

The True Element

by G.W. North

Baptism is not just a physical act, but a spiritual one, where the Holy Spirit is the true element, and Jesus' name is the authority.

Scripture: Acts 2:38

Topics: "Baptism", "Holy Spirit"

Description

G.W. North emphasizes the significance of baptism in the name of Jesus, asserting that it represents a deeper spiritual reality beyond mere words or rituals. He explains that baptism should be understood as an act performed in the presence of Jesus, symbolizing the believer's immersion into His nature and life through the Holy Spirit. North highlights Peter's message in Acts 2, where the gift of the Holy Spirit is equated with baptism, reinforcing that both are integral parts of the same divine operation. He argues against the separation of water baptism and Spirit baptism, suggesting they occur simultaneously as a unified experience. Ultimately, the sermon calls for a recognition of the profound connection between baptism and the work of the Holy Spirit in the life of the believer.

Transcript

As has been previously said, Peter upon this occasion really told them to ... be baptised upon the name of Jesus, that is he was deliberately stating the ground or authority for baptism, which is into Jesus' person and into Jesus Christ's body. But even so, it must be thoroughly understood that whatever form of words is used, or if none are used at all, the whole is implied and intended. Therefore to bandy with words or forms of expression is of no moment. Baptism must be ministered: (1) in His stead, so that it shall be as though He Himself personally is the person officiating in the administration: (2) as into the Holy Spirit, who is now come in the name of Jesus (to be the element instead of water): (3) through Jesus' death and resurrection as it now is in the Spirit, into (unto, with a view to) His person and self, that is His nature and life and body.

All must be ministered with full understanding that what is being done is being done by the Lord Jesus, who is Himself present, that by this means He should add to His Church by baptising in the Spirit into Himself, The entirety therefore is in Jesus' name; they did it as and unto the Lord Jesus Christ in the same way some of them had done whilst the Lord was with them on earth.

From a frank reading of Acts 2, it cannot honestly be doubted that with deliberate intention Peter both openly stated and also seriously implied to them all that they were to equate the gift of the Holy Ghost with the Baptism in and of that same Spirit. To believe or assert otherwise is specious pleading and makes

nonsense of the context. More than that, it destroys truth and puts asunder what God has joined together, for the gift and the Baptism are two parts of one whole which was accomplished in one operation.

This is That

Peter quite clearly told the enquirers, 'the promise is unto you', and this promise cannot be any other than that promise which he had mentioned in verse 33, and Jesus had made in chapter 1 verse 5. Upon reception by himself and his companions this promise had found such fulfilment that it produced in them 'this which ye now see and hear'. 'This' phenomenon, so Peter and the Holy Ghost claimed, was also the result of the fulfilment of Joel's prophecy concerning which they had yet earlier said, 'This is That' -- verse 16.

Note: It is probably right to assume that because such vast numbers were involved in the operation, Peter co-opted some of his colleagues unto the work of baptising. This is most reasonable, for by the time events had run their course the day was far spent already, so it is therefore highly improbable that Peter and the eleven handled all the 3000 applicants twice, once for baptism in water and once again for Baptism in the Spirit. If the still more improbable position be held that Peter did it all himself, the absurdity of a double handling is at once apparent. However, in the absence of literal proof it is better not to be dogmatic about it, but simply allow the improbability of double handling, acknowledging meanwhile that it is only tradition which prevents men from believing the possibility of water and Spirit baptism being synchronous, the former being the visual aid to the latter.

Source: <https://sermonindex.net/speakers/gw-north/the-true-element/>

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