

The Brown Street Beacon

*"...Shine out among them like beacon lights,
holding out to them the Word of Life" (Phil 2:15-16)*



Volume 3

November 6, 2016

Number. 38

Holy Spirit Baptism #1

Pentecostals teach that all true believers experience the baptism of the Holy Spirit.

"All believers are entitled to and should ardently expect and earnestly seek the promise of the Father, the Baptism in the Holy Ghost and fire, according to the command of our Lord Jesus Christ. This was the normal experience of all in the early Christian Church. With it comes the endowment of power for life and service, the bestowment of the gifts and their uses in the work of ministry (Luke 24:49; Acts 1:4, 8; 1 Corinthians 12:1-31). This wonderful experience is distinct from and subsequent to the experience of the new birth (Acts 10:44-46; 11:14-16; 15:7-9)" (Statement of Fundamental Truths # 7, Assemblies of God).

The Assemblies of God denomination advocates that if one is a true believer, he or she will receive the baptism of the Holy Spirit.

"The Baptism is thought by some people to be a luxury rather than a necessity. They consider the experience to be desirable but optional. The Scriptures indicate beyond all doubt that all believers are to receive it. The 120 in the Upper Room seized upon the great words of Joel's prophecy, 'upon all flesh.' Joel included men and women, young and old alike. The promise went beyond the apostles; 108 additional persons received on the Day of Pentecost. Gentiles were included, much to the amazement of Peter and his party (Acts 10:45, 46). Note again these Biblical expressions: 'all flesh' (Joel 2:28, 29); 'any man' (John 7:37-39); 'you and your children, and to all...' (Acts 2:39)" (Ibid., pg. 50).

Pentecostalism teaches that Holy Spirit Baptism is necessary in order to truly live the life of a Christian.

"For salvation? No, for we are justified by faith. For life and service? Yes! Jesus commanded His disciples not to depart from Jerusalem until they had been filled with the Spirit (Acts 1:4, 5). To the converts at Ephesus, Paul gave these instruction: 'Be filled with the Spirit' (Eph. 5:18). This is a clear directive. These are more than words of invitation; they are a Biblical command. If you will sincerely search God's Word, you will discover that the baptism in the Holy Spirit is God's plan for a normal Christian experience" (Ibid., pg. 50).

The implication of these words is clearly that we cannot live the life Christ wants us to without being miraculously filled with the Spirit, i.e., without having received the baptism of the Holy Spirit. Holy Spirit baptism is necessary, they state, for life and service. In answering the question, "Why should we be filled with the Spirit?" here is their response:

*"Several reasons surface immediately. First, Christ promised to send the Comforter. Second, the Bible commands us to be filled. **The main feature of the coming of the Spirit is power for service and not regeneration for eternal life. Whenever we read of the Spirit filling, falling upon, coming upon, or resting upon people, the reference is always related to power for service, and never to the saving work of the Spirit. The main purpose is to enable us to effectively represent Christ to lost men (Acts 1:8)"** (Ibid., pg. 50,*

All of these quotes from Pentecostals should give us a good idea of what they believe concerning Holy Spirit baptism. They, and all other Charismatics, believe that Holy Spirit baptism is for all Christians, and that if you have not received it, you really cannot be what God truly wants you to be. In order to live a good and godly life, you must experience the baptism of the Holy Spirit. Well, let's see what the Bible teaches.

To Whom Was the Promise of Holy Spirit Baptism Made?

Holy Spirit Baptism was promised only to the apostles. Some point to Matt. 3:11 as evidence that more than the apostles are baptized with the Holy Spirit. The passage says the following:

“I indeed baptize you with water unto repentance: but he that cometh after me is mightier than I, whose shoes I am not worthy to bear: he shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost, and with fire.”

At first glance it may appear that John is telling his whole audience that they will be baptized by Jesus with the Holy Spirit. The context, however, does not allow for that conclusion. We notice that Jesus would baptize, not only with the Holy Spirit, but also with fire. Pentecostals believe that the reference to fire points to the purifying effect this baptism will have on those who receive it. They cite Acts 2:2-3 as evidence for this conclusion. However, the context does not bear out that interpretation. In the context of Matthew 3, the fire clearly refers to the fire of hell (vers. 10, 12). Would all to whom John was speaking go to hell. No! Nor would all to whom John was speaking be baptized with the Holy Spirit. John is simply saying that some would be baptized with the Holy Spirit and some would be baptized with fire. We may conclude, then, that some of those who would shortly become apostles of Christ were present. How do we know this? We know because they were the ones who were promised Holy Spirit baptism. Jesus is clear about this (Acts 1:1-5). If you follow the pronouns in verses 3-5, you will see that they point back to the apostles of ver. 2.

Furthermore, we see in the fulfillment of the promise that it was the apostles who received the baptism of the Spirit (Acts 2:1-4). The whole context of Acts 2 verifies that the Holy Spirit fell on the apostles on the day of Pentecost and not the 120 disciples referred to in 1:15. Consider the following from Acts 2.

- 1) Those on whom the Holy Spirit fell spoke in tongues (ver. 4).
- 2) All who spoke in tongues were Galileans (ver. 7).
- 3) The apostles were all Galileans (Acts 1:9-11).
- 4) Some mocked those who were speaking in tongues, i.e., those on whom the Spirit fell, saying that they were drunk (ver. 13).
- 5) The eleven apostles who stood with Peter were the ones accused of being drunk; thus, they were the ones upon whom the Spirit fell, and who spoke in tongues (vers. 14, 15).

The apostles were the ones who received the Spirit miraculously on the day of Pentecost, and all of this is in keeping with the promise that Jesus made to the apostles in John 14:26; 15:26, and 16:13. One must completely ignore the text of Acts 1 and 2 in order to have the Spirit falling on the 120 disciples rather than just the apostles.

Pentecostals are not only wrong about who was baptized with the Spirit, they are also wrong about the purpose of the baptism of the Spirit. In our next article, we will look at the purpose of Holy Spirit baptism.