

BAPTISM IN THE HOLY SPIRIT

By Benjamin Leney

Acknowledgements – See 'Further Reading', but thanks also to John France, Martin French, John Cowley, Mark Mason and Steve Dunn for helping to crystallize my thoughts on these matters.

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Introduction

By the term 'baptism in the Holy Spirit' I am referring not to an event that occurs when someone becomes a Christian, but rather to an event that normally occurs *after* an individual has made their first commitment to Christ. I do believe that a person receives the Holy Spirit when they believe. Indeed, it is not possible for individuals to understand what Jesus did, who they are, and why they need to accept Jesus as their Saviour, unless the Holy Spirit has ministered these truths to their hearts and given them faith to accept them.

However, both the Bible itself, and Christian experience since the Scriptural revelation was completed, testify to a second and indeed ongoing experience of receiving the Holy Spirit. I am not altogether happy with the term 'baptism in the Holy Spirit', and would discourage the label 'Spirit-filled' that we sometimes put or do not put on other Christians, for who are we to judge? But if we are wanting to progress in our relationship with the Lord, then receiving more of the Holy Spirit is the only way that we are to achieve that. Jesus tells his disciples in John 6:63 "It is the Spirit who gives life; the flesh profits nothing." I will in the mean time use the term 'baptism in the Holy Spirit', but I would caution against classifying Christians into those who have been baptised in the Holy Spirit, and those who have not. I will refer to some Scriptures in this paper and do some exposition, but I would encourage those who read this paper to look at Appendix 3 in order to bring further understanding. For maximum benefit of studying this paper, the Bible references need to be referred to, as I have not normally cited them. If you are very keen to simply get to the meat of the issue, then go straight away to 'How to receive the Baptism of the Holy Spirit'.

This Paper is not long enough to do full justice to the topic, and is rather a statement of a doctrinal view, and its practical outworking in a Christian's life.

Scriptures that should be considered, including their context

The references to being baptised in the Holy Spirit are Matthew 3:11, Mark 1:8, Luke 3:16, John 1:33, Acts 1:5, and Acts 11:16. Jesus poured

out the Holy Spirit on the Day of Pentecost, which we read about in Acts 2:1-39.

See also Numbers 11:29, Jeremiah 31:31-33, Ezekiel 36:26-27 and Joel 2:28-29 for some background about what the Day of Pentecost would bring and mean for all who believe.

What does the Holy Spirit do?

The Holy Spirit is a personality in the Triune Godhead, with the Father and the Son. His work is to manifest the active presence of God in the world, and especially in the church. When Jesus taught his disciples, he told them in John 16:7 that "it is to your advantage that I go away; for if I do not go away, the Helper will not come to you; but if I depart, I will send Him to you."

The Holy Spirit gives life and also spiritual rebirth, see Job 34:14-15, and John 3:6-7 as well as Romans 8:11. He also gives power for service, see 1 Samuel 16:13, Exodus 31:3, including for Jesus Himself, see Isaiah 11:2-3 as well as John 1:32, Luke 4:18-19, John 3:34-35. The Holy Spirit helps Christians in ministry, 1 Corinthians 12:11, in prayer, Romans 8:26, including through the gift of tongues, 1 Corinthians 14:2, and for spiritual warfare, for example Acts 13:9-11.

The Holy Spirit purifies. See Romans 8:13, 1 Corinthians 6:11, Titus 3:5, Luke 3:16, Galatians 5:22-23, 2 Corinthians 3:18. 1 Corinthians 14:12 and Matthew 7:15-20 remind us that any outward appearances of the Holy Spirit's presence must be judged by the fruit that is produced.

The Holy Spirit reveals. John 16:13 reminds us that the Holy Spirit will "guide you into all truth". He can sometimes be a perceptible presence, as a dove on Jesus, as visible tongues of fire, and Jesus spoke of a river of living water, see John 7:38. He works in ways that can be perceived both by believers and unbelievers, see Hebrews 2:4. He guides believers, as in Acts 8:29, Acts 15:28, Romans 8:14 and 1 Corinthians 14:29-33. He brings about conviction of sin, John 16:8-11, but also love, Romans 5:5, and peace and joy, see Romans 14:17. He also imparts truth, wisdom, righteousness, awareness of adoption, unity and power. He gives us assurance that God is with us, 1 John 3:24, and he teaches us about God, see 1 Corinthians 2:10-15.

The Holy Spirit unifies. Notice that the Day of Pentecost occurred when they were “all together”. We see the fruit of this in Acts 2:44-47, and in the blessing in 2 Corinthians 13:14 referring to the “fellowship of the Holy Spirit”. See also Ephesians 4:3 and 1 Corinthians 12:13.

The Holy Spirit encourages our response to God. The Holy Spirit left Samson and Saul when they persisted in sin, Judges 16:20 and 1 Samuel 16:14. The Holy Spirit can be grieved and cease to bring blessing, as we are warned in 1 Corinthians 6:19-20. Deeper, hardened disobedience can bring strong judgment, as in Acts 5:3 and Acts 5:9. See also Hebrews 10:29. This may imply that someone has not genuinely believed, and does not suggest that a born-again Christian can lose their salvation, although they may receive heavy judgment in this life and no reward in eternity, see 1 Corinthians 3:13-15. We can resist or quench or oppose the Holy Spirit, and we will then lose his empowering and much of the blessing of God from our lives. But it is also possible to be filled afresh with the Holy Spirit, and all ministry ought to be done in the Holy Spirit, see Ephesians 5:18 and an example in Revelation 1:10. Zechariah 4:6 reminds us that it is “Not by might, nor by power, *but by my Spirit*”, says the Lord of hosts.” In times of revival the Holy Spirit produces a Godlike atmosphere and works through peoples’ lives in especially powerful ways. Romans 8:1-17 and Galatians 5:16-26 are key chapters to increasing our understanding of walking in the Spirit.

The origin of the baptism in the Holy Spirit

The gospels tell us clearly that Jesus is “He who baptizes with the Holy Spirit”. Jesus Himself received the Holy Spirit “like a dove, and He remained on Him”, John 1:32, after he was baptized in water by John the Baptist. Acts 2:38 gives perhaps the clearest indication of the order of Holy Spirit baptism in Christian experience: “Repent, and let every one of you be baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.” See also Luke 11:13. Acts 2:39 uses the word ‘promise’ in relation to the Holy Spirit, and “as many as the Lord our God will call”, the word *proskaleo* which means “to bid to come”. The Father wants all to be saved, and all those who receive salvation can also receive the baptism in the Holy Spirit.

The meaning of baptism in the Holy Spirit

The baptism of the Holy Spirit can only be given by Jesus, see the 'Scriptures that should be considered' above. The word *baptizo* Vines explains means "to dip", as in dipping a garment in dye. It suggests immersion and also identification. Whenever someone is baptized in Acts there is always something that happens to confirm that the Spirit has come. We should not always look for tongues of fire, or the building shaking. But in Acts 10:46 believers who have received the Holy Spirit speak in tongues, just as is recorded in Acts 2:4 on the Day of Pentecost, which suggests that tongues is often a sign of the baptism of the Spirit.

I have not been baptised in the Holy Spirit. Am I not a proper Christian? You can have received Jesus as Saviour and Lord, and be living for Him, and still not have received the baptism of the Holy Spirit. The first question to ask if this is your situation, is have you been baptised (see 'How to receive the Holy Spirit' below)? The second, if so, is have you experienced definite signs of the Holy Spirit's presence? These may include any of the gifts referred to in 1 Corinthians 12:8-10 and Romans 12:3-8.

It is possible that you have received the 'baptism in the Holy Spirit' and did not realise it. It may have been a long time ago that you functioned in the gifts of the Holy Spirit, and need a fresh outpouring, but that would not be the same as the initial 'baptism'. However, see 'How to receive baptism in the Holy Spirit' below. It is also possible that you have yet to receive it, but you are still a born-again Christian. Read on if so!

The purpose of baptism in the Holy Spirit

Baptism in water is an ordinance founded by Jesus for all His followers, and is a public and physical sign of spiritual rebirth. We have to read the book of Acts to see its relation to being baptised in the Holy Spirit, which is an inward and spiritual sign of being born again. While every believer

has the Holy Spirit indwelling them, see Ephesians 1:13, the baptism of the Holy Spirit is an anointing for ministry. The Lord Jesus did not begin His ministry until He was baptized in water and received the Holy Spirit. Notice also that directly after this event He was "led by the Holy Spirit into the wilderness", Luke 4:1. This is not a pattern for our experience, because Jesus had a particular mission, but we *are* called to share in that mission and that will sometimes involve hardship. Baptism in the Holy Spirit does not make the Christian life easy.

Acts shows that baptism in the Holy Spirit is a definite experience, and can occur either with salvation, as in Cornelius' household in Acts 10:44, or more usually after being saved, as indicated in Acts 2:38, and shown in Acts 8:15-17 in Samaria. Baptism in the Holy Spirit is "to make us useful for God and the salvation of souls." (R.A. Torrey) The more we get to know the Holy Spirit, and the more space we make for Him in our lives and our spirits, the more of God's blessings we can receive into every aspect of our lives. The most common spiritual blessings that you receive after baptism in the Holy Spirit is a renewed vigour and excitement in personal prayer, new encounters with the Lord in worship, an increase of power and anointing in current spiritual giftings as well as direction and breakthrough into new giftings, and increased help in sanctification and becoming godly in character. If the Christian experience is on a scale, receiving the baptism of the Holy Spirit enables one to take a large step of growth and receive a new empowering for service. Torrey points out that if you do not receive the baptism of the Holy Spirit, there are souls who could have been saved through you who will not be.

Martyn Lloyd-Jones remarks on the baptism of the Holy Spirit within the church: "There is this paramount need of authority, of power, of a holy boldness, of apostolic witness, if you like. It is the greatest need of all. And nothing can give this but the baptism with the Spirit. That has been the history of the church throughout the centuries."

It should not be sought simply to make money in ministry, see Acts 8:20, and also not for prestige or pride, or simply for the experience of it. Do you want your children to become Christians? Baptism in the Holy Spirit on a married couple will empower them to lead their children to Christ. Have you not seen many people converted although you are always witnessing? Baptism in the Holy Spirit will increase the number of conversions. Baptism in the Holy Spirit does not make you a superior Christian – indeed showing any form of superiority over other Christians is

an indication of spiritual immaturity, see Matthew 23:10-12, Luke 14:7-11 and James 2:1-13.

If you are filled with the Holy Spirit, how can you be filled up more?
When you are born again, the Holy Spirit regenerates your spirit and it becomes alive. When you are baptised in the Holy Spirit, you receive power for service, Acts 1:8. The Holy Spirit enlarges your spirit and helps you to be transformed to His will (see below). Rather than a jug that is full of water and can receive no more, you can view your spirit as a balloon that can still be inflated and receive more air. Ephesians 5:18 urges believers to keep on being filled with the Holy Spirit.

How to receive baptism in the Holy Spirit

From the Holiness Movement onwards through the birth of Pentecostalism there has been very clear, effective teaching on how to receive the baptism in the Holy Spirit. Sometimes nominal Christians, hungry for more, have gone through these steps and realised that they were not actually saved in the first place, and received incredible blessing as a result.

R.A. Torrey, a Bible teacher, evangelist and revivalist, listed these seven steps in his sermons on the topic (see Further Reading). I would like to emphasize that this may not have been your experience – you may not necessarily have been aware of these explicit seven steps. Indeed, you may have received Holy Spirit baptism on conversion. However, these should all be considered doctrinally as preconditions for Holy Spirit baptism, and for many believers, this has been a process. For each step, a Christian's spirit has to say 'Yes' to the Lord, basing their expectation on knowledge of the Word of God, which they have received through faith:

1. Faith in Christ alone for salvation. Your salvation does not depend on anything you have done or anything that you will ever do, including Bible reading, attending church, giving to the poor, or even baptism. But your salvation depends on the finished work of Christ in his life, death and resurrection.

2. *Repentance from all known sin.* Hebrews 10:26 tells us that “if we sin willfully after we have received the knowledge of the truth, there no longer remains a sacrifice for sins.” 1 John 1:9 tells us to confess our sins, and He will forgive us and cleanse us from all unrighteousness. Sin grieves the Holy Spirit. The dove is an easily-scared bird. R.T. Kendall tells the story of a missionary couple in Israel who discovered a pair of doves had started nesting in their eaves. Every time they slammed the door the doves would fly away, and not return for a while. Loud voices would also scare them off. They had to modify their lifestyle because they wanted the doves to stay. If we want the dove of the Holy Spirit to remain on us, we must not grieve Him by our sin.

3 *Water Baptism* – We must make an open confession before the world that we renounce our old life and sin, and that we are trusting in Christ as Saviour, see Luke 12:8. In non-Christian countries it can cost people their family inheritance and their social standing to get baptised. If we are not counting the cost, and are living as a private or a secret Christian, we are resisting the Holy Spirit’s presence and quenching His power.

4. *Obedience* – We must surrender our will unconditionally to God. This is the point at which a lot of people miss the baptism of the Holy Spirit. Many people are willing to sacrifice for Christ, but do not want to surrender to Him. “Absolute surrender to God is simply putting yourself into the hands of infinite love. God’s love is not only wiser than that of any earthly father, it is more tender than that of any earthly mother” (Torrey). Imagine a son coming home and throwing himself into his father’s arms and saying: “I love you so much. I put myself in your hands and today I will do only what you want me to do. Write a list of what you want me to do today.” Would that father sit down and work out a fiendish list of all the chores and drudgery that his son hates, or would he in delight and affection plan the best day that his son has ever had? In the same way, if you are prepared to surrender yourself to God, you will never regret it. If you feel you cannot surrender your will to God, ask Him to empty you of your self-will, and He will do it for you. “Love is a great controlling passion, and it always expresses itself in terms of obedience” Lloyd-Jones.

5. *You have to be thirsty.* Having the Holy Spirit’s presence must be the only thing that you think about, in the same way that when you are thirsty, until you have drunk water, you can focus on nothing else. As long as we are living as if we can get by without Him, operating in our strength, using tricks we have learnt from our experience, then there is

no point in praying for baptism in the Holy Spirit, because nothing will come of it. See Isaiah 44:3 "For I will pour water on him who is thirsty, and floods on the dry ground."

6. *Just Ask.* There has to be a definite prayer for this definite blessing. In the same way that each of us had to pray individually to receive what Christ did on the Cross, we each must pray individually to receive the baptism of the Holy Spirit. We must bring our experience up to the level of the Bible, not the Bible down to our level of experience!

7. *Ask in Faith.* You must confidently expect to receive the baptism of the Holy Spirit when you ask. James 1:6 tells us "let him ask in faith, with no doubting, for he who doubts is like a wave of the sea driven and tossed by the wind. For let not that man suppose that he will receive anything from the Lord." Hebrews 11:6 "without faith it is impossible to please Him." 1 John 5:14-15 teaches us that if we ever ask anything that is according to His will, then He hears us, and will give us whatever we ask. Acts 2:38-39 (see above) and Luke 11:13 show us that God will give the Holy Spirit to those who ask Him. Torrey explains how we move into faith in what the Bible promises: 'The petition I asked was baptism in the Holy Spirit; and since I know He has heard me, I know I have what I asked, so I know I have the baptism in the Holy Spirit.' And what you thus take upon naked faith in the Word of God, you shall afterwards have in actual experimental possession.

QUESTIONS

Are Spirit-baptised Christians more spiritual than others?

Anyone who is a believer has the Holy Spirit within them. Baptism in the Spirit is available for more power and anointing in ministry. There are believers in every era who do not speak in tongues, for example, such as Billy Graham, and yet clearly are used powerfully by God. Receiving the Baptism in the Holy Spirit is an opportunity to take a large step towards becoming like Jesus, but by definition it does not make anyone more 'spiritual'. It is possible over years of Christian service to grow more and more like Jesus and to become more effective in ministry without having experienced 'the baptism of the Holy Spirit', as it has been described here. However, it is the position of this Paper that all believers *ought* to

seek the baptism of the Holy Spirit (see Appendix 2, especially 'The Pentecostal view of Baptism in the Holy Spirit').

Do we have to wait after we are saved for baptism in the Holy Spirit?

No, the disciples waited in Acts because God told them to wait for the Day of Pentecost, but the Day of Pentecost has now come and Jesus has already given the gift of the Holy Spirit.

Can we operate in ministry without being baptised in the Holy Spirit?

If we are to take Jesus' example as a model, who did not begin his public ministry until He had 'fulfilled righteousness' by being baptised by John, and receiving the dove of the Holy Spirit, and also to reflect that the disciples were told to wait until they had "received power" on the day of Pentecost, then it seems clear that we should receive Holy Spirit baptism before moving in ministry. This paper takes the position that you do *not* necessarily receive Holy Spirit baptism on salvation, but have to ask for it, in the same way that we ask individually by faith for salvation.

However, this does not mean that you *have* to speak in tongues, or necessarily operate in all the spiritual gifts (see 1 Corinthians 12:29-31) and you may not be able to pin down the date when you were baptised in the Holy Spirit. The baptism in the Spirit is not about feelings, but about faith. Moreover, those who serve in the church and the world will regularly confess their sins and regularly bring themselves to God to receive the Holy Spirit's help for His glory (see Appendix 1).

Can I pray for a further baptism in the Holy Spirit?

It is clear from Acts and other Scriptures that a special anointing for particular tasks came on God's people, and that Paul instructs us to pray for the Holy Spirit's help. However, once you have received the baptism in the Holy Spirit, you do not need to pray for it again. It is always timely, nonetheless, to ask Jesus to send the Holy Spirit either on the church or on yourself or on someone else.

What if I have not been water-baptised? Can I not receive the Baptism in the Holy Spirit?

Water-baptism is not essential for salvation, although if you read Acts it is the normal response of a new believer. It is common now for more time to elapse between making a commitment to Christ and getting baptised, and this is a good test of seriousness, especially for the young. However, the emphasis that Torrey makes is that you need to publicly confess your faith. If you have not been baptised, you are missing an opportunity for others to believe and to be encouraged, and ought to be baptised. But you can still receive the baptism of the Holy Spirit right now, see Acts 10:46, as in the example of Cornelius' household.

How reliable are the above steps for receiving the Baptism in the Holy Spirit?

Wayne Grudem, who discourages the term 'baptism in the Holy Spirit' as he is quite rightly concerned that it can be divisive among Christians, nonetheless acknowledges that these steps amount to "a guaranteed prescription for significant growth in the Christian life! Such confession, repentance, renewed commitment, and heightened faith and expectation, if they are genuine, can only bring positive results in a person's life." These steps are also listed, for instance, in 'The Spirit-Filled Life Bible', by Derek Prince, by David Watson, and corroborated by Lloyd-Jones. His steps in *Joy Unspeakable* are as follows: 1 Realise the baptism of the Holy Spirit is available 2 Want it for God's glory 3 Be obedient in love 4 Urgently and persistently ask for it. I think that Torrey's steps are more helpful in allowing the penny to drop about the promises that are ours through faith.

What Scriptural and church examples are there of Holy Spirit baptism after conversion?

While Christ was a different case, He was baptised in the Holy Spirit for ministry. Paul was converted on the Damascus Road, but three days later Ananias laid hands on him to receive the Holy Spirit. Believers in Samaria and Ephesus appear to have been baptised in the Holy Spirit after conversion. In church history, many revivalists and evangelists have received baptism in the Holy Spirit, for example John Wesley's 'heart was strangely warmed', D.L. Moody received a new empowering that transformed his ministry, Whitefield laboured in works for some years before receiving a luminous anointing that he never lost, and for more examples see the Roberts Liardon series *Gods Generals*. See Appendix 2

for more information. On revival and the power of the Holy Spirit, someone has said: "Anything God has ever done, He can do now. Anything God has ever done anywhere, he can do here. Anything God has ever done for anyone, He can do for you. Believe it and ask God to increase your faith."

Appendix 1 Prayer to receive the baptism in the Holy Spirit

This is not a formula, but I would encourage a daily prayer along this kind of line, including all the seven steps, in order to keep a short account with God and to provide a fresh declaration of biblical truth. It is important to come to the Lord early in the day, as Robert Murray McCheyne used to say, he wanted to see the face of God before he saw the face of man.

Rather than just speaking it out quickly, still your spirit, and allow the Spirit to nudge you toward any aspect of the prayer that needs highlighting for you at the time – it may be right to pause and confess specific sin, for instance, or to bring specific requests for help at points in the day, such as for a divine appointment, or ministry opportunities, or an event you are nervous about.

Father, I repent of all my known sin and ask you to show me any wicked way in me. I am trusting fully in the finished work of Jesus for salvation. I surrender my will to Yours today, and ask for strength to fully obey you in everything I ought to do and all you prompt me to do. I know that as a good Father you will give the Holy Spirit to anyone if they ask, and I know it's Your will that I might be filled with Your Holy Spirit, so Jesus I ask You to send Your Spirit on me now in power and grace, that I may serve you

effectively today and bring much glory to Your name in what I do, say and think. Thank You for saving me and for calling me to join in Your glorious and eternal work. Amen.

Appendix 2 Further Reading (books and weblinks)

By far the best reading on this subject is both the gospels and the book of Acts, and I would recommend daily reading in these texts. I have not given an exhaustive bibliography here because it would be exhausting, and I did not want to include anything I have not read. I include these in the order in which I have drawn on them for the above Paper:

The Holy Spirit: Who He is and What He Does (Bridge-Logos, Florida, 2008) R.A. Torrey, Ed. Harold J Chadwick, esp. chs. 5-8

(This is also available as *The Baptism in the Holy Spirit* (Bethany House Publishers, Michigan, 1994) Torrey, a paperback or on the Kindle)

Systematic Theology: An Introduction to Biblical Doctrine (IVP, Leicester, 1994) Wayne Grudem, esp. ch. 39

Joy Unspeakable: Power and Renewal in the Holy Spirit (Kingsway, Eastbourne, 1995) Martyn Lloyd-Jones, esp. ch. 20

Baptism in the Holy Spirit, Randy Clark, Kindle Edition

Rev Ed Hird, 'Confessions of a Reluctant Charismatic'
http://www3.bc.sympatico.ca/st_simons/arm11.htm

Andrew Wommack, 'The Holy Spirit'

http://www.awmi.net/extra/article/holy_spirit

Gordon L. Anderson, The Pentecostal view of Baptism in the Holy Spirit:

http://enrichmentjournal.ag.org/200501/200501_071_BaptismHS.cfm

Appendix 3 – Varying Views of the Baptism *taken from Randy Clark*

There probably is no other experience within Christianity that has been more controversial than the subject of baptism in the Holy Spirit. At the same time, there is no other experience more important for a Christian than baptism in the Holy Spirit.

Infant Baptism

The Catholic, Orthodox, Lutheran, Anglican and Episcopal Group believe one is baptised in the Holy Spirit at the time of infant baptism and that there is a renewed filling, or stirring up of the Holy Spirit, that one receives at Confirmation.

At Conversion

The Reformed, Evangelical, Baptist and Modern Methodist group believes one is baptized in the Holy Spirit at the time of conversion and there can be many subsequent fillings of the Holy Spirit.

Subsequent to Conversion

Pentecostals and Charismatics generally see the baptism of the Holy Spirit as subsequent to conversion. They believe conversion is when one is born again, indwelt and sealed by the Holy Spirit. The baptism is to be sought and is subsequent to conversion.

Speaking in Tongues

Most Protestant Charismatics as well as some Roman Catholic Charismatics say that speaking in tongues is the initial evidence of having received the Baptism of the Holy Spirit. Evangelical denominations tend to emphasise the fruit of the Spirit especially faith, hope and love as evidence of having received the Spirit's baptism.