

The Baptism of the Holy Spirit (Part 3)

by Chuck Smith

The baptism of the Holy Spirit is a subsequent experience to salvation, and Jesus is the answer to the spiritual thirst for God, satisfying it with His presence and power.

Scripture: Proverbs 17:22, Isaiah 44:3, John 4:14, John 7:37-39, Acts 2:38, Acts 8:14-17, Acts 9:17, Acts 19:1-6, Romans 8:9, Hebrews 4:12

Topics: "Baptism Of The Holy Spirit", "Spiritual Thirst"

Description

Chuck Smith emphasizes the significance of the baptism of the Holy Spirit, distinguishing it as a separate experience from salvation. He illustrates how this baptism fulfills the deep spiritual thirst within every person, as Jesus invites those who are thirsty to come to Him for living water. Smith references biblical accounts, including the experiences of the disciples and the Samaritans, to demonstrate the transformative power of the Holy Spirit in believers' lives. He encourages the congregation to seek a relationship with the Holy Spirit that overflows with love and power, urging them to not settle for less than God's promise of spiritual abundance.

Transcript

In our lessons on the subject of the Holy Spirit, we have currently been looking at the baptism of the Holy Spirit. Last time we saw that this experience is often referred to as the gift of the Holy Spirit, or the filling of the Holy Spirit, or the baptism of the Holy Spirit. We looked at how this was separate from, and subsequent to, the experience of salvation and being born again by the Spirit and baptized by the Spirit into the body of Christ. This was a subsequent experience that the disciples received sometime after believing and we saw it in the Book of Acts with the disciples themselves.

We saw this experience in the case of the Samaritans who had received the gospel. We saw it in the promise that Peter gave to those who were asking what they should do to compensate for their crucifixion of Jesus; Peter told them to, "Repent, be baptized in the name of Jesus for the remission of your sins and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit." We saw it in the life of Paul the Apostle, who was converted on the road to Damascus, and yet was then filled with the Spirit when that disciple in Antioch named Ananias came and laid hands on him. Finally, we saw in the church of Ephesus in Acts 19.

Now I would like you to turn to the Gospel according to John 7:37, as we see what the experience is (that is, the experience of the baptism, or the filling, or the gift of the Holy Spirit). We are told here by John, that in the last day--that great day of the feast, and from the context, we know that this is the Feast of

Tabernacles--Jesus had come to Jerusalem. And He had more or less remained in seclusion until the last day, the great day of the feast. They were actually wondering whether or not He was going to show up at the feast. And then as He did, He said, "You are going to seek Me and you will not find Me. Where I am, you cannot come." And as they are wondering about this, the last day, the great day of the feast, Jesus stood in the midst of the multitude and cried, saying, "If any man thirst, let him come unto me and drink" (John 7:37).

The Feast of Tabernacles was also known as Succoth, or the Feast of Booths. The feast actually commemorated God's preservation of the nation of Israel during the forty years that they wandered in the wilderness. God preserved them. It was a miracle that they could survive for forty years in the wilderness. It was an obvious miracle of God and this feast was to commemorate that wonderful miracle of preservation during the wilderness wanderings.

Now there were many things that they did to remind them of God's miraculous preservation. Even to the present day with the Orthodox Jews, they build little lean-to type of thatched rooms outside of their houses--usually up against their house. And over in Israel during this time of the Feast of Tabernacles, you will see these little palm-thatched rooms that they have built outside of the house. The family moves outside for a week and lives in these little palm-thatched rooms. And they leave enough space between the palm thatches so that, as you lie there at night, you can see the stars. And the idea is that the children will say, "Oh, I see the stars up there!" And their parents then have the opportunity to say, "Our fathers lived out in the wilderness for forty years, out under the stars and our God preserved them during that forty-year time." And so there were those things that would remind them.

In the worship at the temple, the priests would take these water jugs, bearing them on their shoulders. They would go down the many steps to the temple courtyard to the Pool of Siloam, down in the Kidron Valley below. And there they would fill these water jugs and make this solemn procession back up the steps and on into the temple courtyard, where the thousands of people would be gathered worshipping God. As the priest would come into the courtyard area with these water jugs, the people would break forth singing the hallel psalms. And as they were singing and worshipping God, they would pour the water out on the pavement and let it splash there on the pavement. And they were reminded of how--when their fathers were dying of thirst in the wilderness--Moses took the rod and struck the rock according to the commandment of God. They were reminded how the water came flowing out of the rock and their fathers did drink and were preserved when they were dying of thirst. And so there were many things to remind them of God's divine preservation of their fathers, during the wilderness wanderings.

Now on the last day, the great day of the feast (which was actually the eighth day of the feast), there was no procession by the priest to the Pool of Siloam and there was no pouring out of water on the pavement. This also was significant because it was the acknowledging of God's fulfilled promise. He had promised to bring them into a land that was well-watered--a land that flowed with milk and honey. They no longer needed the miraculous water out of the rock. They now were just enjoying the land of promise that was well-watered. And thus, there was no procession on the eighth day, the great day of the feast.

Now on this day, as the people were gathered there worshipping God--tradition has it that it was at that time of the day when they usually were pouring the water on the pavement--that Jesus stood and cried to the thousands upon thousands of people that were gathered there in the courtyard: "If any man thirst, let him come unto Me and drink" (John 7:37).

Now the fact that Jesus was standing was significant. According to their culture and practices, when a rabbi was teaching, he would also sit and the pupils would always stand. Somehow today we have things mixed up. But then it was customary for the teacher to sit and the pupils to stand. It kept them awake! However, when a person was going to herald or make a proclamation--herald a truth, they would stand. And the fact that Jesus is standing and crying indicates that He is now heralding a truth to the people. Jesus is giving an invitation to those who are thirsty. "If any man thirst," He said, "let him come unto me and drink" (John 7:37).

The land of Israel is basically a very arid land. And thus, the people were all familiar with thirst. In that dry and arid land you become very conscious of the need for water, in order to survive. But Jesus was not making reference to a physical thirst.

Now man is a threefold being. Man is spirit, possessing a consciousness and living in a body. And so, there are the three parts that make up you and me--body, mind, and spirit. Now according to the Scriptures, when a person is living in sin, the spirit is dead. The spirit of man does not come into life until he is born again by the Spirit of God. But man exists on the three levels of body, mind (or emotions), and spirit. And as such, man can experience physical thirst, he can experience emotional thirst, and he can experience spiritual thirst.

We all are very familiar with the physical thirst. Our body needs a certain amount of moisture in order to survive. And thus, one of the strongest physical drives that you have is your thirst drive--second only to the air drive. And when the body moisture content begins to get low, God has built into your body a little monitoring device that is constantly monitoring the moisture level. And in the monitoring of the moisture level, when it starts getting too low it sends out signals to your brain and signals to your throat. Your throat gets dry and it feels like you have cotton in your mouth. And about the only thing you can think of is, I need a drink! You get desperate--"I have got to get a drink of water! Is there a fountain around? I have got to get something to drink." And you can get really worked up and desperate over this need that the body has for moisture. It is a part of what is known as the homeostasis, or the body balance. And it is just something that God has created, this thirst drive. And it can become extremely strong when the body moisture level gets dangerously low.

We have what are called the sociological drives. We have discovered that we need love and there is that drive for love. I need to be loved. Tests have been done with babies, studying various ways of caring for them. Some babies went without physical touch, without caressing, without holding, but were mechanically fed with bottle holders, thus depriving the child of physical touch.

In institutionalized care, they have done this kind of experimentation and they have discovered that a child who does not experience the cuddling, the holding, the touching in six months, who goes without being held and loved, and touched--the child suffers irreversible, irreparable mental retardation. There is that need for love and usually the child will die by two years old under institutionalized, mechanical type of care. They quit the experiments when they discovered how desperately children, even little infants, need touching and need loving.

There is also the need for security, which is another emotional need. There is the need to be needed. We have all observed how couples who have lived together for years, after one dies, often the partner dies within a year or so. This is because the need to be needed is no longer met. As long as the husband was still alive and not feeling well, he needed his wife to be there to cook the meals and to take care of him.

But when he finally died, she died within a year because she no longer felt needed. And that need to be needed is so strong, that when you do not feel needed any more, there is that sort of giving up. There is the need to be needed--one of the sociological or emotional drives.

There is also, deep down in the spirit of every man, a need for God. Romans 8 tells us that the creature was made subject unto emptiness--and that was by the design of Him who created him. Down deep inside, the spirit is crying out and yearning for a meaningful relationship with God. That need is built in. Man is incomplete without God. And without God there is, down deep inside, that yearning--that desire to know God and to experience God. It is universal. And when Jesus cried, "If any man thirst," that is the thirst that He was referring to. He was referring to that deep down thirst, in the spirit of every man, for a meaningful relationship with God.

Although we are made up of the three parts--body, soul, and spirit--they are integrated to the extent that it is often difficult for us to even discern what is soulish and what is spiritual. We are so integrated as body, soul, and spirit, that whatever affects you physically will affect you emotionally. And whatever affects you emotionally will affect you physically. More and more we are finding the tie between the emotions of a person and their physical well-being. It was hinted at in the Scriptures in Proverbs 17:22, which says, "A merry heart doeth good like a medicine." And it was recognized that a happy attitude, a merry heart, is valuable like a medicine. There is a healing power to it.

On the other hand, bitterness, sorrow, grief, can have effects upon you in a physical way. It can be physically detrimental because these emotions create certain chemicals in your body that become a poison to you. And so, we are learning how closely allied are the emotions to the physical well-being of a person.

But also, whatever affects you spiritually will affect you emotionally, and will affect you physically. Whatever affects you emotionally will also affect you spiritually. They are so integrated and so tied together that it is difficult, many times, to even know whether I am under an emotional attack or a spiritual attack. And it is hard to discern sometimes. Sometimes we think it is just emotional. Oh, I am just an emotional basket case, you know. And in reality it is a spiritual attack of the enemy--and you are under a strong spiritual attack.

The Bible says,

For the word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart. (Hebrews 4:12)

God's Word can make that keen division. Many times people think that they are having deep spiritual experiences, when they are only having emotional experiences. The Word of God is that which makes the difference between the feeding of the emotions and the feeding of the spirit. Many services feed the emotions of people. The Word of God feeds the spirit of man--it is the spiritual food.

Now, although I am integrated body, soul, and spirit--so integrated that what affects one part of me affects all of me--yet there is the distinction and separation, so that you cannot fill an emotional need with a physical experience. Nor can you satisfy a physical need with an emotional experience.

My body needs moisture to survive. If I am out in Death Valley where the humidity is down to three percent, the body moistures are sucked right out of your body in that kind of aridity and you cannot survive very long without moisture. Let us say that I am driving through Death Valley and I have car problems. I have an off-road vehicle and my motor conks out on me and I realize that I cannot survive here long. I have got to get help. And there is no one who is going to be driving by this place. And so, I make the mistake.

Now, let me just say if you are in that kind of situation, stay with your vehicle. Many times the authorities find the vehicle before they find the dead body. And you are better off staying with the vehicle, because it is easier to spot than to spot you going through the desert area. And many people have made the mistake of hiking out. It is better to get some shade and just stay in the shade and keep yourself from physical exertion, because you can sweat and lose your moisture in a hurry and die in a few hours.

But let us say I am foolish and I take off. And as I perspire, the body moistures are being sucked out of me and I finally become so weak, as a result of the lack of moisture, I fall on that hot sand and I am lying there and just say, "Water, water." And instinctively I try and dig into the hot sand because there is something in your mind that says there must be water underneath here some place. And the last thing you do is dig into the hot sand trying to find the water. And as I am digging in the hot sand saying, "Water, water," someone comes over the sand dune and says, "Hi, aren't you Chuck Smith?" I respond, "Yeah. Water." He says, "I have seen you on television. I have listened to you teach the Word. I want you to know, I think you are the greatest teacher that ever came along!" And he might be fulfilling my emotional need for love and to be needed, but I am dying right there in his arms saying, "Water, water, water." And I am a goner because you cannot fulfill a physical need with an emotional experience.

Conversely, many, many children are suffering today from a lack of real love. Physically they have been given everything. And so many times we have heard parents say, "I cannot understand what is wrong with my child. We gave him everything." And true there are TVs, there are VCRs, there are video games, and there are bicycles. There is everything you can think of physically speaking. But there is no real closeness, no real love. The child feels like he is alone. Rather than having companionship with his parents, he is always being told, "Now, do not come into the kitchen. You make me nervous. Just go in and--we bought you the TV. Go in and play your games or get out of here! You know--I am trying to listen to Oprah." And you are pushing the kids away and they are dying for love, even though they have every kind of physical device to entertain them.

In a very real sense--and one of the real problems in the world today, is that there are those who are trying to satisfy the spiritual thirst that is in every man's heart. They are trying to satisfy it with physical or emotional experiences. And this is so common today. And people get caught up in religions where they have all kinds of emotional experiences, but they are trying to satisfy a spiritual thirst. Or we see people go from one fad to another, from one thing to another, trying to satisfy a spiritual thirst. They have every toy that has been devised. And when you see them on the weekends, they are heading out in their campers. They are pulling a boat. They have hang gliders tied on top. They have the motorcycles tied on the boat and they are going out to find it this weekend, you know.

But there is this deep thirst for God inside and they are trying to fill that thirst with physical or emotional experiences. And it just does not work. You find out, as Jesus said to the woman of Samaria when He was talking to her about the water of life--the water that only He could give--He said, "If you drink of this water," referring to Jacob's well, "you will thirst again." And those words ought to be inscribed above every

ambition in your life. Drink of the water. Achieve it, but it will not satisfy. You are going to thirst again. Over every physical thing that you want to purchase--that new car, that new boat, that new house--"Drink of that water, but you are going to thirst again." It is not going to satisfy because the thirst is a spiritual thirst. It is a thirst for God and it cannot be satisfied by any physical or emotional experience.

And that is the big mistake being made by the people in the world today. They are trying to satisfy that spiritual thirst and searching the world around, and they are searching into all kinds of religious experiences. I have often said it is amazing the stupid things people will do and people will believe, once they have rejected the truth of Jesus Christ. You become a prey and a sucker for every charlatan that comes down the pike. They know basic nature and the emptiness that is there, and so they promise, "Just sit and meditate on your navel and chant, 'Om' and you are going to have it, man. You are going to find it." And you see these are brilliant people. They are college professors and the like, and they are sitting there cross-legged going, "Om. Om." But it is because they have rejected the truth and there is that search. There is that emptiness. There is that thirst.

And that is the thirst that Jesus was addressing when He said, "If any man thirst." What is the answer to the thirst, the spiritual thirst? Jesus said, "Let him come unto Me and drink." Here again, in an indirect way, Jesus is claiming to be God. Knowing that the deep thirst in the spirit of man is for God, Jesus declares, "If any thirst," (that is, has that deep spiritual thirst for God), "come unto Me. I am the answer to your thirst for God."

Many times Jesus proclaimed that He was God, but then He also acclaimed it indirectly. Here is one of the indirect places. Another such instance is when the rich young ruler came and knelt before Jesus and said, "Good Master, what good thing must I do to inherit eternal life?" And Jesus said, "Why do you call Me good? There is only one good and that is God." Now Jesus was not saying, "I am not good." He was affirming, "I am God. Why did you call Me good? Because I am God." The ruler had come to a consciousness, an awareness, and Jesus is trying to wake up this consciousness that somehow gripped him when he said, "Good Master."

And so Jesus is saying, "Let him come unto Me and drink." There you have the gospel in just a very simple, beautiful form. Thirsty? Is your heart craving after an experience with God? "Come unto Me and drink." Now the result, Jesus said, is that, "he that drinketh of the water that I give, as the Scripture hath said, out of his belly will flow rivers of living water." Now Jesus is probably, as the Scripture said, making a reference to Isaiah 44:3. For in Isaiah 44:3, we find God promising,

For I will pour water upon him that is thirsty, and floods upon the dry ground: I will pour my spirit upon thy seed, and my blessing upon thine offspring.

So the promise of God: "I will pour water on him that is thirsty, floods upon dry ground, my spirit upon those, thy seed, thy offspring." The King James translation here of the Greek text, does not really give the intensity of the Greek text. Where we read in our King James translation, "Out of his belly there shall flow rivers of living water," the Greek text, being more intense, would better be translated, "Out of his belly [or innermost being], there will gush torrents of living water." From the King James text, you might be picturing a gentle little stream trickling through the woods. But the Greek text would rather picture a mighty deluge, cascading down a mountain gorge. There will gush torrents of living water.

At this point I can see Peter turning to John and saying, "John, what is He talking about now? He is speaking in riddles. What do you suppose?" John probably said, "Beats me, man. I don't know."

But notice the prophecy of Isaiah. "I will pour water upon him that is thirsty, floods upon the dry ground. I will pour My Spirit upon your descendants" (Isaiah 44:3).

Now John wrote his Gospel many years later when he was in Ephesus, near the end of his life. Probably some sixty years later is when he penned his Gospel. And now he has a lot more understanding of what Jesus said. He now is looking at these words of Jesus with that great advantage of hindsight. He was thinking back now on that day when Jesus stood and cried to the multitudes, "If any man thirst let him come unto Me and drink!" And now looking back, John explains what Jesus was talking about. And so you will notice in the Bible it is generally put in brackets indicating that John is now giving us a commentary on what Jesus was talking about when He said, "If any man thirst let him come unto Me and drink." And John's commentary on this is:

But this spake he of the Spirit, which they that believe on him should receive: for the Holy Ghost was not yet [given]; because that Jesus was not yet glorified. (John 7:39)

"But this"--Jesus was speaking of the Holy Spirit, which those who believed on Him were to receive.

What is he saying of the Holy Spirit? That it would be like a torrent of living water flowing out of your life. Now, we know what it is to have the indwelling of the Holy Spirit. We know what it is to have our bodies as the temple of the Holy Spirit, which is in us. We know the wonderful work of the Holy Spirit in our lives, as He conforms us into the image of Jesus Christ. But this is something different. This is something that is flowing out of your life--out of your innermost being will gush torrents of living water. This is speaking, John said, of the Holy Spirit.

Putting aside all of the debate over terminology, I really do not care what you call it. Call it the baptism of the Holy Spirit, the gift of the Holy Spirit, the filling of the Holy Spirit--it really does not matter what terminology you might give to the experience. But this experience that Jesus is talking about, where the Spirit will be flowing, gushing forth out of your life is like a torrent of living water. My question to you is: Does this describe what is going on in your life? Does this describe your relationship with the Holy Spirit? Can you say, "Yes! Praise God! There is flowing forth from my life a torrent of dynamic love, and power, as a result of the Spirit overflowing my life."

The question is not whether you are baptized, or filled, or if you have the gift of the Spirit. The question is, is there this overflowing--gushing forth--torrents of living water from your life? If it does not describe your relationship with the Holy Spirit, then may I suggest to you that God has something more for you than what you have yet experienced. And should you not desire that which God has? And should we not seek that which God has promised of a life that is overflowing with the dynamic power and love of the Holy Spirit? I, for one, need and desire all the help I can get and all that God has for me. As Paul prayed for the Corinthians that they would not come short of any spiritual gift, that is my prayer for you. I pray that you will not come short of that which God is wanting to do in your life through this mighty dynamic of the Spirit, being released to where it flows forth out of your life like a torrent of living water.

Shall we pray?

Father, we thank You for the promise that those who hungered and thirsted after righteousness would be filled. And Lord, as You cried to the multitude, "If you thirst, come unto Me and drink," and as You promised that You would pour forth water upon the thirsty, so Lord, fill until we overflow with Your Holy Spirit. So that what You have done in and through our lives might be poured out for others, that they might

experience Your love, Your life, as it flows forth from us to a thirsty world in which we live. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

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