
The Baptism in the Holy Spirit

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LIVING STREAM MINISTRY

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PREFACE

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THE BAPTISM IN THE HOLY SPIRIT

THE TWO ASPECTS OF THE WORK OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

The Scriptures clearly reveal to us that there are two aspects of the work of the Holy Spirit: the inward aspect for life and the outward aspect for power. The outward is not the aim; the outward is *for* the inward. The outward aspect is found in the Old Testament, but it is not until the New Testament time, after the resurrection of Christ, that the aim of God's eternal purpose is accomplished through the inward aspect.

The inward aspect of the work of the Holy Spirit is seen very clearly in the Gospel of John, chapters 7 and 20. In these two chapters the Holy Spirit is likened to drinking water (7:37-39), and breath (20:22), things which are vital to life. We must drink to live, and even more, we must breathe to live! We may live for three days without drinking, but we cannot live five minutes without breathing! Why is the Holy Spirit likened to drinking water and breath for life in the Gospel of John? Because John's Gospel is the Gospel of life. It tells how Christ came to be our life (10:10) and our life supply: He came to be the bread of life (6:35, 57) and the water of life (4:14).

There is only one way for the Lord to be our life: that is in the Spirit. If He were not the Spirit and in the Spirit, He could never come into us to be our life and our life supply. This is what the Lord teaches us in John chapters 14 to 17. In these four chapters the main emphasis is the transition of the Lord from the flesh to the Spirit through death and resurrection. He must change in form from the flesh to the Spirit by being put to death and resurrected. He said in John 6:63, "It is the Spirit who gives life; the flesh profits nothing." As long as He was in the flesh and not in the Spirit, He could never come into us to give us life. Through death and resurrection He was transformed from the flesh to the Spirit. So, after His resurrection He came to His disciples and breathed into them, saying, "Receive the Holy Spirit" (20:22). This signifies that He was received into the disciples as the Holy Spirit—the divine breath. It is clear that this is for life.

The outward aspect of the Holy Spirit's work is seen in the writings of Luke. In Luke 24:49 the disciples were told to stay in Jerusalem until they "put on"

power from on high. The King James Version translates this word “endued,” but the Greek text means “clothed.” Here the Holy Spirit is likened to clothing that is put on, something completely different from drinking. Drinking is for life, but clothing is for authority. Then in Acts 2:2 the Holy Spirit is likened to “a rushing violent wind.” The rushing violent wind is for power. It does have something to do with the breath, for it is the wind that brings the fresh air to breathe. But the main significance of the wind is power. The breath is for life, and the wind is for power.

John, in his Gospel, used drinking water and breath as two symbols of the Holy Spirit. That is the inward aspect for life, for John’s Gospel is mainly concerned with life. However, Luke used two other symbols: clothing and the rushing violent wind. The writings of Luke (his Gospel and Acts) do not emphasize the matter of life, but the preaching of the gospel (Luke 24:47; Acts 1:8). In preaching the gospel, authority and power are needed. So clothing represents authority, and the rushing violent wind represents power. If a policeman attempts to exercise his authority without wearing the proper uniform, no one will respect his authority; but when wearing the proper uniform, everyone honors his authority to act in the capacity of a law enforcer. So also we must be clothed with the Holy Spirit that we may have divine authority and power for God’s work.

Both aspects of the work of the Holy Spirit are necessary to us. Inwardly, we need to drink of the Holy Spirit for life, and outwardly, we need to be clothed with the Holy Spirit for authority. Inwardly, we need the breath of the Holy Spirit breathed into us for life, and outwardly, we need the wind of the Holy Spirit blowing upon us for power. The inward aspect is the Holy Spirit as life within us. The outward aspect is the Holy Spirit as power upon us. The inward aspect of life is for our inward experience, and the outward aspect of power is for our outward experience. The inward aspect is “in” us (John 14:17; 4:14; 7:38), while the outward aspect is “upon” or “on” us (Luke 24:49; Acts 1:8; 2:3; 8:16; 10:44; 19:6).

The outward aspect of power is always for the sake of the inward aspect of life. It is by the inward aspect that God’s desire, God’s central aim, is fulfilled. The outward aspect is the *means* of accomplishing the inward aspect. In 1 Corinthians 12:13 we have these two aspects mentioned in the proper order. We were “baptized” first, and we were given to “drink” second. After we have been baptized in the Spirit into one Body, we must drink of the Spirit that we

may grow in life and be built up in the Body. To be baptized in the Holy Spirit is to be put into Him, just as to be baptized in water is to be put into it. But to drink of the Holy Spirit is to take Him into us just as to drink water is to take it into us. Baptism is outward, and drinking is inward. The outward baptism is for the inward drinking.

The outward aspect of the Holy Spirit's work is mostly included in the baptism in the Holy Spirit. There are five historical cases of the outpouring of the Spirit recorded in Acts. Only two are called the baptism in the Holy Spirit: the outpouring at the day of Pentecost in Acts 2 for the Jewish believers and the outpouring in the house of Cornelius in Acts 10 for the Gentile believers. Acts 1:5 and 11:15-17 verify this fact. In these two instances Christ as the Head baptized the Jewish and Gentile parts of His Body in the Holy Spirit once and for all. By so doing, He fully accomplished the baptism in the Holy Spirit upon His entire Body. With the other three cases—(1) the Samaritan believers in Acts 8:17, (2) Saul in Acts 9:17, and (3) the Ephesian believers in Acts 19:6—the Scriptures record the act of the laying on of hands through representative members of the Body. The significance of this act is that the baptism in the Holy Spirit already accomplished upon the Body by the Head was transmitted to the new members of the Body through identification with the Body. The laying on of hands is only a form, of which the real meaning or reality is that we must be rightly related to the Body so that we may be in the right position to partake of the baptism in the Holy Spirit already accomplished upon the Body. Therefore, these three cases are not three separate baptisms in the Holy Spirit but three experiences of the one baptism in the Holy Spirit which the Body of Christ has already received.

The baptism in the Holy Spirit is uniquely one and was accomplished upon the Body of Christ more than nineteen hundred years ago. But the experiences of the baptism in the Holy Spirit are numerous and continually shared by all the members of the Body of Christ who realize it in this way. We must therefore recognize the one baptism and seek the many experiences of it. Peter first received the baptism (1:5, 8; 2:4) and later experienced it again and again (4:8, 31).

We must also remember that the baptism in the Holy Spirit is not for life but for power. It is not the infilling of the Holy Spirit but the outward aspect of the work of the Holy Spirit. Many Christians and even many Christian teachers confuse the *outward baptism* in the Holy Spirit with the *inward*

filling of the Holy Spirit. This is wrong. Two different Greek words are used in the New Testament for these two aspects. One is *pleroo* for the inward filling; the other is *pletho* for the outward filling. *Pleroo* is used in Acts 13:52 and Ephesians 5:18. *Pleres*, the adjective form of *pleroo*, is found in Luke 4:1; Acts 6:3, 5; 7:55; and 11:24. These are all instances of the *inward* filling of the Holy Spirit. *Pletho* is used in Luke 1:15, 41, 67; Acts 2:4; 4:8, 31; 9:17; and 13:9. All these instances are connected with the *outward* filling, the outpouring of the Holy Spirit. Both of these words are used in Acts 2:2-4. The rushing violent wind *filled* (*pleroo*) the house, but the disciples were *filled* (*pletho*) with the Holy Spirit. The house was filled inwardly, but the disciples were filled, or clothed, outwardly. *Pleroo* is always used for the inward filling, and *pletho* is always used for the outward filling. We should never confuse the inward and outward aspects of the work of the Holy Spirit. The inward is for life; the outward is for power.

AN ACCOMPLISHED FACT

The baptism in the Holy Spirit has already been accomplished, as seen in 1 Corinthians 12:13. "In one Spirit we were all baptized into one Body, whether Jews or Greeks, whether slaves or free." Notice that the verb is in the past tense. The baptism of the whole Body of Christ in the Holy Spirit is something which is already accomplished and still exists. It is not to be accomplished in the future or even in the present, but it has already been accomplished and still exists. It is the same principle as that which applies for the crucifixion of the Lord Jesus. If we would believe in Him, we need not ask Him to die again for us, because His redeeming death has already been accomplished. It is the same with the baptism in the Holy Spirit. This baptism has been thoroughly completed upon the Body and now exists upon the Body, ready for us to take. We need not ask the Lord to do something again to baptize us in the Holy Spirit. We have already been baptized by the Lord in the Holy Spirit in and with the Body. What we need to do now is simply to take what has already been accomplished!

The incarnation, crucifixion, resurrection, and ascension of Christ are all accomplished facts, as well as His descension in the Spirit. The Lord has not only ascended to the heavens, but He has also descended upon His church in the Spirit. The real meaning of His descension is the baptism in the Holy Spirit. Ten days after His ascension, He descended in the Spirit to clothe His Body. Before this time the church was without authority and power. But now

this wonderful Christ—who was incarnated, crucified, and resurrected—ascended to the heavens and was there enthroned. Everything was finished and accomplished, so He descended in the Spirit to clothe His Body as authority and power. The church was baptized in the Holy Spirit by this ascended and descended Christ. This is the baptism in the Holy Spirit which was accomplished on the day of Pentecost and in the house of Cornelius upon the Body of Christ. We must realize that *we were all there!* This baptism in the Holy Spirit is ours because we are members of this baptized Body. We need to read 1 Corinthians 12:13 again. “In one Spirit *we were all baptized.*” We have all been baptized already!

The Scripture tells us plainly that Christ died for our sins. And we are told just as plainly that we were already *baptized* in the Spirit. We know that the Scripture, as the Word of God, is called the Old and New Testaments. The Scripture is the testaments of God. The word *testament* really means “will,” and a will, or a testament, is more than a covenant. A covenant is similar to an agreement or a contract. In a contract certain things are promised if certain conditions are met. However, in a will everything is already accomplished. The Bible is not only a covenant telling us that God will do many things for us, but it is also a testament telling us that He has already done everything. All has been finished and accomplished, and He has put all in a will and now leaves it to us. A will can only be in force if the giver is dead. Christ, the Giver of the will, not only has died to make the will good, but as the resurrected Christ, He is also the Executor of the will. He was the Giver, and now He is the Executor! Everything in the Bible has already been accomplished; it is a will, a testament.

We know that Christ has died for our sins because in this will (the New Testament) we are told, as one of the items, that He has already died and all our sins were laid upon Him. We do not need to pray for several days and nights in order to be saved. No, we can be saved immediately by simply taking what the Lord has already accomplished and itemized in the will (the testament) of God. How may we know that we have been baptized in the Holy Spirit? By the same principle, there is another item in the will telling us, “In one Spirit *we were all baptized.*” The baptism in the Holy Spirit has not only been accomplished, but it has been passed on to us through the will. It is an item of the will that has been given to us. We need only take it.

MANIFESTATION

Some Christians always insist that speaking in tongues is a necessary manifestation of the baptism in the Holy Spirit. But with two of the five cases in Acts—the Samaritans and Saul of Tarsus—nothing is mentioned about speaking in tongues. Students of the Scripture admit that many times what God does not mention is more meaningful than what He *does* mention. With two of these five cases, no specific manifestation is mentioned. This is an indication that tongue-speaking is not the only or the necessary manifestation of the baptism in the Holy Spirit. Even with the other cases, there is no proof that all the believers spoke in tongues. Acts 19:6 states, “When Paul laid his hands on them, the Holy Spirit came upon them, and they spoke in tongues and prophesied.” Did every one of the twelve both speak in tongues and prophecy? It is possible but not probable. It is more probable that some did one and some did the other. So even here, tongues are not the only manifestation. Then Acts 2:4 says, “They were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in different tongues.” Not even this verse proves they all spoke in tongues. For example, when we say, “We all came to the meeting and began to pray,” do we mean that we all prayed? No! This is the same kind of composition. They *all* were filled with the Holy Spirit, but it is doubtful whether they *all* spoke in tongues. First Corinthians 12:29-30 asks, “Are all apostles? Are all prophets?...Do all speak in tongues?” The automatic answer to this question is that some do and some do not. Not all are apostles; neither do all speak in tongues. The Christians who insist on this matter interpret this verse as referring only to the exercise of the gifts. In the initial manifestation, they say, everyone must speak in tongues. But this is not logical! How could one speak in tongues as an initial manifestation but not in the exercise of the gifts?

The facts of history also have much to say about this matter. There have been many powerful and deeply spiritual persons over the centuries who have never spoken in tongues. Brother Watchman Nee has never spoken in tongues. Once, he sent me a cable with only the words, “Not all speak in tongues.” He has studied the Word very thoroughly. I have never met a man so well versed in the Scripture as he. He has found it unmistakably clear that “not all speak in tongues.” To insist that all must speak in tongues is unscriptural, but to say that speaking in tongues is dispensationally over is also wrong.

In the entire New Testament only a small proportion is given to speaking in tongues. It is not mentioned at all in Romans, one of the basic books of the Christian life. Neither is it mentioned in 2 Corinthians, Galatians, Ephesians, Philippians, or Colossians. It is not in 1 and 2 Thessalonians, 1 and 2 Timothy, Titus, Philemon, Hebrews, James, 1 and 2 Peter, 1, 2, and 3 John, Jude, or Revelation. In all of the Epistles of the New Testament it is only mentioned in 1 Corinthians. If our attitude is fair, we will admit that even in 1 Corinthians the apostle Paul speaks of tongues in the sense of limitation, adjustment, correction, and discouragement. In the very beginning of the book, he declares that Christ is our portion. Christ crucified is God's power and wisdom, and God has made *Him* wisdom to us: both righteousness and sanctification and redemption. This means that *He* is our everything. Then in chapter 2 he says that he determined to know nothing but Christ and Him crucified. He tells the Corinthian believers that they all had the gifts (1:7), yet their spiritual condition was babyish and carnal, that is, fleshly and even fleshy (3:1-3). When he reaches chapter 13, he tells them of the "most excellent way" (12:31), the way of love. He says that even if we speak in the tongues of angels, without love—that means without life, because love is the expression of life—we become sounding brass. We make the sound, but we do not have the life. In chapter 14 Paul encourages us to seek the gifts which are most profitable for the building up of the church. If we read the entire book, we see that the matter of tongues is not touched in a positive way, but rather the contrary. Of course, in the Scripture, ground is given to the gift of tongues, but it is very limited.

THE PROPER WAY TO EXPERIENCE THE BAPTISM IN THE HOLY SPIRIT

We have briefly given the proper definition of the baptism in the Holy Spirit. We must now see the proper way to experience it. First of all, we must realize that the baptism in the Holy Spirit is an accomplished fact. It is an item of the testament, the will given to us all, and we are all entitled to it as members of the Body. However, we must not stop here. We must go on:

(1) We must be right with the Body of Christ and stand in it. Since the baptism in the Holy Spirit has been accomplished upon the Body of Christ and still exists upon it, we must be properly related to the Body and maintain this proper relationship with the Body in order to be one with it. Of course, we

ourselves must get right with the Lord. Any sin, anything wrong between us and God, must be thoroughly dealt with through the cleansing of the blood of Christ. Nothing between the Lord and us should be allowed to remain. But we must also get right with the Body of Christ. Anything that frustrates, distracts, or separates us from the Body must be fully dealt with and real oneness and harmony maintained with the Body and its members. Nothing should remain between us and the Body. If some separation exists, if we are wrong with the Body, if we do not stand and keep our position in the Body, we will lose the ground for claiming and partaking of the baptism in the Holy Spirit. Since the baptism is on the Body, the Body is the ground for us to claim and take it. Therefore, a real identification and proper relationship with the Body are necessary for the experience of the baptism in the Holy Spirit.

(2) We must take the baptism in the Holy Spirit by living faith. If we are right with the Body of Christ, we are in a position to take the baptism in the Holy Spirit. We should realize that it has been already accomplished and now exists upon the Body of Christ. As members of the Body of Christ, maintaining a right relationship with the Body, we are entitled to claim it through the exercise of living faith. We must take it just as we took the value of the Lord's redeeming death. We did not take that according to our feeling or any kind of so-called manifestation. We received the Lord's redemption simply by believing, and the Lord honored it. When we believe in the accomplished fact of the Lord's death for our sins, the Holy Spirit quietly honors our faith; forgiveness of sins and divine life are imparted to us, and we have peace and joy within. We just believe what the Lord has accomplished according to what we are told in the will. The will also tells us that the baptism in the Holy Spirit is accomplished upon the Body of Christ and waiting to be taken. We who are rightly related with the Body of Christ should simply take it by living faith. If we mean business with the Lord, He will honor our faith.

There is no need for us to seek feelings, manifestations, or signs. We should never trust in these things. If we seek them, we have an evil heart of unbelief. We are trying to prove or tempt the Lord. The third chapter of Hebrews tells how the children of Israel tested and proved the Lord in the wilderness because of their unbelief. They did not know the ways of the Lord, but we do. There is no need to put the Lord to the test. We must simply take His Word while abiding in the right position. His Word is here in the will. Signs and proofs are not necessary. We should tell the enemy, Satan, that we do not need any signs or proofs. Only one proof is good enough—that is the will! It is

a strong and complete proof to us that the baptism in the Holy Spirit has been accomplished and given. Since we are now on the proper ground, standing in and with the Body, we may take it.

I can testify to you that when we believe in the Lord's Word in this way, He will honor our faith. Leave the signs in His hands. Stand in the Body and believe in the will. Then whenever you need power, the Lord will grant it. Look at the martyrs of church history. Before their martyrdom, they may not have been so concerned with the baptism in the Holy Spirit, but they loved the Lord. They would even sacrifice their lives for the Lord's testimony. When they were brought forth to be martyred, at that very moment the power was manifested. Their faces looked like angels' faces. There are many stories like this.

Many times we preach the gospel in an unbelieving way. We just believe a part, not the whole; so we do not have the power. We believe the Lord has died for us, but we do not believe He has baptized us in the Holy Spirit. Therefore, we do not have power in preaching the gospel. If we stand in the Body, believe in the whole will, and take the accomplished fact of the baptism in the Holy Spirit upon the Body by living faith, we will bind the strong man and shut his mouth. All the walls of Jericho will fall down. We will see the real power in the gospel preaching.

To stand in the Body, believe in the will, and take the accomplished fact by claiming faith is the proper and effective way to experience the baptism in the Holy Spirit. May the Lord, by His mercy and grace, grant us to be rich in its experiences.