

"Baptism and Filling of the Holy Spirit"

Acts 1:5

Dr. Jerry Nelson

www.soundliving.org

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Most of you know that Christians have a "lingo" all of their own.

Engineers have their own language,

Computer people have theirs.

Well Christians do too.

"Sanctification," "Regeneration," "Propitiation" are some such words.

It's not wrong to have precise terminology to describe very important issues but it is imperative that others understand them if we are going to communicate accurately.

In Acts chapters one and two there are some very important words that I believe need some very clear definition for us to better understand what is going on and for us to understand their significance.

I do not want to give the impression that I think the Bible is so complicated and that theology is so technical that only preachers or theologians can understand it.

That is definitely not the case. But neither is the Bible simplistic. Many times important things take study. And any Christian could use the Bible and come to the understanding we will today.

What are some of those words that I think we need to understand before we study Acts 2 further?

Have you ever wondered when you have read some of these verses what words or phrases like the following mean or how they relate to each other?:

Acts 1:5 "baptized with water."

1:5 "baptized with the Holy Spirit"

1:8 "when the Holy Spirit comes on you"

2:4 all of them were "filled with the Holy Spirit"

2:17 God says, "I will pour out my spirit on all people"

And to those we have added some phrases of our own in the church to describe the work of the Holy Spirit:

a revival

an outpouring of the Spirit, etc.

This morning we are going to look primarily at two of the phrases that are used:

"Baptism of the Holy Spirit" and "Filling with the Spirit."

I wish to show how the other phrases and words, I've mentioned already, are largely synonymous with these two.

Again looking at Acts 1:5 we see that Jesus promised that His disciples would receive the Holy Spirit.

In Acts 1:8 He says that when they do, they will be witnesses to the rest of the world about who Jesus is.

Then in Acts 1:14 it says that they met together to pray and though it doesn't explicitly say it, I believe they met together to pray for the coming of the Spirit that Jesus had promised would come.

Then in Acts 2 we have the record of the Holy Spirit coming.

So what then does it mean when Jesus says, "you will be **baptized** with the Holy Spirit"? And what does it mean in Acts 2:4 that "they were **filled** with the Holy Spirit"?

I. Let's first of all look at the "Baptism in or with the H/S"

It is probably obvious to most that the word "Baptism" used in this way is a word picture to help us understand in what way a person is affected by the Holy Spirit.

When we hear the word "baptism" it ought to make us think of water and of the ritual known as water baptism.

That is good because water baptism will help us understand how the word is used in reference to the Holy Spirit and us.

In the same verse where Jesus talks about "baptism of the Holy Spirit he also talks about "John's baptism of water".

Jesus, himself, makes the parallel. What is it?

If we were to take the time to look back at any of the Gospel accounts of John The Baptist we would see that John went around preaching repentance and when people did repent of their sins they would be initiated into John's band of disciples by what – water baptism.

That baptism was a ritual that indicated that the person who had confessed his sins was cleansed of them (just like water cleans dirt) and was initiated into a whole different way of life. Through the ritual of water baptism people gave evidence that they were entering a new way of life.

Even today, we understand about initiation because we ask people to go through rituals to belong to organizations. (fraternities, clubs, etc.).

So when we think of the word "Baptism" we not only think of John's Baptism by water from the Gospels, but more likely we think of the water baptism that is commanded by Jesus in Matt 28:19-20, is practiced by the Apostles and is practiced in our own churches down to the present time.

I'm not able to take the time this morning to talk about the full significance of water baptism as Paul does in Romans 6 but I can say that at root "Water Baptism" is symbolic of an initiation into a group.

Christian Water Baptism in the bible in every case follows faith and repentance and symbolic of the persons new identity - I now belong to Christ.

Water baptism is a ritual of initiation - I now belong to the church. I am taking my stand as a Christian. I am willing to identify as a part of the people of God.

Now do some of you see why we often say it is inconceivable that people would say they are trusting Christ as saving-Lord and not be willing to be baptized?

Jesus is the one who laid down "Water Baptism" as the ritual that outwardly indicates to others what decision we have made internally - to belong to Christ.

We are having a Baptismal Service in two weeks, many of you need to be baptized. Call the church office and we will tell you more about it.

Now we may understand how the word "baptism," when used with "water," applies to initiation - to induction into something but how do we understand the word "baptism" when not used with water.

In the same way!

We are familiar with that usage too:

When someone has had only one day of practice on the new football team and then is thrown into the "big" game - we might hear someone say, "wow, that guy sure got baptized" or "He got baptized by fire" meaning that he was abruptly initiated into the activity. From no participation to full participation.

We aren't talking about water but about initiation into something.

Just as water baptism was **symbolic** of our initiation into the people of God so "Baptism with the Spirit" is **the actual means** whereby we are made part of the people of God.

Water baptism only symbolizes our initiation into the church - the people of God while the baptism of the Spirit is real way whereby we are made God's people.

So when Jesus in Acts 1:5 says, "you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit," he is saying that when the Holy Spirit comes in Acts 2 these disciples will be the first ones to become part of the new people of God.

In your Bible find John 14:16-17 "And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Counselor to be with you forever—¹⁷ the Spirit of truth. The world cannot accept him, because it neither sees him nor knows him. But you know him, for he lives with you and will be in you."

Jesus said that the Holy Spirit would come and be in them.

Now find I Corinthians 12:13 and here we will see what that Holy Spirit would do when He came: "For we were all baptized by one Spirit into one body—whether Jews or Greeks, slave or free—and we were all given the one Spirit to drink."

Now turn to 2 Corinthians 1:22 to fill out this idea. When we trust in Christ as Saving-Lord, God places His Holy Spirit in us as a down-payment, a deposit of what is to come.

"He anointed us,²² set his seal of ownership on us, and put his Spirit in our hearts as a deposit, guaranteeing what is to come."

To be "baptized with the Holy Spirit" is to be initiated into the body of Christ, to become part of the people of God.

Now if we turn to Acts 2:38 we will see water baptism and Spirit Baptism again used side by side - the one being the symbol of the real.

In fact the two ideas (water baptism and Spirit baptism) are so closely related that Peter doesn't even give an order of events in this verse.

So notice how he takes the two ideas and weaves them together:

The first idea being what happens internally in our repentance and forgiveness of sins and the reception of the Holy Spirit and the
Second idea being the outward symbol of that in our baptism.

The baptism with the Holy Spirit is that act of Jesus whereby He gives us the Holy Spirit, thus making us one of His people - inducting us into His family.

Every person from Acts 2:38 on, who trusted in Jesus as Saving-Lord was given the Holy Spirit was baptized with the Spirit.

It was part and parcel of becoming a Christian.

To be "Baptized with/or in the Holy Spirit" is to become part of the family of God.

It is not something we feel, it is something that is done for us by Jesus.

Someone might quickly say, "Baptism with the Spirit may well be an act of Jesus whereby He places us into His family but when I look at Acts 2 I see all kinds of

things that were sensed. What do you mean we don't feel it? Those disciples sure sensed something!

I submit to you that what is happening in Acts 2 is two different things - one as the result of the other.

In Acts 2 the disciples are "baptized with the Spirit" just as Jesus promised (Acts 1:5) but they were also "filled with the Spirit"(Acts 2:4) which was also part of the promise given in Acts 1:8 "But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth."

That brings us to the second phrase, "Filled with the Spirit".

If "Baptism with the Spirit" is that act of Jesus whereby he initiates us into the people of God (and water baptism is the outward symbol of that) then "being filled with the Spirit" is that act of the Spirit whereby He governs our thoughts, words and actions.

When you hear the word "filled" don't think of a space that is filled with a substance like a fluid instead think of a person who is increasingly influenced by another.

To be "filled with the Spirit" is to be influenced by the Holy Spirit - to have our lives governed by His values, His goals, His love, His perspective.

In Acts 2 as a result of the promise of Acts 1:5 & 8 we see two things happening to the disciples:

One, they are baptized with the Holy Spirit and two, they are filled with the Holy Spirit.

Now very important to us is to know **how** this filling (this powerful influence on us by the Holy Spirit) takes place.

The Baptism of the Holy Spirit takes place at the time we become a Christian.

But the Filling with the Spirit takes place in two ways.

What I am going to say next is in some ways very different from much popular teaching on this subject.

I do not believe that we are filled with the Spirit by simply believing and then "spiritual breathing".

Look at Ephesians 5:18-20 and Colossians 3:16-17

Eph: "Do not get drunk on wine, which leads to debauchery. Instead, be filled with the Spirit.⁹ Speak to one another with psalms, hymns and spiritual songs. Sing and make music in your heart to the Lord,²⁰ always giving thanks to God the Father for everything, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Col: "Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly as you teach and admonish one another with all wisdom, and as you sing psalms, hymns and spiritual songs with gratitude in your hearts to God.

¹⁷ And whatever you do, whether in word or deed, do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him.

Just a casual perusal of these two passages would indicate that they are parallel - they are both speaking of the same issue - growing to maturity in Jesus Christ becoming more and more governed by the Holy Spirit as it says in Ephesians 4:13 "Attaining to the full measure of the fullness of Christ"

In fact if you look closely at Eph 5:18-20 you will see that it is nearly identical to Col 3:16-17.

What is noteworthy is that while Eph 5:18 says, "Be Filled with the Spirit" Col 3:16 says, "Let the Word of Christ dwell in you richly".

I content that to be filled with the Spirit in this way is the experience of growing in Spiritual understanding and application to our lives.

I see Col 2:6-7 speaking to the same issue "So then, just as you received Christ Jesus as Lord, continue to live in him,⁷ rooted and built up in him, strengthened in the faith as you were taught, and overflowing with thankfulness.

The usual way that we are "filled with the Spirit" or increasingly governed by the Spirit in our words and actions is by the sometimes slow experience of:

- studying the Word,
- praying,
- fellowship with other Christians,
- participating in the sacraments of baptism and the Lord's supper
- worship,

and trusting the Spirit of God to use these means to grow us up to be more and more thinking His thoughts, doing what He would do, and saying what He would say - governed by Him - "Filled"

As I said, as we look at the experience of the people of God in the OT and NT, and as we look at the majority of the teaching of the NT we are led to believe that this is the **usual means** the Holy Spirit of God uses to "fill" us.

I do not want to minimize this for a minute - in fact I want to emphasize it.

If we want to experience a more mature Christian life instead of often feeling defeated and weak and weary as I talked about last week - then **the usual means** that God uses to grow us is this lifetime of maturing that I have just described.

But there is **another way** of being "filled" spoken to in the Bible as well.

But there is **an "unusual"** way as well.

There have been times in history starting with Acts 2 that God has chosen to pour out His Spirit in unusual measure - meaning that the Spirit has moved in people's lives for special boldness or ability.

In Acts 2 when the Holy Spirit filled the Apostles it says that they witnessed to the truth about Jesus with special boldness.

In Acts 2:37 when the Holy spirit moved in this unusual way it says that the unbelieving Jews heard, were convicted, repented and believed and were baptized-in fact 3000 of them that first day.

Look at Acts 2:4, the whole group was filled.

Look at Acts 4:8, one person was filled.

Look at Acts 4:31, the whole group was filled.

Look at Acts 13:9, one person was filled.

In each of these cases it appears that God sovereignty moved to "fill" these people to accomplish what He had in mind at that very time.

The outpouring of His Spirit (as Peter, reciting Joel, called it in Acts 2:17) came with such power that the disciples spoke with boldness and unbelievers turned in great numbers to Christ.

Again I say that I believe that Acts 2 is the first New Testament record of a revival.

And that unusual reviving and outpouring of God's Spirit has happened numerous times down through history in countries all around the world.

It is that kind of revival that I spoke to last week. It is that kind of revival, that kind of outpouring of the Holy Spirit, that kind of filling of the Spirit that I pray God would do in our midst/ in our hearts.

Again, I do not want to underestimate the power or necessity of **the "usual,"** though supernatural, working of the Spirit in our hearts whereby he grows us , "fills" us , matures us over time

BUT I pray that God would also visit us with a special, **an unusual** filling of His Spirit .