

The Baptism of the Holy Spirit (Part 1)

by Chuck Smith

Chuck Smith's sermon explores the significance and experience of the baptism of the Holy Spirit, emphasizing its distinction from regeneration and the need for empowerment in the believer's life.

Scripture: Luke 3:16, John 1:33, Acts 1:4

Topics: "Baptism Of The Holy Spirit", "Empowerment for Service"

Description

Chuck Smith discusses the baptism of the Holy Spirit, emphasizing its distinction from regeneration and the necessity of this experience for believers. He references John the Baptist's prophecy about Jesus baptizing with the Holy Spirit and fire, and explains that while all believers receive the Holy Spirit at conversion, the baptism of the Holy Spirit is a separate empowering experience. Smith highlights the importance of being filled and overflowing with the Spirit for effective witness and service in a world that desperately needs spiritual renewal. He encourages the church to seek this empowerment to combat the challenges of modern society.

Transcript

We are studying the subject of the baptism of the Holy Spirit. This will be part one of three parts that we will examine on the subject of the baptism of the Holy Spirit.

In Luke 3:16, we read concerning John the Baptist that,

John answered saying unto them all, I indeed baptize you with water; but one mightier than I cometh, the latchet of whose shoes I am not worthy to unloose: he shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost and with fire.

In John 1:33, again John the Baptist is speaking his testimony concerning Jesus. He said,

And I knew Him not: but he that sent me to baptize with water, the same said unto me, Upon whom thou shalt see the Spirit descending, and remaining on him, the same is he which baptizeth with the Holy Ghost.

So John was prophesying of the one who was coming after him, who was mightier than he was, and who would baptize them with the Holy Spirit and fire. And John now testifies of Jesus, declaring that he really did not know that Jesus was the one until he saw this Spirit of God descending and remaining upon Him. For the one who sent him to baptize, told him that the one upon whom he saw the Spirit descend and remain was the one that would baptize with the Holy Spirit.

In Acts 1:4, Jesus was assembled together with His disciples and He commanded them not to depart from Jerusalem but to wait for the promise of the Father, of which, He said,

Ye have heard of me. For John truly baptized with water; but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost not many days hence. (Acts 1:4-5)

What do we learn from these verses? First of all, that there is an experience that is properly called the baptism with the Holy Spirit. John said, "There is One coming after me, mightier than I am. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire" (Luke 3:16) And he testified that Jesus was that one. It teaches us that the baptism with the Holy Spirit is separate and distinct from regeneration. It is one thing to be born of the Spirit, and yet another thing to be baptized with the Holy Spirit.

In John 20:22, we read that Jesus breathed on His disciples and He said unto them, "Receive ye the Holy Spirit." It was at this point that the disciples did receive that indwelling presence of the Holy Spirit in their lives.

Now I know that there are those who would object and say that the action of Jesus in breathing on them and saying, "Receive the Holy Spirit," was only symbolic. I would like to suggest that their declaration, that it is only symbolic, is their interpretation of the experience. But they are totally without scriptural warrant in making that interpretation. There is nothing in the Scripture that would indicate that they did not receive the Holy Spirit when Jesus breathed on them and told them to receive the Holy Spirit. In fact, it is sort of hard for me to believe that Jesus could breathe on you and say, "Receive ye the Holy Spirit," and you not receive it. But the reason why they say it was only a symbolic action is because of their presupposition position, that regeneration and the baptism of the Holy Spirit are one and the selfsame experience.

But from the time that Jesus breathed on them, the Holy Spirit indwelt them. However, in Acts 1:4, Jesus told His disciples that they should not depart from Jerusalem but wait for the promise of the Father. For He said, "John indeed baptized with water unto repentance, but you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit in a few days." And Jesus here speaks of and acknowledges two different baptisms. He acknowledges the baptism with John in water and the subsequent baptism of the Holy Spirit that they were to receive in just a few days.

Now in 1 Corinthians 12:13, Paul the Apostle declares that we were all baptized by the Spirit into one body. Note that it is baptism, by the one Spirit, into the body. In that case, it is the Spirit who is the one who is baptizing you into the body of Christ. But Jesus is the one who baptizes you with the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit baptizes you into the body of Christ. Jesus baptizes you with the Holy Spirit.

Those who seek to deny that the baptism of the Holy Spirit is separate from regeneration, usually quote from Ephesians 4:3-5, where Paul is encouraging the church to keep the unity of the Spirit. "For," he declares, "there is one Spirit, one Lord, one faith, one baptism." Now what they usually do is put these two passages together. One baptism-- "And you were all baptized by the one Spirit into the body of Christ" (1 Corinthians 12:13). When Paul is telling the Ephesian church to endeavor to keep the unity of the Spirit and speaks about one Lord, one faith, one baptism, what he is referring to is that there is only one baptism into the body of Christ. There is only one body of Christ.

I believe that Paul was warning about the things that we see happening today, in that we have built up denominational barriers. And each denomination sort of claims its own exclusivity, as far as spiritual things are concerned. So, if you want to join the Missouri Synod Lutheran Church and they ask you if you have

been baptized and you say, "Oh yes. I was down at Corona del Mar and I was baptized." They will say, "Well no, we cannot accept that. Unless you have been baptized as a Lutheran, you cannot really join the church and so you will have to go through your classes and then be baptized by the Lutherans." They will not accept baptism from Baptist churches or other churches, only their own.

The same is true of the Church of Christ. You may have been baptized by the Lutherans, but the Church of Christ will not accept that, nor will they accept Presbyterians or Baptists. They will only accept baptism by the Church of Christ. But then, if you want to change and you want to be a member of a Jesus Only fellowship, they will not accept that either. They say that a baptism is not valid unless you were baptized into the name of Jesus Only.

So this is just the very thing that Paul was warning about and seeking to guard against, the fact that everyone establishes their own parameters and you have to be baptized by us and into our church. Paul is saying, "No, no. There is only one body--the body of Christ. There is only one baptism." Do not go around to be baptized by all of the different groups who require baptism by their group in order to be accepted into their fellowships. That is dividing the body of Christ and that is what Paul was speaking against.

We know that there is baptism in water. And the one who baptizes you in water is usually the pastor of the church. He is the one who is baptizing and the water is the element in which you are being baptized.

There is the baptism with the Holy Spirit and Jesus is the baptizer. John said, "He shall baptize you with the Holy Spirit" (John 1:33). And the Holy Spirit is the element in which you are immersed, even as you have been immersed in water. So, to be immersed in the Holy Spirit is the thought and the idea behind the baptism with the Holy Spirit.

Now in the Greek language, there are three prepositions that signify relationship with the Holy Spirit. When Jesus was talking to His disciples the night on which He was betrayed, in John 14, He is encouraging them. Their hearts are discouraged. He is talking about going away and where He is going they cannot come and they are upset. He seeks to encourage them and comfort them, promising that He would pray the Father who would give to them another Comforter, even the Spirit of truth, that He might abide with them forever. And speaking of the Holy Spirit, Jesus said,

Whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him: but ye knoweth him; [Jesus said], for He dwelleth with you and shall be in you. (John 14:17, emphasis added)

So the Holy Spirit, Christ said, is dwelling with you. He is there alongside of you. The Greek preposition is para, but He is also going to dwell in you. He is going to come in and He will indwell you. And I believe that is what transpired in the twentieth chapter of John, when Jesus breathed on them and said, "Receive ye the Holy Spirit." I believe that the Holy Spirit began to indwell them at that time.

Now prior to your conversion, it was the Holy Spirit who convicted you of your sin. It was the Holy Spirit who revealed Jesus Christ to you as the One who could take care of your sins. It was the Holy Spirit that convinced you to accept Jesus as your Lord. And the minute you accepted Jesus as the Lord of your life, the Holy Spirit came into your life and began to indwell you. But that is not the baptism with the Holy Spirit.

As the Holy Spirit is dwelling in you, He begins that marvelous work of conforming you into the image of Jesus Christ. And we will talk about this in a subsequent lesson, when we are dealing with the work of the Holy Spirit in the life of the believer--conforming him into the image of Jesus Christ. But there is that

working of God's Spirit within me and within every child of God. No man can call Jesus Lord except by the Holy Spirit. Paul said, "Don't you realize that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit, which is in you." The Holy Spirit is in every child of God. You are not your own. You have been bought with a price. "If any man hath not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of His" (Romans 8:9). The Holy Spirit indwells every born again believer. You are born again by the Spirit into the body of Jesus Christ.

However, not every believer has the baptism of the Holy Spirit. And in our next lesson we will look at many instances of believers who were not baptized with the Holy Spirit upon their believing in Jesus Christ. But the baptism of the Holy Spirit was a subsequent experience to their believing, which occurred sometimes days later, sometimes weeks later, and sometimes even perhaps years later. We will be looking at these instances in our next lesson.

But we have two prepositions to look at now. He is with you. He shall be in you. And every one of you tonight, who have been born again, have had both experiences. You had the Holy Spirit with you to convict you and to bring you to Jesus Christ. And the moment He came, He began to indwell you. In Acts 1 again, where Jesus told His disciples to wait in Jerusalem--not to depart, but wait there for the promise of the Father--He then said to them, "For you shall receive power, when the Holy Spirit comes upon you." And here He uses the third Greek preposition, which is epi. He comes upon you or He comes over you. And I personally prefer when He overflows you.

And this epi baptism of the Holy Spirit is the empowering of the believer for service. Dwelling within me, He empowers me to be like Jesus. It is an inward work. It is a subjective work of the Holy Spirit within the believer, but the baptism is an outward working of the Spirit. It is the flowing forth from my life in the dynamis (the dynamic)--the power of God's Spirit working through my life in touching those around me. It is one thing to have the Holy Spirit with you--para. It is another thing to have the Holy Spirit in you, but even more to have the Holy Spirit upon you, or over you.

Now, if I should have an empty glass up here on the pulpit, and next to it a large pitcher of water, and the pitcher of water was setting here and the empty glass next to it here, this pitcher of water would be para--with the glass. If I start pouring the water from the pitcher into the glass, then the water is now in this glass--this vessel. Now, as the glass gets filled with water and I continue to pour water out of the pitcher, it now begins to overflow. It now is upon, or overflowing from, the glass and it is the epi at this point. So, you started out with the para, as it is setting beside it. Then it is in it. And now it is overflowing it. And so it is with the Holy Spirit. Our life is like a vessel. The Holy Spirit is with us. He begins to dwell in us. But then the Lord continues to pour into us, until the Holy Spirit flows from us--the epi, or overflowing experience of the Holy Spirit.

Many Christians have the Holy Spirit in them, but the Holy Spirit is not flowing forth out of their lives. In John 7:37-38--and we will be covering this also in a subsequent lesson--Jesus, on the last day of the feast, stood and cried to the people saying,

If any man thirst, let him come unto me, and drink. He that believeth on me, as the scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water.

And John tells us that this He was speaking of the Spirit. He is speaking of this third relationship, the overflow or gushing forth from their lives like torrents of living water-- that overflowing of the Spirit manifesting the real dynamic of the Spirit through your life.

Certainly, God wants us to be filled with the Spirit. In fact, that is a command of the Scripture. When Paul was writing to the Ephesians, he said, "Be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess; but be ye [and he uses the present perfect tense] being filled with the Spirit" (Ephesians 5:18)--or be continually filled with the Spirit.

But God also wants us to be overflowing with the Spirit. So many people have the Spirit just all bottled up inside and there is no flowing forth of the Spirit from their life. They are content to just be nominal Christians, just participating but never to overflowing. But it is God's desire, God's purpose, and God's will that your life be overflowing with the Spirit.

On the Day of Pentecost, the people gathered because of the supernatural phenomena, and Peter stood up and preached that message of Jesus Christ to them. The Holy Spirit brought conviction to the hearts of the people who were listening to Peter's message. And in Acts 2:37-39, they cried out and said, "Men and brethren, what shall we do, seeing that we have crucified the Lord of glory?" They recognized their sin--what they had done wrong. "What shall we do?" And Peter said, "Repent first. Secondly, be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of your sins." You see, the Holy Spirit was with them. They were convicted under the conviction of the Holy Spirit and they were crying out, "What shall we do?" Peter said, "Repent and be baptized." That is when the Holy Spirit will come into your life and begin His indwelling.

And then thirdly, he went on to say, "And you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit." That would be the epi, the overflowing, this glorious gift of God's power for service. And then Peter said,

For this promise is unto you and to your children and to those who are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call. (Acts 2:39)

So, there is no thought or indication that this gift of the Holy Spirit would cease at the close of the apostolic age, with the death of the last of the apostles. No thought of that at all; in fact, the opposite is indicated. This promise of the gift of the Holy Spirit is to you, to your children, and then to those that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call. So in reality the promise is for us today, in this day.

I am convinced that the greatest need in the church today is a renewal of the teaching on the subject of the Holy Spirit, in order that the church might come into the fullness of the Spirit. We need a renewal of teaching on the baptism with the Holy Spirit, where your life will be empowered to go into this world in which we live and be a witness for Jesus Christ. I believe that the only hope for our nation today is a spiritual awakening that will begin in the church with a fresh movement of the Holy Spirit upon the lives and the hearts of the church, who is seeking, who is thirsting, who is asking.

Jesus said,

If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children: how much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him? (Luke 11:13)

Jesus said,

Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness: for they shall be filled. (Matthew 5:6)

Now, the baptism of the Holy Spirit is not the end all of all experiences that God has for you. It is just the opening of the door into this vast new dimension of power. After the baptism of the Holy Spirit, there is

then the necessity for the walk in the Spirit. There is the need to be led by the Spirit, and to be constantly being filled with the Spirit, being controlled by the Spirit, and being empowered by the Spirit. And we will see as we go through and look at the examples of the apostles in the Book of Acts, how they were directed, guided, led, and warned by the Spirit as they were walking in the Spirit and after the Spirit.

Oh, how desperately we need that today! We need it for survival. We are living in those perilous days that the Scripture said would come. We are living in those days when the love of many is waxing cold. We are living in a day when, you can hardly dare to watch TV because of the filth and the smut that is aired, that can be planted into your mind. How we so desperately need to just wait upon God, to be overflowing with the Spirit of God, that the church might be a powerful witness and turn back the tide of evil that is engulfing our society and our community.

I am praying that as we study the subject of the Holy Spirit, God will give you such a hunger and such a thirst, that this series will end with the whole church waiting on God and being empowered by the Spirit of God. I am praying that there would be a fresh, new outpouring of God's Spirit upon His church and upon His people. If this does not happen, it is only a matter of time until we will find ourselves crushed by the degraded world around us.

Let us pray.

Father, we thank You for the promise of the Holy Spirit, this wonderful gift of Your Holy Spirit, Lord. The promise that is to us, far off down the centuries from those first days, yet we are called of Thee. Lord, when we read of the power of the early church, we recognize, Lord, that we are very weak. But Lord, we also recognize how desperately we need that power of Your Holy Spirit tonight. Lord, how our hearts long to just be empowered by Your Spirit. And so, Lord, whatever it is that is holding back our lives from Your fullness, we pray that Your Spirit will reveal it. And Lord, we pray that we might see that sovereign work of Your Holy Spirit, dividing to each man severally at He wills, of the gifts of the Spirit, that Your church might be empowered, Lord, to be Your witness in these last days. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

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