

Chapter 39: Baptism in and Filling with the Holy Spirit

Should we seek a “baptism in the Holy Spirit” after conversion? What does it mean to be filled with the Holy Spirit?

- A) The Traditional Pentecostal Understanding (764-765)
- 1) Jesus’ disciples were born-again believers before Pentecost, certainly after his resurrection. (John 20:22)
 - 2) Jesus nevertheless commanded his disciples to remain in Jerusalem to receive new empowering for witness and ministry. (Acts 1:4-8)
 - 3) On Pentecost the disciples were baptized in (or with) the Spirit subsequent to conversion and began to speak in tongues. (Acts 2:4)
 - 4) Christians today should ask Jesus for a “baptism in the Holy Spirit,” and generally expect this baptism to be accompanied by speaking in tongues.
 - 5) This pattern is also seen in other passages in Acts. (Acts 8:12, 14-17, 19:6)
- B) What does “baptism in the Holy Spirit” mean in the New Testament? (766-773)
- 1) There are only seven passages in the NT where we read of someone being baptized in the Holy Spirit.
 - a) In the first four verses, John the Baptist is speaking of Jesus and predicting that he will baptize people in the Holy Spirit. (Matt. 3:11; Mark 1:8; Luke 3:16; John 1:33)
 - b) The next two passages refer directly to Pentecost. (Acts 1:5; Acts 11:16)
 - c) The only remaining reference in the NT is in the Pauline epistles. (1 Cor. 12:13)
 - i) The question is whether this passage refers to the activity that is occurring in the other six verses.
 - ii) Pentecostals are desirous to say that something different is being discussed here; however, the wording in Greek is exactly the same as in the other passages and should be seen as the same event.
 - iii) “Baptism in the Holy Spirit” refers to all that the Holy Spirit does at the beginning of our Christian lives.
 - d) But how, then, do we understand the references to baptism in the Holy Spirit in Acts 1:5 and 11:6, both of which refer to the day of Pentecost?
 - i) The disciples were “born again” long before Pentecost. (John 6:44; Matt. 16:16-17; John 17:8, 12)
 - ii) The day of Pentecost is much more than an individual event in the lives of Jesus’ disciples and those with them. The day of Pentecost was the point of transition between the old covenant work and ministry of the Holy Spirit and the new covenant work and ministry of the Holy Spirit. (Jer. 31:31-33; Joel 2:28-29; Matt. 11:11-14; Luke 4:14-44; Acts 1:8; Eph. 1:19-21; Eph. 6:10-18; 1 Cor. 12:7)
- C) How should we understand the “second experiences” in Acts? (773-775)
- 1) In none of these events is the phrase “baptism in the Holy Spirit” used to describe the people’s experience.
 - 2) Acts 8:4-25: God, in his providence, sovereignly waited to give the new covenant empowering of the Holy Spirit to the Samaritans directly through the hands of the apostles so that it might be evident to the highest leadership in the Jerusalem church that the Samaritans were not second-class citizens but full members of the church. (Samaritan Pentecost)

- 3) Acts 10: It is not even clear that Cornelius was a genuine believer before Peter came and preached the gospel to him.
 - 4) Acts 19: These people had not really heard the gospel of salvation through Christ.
- D) What terms shall we use to refer to an empowering by the Holy Spirit that comes after conversion? (775-784)
- 1) Harm comes to the Church from teaching two-class Christianity.
 - a) The NT itself teaches no such two-class Christianity.
 - 2) There are many degrees of empowering, fellowship with God, and personal Christian maturity.
 - a) How should we understand contemporary experience?
 - i) A single experience may result in a large step of growth in the Christian life.
 - b) What terms should we use today?
 - i) a large step of growth
 - ii) new empowering for ministry
 - c) What is “being filled with the Spirit”?

This seems to be the best term to use to describe genuine “second experiences” today because of its frequent use in contexts that speak of Christian growth and ministry. (Eph. 5:18; Acts 4:8, 31)
 - 3) Being filled with the Holy Spirit does not always result in speaking in tongues. (Luke 4:1; Luke 1:41-45; Acts 4:8, 31; Acts 11:24; 1Cor. 12:11)