

Baptism with the Holy Spirit

And with Fire

A Preacher's Workshop

by Charles B. Hodge, Jr.

TEXTS: *Matthew 3:9-11; Mark 1:8; Luke 3:16; Acts 1:5; 11:14-18.*

INTRODUCTION

The Trinity is vital. This has already been attested. However, we usually get them confused. Let me illustrate this: We usually present God to the world, we talk about Jesus to the inner group, and the Holy Spirit is reserved for the spiritually elite! All this is backwards. The Spirit came to convict the world! He is present or He is not! God is reserved for the spiritually mature, if any member of the Godhead is! The Holy Spirit reveals Jesus to the world. The love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Spirit!

Jesus left that the Holy Spirit could come (John 16:7, 8). It was a blessing (regarding the Holy Spirit) that Jesus ascended, leaving the apostles alone. While Jesus was here they saw little need to rely upon the Holy Spirit. Actually, why should they? In His absence there is no visible support—they found the Holy Spirit a necessity. To survive they had to learn the deeper reality of the Holy Spirit.

I. FACTS, FACTS, FACTS

A. Read our texts, reread them, and then read them closely! Familiar Scripture must be read more closely!

1. Do not "read into" but "out of." We have nothing to seek or defend but Scripture. There are no "church of Christ" positions or interpretations. Do not read with fear, on the defensive, or in the negative. Do not fear if the Bible says something you do not want!
2. Take a sheet of paper. Either divide it or make squares. Write in what the Scripture teaches. Also notice what it does not say.
3. Baptism *with* the Holy Spirit is mentioned only five times—then it is never mentioned again! Never is it mentioned in the Epistles!

4. Mark 16:15, 16, the Great Commission, says we must emphasize the gospel—Christ. The Holy Spirit never points to Himself. Beware of any who emphasize "getting the Holy Spirit." Their emphasis betrays them.

5. This is a study. Hodge will "throw out thoughts." You study and pray about it. Beware of predetermined doctrine and prejudice. Beware of reaction to Pentecostals. Do not make the Bible say what you want it to say. Our only loyalty is to Christ, truth, and Scripture. This must not be feared. Do not play Jonah. Do not try to protect God! The gospel has suffered as much from the *defenders* as from its *detractors*.

6. Read Scripture more closely. It is "with" and "in," not "of." Moderns call it "baptism of the Holy Spirit." They claim they "got it" The Holy Spirit is the sent, the element, not the doer! This is crucial. All the promises of Jesus in the Farewell Discourses center in the Holy Spirit. Pentecostals are divided. Some maintain tongues are proof of salvation; others say that is not so; some speak in tongues often. Neither John the Baptist nor Jesus spoke in tongues! The Holy Spirit never baptized anyone.

B. The baptism with the Holy Spirit is a promise, not a command. Jesus is the administrator, not man. It is not the "filling" of Ephesians 5:18. Scripture never tells men to seek for or pray for this baptism. John and men baptize with water; Holy Spirit baptism is unique with Jesus.

1. This limits said baptism. The witness is to Jesus, not the Holy Spirit.
2. Read Luke 24:49; Acts 1:4-6; Joel 2:28-31, and Acts 2. Peter said, "This is that." This means, "That is it."

C. There is a vast difference in Pentecost (Acts 2) and Cornelius (Acts 10). The Holy Spirit is the same gift, but the situations have major differences!

1. The apostles received the Holy Spirit in Acts 2; Gentiles are accepted in Acts 10. There is no wind, no cloven tongues in Acts 10.
2. Read in 1 Corinthians 14 the reference to Isaiah. Tongues were a sign to Jews, not Gentiles. Even in Acts 2 the assembly could have heard in Hebrew, Greek, or Aramaic. The language was not really the issue. They heard in their own dialect.
3. In Acts 2 the apostles are set in the church. The twelve apostles are made inspired men. This authority was confirmed. In Acts 10 Cornelius was not made an apostle; he had to be told what to do. The signs were not for Cornelius but for Peter and the Jewish brethren. Cornelius still had to be baptized. Christ died on the cross once—for both Jews and Gentiles. This was initiated twice—Acts 2 and Acts 10. The Holy Spirit came also once. Once here He is here! But he was initiated twice—Acts 2 and Acts 10. If Cornelius had what Peter had he would have known and could have done what Peter did! Why send for Peter? Cornelius heard “words” to be saved.
4. Here is another observation. Read Acts 8. Philip had supernatural power. But Simon tried to buy the power from Peter not Philip!
5. Acts 11 also says “the like gift.” Pentecost is to the Holy Spirit what Calvary is to Jesus. Also the tongues in Acts 10 were not for communication from Cornelius to Peter! This needs to be restudied. There also are differences between Acts 2 and 1 Corinthians 14.

II. BAPTISM WITH HOLY SPIRIT AND FIRE

- A. *Study* this: Is there one baptism or two?
 1. Did John have two baptisms? Or one?
 2. We are reading from Scripture and history books. Some think the “fire” was the Fall of Jerusalem in A.D. 70! This is bad hermeneutics. The first part is figurative and the latter is historical. Scripture must be considered in its context. The listeners at that time could have had no concept of A.D. 70!
 3. Most believe the “fire” is hell. There is a hell—of fire. But again, this is reading into Scripture. The subject of Matthew 3:11 re-

ceives *both!* Practice consistent hermeneutics! It is true that those who reject the Holy Spirit will go to hell—but is this what Matthew 3:11 teaches? This is the issue! The baptism herein is a blessing, not a damnation. The work of the Holy Spirit is to plant Jesus as lord in our hearts. The baptismal measure not only inspired but it also refined, purged, and cleansed.

- B. To be more enamored with an experience than simple faith in Christ is sophisticated idolatry. It is obvious more study needs to be done in this area. To correctly understand the baptismal measure eliminates the tongue and miracle problems. *Study!*

ILLUSTRATION

What Speaks for Me

“Why is it that the sound of thy flowing waters cannot be heard even a short distance from thy shores?” asked all the other rivers of the Euphrates river.

“It is not necessary that my waters be heard,” replied the Euphrates. “My deeds, my fruitful shores, speak for me.”

The rivers then asked of the Tigris river, “Why is it that the tumult and splashing of thy waters may be heard for such a great distance?”

“Because,” replied the noisy Tigris, “it is necessary that my currents rush with tumultuous rumble and clamor so people may hear and know how important I am.”

Likewise did the trees of the forest ask the fruit trees, “Why is it that the rustling of thy leaves may not be heard at the distance?”

“It is not necessary that we attract attention by the rustling of our leaves. Now, we shall ask a question of thee, ‘Why do thy leaves rustle constantly?’”

“That,” answered the forest trees, “is because we must call the attention of others to our presence.”

The Talmud comments on this subject: Man is to be judged by his deeds, not his words. As a tree is known by its fruit, so is man by his works.