, the conversion of the soul, He may do at a distance, or by a momentary act. The baptism of the Spirit is God's residence in the soul, which is a closer union and a more continuous communion and working. The one is the building of a house, and I may build a hundred houses; the other is my residence in the house and the making of that house my abode.

What are the effects of this divine incoming and occupancy? Let us trace them briefly as Christ Himself reveals them in His own promise.

1. "At that day (i.e., the day when the Comforter comes) you shall know that I am in the Father, and you in me, and I in you." That is to say, the coming of the Holy Spirit will give reality, vividness and intense consciousness to our union with Jesus Christ. We will not be so conscious that we have received the Spirit as that Jesus is dwelling in our hearts and bringing the Father with Him. We shall not believe nor hope, but we shall intensely know by the deepest spiritual cognition and consciousness, by an intuition deeper than any emotional impression or feeling, that He is in us, and we in him, and our life is part of His, and His life is part of ours forever.

Do we not long for this? Does not Jesus sometimes seem far away? Is it not difficult for you to conceive and grasp His personal reality? Does your heart not hunger for a keen, sweet, constant sense of His substantial reality? Oh! will you not cry for the Holy Ghost to make you know that He is in the Father, and you in Him, and He in you. It is His own promise. Hold Him to it, and claim it of Him this day in all His fullness. This is the deepest need of your spiritual life, to know Jesus as abiding in you, to understand the secret, which is "Christ in you, the hope of glory"; to have no doubt of it, no vague reaching out for it, but a deep abiding rest in His abiding love. Beloved, claim your privilege. Blessed Holy Ghost, make Jesus real to us, and let us know that we are in Him, and that He is in us, as never before, in the deep eternal rest, faith, fellowship and love.

2. The baptism of the Spirit will bring you instruction and light, for "he shall teach you all things." Our minds need to be instructed, as well as our spirits united to Christ. Our thought needs to be directed in the fullness of divine truth. Our understanding needs to be illuminated in the knowledge of God and His Word. Our Bible needs to be made plain and living to us; and all this the Spirit does. How in a moment He lights up a passage with a strange vividness, which we had often read, and which we had intellectually understood, but had never felt its power! How plain He makes the subject of sanctification by a single touch of heavenly light! How easy it seems to us to claim Him as a Healer when the truth is brought home to the heart by the Holy Ghost, not as a theory, but as a living light from heaven for our suffering life!

Not only does He teach, but He continues to teach; and He repeats His teaching; for He will "bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you." In a moment of perplexity He will suggest to us with strange appropriateness the very thought and word that will bring us direction. In the hour of temptation He will bring to our remembrance the promise that will deliver and overcome the adversary, "the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God." In the dark night of sorrow He will shed the bright light of His comfort, and the star of promise will shine with a brightness we could not see by day. In the time of service He will bring to our remembrance the truth that we need to speak. "He awakens morning by morning, he awakens my ear to hear as the learned, that we may, know how to speak a word in season to him that is weary," and "it shall be given you in that same hour what you shall speak."

As we kneel by the side of the inquirer and the penitent He will give to us the appropriate message. As we meet the assaults and the keen criticism of man, He will enable us to know what we ought to answer every one, and will let our speech be always seasoned with grace. And we will often wonder at the strange simplicity and sweetness with which intuitively our thoughts come to us, and someone seems to be thinking in us without our trying. Oh, the blessed help of the Holy Ghost's suggestive ministry! Beloved, do you want this inward monitor, this continual guide, this sweet voice, this whispering presence, this tender mother and guide and friend? Come to Jesus, who baptizes with the Holy Ghost, and receive His richest gift this day.

3. He will not only teach, but "he will guide us into all truth." This is more than teaching; this is the direction of our steps, the leading of our feet into the paths of His holy will. Wisdom is more than knowledge, and guidance more than instruction. Wisdom is that which shows us where we are and ought to go and keeps us from error and mistake; and this is the blessed Spirit's special ministry "to guide the trusting and obedient heart and let it make no mistake, for He is able to keep you from falling and to present you faultless before the presence of his glory with exceeding joy." He will show us the way in which we ought to go. He will lead us "in a straight way, wherein (we) shall not stumble." Oh, how often we have erred, and how sad the consequences of our mistakes! How our feet have been wounded

by the thorns, and our hearts have been pierced by the stings that have followed our disobedience, when we knew not why we stumbled! But the blessed Spirit will give us light and keep us right, if we will but trust Him and follow Him, and receive Him in His fullness.

4. He will give us success in all our work for Him, for "when He is come, He will reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment." We cannot convict men of sin. We may pierce them with a thousand accusations, we may sting them with our reproaches, we may warn them with our most solemn messages, we may plead with them with the utmost pathos and tenderness, but we cannot bring conviction to their consciences. But He can. He can make a single word enter the heart like a barbed arrow, and slay the pride and self-confidence, and lay the sinner in the dust. He can make a single look send Peter down to weep the tender tears that melted but did not break his heart.

And He can convict them of righteousness. He can show them the Savior as their Righteousness, and He can enable the poor sinner, as we point him to Jesus, to "behold the Lamb of God, which takes away the sin of the world," to trust himself in His loving arms, to take Him as his own personal Savior, and to know that He does save, forgive, and sweetly accept forever. He can show the poor, struggling heart God's righteousness, Jesus as the Sanctifier, the Keeper, the Rest; and enable us to commit our souls to His keeping, and know that what we have committed to Him He is able to keep against that day, and so go forward in victory and praise.

He can convict the world "of judgment, because the prince of this world is judged." That is, it seems to us, He can make the poor, baffled, beaten heart to know that Satan is overcome, that through Jesus he is a conquered foe, and that now we need fear him no more, but may stand in complete victory and know that neither life, nor death, nor earth, nor hell can ever separate us from the love of Christ.

5. He gives us power. "But you shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you," was the Master's parting word, "and you shall be witnesses unto me." This is not the power of human persuasion or natural ability of any kind, but it is the divine power working through us. It is that which makes our words and acts effectual. It is that strange influence which makes things tell and often brings out of the very little things mighty and lasting results. This made Peter's sermon on the day of Pentecost, although the utterance of a few simple words of truth, the means of converting thousands of souls. This made Paul's ministry mighty through God to the establishment of Christianity in all the world. And this will make the weak things to confound the things that are mighty; the things that are despised, the foolish things, yes, the things that are not, to bring to nought the things that are, that the weakness of God may be stronger than men and the foolishness of God wiser than men; for Christ is the power of God and the wisdom of God through the Holy Ghost.

6. The Holy Ghost gives us courage. "When they saw the boldness of Peter and John . . . they took knowledge of them, that they had been with Jesus," and so "God has not given us the spirit of fear." The Holy Ghost is courage. He makes the heart strong, and sets the face like a flint in the steps of faith and the path of duty and the battle of the Lord. Timid one, would you be brave; fearful one, would you be strong; shrinking one, would you stand firm? "Receive the Holy Ghost."

7. He gives us wisdom. This was the endowment of Stephen and his brethren. This was the apostle's assurance to Timothy: God has given us the Spirit "of a sound mind." It was He who guided and governed the apostolic church. It was He who enabled Paul to form his plans and purposes. Especially do we read in the life of Paul that at a certain crisis he purposed in the Spirit that he would adopt a certain

plan of work and pursue certain lines in his missionary journey; and, although every influence on earth and every power from beneath seemed leagued together to defeat his purpose, and even the very saints of God and the prophets of inspiration tried to turn him aside, that purpose which had been formed "in the Spirit" was literally fulfilled, and he was held to it with the tenacity of victorious faith. So He will guide our plans, establish our purposes, and accomplish our highest, holiest desires for the glory and work of God.

8. He is the Spirit of love. After the gifts of power referred to in the twelfth chapter of First Corinthians, the apostle tells us that the greatest of these is love. It is emphatic, it is important to notice that the terms in which this is spoken of distinctly imply that it is not a human virtue or the exercise of any will of our own or any feeling of our natural heart, but it is a distinct and supernatural gift of the Spirit.

The word for love is "charitas", and the word for the gift of grace is "charis", so that it is distinctly recognized as a divine gift, and not in any sense a personal quality. He will give us this wondrous love in all its fullness, sweetness and victorious power.

Would you have the love that suffers long and is kind? Receive the Holy Ghost. Would you have the love that vaunts not itself and is not puffed up, but acts ever with sweet and lowly meekness? Receive the Holy Ghost. Would you have the love that does not behave itself unseemly, and cannot do a rude act or speak a hard and harmful word? Receive the Holy Ghost. Would you have the love that seeks not her own, but is ever self-forgetful, lives for others and for God without thinking for itself? Receive the baptism of the Holy Ghost. Would you have the love that thinks no evil, that allows no thought of suspicion ever to touch you, that imagines no wrong in a brother, that would rather be deceived than think evil, that believes all things with simple, artless confidence, that hopes all things, even though the present seems all wrong, and covers the future with faith and prayer and blessing even for the unworthy heart? Would you know the rest of being saved from thinking of your brother's faults, and living in a constant atmosphere of sweetest confidence and innocency and harmless like a little nestling dove? Receive from Jesus His greatest gift. Receive from the Spirit His richest, His highest grace, the grace of heavenly love. Would you have the love that never fails, that will never again pierce your heart with a thorn, never again sting you with that with which you stung your brother? Come to Him who baptizes with the Holy Ghost, and let Him put into you the same Spirit that made Him holy, harmless, undefiled and separate from sinners, the Christ of love.

9. He is the Spirit that shields you from temptation and gives you victory in the hour of conflict; for, "when the enemy shall come in like a flood, the Spirit of the Lord shall lift up a standard against him," and He will so fill you with His own presence that the shafts shall not stick, but He in you shall resist, repel, and hurl back all the wild billows of the adversary's rage. Like the red-hot iron which repels the slightest particle of water or dust, from adhering to it because of its heat, so the enkindled Spirit shall throw off the touches of the enemy, and you shall move on in glory and victory, and He shall be a wall of fire around you, and the glory in the midst.

10. He is the Spirit of prayer, for, "the Spirit itself makes intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered." This is our highest service for God; and they who are ever filled with the Spirit will be able to touch the throne with the very power of God, and the prayer that rises from your heart will be a divine power, and He will know instinctively that it has the answer even before it asks, because it is the thought and will of God reflected back again to Him from whom it came. Would you have the power that will move heaven and earth, that will prevail with God and man, that will take the fullness of Christ's promises for these last days, that will meet the mighty conflicts that are coming in victorious omnipotence,

come to Him who baptizes with the Holy Ghost and be endued with power from on high.

We are in the days of supernatural conflict; we are touching the borders of the tribulation times. We are feeling the dragon-wing that is in a little while to overshadow the earth and blot out the very light of the sun. We are nearing these dark hours from which Christ is to call up His own elect. Deeper, stronger, subtler than ever before; more penetrating, more mighty are the weapons that are against us and the forms that assail and resist us. We must be encased in the armor of fire. We must be filled with the living God. We must be baptized with the Holy Ghost, and baptized as we never have been before with the all-encompassing presence of God, where no joint in the harness can let in an arrow of the enemy, and no slip for a single second give him the slightest advantage. Oh! You who baptizes with the Holy Ghost, hear Your people's prayer, robe them in Your own omnipotence, clothe them in the garments of Your fire, baptize them with the fullness of the seven-fold Holy Ghost, and keep them abiding in You, and walking in the Spirit every breath and every step.

11. He is the Spirit of hope. "Now the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that you may abound in hope, through the power of the Holy Ghost." He, and He alone, can take the fear out of your heart and the shadows from your future. He can thrust away the dark clouds of dread that blot out all light and confidence and that cover everything with the dismal shadow of despair. He can illumine your own path through life with sweet and heavenly confidence. He can unfold to you the vision of the land that is very far off. He can show the stretches of the outreaching of God's blessed promises for you and all His glorious work for you. Yes, He can show you the coming of the King in His glory, and even touch your heart with the thrill of personal hope and the expectation of beholding Him with these mortal eyes, and preparing this world for His glorious advent.

What Is Implied in Receiving This Baptism?

1. The very thought of baptism suggests the deeply solemn thought of death and resurrection. Baptism is burial and a new life; and, therefore, to receive the fullness of the Holy Spirit there must be death "the death of all that will and can die, for only that which is imperishable ought to live. The gold cannot be burned, therefore you need not fear to die in the arms of Jesus to everything that is capable of dying; and everything that will not die is safe, for only that which is divine can stand the fire of God. Yield yourself unto His death in all the fullness of His thought, and then rise into life in all the fullness of His will and be baptized into the Spirit. Therefore you that have died to self and earth have received, and will receive in that measure the fullness of His Spirit and life, even in those very places where you have most truly died. And you that have not received the fullness of His baptism are, perhaps, hindered because in some place you have not died with your Lord, or having died, have not risen again into His resurrection life; for there comes a call to arise as well as to die, and the voice of heaven, which says, "Arise, shine; for your light is come, and the glory of the Lord is risen upon you."

2. The term baptism suggests great fullness. It is into an ocean that you are baptized. It is not a sprinkled drop, but it is a great unfathomable sea, and God is calling us to go out into the depths of Himself. Too long we stayed in the shallow surf, swept by its surges, defiled by its miry waters, and beaten by its mighty breakers. Out beyond are the depths of calm, the fullness unfathomable. Let us launch out into the deep, out into the fullness of God.

3. This figure suggests great simplicity of receiving the Holy Ghost. It is easy to be baptized. You have just to let yourself go and sink into the floods, or lie restfully in the hand that upholds you or on the bosom of

the wave whereon you repose. So it is a very simple thing to receive the Holy Ghost. It is trust. How little we trust the Spirit! How we strive, and strain, and do violence to nature in the struggle after some deep filling, when in quietness and restfulness we might receive His heavenly life and influence.

The rock of Kadesh was the type of the Holy Spirit's deeper overflowing; and the command of Moses was to speak to the rock, but on no account to strike it; and his striking the rock became a sin and offense, which did not hinder the water coming, but hindered his full blessing. There is something very suggestive in this simple thought of speaking to the rock. It is the attitude of simple trust and confidence and quietness. Let us speak to the rock. Let us draw near in the desert, amid the hot and burning sands, thirsty, weary, fainting, everything around us wretched and sad. The face of yonder rock seems hard as flint, but in its bosom are stores of infinite refreshing. It needs no violent grasp, no voice, nor touch to bring them forth. Speak the word of simple trust. Speak to the rock, and see, the waters will gush forth in streams of refreshing, and you shall drink, and you shall bathe in their cool tides until the wilderness and the solitary place shall be glad, and the desert shall blossom as the rose. It is Jesus who is that Rock. He is standing before you now. He that baptizes you with the Holy Ghost, loves you, has redeemed you, will never fail if you will trust Him. Trust Him for the Holy Ghost, and sweetly receive His infinite fullness, that you may have to give to a thirsty world the fullness which He has given you.

Fainting in the desert, Israel's thousands stand At the rock of Kadesh, hear! the Lord's command, Speak to the rock, bid the waters flow, Strike not its bosom, opened long ago, Speak to the rock 'till the waters flow.

Blessed Rock of Ages, You are open still Blessed Holy Spirit all our being fill; Still You are saying, why do you struggle

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