

Week 48

God the Holy Spirit: Baptism and Filling

Key Verses

1 Corinthians 12:13 For by one Spirit we were all baptized into one body, whether Jews or Greeks, whether slaves or free, and we were all made to drink of one Spirit.

+ Introduction

Many Christians today know very little about the Holy Spirit, resulting in confusion, false teaching, and false practice. We need to remember that the Holy Spirit is a person, not a "force" or an "it." He is the third person of the Trinity, equal to and with all the attributes of the Father and the Son. His work teaches, guides, testifies, convicts, regenerates, intercedes, and commands. His personality can be grieved, blasphemed, resisted, lied to, and obeyed. Symbols of the Holy Spirit in Scripture include but are not limited to clothing, a dove, a pledge, fire, oil, a seal, water, and wind.

Today we will study two particular ministries of the Holy Spirit: Baptism and Filling.

+ The Baptism of The Holy Spirit

There has been some confusion and misunderstanding regarding the baptism of the Holy Spirit. Some teach that the baptism of the Holy Spirit comes as a second experience sometime after salvation. They teach that this experience is accompanied by speaking in tongues and that if you have not spoken in tongues, then you have not been baptized in the Spirit or "received the baptism." This teaching has caused much confusion and has led to dividing believers into the "haves" and "have-nots," sometimes even in the same church.

The baptism of the Holy Spirit may be defined as that work whereby the Spirit of God places the believer into union with Christ and into union with other believers in the body of Christ at the moment of salvation.¹ *The Baptist Faith and Message* speaking of the Holy Spirit, states, "At the moment of regeneration He baptizes every believer into the Body of Christ." (p. 9). Notice that it says "at the moment of regeneration," not a "second blessing" or second experience after salvation. Spirit Baptism happens at salvation. Scripture has much to say about this topic. Lets take a look at a few passages.

1 CORINTHIANS 12:13 *For by one Spirit we were all baptized into one body, whether Jews or Greeks, whether slaves or free, and we were all made to drink of one Spirit.*

The word “baptize” means “to immerse” or “to place into.” This verse is not referring to water baptism but to Spirit baptism. Notice that Paul says “we were all,” that is, every believer is placed into the body of Christ the moment of conversion. Notice that speaking in tongues is not mentioned – it does not always accompany Spirit baptism or filling. Although speaking in tongues is mentioned in the Book of Acts, it is never as a point of reference of salvation. Also, notice what Paul says concerning the various gifts of believers. Each rhetorical question he asks is designed to be answered consistently as “no” in response.

1 CORINTHIANS 12:27-31 *Now you are Christ’s body, and individually parts of it. ²⁸ And God has appointed in the church, first apostles, second prophets, third teachers, then miracles, then gifts of healings, helps, administrations, and various kinds of tongues. ²⁹ All are not apostles, are they? All are not prophets, are they? All are not teachers, are they? All are not workers of miracles, are they? ³⁰ All do not have gifts of healings, do they? All do not speak with tongues, do they? All do not interpret, do they? ³¹ But earnestly desire the greater gifts. And yet, I am going to show you a far better way.*

Paul writes to the Church at Rome concerning the Spirit’s work of baptizing a believer into the family of God.

ROMANS 6:3-4 *Or do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus have been baptized into His death? ⁴ Therefore we have been buried with Him through baptism into death, so that, just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, so we too may walk in newness of life.*

This passage, too, refers to Spirit baptism. We are baptized or “placed into” Christ Jesus. We are identified with Him in His death, burial, and resurrection. It is something that happens to us the moment we believe in Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord. This passage is speaking of the Spirit’s work of baptizing believers into union with Christ. It leads to a beautiful picture of the symbolism of what happens in water baptism. When someone is baptized at Second Baptist, the pastor will say, “buried with Christ unto death; rise to walk in the newness of life,” which is based on these verses. It is a picture of us identifying our life with the life and ministry of Jesus. Just as Jesus died and was buried, the Spirit’s work in our life empowers us to die to our old life and sin. Just as Jesus rose from the grave in his resurrection, the Spirit empowers every believer to rise from the old life that is dead to sin, and live in obedience to God.

Below are three characteristics of the believer baptized in the Spirit:

- 1. It is for all believers without exception.** If every believer is baptized into the body of Christ at conversion, then there is no exception. It is not a special select few or an inner circle of believers who are baptized, and the rest of us are second-class citizens of heaven.

2. **Each believer is baptized only once – at conversion.** The tense of the verb in 1 Corinthians 12:13 indicates a one-time occurrence; it does not need to be repeated. There are no additional requirements needed for the Holy Spirit to be present in the life of a Christian. Since the dawn of the Church at Pentecost, the Holy Spirit has indwelt Christians at the moment of their salvation. The message that Peter preached was, *“Repent and be (water) baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins, and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.”* (Acts 2:38 ESV)

3. **The Holy Spirit is present in the believer.** “It is God who makes both us and you stand firm in Christ. He anointed us, set His seal of ownership on us, and put His Spirit in our hearts as a deposit, guaranteeing what is to come” (2 Corinthians 1:21-22). There is no command to be anointed by the Holy Spirit, just the declaration of the fact that it has happened. This is an indication that all Believers in Christ are anointed with the Holy Spirit at the moment of their salvation. *The Baptist Faith and Message* states, “His presence in the Christian is the guarantee that God will bring the believer into the fullness of the stature of Christ” (p. 9).

✦ The Filling of The Spirit

There are two main aspects to the filling of the Spirit throughout the Scriptures:

1. **A sovereign act of God where the Spirit possesses and empowers an individual for a special ministry or activity.**
 - John the Baptist was “filled with the Holy Spirit even from Birth” (Luke 1:15)
 - John’s mother Elizabeth (Luke 1:41)
 - John’s Father Zacharias (Luke 1:67)
 - Believers gathered together on the Day of Pentecost (Acts 2:4)
 - Peter when he was arrested and stood before the Sanhedrin (Acts 4:8)
 - Paul immediately following his conversion (Acts 9:17)
 - Paul when he encountered a sorcerer’s opposition (Acts 13:9)

These individuals did not do anything special in order to be filled by the Spirit in these cases. God chose to empower them in a special way in order to do ministry or perform a task through the Holy Spirit.

2. **The filling of the Spirit as an extensive influence and control of the Spirit at specific moments in time in an individual's life.**

To be filled with the Holy Spirit is commanded by God for all believers. It means to come under the control and influence of the Holy Spirit. The Apostle Paul tells the Church at Ephesus *“Do not get drunk on [be under the influence of] wine, which leads to debauchery. Instead, be filled with [under the influence of] the Spirit* (Ephesians 5:18). Just as you can be under the influence of a foreign substance, Christians

are to come under the influence of the Holy Spirit. If you and I have too much wine, it will affect the way we walk, it will affect our speech, it will affect our decision-making process. When we come under the influence of the Holy Spirit- the way we walk throughout life should be different. Under the influence and control of the Holy Spirit our speech will be seasoned with mercy and grace. Under the leadership of the Holy Spirit, you and I will make decisions that honor and glorify God.

To be filled with the Spirit does not mean that we have more of the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit cannot be divided into portions. Being filled with the Holy Spirit involves allowing Him to have more of us, submitting ourselves to His influence and control.²

Paul tells us in Ephesians to be filled with the Spirit.

EPHESIANS 5:18-21 *And do not get drunk with wine, in which there is debauchery, but be filled with the Spirit,¹⁹ speaking to one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody with your hearts to the Lord;²⁰ always giving thanks for all things in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ to our God and Father;²¹ and subject yourselves to one another in the fear of Christ.*

The tense Paul uses is the present tense imperative verb which could more explicitly be translated, "be continually being filled with the Holy Spirit," thus implying that this "filling" is something that should repeatedly be happening to Christians. This is markedly different from the one-time-only baptism of the Holy Spirit that happens at conversion. When Jesus was describing the Holy Spirit, the words Helper, Counselor, Spirit of Truth are used; these are characteristics of someone who will be with us in times of trouble when we need help. Someone who will be with us during difficult decisions when we need counsel. Someone who will be with us when society's moral and ethical compass keeps changing directions, and we need truth.

The Holy Spirit is supposed to fill us continuously, but it is up to us to yield ourselves to be filled. Often, we tend to think more about God, the Father, and Jesus, the Son, more than we think about the Holy Spirit whom Jesus sent to be with us in His absence. There is comfort knowing that the Holy Spirit is with us even now regardless of what we are going through in our lives.

Dr. Charles Ryrie, in his book *A Survey of Bible Doctrine*, states, "From the perspective of daily living and a vital Christian experience, the filling of the Spirit is undoubtedly the most important aspect of this doctrine. This is the pure essence of true spirituality and the basic requirement for growth and maturity."⁴ We are not to take this lightly in our Christian life. Nor should we allow challenges from various denominations to make us wary of the Holy Spirit. Jesus wants us to have the fullness of the Spirit in our lives as we live out our faith in Him.

A point of confusion can occur because of the word "filling." It sounds like we are filled up with the Spirit at conversion but then somewhere along the way, the Spirit sort of "leaks out" and we need to get a refill. This is not the case at all. If we stray from the truth, take back control of our lives and sin, it does not mean that we suddenly have less of the Spirit. It means that He has less of us!

There are those who say once you are "full" of the Holy Spirit, how or why should you get more of the Holy Spirit? A glass full of water cannot get more water. Perhaps a better analogy would be a

balloon, which can be “full” of air even though it has very little air in it. When more air is blown in, the balloon expands, and in a sense, it is “more full.” So it is with us; we can be filled with the Holy Spirit and at the same time be able to receive much more of the Holy Spirit as well.⁵

Ephesians 5:18 is a command to be filled with the Spirit, not a suggestion or one among many options. The verb usage is imperative. “*Be filled with the Spirit*” is a command, and He expects us to obey. The command is plural, so it applies to all Christians and not just a select few.⁶ As believers, without exception, we are expected by the Lord to be filled (controlled) by the Holy Spirit! This is not just for a certain denomination or “professional” Christians but a requirement for every believer as part of the normal Christian life. Yes, normal. Being filled with the Holy Spirit should be the norm and not the exception.

In Acts 2:4, it says that the believers were filled with the Spirit on the Day of Pentecost. Later, in Acts 4:31, it says that many of the same people were filled with the Spirit. What was different? In the first instance, they were filled in the initial coming of the Spirit to earth to dwell in believers. The second instance was to face a new problem and to speak the word with boldness in the face of persecution. As Dr. Ryrie states, “...repeated fillings may be necessary because new areas of life come to light which need to be brought under the control of the Spirit.”⁷

It is also true that a believer needs to be filled again and again when sin occurs, breaking the Spirit's control. In the case of a believer who sins, Dr. Bill Bright, founder of Campus Crusade for Christ, introduced a concept called “spiritual breathing.” Here is how it works...

- Exhale – Confess your sin; agree with God concerning your sin that it is forgiven according to 1 John 1:9. Remember, confession also involves repentance – a change of attitude and action.
- Inhale – Surrender control of your life to Christ and receive the fullness of the Holy Spirit by faith according to Ephesians 5:18. Trust that He once again is directing, controlling, and empowering your life.⁸

+ Conclusion

The Baptist Faith and Message states, “He [the Holy Spirit] enlightens and empowers the believer and the church in worship, evangelism and service” (p. 9). Specific results of being filled with the Holy Spirit include the following:

1. **You will become more like Christ.** You will demonstrate more and more the fruit of the Spirit, Galatians 5:22-23. These are qualities the Spirit produces in our lives.
2. **It will impact your worship and praise.** Our main verse for filling, Ephesians 5:18, is followed immediately by phrases that describe worship, praise, and thanksgiving:

EPHESIANS 5:19-21 *speaking to one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody with your hearts to the Lord; ²⁰ always giving thanks for all things in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ to our God and Father; ²¹ and subject yourselves to one another in the fear of Christ.*

- 3. Your prayer life and study of God's Word will become more meaningful.** He is called the Spirit of Truth in John 14:17, 15:26, and 16:13. Jesus also says in John 16:13 of the Spirit, "...He will guide you into all the truth," helping us to pray according to the will of God.

ROMANS 8:26-27 *Now in the same way the Spirit also helps our weakness; for we do not know what to pray for as we should, but the Spirit Himself intercedes for us with groanings too deep for words;²⁷ and He who searches the hearts knows what the mind of the Spirit is, because He intercedes for the saints according to the will of God.*

- 4. You will experience His power in sharing your faith with others** (Acts 1:8). The last words Jesus shared with His disciples before His ascension into heaven and 10 days before Pentecost were these:

ACTS 1:8 *but you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be My witnesses both in Jerusalem and in all Judea, and Samaria, and as far as the remotest part of the earth."*

It is significant to note that Jesus wanted them to know the Holy Spirit would empower them to be a witness of the gospel. It simply means that the Spirit will give us the words to say when the opportunity arises in normal conversation. After all, one of the ministries of the Holy Spirit is to point people to Jesus Christ. In John 15:26, Jesus says, "...He will bear witness of Me;" and in John 16:14, Jesus says, "He will glorify Me."

- 5. You will be prepared for spiritual conflict against the world (1 John 2:15-17), the flesh (Galatians 5:16-17), and against Satan (Ephesians 6:10-13).** Our enemies are spiritual, and we need spiritual power to have victory. The book of Acts shows this truth played out page by page through Peter, John, Paul, and other Apostles. It was through the filling of the Holy Spirit they were able to face the dangers, challenges, and obstacles, both spiritual and physical. And they were victorious!

When you look specifically at the totality of Scripture and not just take specific verses out of context, it is clear that the Holy Spirit is a gift. We are baptized in the Spirit at conversion. We are filled with the Holy Spirit throughout our lifetime.

¹ <https://www.gotquestions.org/Spirit-baptism.html>

² Lewis Sperry Chafer, *Major Bible Themes* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1926), volume 1, p. 250.

³ Wayne Grudem, *Systematic Theology*, Zondervan, Grand Rapids, MI; 1994, p. 781.

⁴ Dr. Charles Ryrie, *A Survey of Bible Doctrine*, Moody Publishers, Chicago, IL, 1989, p. 82.

⁵ Wayne Grudem, *Systematic Theology*, Zondervan, Grand Rapids, MI; 1994, p. 782.

⁶ Warren Wiersbe, *The Wiersbe Bible Commentary NT*, David C. Cook, Colorado Springs, CO, 2007, p.615.

⁷ Dr. Charles Ryrie, *A Survey of Bible Doctrine*, p.83.

⁸ This paragraph is based on the booklet *Have You Made the Wonderful Discovery of the Spirit-Filled Life?* by Bill Bright, Copyright 1966, 1995, 2000; New Life Publications; p.15.