

# The Baptism and Fullness of the Holy Spirit

## ***John 7:38-39***

Whoever believes in me, as the Scripture has said, streams of living water will flow from within him." By this he meant the Spirit, whom those who believed in him were later to receive. Up to that time the Spirit had not been given, since Jesus had not yet been glorified.

**Acts 1:4-5, 8** On one occasion, while he was eating with them, he gave them this command: "Do not leave Jerusalem, but wait for the gift my Father promised, which you have heard me speak about. For John baptized with water, but in a few days you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit." 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."

**Ephesians 5:17-18** Therefore do not be foolish, but understand what the Lord's will is. Do not get drunk on wine, which leads to debauchery. Instead, be filled with the Spirit.

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## “An Introduction”

### This Is Risky Business

I feel like we are stepping out into no man's land. The doctrine of the Holy Spirit to this point has been fairly straightforward – He sealed us, is a fact along with all the other nine Spiritual blessings in heavenly places. He quickened us before and after conversion and continues doing so until we die. He brings forth fruit of the Holy Spirit in our lives, that is, he conforms us to the image of Christ, or makes us like Jesus in our character. Finally, we have seen that he can be grieved, hindered, quenched, lied to, and blasphemed. So far there is little or no controversy.

Today we begin to probe the mysterious and often controversial, misunderstood, misrepresented, and very subjective work of the Holy Spirit in the believer's life.

If you thought election and predestination were hot topics with strong opinions and divergent views wait until you hear about Baptism, Fullness and Gifts of the Holy Spirit. People have varying views and strongly heated views about the Holy Spirit. People's experiences often taint their theology.

### There Are Differences of Opinion

Just as with election and predestination I beg of you to have grace in your hearts for brothers and sisters who have differing views from your own. They are not bad people because they have a different view. Godly men in all ages of the church wrestled with the work and ministry of the Holy

Spirit just as they wrestled with election and predestination. Godly men do not see eye to eye on these matters. There is room for differing opinions and varying experiences. Perhaps you have already formulated your views on the Holy Spirit's baptism, and fullness and on the gifts of the Holy Spirit. We have over 1,000 people attending here from dozens of denominational backgrounds, each with varying views of the work of the Holy Spirit. We cannot expect to please all of you. I cannot teach so as to tickle everyone's ears and make all of you happy. Some of you won't like what I am going to say, and others will be delighted.

### Clarifying Alliance Doctrines

Our own denomination, The Christian and Missionary Alliance, has its own doctrinal statements and practices in this important matter of the Baptism and Fullness of the Spirit. If you become a member here you need to know the denominational view and agree to abide by it. The Alliance is an alliance of people of many walks of life and many denominational backgrounds. **We tolerate opposing views.** We allow for divergence of experience and convictions. We do not try to make everyone fit into the same mold. Yet, we must clarify our understanding of Scripture and establish norms of behavior and doctrine within the evangelical community that distinguishes from other groups.

You need to know. We are not Baptist, Presbyterian, Congregationalists, Methodist, Mennonite, Amish, or Pentecostal or Charismatic or neo-Pentecostal. We are an Alliance. We are tolerant. We are divergent. We are sympathetic. We are multi-faceted. We are the body of Christ. We are God's family.

### We Have Our Doctrinal Positions

Having said that you need to know that we do draw **doctrinal lines in the sand**. We do have convictions, markers, distinguishing features, biblical interpretations, and historical policies on such things as homosexuality, adultery, marriage-divorce-remarriage, baptism by immersion, ordination of women, the inspiration and inerrancy of Scripture, salvation by grace through faith alone, and many other important biblical doctrines. We do define our position regarding the baptism, fullness, and gifts of the Holy Spirit. If you have a question on any of these please visit our web site where you can view our doctrinal statements and download position papers on such matters. Recently, as I considered this I identified not less than 20 doctrinal positions that need to be articulated in our day and age of compromise.

### The Doctrine of Tongues and The Holy Spirit

Among the divergent doctrines of the church none is so hotly debated as that of the Baptism, Fullness and Gifts of the Holy Spirit. And of the doctrines of the Holy Spirit none is so hotly debated and often divisive in the evangelical church is the teaching on the **gift of tongues** and its place in the church today. Hardly anything else has split more churches (of any denomination), caused more confusion, and angered more people than that of the doctrine, teaching, and practice of speaking in tongues.

OK. I've got your attention!
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All right Pastor, cut to the chase and tell us where you stand on the tongues issue.

### We Are Not A Charismatic or Pentecostal Church

From its inception the Alliance has struggled with well-meaning people who wanted to make the denomination a Charismatic or Pentecostal church. We are not a Pentecostal Church. We are not a Charismatic church. **We are a Spirit-Filled Church.** We believe in the baptism and fullness of the Holy Spirit. We do not push, practice or promote tongues as a gift to be practiced in public and there are reasons we do not. We believe all the miraculous gifts mentioned in the Epistles are operative or can be operative today. They did not die out with the Apostles. We do not promote one gift or teach or imply that everyone must have a certain gift above another. We seek to be Biblical in our approach to the gifts and to do all things decently and in order. God defines that "order and decency" in Paul's first letter to the Corinthian church chapters 12-14. We endeavor to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. (Eph 4:3) We try to strictly abide by the Biblical rules regarding the gifts of the Holy Spirit, whether tongues, prophecy, words of knowledge, giving or administration. All are gifts of the Holy Spirit. All are welcome when guided by Scripture. All are useful and helpful in their place.

### Tongues Is Not The Sign of the Spirit

We do not exalt one gift as **the gift, the best gift, or the sign gift** of the Holy Spirit's presence, baptism or fullness. We do not believe tongues to be a sign gift, or evidence of the baptism and fullness of the Holy Spirit. We have biblical reasons for believing that and if you are patient we will get to the biblical passages to explain that. However, if it makes you mad that we do not believe tongues to be a sign gift, then perhaps, just perhaps, you are in the wrong

congregation. I say that lovingly and with sadness. I don't want to lose any of you. It really should not make you mad, maybe disappointed, but not mad. There are many churches in our community and in the surrounding communities that believe that tongues is the sign of the Holy Spirit's presence. If it makes you mad, or it disturbs you that we do not, then perhaps, just perhaps, you are in the wrong church.

### If You Have the Gift

We have many members in our local fellowship, some members, some faithfully attending here for many years, some are not members, who "speak in tongues" as a prayer language in their private devotions. **I have no problem with that** and I have told each of you who informed me of your gift. We do not censure, criticize or condemn that private matter – neither do we promote it.

If God has given you a prayer language as a gift of the Holy Spirit then use it for his glory, not your own. It is not to be worn as a badge of honor, it is not to be promoted, it is not to be advertised, bragged about any more than the gift of wisdom, giving or administration. **It is a gift. You did not earn it. It is not a reward.** There is nothing to glory in except to glory in the Lord. I will not tolerate anyone bragging about their giving, and I will not tolerate bragging about tongues. Gifts are given to that you might serve God better. They are given for his glory, not your own.

### Bear The Fruit of the Spirit

With every gift comes the fruit of the Spirit, without which the gift is just a showpiece. With any gift comes the responsibility to use that gift reverently, and for the unity of the body of Christ, the church.

Whatever your gift, bear fruit with it. Exercise it with ample demonstration of humility, kindness, and self-control. Use it always with grace in your heart. Don't let your gift be divisive. **The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, -- patience, kindness, goodness, -- faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control.** Against these there is no law and against these there is no limit.

### How To Disagree Graciously

What I teach here may not agree with your studied view. It may not agree with what someone else or some other church taught you. Please don't be mad at me. Be kind. Be gentle. I am not suggesting that you have to see it my way or hit the highway. You have my permission to disagree with my conclusions or my exegesis of Scripture. I will endeavor to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace as well by being loving, kind, gentle, and patient. I expect no less in return. We can agree to disagree and still live in the same house and love one another deeply. My view may be way too conservative, or way too Pentecostal, or way outside your comfort zone. It's OK! Just listen and learn to appreciate differences of opinion.

I beg of you be grace filled. I urge you not to attempt to persuade me otherwise with phone calls, letters, e-mails or personal interviews. If you must bash me then let it be a “**drive-by fruiting**” of the Holy Spirit. Throw love, joy, peace, patience and the like. Throw fruit, or throw kisses, but please do not throw tantrums or hissy-fits. I love you. I care about you. I am not here to hurt you with words or with doctrine.

Let us agree to disagree, but let us study together these important truths. Let us love one another fervently. Let us give no advantage to the devil. I will try to do the same.

## If You Must Leave, Leave Graciously

**THERE IS ONE EXCEPTION**, and it happens. If you disagree to the point of divisiveness in which you cannot agree to submit to this church's position, or this pastor's authority on the issue, then please leave quietly – no harm done, no offense taken, no insult received. Let us agree to disagree. Or else find a church that preaches your doctrinal stance.

**Now that I have aired all that let us cautiously begin our systematic study of the Baptism and Fullness of the Holy Spirit.**

### Books: Suggested Readings

With open mindedness I want to give you several books to read on the subject of the Baptism and Fullness of the Holy Spirit. Keep an open mind. You may not agree with all or any of them but read them anyway. I don't agree with all of them but I believe these wise godly brothers in Christ have much to say that will help our understanding.

1. *The Baptism and Fullness of the Holy Spirit* by John R.W. Stott, Intervarsity Press
2. *How To Be Filled With The Holy Spirit*, by A.W. Tozer, or R.A. Torrey, or Bill Bright.
3. *A Third View of Tongues*, by K Neil Foster, or his excellent book, *Sorting the Supernatural*.
4. *An Open Letter To Pentecostal Brothers*, by F.F. Bosworth, and Assembly of God evangelist from 1913.

It will be posted on our web site along with these suggested readings.

5. *David Wilkerson Speaks Out*, by David Wilkerson, Bethany Fellowship, Inc.

We will have more suggestions as we get into these studies. And I know you have a list of books you want me to read too, but I do not have time to read everything everyone suggests. You can suggest it and tell me why but I will not guarantee I will have time to read all of your suggestions.

Let me close this morning with the Testimony of Dr. A.B. Simpson, founder of The Christian and Missionary Alliance. Dr Simpson admits seeking the Lord for all and any of the gifts of the Spirit. In the end he was greatly filled and empowered for a full lifetime of service to God and summed up his seeking the fullness and gifts with the words of this hymn.

### **Himself**

1. Once it was the blessing, now it is the Lord;  
Once it was the feeling, now it is His Word;  
Once His gift I wanted, now the Giver own;  
Once I sought for healing, now Himself alone.

2. Once 'twas painful trying, now 'tis perfect trust;  
Once a half salvation, now the uttermost!  
Once 'twas ceaseless holding, now He holds me fast;  
Once 'twas constant drifting, now my anchor's cast.

3. Once 'twas busy planning, Now 'tis trustful prayer;  
Once 'twas anxious caring, Now He has the care.  
Once 'twas what I wanted, Now what Jesus says;  
Once 'twas constant asking, Now 'tis ceaseless praise.

4. Once it was my working, His it hence shall be;  
Once I tried to use Him, Now He uses me.  
Once the power I wanted, Now the Mighty One;  
Once for self I labored, Now for Him alone.

5. Once I hoped in Jesus, Now I know He's mine;  
Once my lamps were dying, Now they brightly shine.  
Once for death I waited, Now His coming hail;  
And my hopes are anchored, Safe within the veil.

(Hymns of the Christian Life)

### **Some Closing Thoughts**

Let me speak to those of you who “charismatic.” I am not new to “charismatic” gifts. I was filled with the Holy Spirit in 1966 before many of you were born. The Holy Spirit’s anointings are not new to me. I have been walking in the Spirit and with the Spirit for over 40 years. I am not a novice.

Please view me, not as an enemy, but as an ally, as one who has obtained mercy from the Lord. I am not perfect. I am not infallible. As Pastor Ed Dixon so often says, I am not God. But I have and will deliver unto you that which I have received of the Lord. I have received more blessings from the Lord than I deserve.

I have had wonderful outpourings of the Holy Spirit in my life. I have been filled with the Holy Spirit. I have had miracles, revelations, discernments, anointings, healings, casting out of demons, interpretation of tongues, seen visions, and much more. I have seen and personally experienced wonderful extraordinary phenomena from the Lord. I have

experienced the hand of the Lord and the breath of the Spirit in ways I do not deserve. I am not a novice to the work and ministry of the Holy Spirit. I don't know everything, nor do I understand all mysteries or have all wisdom, but I know a few things. I have been around the block a couple of times.

So, please, please, p-l-e-a-s-e, do not write off what I am going to teach and preach as though it is borrowed as someone's exposition on the Holy Spirit.