

The Baptism of the Spirit

by Andrew Murray

The Baptism of the Spirit is the conscious presence of Jesus Christ in the heart, making Him present within us, always abiding in the power of His glorified nature.

Scripture: Isaiah 44:3, Luke 4:1, John 1:33, John 7:38, Acts 1:4, Acts 2:33

Topics: "Baptism Of The Holy Spirit", "Empowerment for Christian Living"

Description

Andrew Murray emphasizes the significance of the Baptism of the Spirit, linking it inseparably to the Blood of the Lamb. He explains that while the message of redemption through Christ's sacrifice is more readily understood, the deeper spiritual truth of the Holy Spirit's indwelling is essential for true Christian living. Murray highlights that Jesus, who was baptized with the Spirit, is the source of this baptism for believers, enabling them to experience His presence and power in their lives. He encourages believers to seek a deeper relationship with Jesus, recognizing that the Holy Spirit empowers them to live victoriously. Ultimately, Murray calls for a faithful and obedient heart to receive the fullness of the Spirit's blessing.

Transcript

'John bare witness, saying, He that sent me to baptize with water, He said unto me, Upon Whomsoever thou shalt see the, Spirit descending, and abiding on Him the same is He that baptizeth with the Holy Spirit.' John 1:33

THERE were two things that John the Baptist preached concerning the person of Christ, The one was, that He was the Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world The other, that He would baptize His disciples with the Holy Ghost and with fire. The Blood of the Lamb, and the Baptism of the Spirit were the two central truths of his creed and his preaching. They are, indeed, inseparable: the Church cannot do her work in power, nor can her exalted Lord be glorified in her, except as the Blood as the foundation-stone, and the Spirit as the corner-stone, are fully preached.

This has not at all times been done even among those who heartily accept Scripture as their guide. The preaching of the Lamb of God, of His suffering and atonement, of pardon and peace through Him, is more easily apprehended by the understanding of man, and can more speedily influence his feelings, than the more inward spiritual truth of the baptism, and indwelling, and guidance of the Holy Spirit. The pouring out of the blood took place upon earth, it was something visible and outward, and, in virtue of the types, not unintelligible. The pouring out of the Spirit was in heaven, a Divine and hidden mystery. The shedding of the blood was for the ungodly and rebellious; the gift of the Spirit, for the loving and obedient disciple. It is

no wonder, when the life of the Church is not in very intense devotion to her Lord, that the preaching and the faith of the Baptism of the Spirit should find less entrance than that of redemption and forgiveness.

And yet God would not have it so. The Old Testament Promise had spoken of God's Spirit within us. The forerunner at once took up the strain, and did not preach the Atoning Lamb without telling whereunto it was that we were to be redeemed, and how God's high purpose was to be fulfilled in us. Sin was not only guilt and condemnation; it was defilement and death. It had incurred not only the loss of God's favor it had made us unfit for the Divine fellowship. And without this the wonderful love that had created man could not be content. God wanted really to have us for Himself, -our hearts and affections, yea, our inmost personality, our very self, a home for His love to rest in, a temple for His worship. The preaching of John included both the beginning and the end of redemption: the blood of the Lamb was to cleanse God's Temple and restore His Throne within the heart; nothing less than the Baptism and Indwelling of the Spirit could satisfy the heart of either God or man.

Of what that Baptism of the Spirit meant, Jesus Himself was to be the type : He would only give what He Himself had received: because the Spirit abode on Him, He could baptize with the Spirit. And what did the Spirit descending and abiding on Him mean? He had been begotten of the Holy Spirit; in the power of the Spirit He had grown up a holy child and youth, had entered manhood free from sin, and had now come to John to give Himself to fulfil all righteousness in submitting to the baptism of repentance. And now, as the reward of His obedience, as the Father's seal of approval on His having thus far yielded to the control of the Spirit, He receives a new communication of the Power of the Heavenly Life. Beyond what -He had yet experienced, the Father's conscious indwelling presence and power takes possession of Him, and fits Him for His work. The leading and the power of the Spirit become His more consciously (Luke 4: 1, 14, 22) than before; He is now anointed with the Holy Ghost and with power.

But though now baptized Himself, He cannot yet baptize others. He must first, in the power of His baptism, meet temptation and overcome it; must learn obedience and suffer, yea, through the Eternal Spirit, offer Himself a sacrifice unto God and His will,--then only would He afresh receive the Holy Spirit as the reward of obedience (Acts 2: 33), with the power to baptize all who belong to Him.

What we see in Jesus teaches us what the baptism of the Spirit is. It is not. that grace by which we turn to God, become regenerate, and seek to live as God's children. When Jesus reminded His disciples (Acts 1: 4) of John's prophecy, they were already partakers of this grace. Their baptism with the Spirit meant something more. It was to be to them the conscious presence of their glorified Lord, come back from heaven to dwell in their hearts, their participation in the power of His new Life. It was to them a baptism of joy and power in their living fellowship with Jesus on the Throne of Glory. All that they were further to receive of wisdom, and courage, and holiness, had its root in this: what the Spirit had been to Jesus, when He was baptized, as the living bond with the Father's Power and Presence, He was to be to them: through Him, the Son was to manifest Himself, and Father and Son were to make their abode with them. 'Upon whom thou shalt see the Spirit descending, and abiding upon Him, the same is He that baptizeth with the Holy Spirit.' This word comes to us as well as to John. To know what the baptism of the Spirit means, how and from whom we are to receive it we must see the One upon whom the Spirit descended and abode. We must see Jesus baptized with the Holy Ghost. We must try to understand how He needed it, how He was prepared for it, how He yielded to it, how in its power He died His death, and was raised again. What Jesus has to give us, He first received and personally appropriated for Himself ; what He received and won for Himself is all for us: He will make it our very own. Upon whom we see the Spirit abiding, He baptizeth with the Spirit.

In regard to this baptism of the Spirit there are questions that we may not find it easy to answer, and to which all will not give the same answer. Was the outpouring of the Spirit at Pentecost the complete fulfilment of the promise, and is that the only baptism of the Spirit, given once for all to the newborn Church ? Or is not the coming of the Holy Spirit on the disciples in the fourth of Acts, on the Samaritans (Acts 8), on the heathen in the house of Cornelius (Acts 10.), and on the twelve disciples at Ephesus (Acts 19), also to be regarded as separate fulfilments of the words, 'He shall baptize with the Holy Ghost'? Is the sealing of the Spirit given to each believer in regeneration to be counted by him as his baptism of the Spirit ? Or is it, as some say, a distinct, definite blessing to be received later on ? Is it a blessing given only once, or can it be repeated and renewed ? -In the course of our study we shall find light in God's word that may help us to a solution of difficulties like these. But it is of great consequence that at the outset we should not allow ourselves to be occupied with points as these, which are after all of minor importance, but fix our whole hearts on the great spiritual lessons that God would have us learn from the preaching of the Baptism of the Holy Ghost. These are specially two.

The one is, that this baptism of the Holy Spirit is the crown and glory of Jesus' work, that we need it, and must know that we have it, if we are to live the true Christian life. We need it. The Holy Jesus needed it. Christ's loving, obedient disciples needed it. It is something more than the working of the Spirit in regeneration. It is the Personal Spirit of Christ making Him present within us, always abiding in the heart in the power of His glorified nature, as He is exalted above every enemy. It is the Spirit of the Life of Christ Jesus making us free from the law of sin and death, and bringing us, as a personal experience, into the liberty from sin to which Christ redeemed us, but which to so many regenerate is only a blessing registered, on their behalf, but not possessed or enjoyed. It is the endowment with power to fill us with boldness in presence of every danger, and give the victory over the world and every enemy. It is the fulfilment of what God meant in His promise - I will dwell in them, and walk in them. Let us ask the Father to reveal to us all that His love meant for us, until our souls are filled with the glory of the thought: He baptizeth with the Holy Spirit.

And then there is the other lesson: It is Jesus who thus baptizeth. Whether we look upon this baptism as something we already have, and of which we only want a fuller apprehension, or something we still must receive, in this all agree : it is only in the fellowship of Jesus, in faithful attachment and obedience to Him, that a baptized life can be received or maintained or renewed. 'He that believeth in me,' Jesus, said, 'out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water.' The one thing we need is living faith in the indwelling Jesus: the living water will surely and freely flow. Faith is the instinct of the new nature, by which it recognises and receives its Divine food and drink. In the power of the Spirit who dwells in every believer, let us trust Jesus, who fills with the Spirit, and cling to Him in love and obedience. It is He who baptizes: in contact with Him, in devotion to Him, in the confidence that He has given and will give Himself wholly to us, let us look to Him for nothing less than all that the baptism of the Spirit can imply.

In doing so let us specially remember one thing: only he that is faithful in the least will be made ruler over much. Be very faithful to what thou already hast and knowest of the Spirit's working. Regard thyself with deep reverence as God's holy temple. Wait for and listen to the gentlest whispering of God's Spirit within thee. Listen especially to the conscience, which has been cleansed in the blood. Keep that conscience very clean by simple childlike obedience. In thy heart there may be much involuntary sin, with which thou feelest thyself powerless. Humble thyself deeply for thy inbred corruption, strengthened as it has been by actual sin. Let every rising, of such sin be cleansed in the blood.

But in regard to thy voluntary actions say, day by day, to thy Lord Jesus, that everything thou knowest to be pleasing to Him thou wilt do. Yield to the reproofs of conscience when thou failest; but come again, have hope in God, and renew the vow: What I know God wants me to do, I will do. Ask humbly every morning, and wait, for guidance in thy path; the Spirit's voice will become better known, and His strength will be felt. Jesus had His disciples three years in His baptism class, and then the blessing came. Be His loving, obedient disciple, and believe in Him on whom the Spirit abode, and who is full of the Spirit, and thou too shalt be prepared for the fulness of the blessing of the baptism of the Spirit.

Blessed Lord Jesus! with my whole heart I worship Thee, as exalted on the Throne to baptize with the Holy Ghost. Oh! reveal Thyself to me in this Thy glory, that I may rightly know what I may expect from Thee.

I bless Thee that in Thyself I have seen what the preparation is for receiving the Holy Spirit in His fulness. During Thy life of preparation in Nazareth for Thy work, O my Lord, the Spirit was always in Thee. And yet when Thou hadst surrendered Thyself to fulfil all righteousness, and to enter into fellowship with the sinners Thou camest to save, in partaking of their baptism, Thou didst receive from the Father a new inflowing of His Holy Spirit. It was to Thee the seal of His love, the revelation of His indwelling, the power for His service. And now Thou, on whom we see the Spirit descend and abide, doest for us what the Father did for Thee.

My Holy Lord I bless Thee that the Holy Spirit is in me too. But, oh I beseech Thee, give me yet the full, the overflowing measure Thou hast promised. Let Him be to me the full unceasing revelation of Thy presence in my heart, as glorious and as mighty as on the Throne of Heaven. O my 'Lord Jesus! baptize me, fill me with the Holy Spirit. Amen.

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