

Chapter One

“³² And John bare record, saying, I saw the Spirit descending from heaven like a dove, and it abode upon him. ³³ And I knew him not: but he that sent me to baptize with water, the same said unto me, Upon whom thou shalt see the Spirit descending, and remaining on him, the same is he which baptizeth with the Holy Ghost. ³⁴ And I saw, and bare record that this is the Son of God” (John 1:32-34).

John the Baptist was the first to introduce the baptism with the Holy Spirit in the New Testament. The baptism with the Holy Spirit is unique to the Church Age dispensation (from the Day of Pentecost to the rapture). The baptism with the Holy Spirit was not available before the Cross and the completion of the propitiatory work of Christ. We should not confuse the baptism with the Holy Spirit with anything the Holy Spirit of God did in the Old Testament. John the Baptist is the messenger announcing the coming of the New Covenant in Jesus the Christ. Integral to that New Covenant is the baptism with the Holy Spirit.

Therefore, understanding the baptism with the Holy Spirit defines God’s working in the lives of His Redeemed. It is the finished work of Christ that opens the dispensational door for the baptism with the Holy Spirit. For instance, we know from Scripture that the baptism with the Spirit could not have happened before Jesus was glorified.

“³⁷ In the last day, that great *day* of the feast, Jesus stood and cried, saying, If any man thirst, let him come unto me, and drink. ³⁸ He that believeth on me, as the scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water. ³⁹ (But this spake he of the Spirit, which they that believe on him should receive: for the Holy Ghost was not yet *given*; because that Jesus was not yet glorified.)” (John 7:37-39).

The Scriptures tell us that the Holy Spirit could not come in this new way until after Christ was ascended to the Father. Christ said this in John 16:7 and Peter said it in his message on the Day of Pentecost (Acts 2:31-33)

“Nevertheless I tell you the truth; It is expedient for you that I go away: for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send him unto you” (John 16:7).

“³¹ He seeing this before spake of the resurrection of Christ, that his soul was not left in hell, neither his flesh did see corruption. ³² This Jesus hath God raised up, whereof we all are witnesses. ³³ Therefore being by the right hand of God exalted, and having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Ghost, he hath shed forth this, which ye now see and hear” (Acts 2:31-33).

Although the finished work of Christ opened the door to the New Covenant (and closes the door to the Old), it is the baptism with the Holy Spirit that defines God’s operations in everything He does throughout the Church Age. Anyone ignorant of this one doctrine will be easily led astray (and many have been led astray). Therefore, it is important to take the time to establish what the Scriptures teach regarding this doctrine.

We must be careful to avoid confusion regarding the transitional period between the Old and New Covenants. At the time of the coming of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost, there were believers in both the Old Testament sense and the New Testament sense. The Old Testament believer was saved by faith in what Messiah would do when He came. There were many saved Jews like this at the time of Christ's first advent. All of the disciples of John the Baptist (as well as John himself) were Old Testament saints. These Old Testament believers were saved, but were not baptized with the Holy Spirit.

In order to become New Covenant believers, they needed to recognize Jesus to be their promised Messiah, accept the work of the Cross as the fulfillment of all that the Old Covenant rituals could only cry out for (completeness), and publicly acknowledge (confess) their belief that Jesus was the incarnate Jehovah God Who came to redeem them.

The baptism with the Spirit only happened to those who trusted in Jesus and His finished work. During the inter-testament period, Old Covenant believers became New Covenant believers by hearing the gospel and accepting Jesus as the fulfillment of the Law. Apollos was a disciple of John the Baptist and was one such Old Covenant believer who became a New Covenant believer.

“²⁴ And a certain Jew named Apollos, born at Alexandria, an eloquent man, *and* mighty in the scriptures, came to Ephesus. ²⁵ This man was instructed in the way of the Lord; and being fervent in the spirit, he spake and taught diligently the things of the Lord, knowing only the baptism of John. ²⁶ And he began to speak boldly in the synagogue: whom when Aquila and Priscilla had heard, they took him unto *them*, and expounded unto him the way of God more perfectly. ²⁷ And when he was disposed to pass into Achaia, the brethren wrote, exhorting the disciples to receive him: who, when he was come, helped them much which had believed through grace: ²⁸ For he mightily convinced the Jews, *and that* publickly, shewing by the scriptures that Jesus was Christ. (Acts 18:24-28)

Another example of this is the twelve disciples of John the Baptist which Paul encountered at Ephesus

“¹ And it came to pass, that, while Apollos was at Corinth, Paul having passed through the upper coasts came to Ephesus: and finding certain disciples, ² He said unto them, Have ye received the Holy Ghost since ye believed? And they said unto him, We have not so much as heard whether there be any Holy Ghost. ³ And he said unto them, Unto what then were ye baptized? And they said, Unto John's baptism. ⁴ Then said Paul, John verily baptized with the baptism of repentance, saying unto the people, that they should believe on him which should come after him, that is, on Christ Jesus. ⁵ When they heard *this*, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. ⁶ And when Paul had laid *his* hands upon them, the Holy Ghost came on them; and they spake with tongues, and prophesied. ⁷ And all the men were about twelve” (Acts 19:1-7).

Tongues were a sign to Old Covenant believers who had not believed in Jesus as Messiah. Prophesying was a sign for those who believed Jesus was Messiah and that the New Covenant had become a reality and they had now become part of that reality.

“²¹ In the law it is written, With *men of* other tongues and other lips will I speak unto this people; and yet for all that will they not hear me, saith the Lord. ²² Wherefore tongues are for a sign, not to them that believe, but to them that believe not: but prophesying *serveth* not for them that believe not, but for them which believe. ²³ If therefore the whole church be come together into one place, and all speak with tongues, and there come in *those that are* unlearned, or unbelievers, will they not say that ye are mad? ²⁴ But if all prophesy, and there come in one that believeth not, or *one* unlearned, he is convinced of all, he is judged of all: ²⁵ And thus are the secrets of his heart made manifest; and so falling down on *his* face he will worship God, and report that God is in you of a truth” (I Corinthians 14:21-25).

Although it appears that tongues accompanied the baptism with the Holy Spirit, it was actually the filling of the Holy Spirit that resulted in speaking in tongues.

“¹ And when the day of Pentecost was fully come, they were all with one accord in one place. ² And suddenly there came a sound from heaven as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting. ³ And there appeared unto them cloven tongues like as of fire, and it sat upon each of them. ⁴ And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance” (Acts 2:1-4).

The baptism with the Holy Spirit unites the believer with the mystical body of Christ (the New Creation). At conception, all people become part of the family (body) of Adam and are condemned as humankind.

“¹² Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned: ¹³ (For until the law sin was in the world: but sin is not imputed when there is no law. ¹⁴ Nevertheless death reigned from Adam to Moses, even over them that had not sinned after the similitude of Adam’s transgression, who is the figure of him that was to come” (Romans 5:12-14).

The moment an individual understands the gospel, places saving faith in the finished work of Christ, publicly acknowledges Jesus’ divine authority over his life (Rom. 10:9-13) and calls on the Name of Jesus to save him, that individual is positionally removed from the family of Adam, is positionally “born again” and becomes part of the family of God in the body of Christ.

“¹² For as the body is one, and hath many members, and all the members of that one body, being many, are one body: so also *is* Christ. ¹³ For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether *we be* Jews or Gentiles, whether *we be* bond or free; and have been all made to drink into one Spirit” (I Corinthians 12:12-13).

Any time we see the words “in Christ” in the Bible, it is referring to the effects of the baptism of the Holy Spirit and our position before God.

“So we, *being* many, are one body in Christ, and every one members one of another” (Romans 12:5).

“²⁰ But now is Christ risen from the dead, *and* become the firstfruits of them that slept. ²¹ For since by man *came* death, by man *came* also the resurrection of the dead. ²² For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive” (I Corinthians 15:20-22).

“Therefore if any man *be* in Christ, *he is* a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new” (II Corinthians 5:17).

Chapter One

Discussion Questions

- 1.** Who was the first individual to introduce the doctrine of the baptism with the Holy Spirit in the New Testament?
- 2.** Discuss the significance of the uniqueness of the baptism with the Holy Spirit in its relationship to the New Covenant in Jesus Christ.
- 3.** Read John 7:37-39. According to these verses, what needed to happen before the baptism with the Holy Spirit could become available?
- 4.** Read John 16:7 and Acts 2:31-33. According to these verses, what needed to happen before the baptism with the Holy Spirit could become available?
- 5.** Discuss the following statement and its relationship to the baptism with the Holy Spirit: *“Although the finished work of Christ opens the door to the New Covenant (and closes the door to the Old), it is the baptism with the Holy Spirit that defines God’s operations in everything He does through out the Church Age.”*
- 6.** Discuss how a misunderstanding of the transitional period between the Old and New Covenants can cause confusion regarding the Scripture’s teaching of the baptism with the Holy Spirit.
- 7.** Discuss why the disciples of John the Baptist (those water baptized by him) were not baptized with the Holy Spirit too.
- 8.** What did all the disciples of John need to do before they could be baptized with the Holy Spirit?
- 9.** Read 1 Corinthians 14:21-25. For whom were tongues a sign?
- 10.** Therefore, were tongues ever used to prove to a new believer (or an old one) that his salvation was now complete?
- 11.** Discuss what is meant by the statement, “The baptism with the Holy Spirit immerses the believer into the mystical body of Christ.” Be thorough, using Scripture to support your discussion.