



Baptism of the Holy Spirit (John 1:19-34)

We need to reengage with the Holy Spirit in a fresh way, individually and corporately. The early church was birthed in the fire of the Spirit, and so will the end-time church be. We need a fresh baptism of the Holy Spirit and fire to fulfill the call of God and finish it.

1. Two Baptisers in the NT: John the Baptist & Jesus the Baptist

- a. All four gospels start with the ministry of John the baptiser and finish with Jesus the baptiser. John came preaching the baptism of repentance in the river Jordan. So convicting was John's message that Jews from all over Israel came to be baptised by him in the muddy river Jordan to be cleansed of their sin. Then they began to ask, 'Are you the One?' He kept saying, 'No, I am not. But I am a voice in the wilderness...' (Jn 1:19-27). All of John's life and his message were a sign pointing to the One who was to come after Him, who is infinitely worthier than John, whose sandal straps he is not worthy to untie.
- b. John's two-fold message about the One was the following:
 - (i) *He will take away the sin of the world! Not just Israel's sins.*

Consider the previous 400 years of total silence from God and the nation's humiliation under Roman occupation. It was due to Israel's sin. We are living in a similar condition today.

(ii) *'He will baptise you with the Holy Spirit and fire.'* (Matt 3:11)

John demanded radical repentance from the people. He demanded the fruit of repentance and change in lifestyle in preparation for the coming king. But John's baptism could only deal with their past sins. It had no power to create a holy people for God. It would take the One who can baptise them with (lit. 'in' or 'into') the Holy Spirit and fire.

This was what John was waiting for Jesus to do. But Jesus did not baptise anyone during his earthly ministry. This so confused John. Then the night before Jesus' death (John 14-16), He introduced the Holy Spirit. This baptism into the Holy Spirit and fire, which John prophesied, was made available only through the death, resurrection, and ascension of Jesus Christ. It is the present work of Jesus Christ in the church to baptise His people into the Holy Spirit and fire. This has never ceased from Pentecost to this day.

2. The Controversy of the 'Baptism of the Holy Spirit'

The 'baptism of the Holy Spirit' is the most controversial phrase in the church in the past 100+ years.

- a. *SEVEN distinct passages on the baptism of the Holy Spirit are:*

Matt 3:11; Mark 1:8; Luke 3:16; John 1:33; Acts 1:5; Acts 11:16; 1 Cor 12:13.

Preposition for the baptism is always 'in' or 'into', NOT 'with' or 'by'. The idea behind the word 'baptise' means 'submerged under.' 'Baptism' simply means 'immersion' in English. This word has not been allowed to be translated into proper English for political reasons.

Baptism in the Holy Spirit was such a rich experience for the early church that a huge amount of vocabulary is used to describe this experience in the New Testament.

- (i) Outward description: came upon, fell upon, poured out, being anointed with, etc.
- (ii) Inward description: drinking, sealed, filled to overflowing, etc.

The most important synonym for the baptism of the Spirit is 'receiving the Spirit'. For the apostles, baptism in the Spirit and receiving the Spirit are one and the same event. Only once, in the book of Acts, it is said 'baptised in the Spirit.' On all other occasions, it is called 'receiving the Spirit.' There are many Christians who believe in Jesus Christ and are converted, but not yet filled with the Holy Spirit.

Note the revival in Samaria (Acts 8:14-17), and Paul in Ephesus: *'Did you receive the Holy Spirit when you believed?'* (Acts 19:1-6)

- b. In Acts, when somebody was baptised in the Holy Spirit, he knew it and everybody around him knew it. *'It was an experience as definite as catching influenza.'* (Barclay)

Location	External	Internal
Jerusalem (Acts 2:1-4)	Sound of rushing mighty wind from heaven, divided tongues of fire	They began to speak with other <u>tongues</u> (languages) as the Spirit gave them utterance.
Caesarea (Acts 10:44-47)	N/A	They heard them speak with <u>tongues</u> and <u>magnify God</u> ...
Ephesus (Acts 19:1-6)	N/A	Holy Spirit came upon them and they spoke with <u>tongues</u> and <u>prophesied</u> .

What apostles counted as authentic and important is the internal sign – *'Gentiles have received the Holy Spirit just as we have'* – i.e., without the external signs of wind and fire.

All three cases of internal signs point to the overflow through the mouth. Jesus said, *'For out of the abundance of the heart, the mouth speaks.'* (Matt 12:34)

3. 'Receiving Jesus' vs 'Believing Jesus and Receiving the Holy Spirit'

- a. In modern evangelism, we tend to say, *'receive Jesus Christ into your heart and you will be saved.'* We roll two separate experiences into one event. But the apostles preached, *'believe in Jesus Christ and you will receive the Holy Spirit.'* (Acts 2:38-39) The apostles required repentance from sin, faith in the resurrection of Jesus Christ, and water baptism. And on that basis, they prayed to receive the Holy Spirit. The early Christians were filled with the Spirit very early on in their Christian walk.

It is important that born-again believers are introduced to all THREE Persons of the Godhead as early as possible, not 30 years later. This happened in Acts 2, not in Acts 28. It is the Holy Spirit who makes Jesus and the Father real to us from within. *'At that day you will know that I am in My Father, and you in Me, and I in you'* (John 14:20)

- b. Historical emphasis on the work of the Holy Spirit:

(i) Holiness movement following the Wesleyan tradition emphasised the work of the Holy Spirit as personal, internal sanctification, also known as entire sanctification or sinless perfection or the second blessing. However, we do not achieve sinless perfection in this life.

(ii) Pentecostal movement emphasised the work of the Holy Spirit as the empowerment for external ministry and mission. However, many powerful ministries ended up in disrepute with grievous sin. (C.f. Matthew 7:21-23) Both internal and external aspects of the work of the Spirit are needed today.

(iii) Neo-Pentecostalism came along and removed the 'thorn in the flesh' by removing the emphasis on the baptism of the Spirit. Instead, they emphasised the exercise of spiritual gifts. However, the result was that the gifts began to disappear from the church. The tongue is for personal spiritual edification and it is the gateway for all other gifts (1 Cor 14:4, 18)

- c. Q1/ Did you receive the Holy Spirit when you believed?

Every single Christian ought to be baptised into the Holy Spirit. There is no other way to live a full Christian life except by being filled with the Holy Spirit.

Q2/ If yes, are you being filled with the Holy Spirit continually?

'And do not be drunk with wine, in which is dissipation; but be filled [continual present tense] with the Spirit, speaking to one another in psalms, and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord, giving thanks always for all things to God the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ...' (Eph 5:18) *'I need to be topped up with the Holy Spirit again because I leak.'* (D. L. Moody)

- d. Indwelling Holy Spirit Rom 8:9; 1 Cor 3:16; 1 Cor 12:3; John 20:22; 2 Cor 6:16; John 14:17, 2 Tim 1:14

Infilling of the Holy Spirit Acts 2:4; 4:31; 7:55; 9:17; 11:24; 13:9