

PNEUMATOLOGY (61)

Reason #4 - Because of a personal experience .

There are many people who do not understand the doctrine of Spirit baptism because of some personal experience they have had or some personal experience another claims to have had. As a result, these individuals never come to a true understanding of sound doctrine because their authority basis is not the Bible , but their experience .

It is amazing that many people intimidate others doctrinally by citing their experience as their authority for what they do or do not believe. In fact, some of these individuals act as if it is unspiritual to even dare to question their experience. However, the Bible makes it clear that questioning and examining a person's experience is not only the mark of spirituality, it is the mark of obedience.

God has given us the responsibility to carefully examine and question experiential matters in light of His precious Word for the following reasons:

- 1) We know from Scripture that two sources can produce the supernatural: God and Satan (i.e. Ex. 7:8-11).
- 2) We know from Scripture that we are in warfare against supernatural forces who are able to produce supernatural experiences (Eph. 6:10-18).
- 3) We know from Scripture that Satan has his own ministers who appear to be servants of righteousness, who twist and tamper with God's truth (II Cor. 11:13-15).
- 4) We know from Scripture that as we near the end, doctrinal heresy will increase (I Tim. 4:1-4; II Tim. 4:3).
- 5) We know from Scripture that as we near the end, experiential pleasure seekers will increase and influence others, drawing them away from truth and a disciplined life (II Tim. 3:1-10).
- 6) We have been charged to test people to see if what they are saying lines up with the truth of God's Word (I John 4:1-3).

God's people not only have the right to demand that any experience line up with the whole of God's Word, they also have the responsibility to do this. For many people, the Word of God is not their authority; their experience is.

Reason #5 - Because of a failure to distinguish between baptism and filling .

Many in Christianity have failed to understand the doctrinal difference between baptism and filling, and as a result there is a misunderstanding. Two of the more prominent names in Christianity who were very confused on this issue were R. A. Torrey and D. L. Moody.

PNEUMATOLOGY (62)

Dr. Charles Ryrie writes: “The lack of clarity is compounded by the fact that great men like R. A. Torrey and D. L. Moody were unclear in this area. Torrey taught that a person could or could not be baptized with the Spirit at the moment of salvation.” Ryrie goes on to say in Torrey’s biography of D. L. Moody that Mr. Moody believed he was baptized by the Spirit after he was saved (*Basic Theology*, p. 363).

It will be demonstrated in this study that the confusion of these men is due to their failure to distinguish between the baptism of the Holy Spirit and the filling of the Holy Spirit. It would be worth mentioning that D. L. Moody, himself believed he was very weak doctrinally. In fact, he was quick to admit that even though he had been greatly used as an evangelist, he needed deep training in the Word of God and in the doctrines of God. One who is not doctrinally precise can easily fail to differentiate between the baptism of the Spirit and the filling of the Spirit. It would be well to note that D. L. Moody (1837-1899) and R. A. Torrey (1856-1928) were the forerunners of C. I. Scofield (1843-1921) and Lewis Sperry Chafer (1871-1952). It is well for us to observe that Dr. Scofield was the great influence of Dr. Chafer, and Dr. Scofield’s monumental contribution to Christianity was his God-given ability to dispensationally understand and interpret the Bible and its doctrines. Prior to this, Pneumatology was a dispensationally fuzzy doctrine and there were not many attempts whatsoever to systematize this doctrine. It can be no coincidence that God raised up these skilled men of the Word to doctrinally stabilize His people. Although Mr. Moody recognized and admitted his doctrinal and biblical weaknesses, it must also be realized that there were not too many writings or men available who had carefully studied these doctrines and could accurately teach them. It was certainly not a sinful rebellion that caused D. L. Moody to misunderstand baptism and filling, it was a lack of knowledge.

Dr. Ryrie made a powerful observation when he wrote: “Admittedly, sometimes this lack of clarity is innocent; but regrettably sometimes these misconceptions are deliberately promoted. In either case, believers are robbed of an important truth that involves our union with Christ and a solid basis for holy living” (*Ibid.*, p. 363).

When we fail to be precise in our doctrine, we do God, His Word, ourselves and others a great injustice. It is possible to actually present our well-meaning opinions and rob people of the truth. Undoubtedly, when it comes to the subject of Spirit baptism, this is a great problem. Spirit baptism and Spirit filling are two distinct works of the Spirit. If we do not recognize these distinctions, we will be unstable and confused and, in many instances, powerless in our Christian lives.

Reason #6 - Because of a misunderstanding of tongues.

For many, Spirit baptism is just another way of wording “speaking in tongues.” Those who view Spirit baptism this way misunderstand and misinterpret Spirit baptism and biblical tongues. Furthermore, such a concept demeans the doctrine of Spirit baptism in that it lowers its true meaning and promotes a heresy that unfortunately confuses many of God’s sheep.

There can be no doubt that Satan is behind all confusion concerning the subject of Spirit baptism.

PNEUMATOLOGY (63)

He realizes the potential power a believer can have if he truly grasps this doctrine and he has done and is still doing his best to keep believers in ignorance of this precious doctrine.

(Spirit Baptism - Question #3) - What does the word “baptize” actually mean or what exactly is baptism?

We begin with this question because one of the greatest doctrinal tragedies which have occurred has been a failure to actually understand what baptism really is or means. The sad reality is that when it comes to the subject of “Spirit baptism,” very little attempt is made to define baptism. Since “every word of God is pure,” we believe there is an important meaning behind the very words God selects. Obviously an accurate understanding of “Spirit baptism” demands some knowledge of the actual meaning of the word “baptism.”

In the English speaking world, we have a tendency to immediately think in terms of baptism as being some connection between a human being and water. Certainly there is a legitimate application which may be drawn between these two existences. However, to limit our understanding of “baptism” to only this level is to do great harm to our ability to understand what God would have us understand. The word “baptism” certainly did not conjure up the same image in the minds of those who lived in biblical times as it does with us. In order for us to truly understand what “Spirit baptism” is, we must try to understand what those first century believers saw and believed.

To illustrate how different we think about baptism and how the first century believer thought about it, we turn to a famous work written in the 1800’s by T. J. Conant, *The Meaning and Use of Baptizein*. Dr. Conant crawled through history and tracked down Greek writings to see how the term baptism was used. He determined that it was used to refer to that part of something which was completely and totally submerged under water.

- 1) Polybius, who lived 200 years before Christ, describes a sea fight between the Romans and the Carthaginians. The Carthaginians were much more skillful in maneuvering ships and in describing the Roman Navy, Polybius writes: “on account of the unskillfulness of the crews they baptized (ebaptizou) many of the vessels” (pp. 15-16). The obvious meaning is that they sank some of their own ships. So baptism would be understood as submerging a ship.
- 2) Plutarch, who was born approximately 50 years after Christ, in discussing the arms of engines which projected out from the ships wrote: “Some (of the vessels) thrusting down, under a weight firmly fixed above, they sunk into the deep; and others, with iron hands or beaks like those cranes, hauling up by the prow till they were erect on the stern, they were submerged = baptized (baptizomena).” The obvious meaning is they were submerged or they sunk.
- 3) Aristotle, who was born 384 years before Christ, in speaking of rushes and seaweed wrote, “...certain places full of rushes and seaweed, which, when it is ebb-tide, are not baptized (me baptizesthai), but when it is flood-tide are overflowed.” Here the meaning is that the seaweed is not submerged underwater (p. 18).

PNEUMATOLOGY (64)

4) Polybius, who lived 200 years before Christ, describes an iron-headed spear and wrote: “And even if the spear falls into the sea, it is not lost, for it is compacted of both oak and pine, so that when the oaken part is baptized (baptizomenou) by the weight, the rest is buoyed up and easily recovered.” Again the clear idea is part of the spear is submerged under water (p. 18).

Again Polybius writes of the Roman army: “They passed through with difficulty, the foot soldiers baptized (baptizomenoi) as far as to the breasts.” Here the idea clearly is part of the body was submerged under water (p. 19).

The actual word “baptize” is one that means to dip , to immerse , to submerge and to sink . This particular word “baptizo,” was used often in Greek to refer to the sinking of a ship . In biblical Greek, the word was used to refer to washing or bathing (Mark 7:4); of water baptism (I Corinthians 1:14); of Spirit baptism (I Corinthians 12:13); of repentance baptism (Matthew 3:11); of remission baptism (Mark 1:4); of Christ’s suffering baptism (Matthew 20:22-23; Luke 12:50); of Israel’s Mosaic baptism (I Corinthians 10:2), of the Trinity baptism (Matthew 28:19). Every one of these baptisms features a form of the word “baptizo.”

“Baptizo” comes from a Greek root word “bapto.” Although this particular word occurs only three times in the N.T., it is very important that we understand the meaning, since all words are derived from this one.

The basic meaning of the word “bapto” is twofold: 1) To dip ; 2) To dye . We are very accurate and specific when we say “bapto” means to dip in dye. If we examine the three N.T. passages where this word is used, we may clearly see that the thing dipped contains the substance of whatever it was dipped into: 1) Luke 16:24 = the dipped finger contains the water; 2) John 13:26 = the dipped morsel contained the substance; 3) Rev. 19:13 = the dipped robe contains the blood. In every instance, the thing dipped contains the substance of that into which it was dipped. This perfectly fits the idea of dipping in dye. In this case, a piece of material is placed into dye so that when it is finally removed it is a totally different color, testifying of a permanent change.

In understanding the meaning of the word, we may begin to form an accurate understanding of Spirit baptism. **Spirit baptism is the work of the Spirit in which He places, immerses, and submerges the believer into Jesus Christ so that this person is so linked and so identified with Jesus Christ that he is changed forever in the sight of God.** One who has been baptized by the Spirit into Jesus Christ is instantly changed in color and this one stands in the sight of God as robed in the righteousness of Jesus Christ and is washed whiter than snow.

Any honest examination and evaluation of this word “baptize” demands this definition. Spirit baptism dips the believer deep into Jesus Christ so that from God’s perspective he is seen totally different—as one united and vitally linked forever with the person and work of Jesus Christ.

PNEUMATOLOGY (65)

God, as it were, looks into a doctrinal vat filled with the blood of Jesus Christ, which is evidence of His death, burial, and resurrection. At the precise moment one believes on Jesus Christ, the Holy Spirit takes that one and dips him into that vat. From that moment on, God sees that person as one vitally linked to His own Son. That is Spirit baptism. It fits perfectly with a true definition of the word.

(Spirit Baptism - Question #4) - What are the passages of Scripture that refer to Spirit baptism?

When it comes to specific passages that pertain to Spirit baptism, we may examine them under two Spirit baptism headings:

Spirit Baptism Heading #1 - Those passages in which Christ baptizes **WITH** the Holy Spirit.

Spirit Baptism Heading #2 - Those passages in which the Holy Spirit baptizes **INTO** Jesus Christ.

Spirit Baptism Heading #1 - Those passages in which Jesus Christ baptizes with the Holy Spirit.

There are six passages in which Jesus Christ is said to be the baptizing agent who baptizes with the Spirit of God: 1) Matthew 3:11 ; 2) Mark 1:18 ; 3) Luke 3:16 ; 4) John 1:33 ; 5) Acts 1:5 ; 6) Acts 11:16 .

What these verses clearly demonstrate is that the baptism of the Spirit was considered to be a much greater and more significant baptism than water baptism for this baptism was one fully authorized by Jesus Christ.

It is evident from these verses that John's baptism was very subservient to Christ's baptism with the Holy Spirit. John, himself saw his "repentance baptism" with water, as being completely subordinate to Jesus Christ's baptism with the Holy Spirit. It is also evident from a text like Acts 11:16 that the Apostle Peter, in the early days of the Church Age, viewed it exactly the same way.

If we are honest with the Bible, we must conclude, on the basis of inspired revelation, that the "baptism of the Spirit" authorized by Jesus Christ, takes a major precedence over the "baptism in water" accomplished by John. In John's mind, these two different baptisms were not on the same level or scale of significance, even though John's baptism was sanctioned by heaven (Matt. 21:25).

Although the purpose of this study is to focus on the subject of Spirit baptism, we cannot leave these passages without making some doctrinal observation and application. When water baptism, which is a physical act performed by sinful people, is elevated to the same level of "Spirit baptism" which is a divine work authorized by Jesus Christ, we must brand this type of thinking as heretical.

PNEUMATOLOGY (66)

There are a number of churches and religions who would have God's people believe that water baptism is somehow part of salvation. These misguided and misinformed individuals actually believe that a water baptism performed with sinful hands is part of a divine baptism authorized by Jesus Christ. Such thinking was not found in the mind of John, who is often credited with the concept of baptism, (i.e. "John the Baptist" or "John the Baptizer").

When a person comes to faith in Jesus Christ, the challenge that is often given is that of a need to be baptized in water. A more accurate biblical picture is the need to understand what the Holy Spirit just did to that one who believed; namely baptized him into Jesus Christ. By full authority of God the Father and God the Son, one who believes on Jesus Christ is, at the moment of salvation, placed into Jesus Christ to the extent that he is forever identified with Christ's death, burial, and resurrection and at that precise moment he forever becomes a child of God. It is the Spirit of God who carries out this amazing baptism and it is this baptism which ought to be emphasized to the new believer. An understanding of Spirit baptism is life transforming, unlike baptism in water that doesn't transform anything. There are many people who are baptized in water and expect to be totally different after they come up out of the water. It doesn't take long for them to realize they aren't totally different and they don't have anymore power over sin than they did prior to their water baptism. The problem is **power over sin is not achieved by focusing on water baptism, but by focusing on Spirit baptism.** This is clearly how John saw it and it is clearly how we need to see it.

If a believer desires to think about something that can and will revolutionize his Christian life, one should think about the fact that the moment you believed, the Holy Spirit of God placed him into Jesus Christ and identified him with everything Christ is and did. This baptism was totally, completely, and fully authorized by Jesus Christ, Himself. This is Spirit baptism and this is the thinking that will bring power to the Christian life to live victoriously over sin.

Spirit Baptism Heading #2 - Those passages in which the Holy Spirit baptizes into Jesus Christ.

Dr. Lewis Sperry Chafer, in speaking of these passages wrote: "These passages constitute a distinct testimony by themselves, which is to the effect that by the operation of the Holy Spirit the believer is organically and vitally joined to the Lord and thus has become a partaker of the standing, merit, and perfect worthiness of Christ" (Vol. 6, p. 142).

Under this particular heading, we will examine seven passages that instruct us concerning the glorious realities of Spirit baptism. It needs to be once again pointed out that Spirit baptism is a real baptism, **not** a ritual baptism. Therefore, Spirit baptism **is not** a symbol, **it is** a reality.

Passage #1 - Romans 6:1-4.

In this context, the Apostle Paul had just concluded informing the believers of the judicial work of God in declaring one righteous in Jesus Christ, no matter what their level of sin (5:18-21).