

Acts #4
Spirit Baptism
Acts 2:1-13

It all starts so quietly – on a warm summer’s day. It is a quiet afternoon, there is no breeze, but off in the distance the sky looks dark and slightly ominous. It is not long, however, before those gray-green clouds are right overhead. Two pressure systems (one hot, the other cold) have collided, and slowly the air begins to rotate counterclockwise. Slowly at first – round and round and then down towards the ground. And suddenly you realize that it is a tornado; a violent whirling wind whipping away any obstacles in its destructive path.

Last year more than 600 tornados ripped through America, killing over a 100 people causing billions of dollars in damages.

Acts tell us that on this day a large number of people gathered in an Upper Room when suddenly they heard a noise. The sound of a tornado filled the whole house where they were sitting. And with the sound of a mighty rushing wind also came little blazes of fire that settled on the heads of those present! And with those two events began the marvelous Pentecostal transformation and the birth of the Church.

Previous to this event the Holy Spirit came only to select individuals at special times to accomplish a specific goal or mission. And before the New Testament, the Jews believed that, because of the sins of the nation, the Spirit of God had ascended into heaven and would not return to be poured out on all believers until the “last days.” Thus, Peter referred to the fulfillment of Joel’s prophecy.

There have been many sermons preached, books written, and opinions given concerning the “baptism of the Holy Spirit.” I want to make this statement: I do indeed believe in the baptism of the Holy Spirit. Having said that I want to share with you what the Bible says concerning this awesome event.

There are four verses in the gospels, which record what John the Baptist promised regarding “the baptism of the Holy Spirit.” In Matthew 3:11 we are told, “I baptize with water those who repent of their sins and turn to God. But someone is coming soon who is greater than I am - so much greater that I’m not worthy even to be his slave and carry his sandals. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and with fire.” In Mark 1:8 we are told, “I baptize you with water, but he will baptize you with the Holy Spirit!” In Luke 3:16 we are told, “John answered their questions by saying, “I baptize you with water; but someone is coming soon who is greater than I am - so much greater that I’m not even worthy

to be his slave and untie the straps of his sandals. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and with fire.” **And in John 1:33 we are told,** “I didn’t know he was the one, but when God sent me to baptize with water, he told me, ‘The one on whom you see the Spirit descend and rest is the one who will baptize with the Holy Spirit.’”

Please notice that according to the Word of God, the One to do the baptizing in the Holy Spirit was Christ Himself. Now we are told that this promise of the Baptism of the Holy Spirit was fulfilled on the Day of Pentecost, as seen in Acts 2:32-33, “God raised Jesus from the dead, and we are all witnesses of this. Now he is exalted to the place of highest honor in heaven, at God’s right hand. And the Father, as he had promised, gave him the Holy Spirit to pour out upon us, just as you see and hear today.” **Therefore, we are able to conclude that the administrator of the Holy Spirit is none other than the Lord Jesus Christ!**

With that thought in mind, I want to draw your attention to Acts 10:44-46, where Peter had gone to the house of Cornelius, a gentile, “Even as Peter was saying these things, the Holy Spirit fell upon all who were listening to the message. The Jewish believers who came with Peter were amazed that the gift of the Holy Spirit had been poured out on the Gentiles, too. (Why?) For they heard them speaking in other tongues and praising God.” **Turn over to Acts 19:1-7,** “While Apollos was in Corinth, Paul traveled through the interior regions until he reached Ephesus, on the coast, where he found several believers. “Did you receive the Holy Spirit when you believed?” he asked them. “No,” they replied, “we haven’t even heard that there is a Holy Spirit.” “Then what baptism did you experience?” he asked. And they replied, “The baptism of John.” Paul said, “John’s baptism called for repentance from sin. But John himself told the people to believe in the one who would come later, meaning Jesus.” As soon as they heard this, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. Then when Paul laid his hands on them, the Holy Spirit came on them, and they spoke in other tongues and prophesied. There were about twelve men in all.”

Now, I wanted to bring these passages of Scripture into your mind, to share with you what was happening then, that are very much different today, even later in the New Testament era. 1. In Acts 2 we can see the 120 disciples representing the Jews, being baptized into the “body of Christ,” or into the true “church.” 2. In Acts 10 we see Cornelius representing the Gentiles being baptized into the “body of Christ,” or into the true “church.” 3. In Acts 19 we see those believers saved by the ministry of John the Baptist (by faith in the coming Messiah) being baptized into the “body of Christ,” or the true “church.”

This transition was manifested by the outward “sign” (1 Corinthians 14:22) of speaking in “tongues.” There were other Jews saved on the Day of Pentecost (3,000) and there is nothing said about any of those speaking in

tongues. The Word of God tells us of other Gentiles being saved in Acts 13:48. The Philippian jailer was saved in Acts 16 and nothing is said about him having any outward manifestation such as tongues.

Now, before you become upset and turn of our “hearing aid” let me remind you once more that I do indeed believe in Spirit baptism and the gift of tongues, but I also believe that we must have a biblical foundation for what we believe. The purpose of Spirit baptism is to place all believers into the Body of Christ. This truth is very clearly seen in 1 Corinthians 12:13, “For by one Spirit were we all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Greeks, whether we be bond or free; and have been all made to drink into one Spirit.” Listen, this inspired Word of God tells us that “we all (were) baptized into one body.” Every believer is included. This is seen clearly in Ephesians 1:22-23, “God has put all things under the authority of Christ and has made him head over all things for the benefit of the church. And the church is his body; it is made full and complete by Christ, who fills all things everywhere with himself.” And again in Ephesians 2:19-22, “So now you Gentiles are no longer strangers and foreigners. You are citizens along with all of God’s holy people. You are members of God’s family. Together, we are his house, built on the foundation of the apostles and the prophets. And the cornerstone is Christ Jesus himself. We are carefully joined together in him, becoming a holy temple for the Lord. Through him you Gentiles are also being made part of this dwelling where God lives by his Spirit.” The Bible declares that every believer shares in the “one Spirit baptism” and in the “drinking” of which Jesus spoke. The big difference is simply this: In the instance of the Book of Acts, “tongues” was an outward manifestation of the “Spirit baptism” into the Body of Christ. Today “tongues” is no longer a manifestation of the Holy Spirit, but it is a gift of the Holy Spirit.

This is very clearly seen in 1 Corinthians 12:4-31, “Yes, the body has many different parts, not just one part. If the foot says, “I am not a part of the body because I am not a hand,” that does not make it any less a part of the body. And if the ear says, “I am not part of the body because I am not an eye,” would that make it any less a part of the body? If the whole body were an eye, how would you hear? Or if your whole body were an ear, how would you smell anything? But our bodies have many parts, and God has put each part just where he wants it. How strange a body would be if it had only one part! **20** Yes, there are many parts, but only one body. The eye can never say to the hand, “I don’t need you.” The head can’t say to the feet, “I don’t need you.” In fact, some parts of the body that seem weakest and least important are actually the most necessary. And the parts we regard as less honorable are those we clothe with the greatest care. So we carefully protect those parts that should not be seen, while the more honorable parts do not require this special care. So God has put the body together such that extra honor and care are given to those parts that have less dignity. This makes for harmony among the members, so that all the members care for each other. If one part suffers, all the

parts suffer with it, and if one part is honored, all the parts are glad. All of you together are Christ's body, and each of you is a part of it. Here are some of the parts God has appointed for the church: first are apostles, second are prophets, third are teachers, then those who do miracles, those who have the gift of healing, those who can help others, those who have the gift of leadership, those who speak in unknown languages. Are we all apostles? Are we all prophets? Are we all teachers? Do we all have the power to do miracles? Do we all have the gift of healing? Do we all have the ability to speak in unknown languages? Do we all have the ability to interpret unknown languages? Of course not! So you should earnestly desire the most helpful gifts." **It is well to remember that in addition to forming the Church and making it His dwelling place, the Holy Spirit takes up His abode in every individual Christian!** That is the reason Paul asked the question in 1 Corinthians 6:19, "Don't you realize that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit, who lives in you and was given to you by God? You do not belong to yourself."

Let me stress that according to the Word of God, the indwelling presence of the Holy Spirit in the believer is not the privilege enjoyed by only a few Christians, who have experienced some kind of "second blessing," but is the portion of every child of God. And because of that fact, we are never told, commanded, or urged to seek the baptism of the Holy Spirit. That idea is alien to the Scriptures. **Yet some seek, pray, wait for such experience.** They are persuaded that God has reserved for a chosen few that unusual baptism. They expectantly, prayerfully, and sometimes agonizingly wait before the Lord for this heavenly gift. Some even build whole systems of theology on it, presenting it in their teaching as a **"second work of grace."**

With that said, look with me at the filling of the Holy Spirit, as seen in Ephesians 5:18, "Don't you realize that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit, who lives in you and was given to you by God? You do not belong to yourself." **You see, today we have been guilty, many times, of asking God for something we already have!** There is no need for a believer to pray for the **"baptism"** of the Holy Spirit, for that takes place when we are **"born again."** But the need today is for Christian to be **"filled with the Spirit."**

Writing to the church in Corinth, Paul says this in 1 Corinthians 3:1-3, "Dear brothers and sisters, when I was with you I couldn't talk to you as I would to spiritual people. I had to talk as though you belonged to this world or as though you were infants in the Christian life. I had to feed you with milk, not with solid food, because you weren't ready for anything stronger. And you still aren't ready, for you are still controlled by your sinful nature. You are jealous of one another and quarrel with each other. Doesn't that prove you are controlled by your sinful nature? Aren't you living like people of the world?" **The "carnal" Christian is one who has been born again of the Holy Spirit, but who has never allowed**

the Holy Spirit to have unlimited control of his life. On the other hand, the Spirit-filled life is the Christ-filled life. In 1 Peter 4:2 we are told that Jesus Christ “You won’t spend the rest of your lives chasing your own desires, but you will be anxious to do the will of God.” In other words, the Spirit-filled life is when we allow Christ to think through our mind, love through our heart, and witness through our lips!

Therefore, when a person is born again God the Holy Spirit bestows on that individual certain gifts of the Spirit, as seen in 1 Corinthians 12. But those gifts are not manifested in the believers’ life unless they are living the Spirit-filled life! A person might be filled with the Spirit and not have the gift of preaching, the gift of healing, the gift of speaking in tongues, etc. But, if you are saved, you have been given a gift as seen in 1 Corinthians 12:11.

The problem that Paul was dealing with in the Church at Corinth was that there were some in the church that had receive the gift of “tongues” and had developed the idea that if a person did not have this gift, might not even be saved, and surely they had not “received the Holy Spirit.” We have some people today that have this very same idea, and they too are just as wrong as those folks in the Church at Corinth.

If you are saved by the grace of God, you have been baptized by the Spirit into the Body of Christ, and you have all of Him. That settles your salvation. But now the Spirit wants all of you, and this comes by a complete emptying of self and yielding to the will of God for your life.