

Baptism in the Spirit *By Richard Willetts*

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All Scripture quotations are from the New International Version of the Bible unless otherwise stated.
The Holy Bible, NIV Version 1978, 1984 by New York International Bible Society

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Forward

In Christian circles much controversy surrounds the third person of divinity. Though most are comfortable with the personality of Yahweh the Father and His Son, Yahshua, the person of the holy Spirit raises for many some most puzzling questions: Who is He? How can we experience Him? What does it mean to be “filled with the holy Spirit”? It is our desire that this article will give you some answers to these legitimate questions and show you the importance and potential of the holy Spirit in every believer’s life.

Arthur J. Moore says,

*“If the church is to rise to its fullest stature in [Yahweh],
if it is to enjoy the abundant life,
if it is to meet all foes in the spirit of triumph,
it must rely, not upon its numbers or skills,
but upon the power of the holy Spirit.”*

If this is a statement of fact then not only the congregation as a whole but we as individuals must wake up to our desperate need for the holy Spirit.

The topic of the holy Spirit generates wide-ranging opinions. What this article declares is the teaching of the Scriptures but I would ask you to prayerfully consider the ideas and claims put forward. In this case be like the believers at Berea who “*examined the Scriptures every day to see if what Paul said was true*”.

Editor.

Who is He?

A commonly misconstrued idea of the holy Spirit is that He is an *ethereal force – an ‘it’ - producing warm and loving feelings. A simple study of the New Testament, however, shows us that both Yahshua, and the writers of the New Testament, called the holy Spirit ‘He’.¹

He is spoken of as a divine Person in relation to the Son and the Father;² as having a will³ and emotions,⁴ and as One Who manifests Himself as a Person distinct from the Father and the Son. Paul speaks about enjoying the fellowship of the holy Spirit,⁵ and Yahshua promises “another counsellor” (Gk. allos Parakletos). The Greek word ‘Paraketos’⁶ can be translated interpreter, helper or advocate, and the word ‘allos’ (another) conveys the sense of one who is separate and distinct from and of equal value to. The withdrawal of Yahshua’s bodily presence made way for another counsellor of equal standing and calibre. The holy Spirit was that counsellor who was to continue the work that Yahshua began on the earth, in the hearts of men, therefore His work cannot be separate from the Son.

**“What the Spirit does is exactly what [Yahshua] does;
the Spirit’s work is not an additional or special work beyond
[Yahshua’s], the Spirit is [Yahshua] at work.”**

F.D Bruner

In Acts 5:3-4, Peter accuses Ananias of lying to the holy Spirit and then states, “*You have not lied to men, but to Yahweh,*” showing that Peter regarded the holy Spirit as Yahweh present with His people. The devastating result of Ananias’ deed clearly showed that his sin was not against man, but against the Elohim of heaven.

The simple conclusion to all this that the holy Spirit is an integral part of the Divinity or Godhead, with a distinct personality and separate role to play. He is the Eternal Spirit. Though He is deity He is Someone Whom we can know **personally**.

***Ethereal Force**

An indefinable, unearthly power with no personality or character traits.

Born of the Spirit

Yahshua emphatically tells Nicodemus that, “*...no-one can enter the kingdom of Yahweh unless he is born of water and the Spirit.*”⁷ We understand the process of being “born again” as one whereby our inner-self experiences a radical transformation when we both repent of past sin and believe in a risen Saviour and the power of His atoning blood.

¹ John 14:17

² 2 Cor. 13:14; 1 Pet. 1:2;

³ Acts 16:7; 1 Cor. 12:11;

⁴ Isa. 63:10; Eph. 4:30;

⁵ 2 Cor. 13:14;

⁶ John 14:16;

⁷ John 3:5

This experience was, and still is, a powerful reality in my own life. Yahshua has become my salvation; I am assured not only of an eternal future with Him, but also of a personal walk of holiness, love and power in my everyday life. But how is this great work effected? Yahweh is our Father in heaven, and Yahshua is His Son Who is seated at His right hand. How then are They able to reach down and quicken us? The answer is by the holy Spirit! He acts on Their behalf, He is the channel through Whom they speak. This Divine Personality is the Spirit of salvation. Didn't the disciples receive the Spirit for salvation before Pentecost when Yahshua, having risen from the dead, appeared to His disciples in the upper room, breathed on them and said, "*Receive the holy Spirit*"?¹ He it is Who convicts of sin and brings us to the place of repentance whereby we receive Yahweh's forgiveness. Yes, it is the holy Spirit Who first comes into our lives at the point of *conversions, bringing with Him the entire fullness of deity; He it is Who warms our hearts with His Presence, Who instructs and corrects us;² Who prays in and through us;³ Who enables us to experience our adoption as Yahweh's children.⁴ It is the holy Spirit Who gives spiritual gifts to the church;⁵ Who provides resurrection power and empowers⁶ and guides us in our witness, service and personal growth.⁷

Does this make you excited about this beautiful Spirit of Yahweh? Wouldn't you like Him resident and working in your life? Be assured of this, the point of your born-again conversion was the precise second when the holy Spirit entered your life.

**"Every time we say "I believe in the holy Spirit,"
we mean that we believe that there is a living God able
and willing to enter human personality and change it."**

J.B. Phillips

***Conversion**

A change of belief and character effected by the holy Spirit
when a person first comes to saving faith in Yahshua.

Filled with the Spirit

The coming of the holy Spirit at Pentecost, powerfully indwelling and filling the lives of thousands of believes, was not an outpouring which began and ended with the 1st century church. Peter, on the same day that he had been filled with the holy Spirit, preached a powerful sermon, in which he said, "*Repent and be baptised, every one of you... and you will receive the gift of the holy Spirit.*"⁸ Here Peter claims that the normal process of anyone accepting Yahshua as Saviour includes the receiving of the gift of the holy Spirit, meaning an infilling of the Spirit, similar to

¹ John 20:19-23;

² John 16:8-9;

³ Rom. 8:26-27;

⁴ Rom. 8:15;

⁵ 1 Cor. 12:11;

⁶ 2 Cor. 4:14;

⁷ 1 Cor. 6:11;

⁸ Acts 2:38

the one he himself had just experienced. The infilling of the holy Spirit is as much for today's believer as it was for the early disciples. It is the believer's birthright!

Let us go a step further. The Spirit that filled those first disciples was the same Spirit Who descended on Yahshua and possessed Him. We can, therefore, conclude that the Spirit comes to dwell in the believers of today much as He dwelt in the Son; all that He had been to Yahshua He comes to be to us.

**“If Pentecost is not repeated,
neither is it retracted... This is the era of the holy Spirit.”**

John Murray

Paul exhorts the church at Ephesus to, “Do not get drunk on wine, which leads to debauchery.” (A typical picture of pagan-style worship) but to rather “...be filled with the Spirit.”¹ It is sad to note that, today, a rift has occurred amongst many believers on this very subject. Those of a *Pentecostal persuasion have argued that the experience of being filled with the Spirit, or initially baptised in the holy Spirit, is distinct from and subsequent to one's initial conversion. Some *evangelicals have discredited this and pointed to being born again as the consummate *'charismatic' experience. The truth of the matter is that both are correct!

***Pentecostal**

A movement arising from the outpouring of the holy Spirit at the turn of the century typified by the speaking in tongues phenomenon as well as other supernatural gifts of the holy Spirit.

***Evangelicals**

A term describing a broad spectrum of christians who rightly limit religious authority to the Bible and who stress the New Testament doctrines of conversion, new birth and justification by grace through faith alone.

***Charismatic**

A renewal movement of the holy Spirit which began in the 1960's touching largely main line Protestants and Catholics.

Allow me to explain: Paul states that no-one can say “**Yahshua is Lord**” except by the holy Spirit,² “...and if anyone does not have the Spirit of Messiah, he does not belong to Messiah.”³ To be born of the Spirit, however, is not synonymous to being filled with the Spirit. The poor widow at the time of Elisha had a little oil but it was not until she filled her house with pots and miraculously poured the oil into every one, that her house was full and her salvation was assured.⁴ So it is when being filled with the holy Spirit.

Philip preached the Gospel in Samaria and many believed and were baptised.⁵ Then Peter and John came up from Jerusalem and laid hands on them because the holy Spirit had not yet come upon them in His fullness. Similarly, when Peter went to the house of Cornelius and preached, the holy Spirit came upon them and they began to *speak in tongues and praise Yahweh.⁶ On another occasion when the apostle Paul laid his hands on the believers in Ephesus for them to receive the

¹ Eph. 5:18

² 1 Cor. 12:3;

³ Rom. 8:9;

⁴ 2 Kings 4:1-7;

⁵ Acts 8:4-13;

⁶ Acts 10;

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gift of the holy Spirit, being filled, they not only spoke in other tongues, but also prophesied.¹ This is what to expect when we are filled with the holy Spirit – He moves powerfully in and through us; He fills our bodies and flows out of our mouths.

I would like to point out once we have been initially filled with the holy Spirit, we are ‘full’ of the Spirit, and to remain in a place of ‘fulness’ we have to receive further in-fillings. This was the experience of believers in the early congregation.² The in-filling of life, power, energy and ability bestowed by the holy Spirit is for us to pour out, in whatever way He leads, for the good of those around us and for the glory of Yahshua. There have been many times when, subsequent to my conversion, the holy Spirit has come upon me and manifested His presence, sometimes in praise and worship, other times through speaking in tongues and *prophesying; sometimes when preaching and teaching or in the laying on of hands on the sick and oppressed. At these times Yahweh has moved powerfully and miraculously. When we are filled with the holy Spirit we cannot help but manifest His power and presence both audibly and visibly. If any of this is not your experience then it is Yahweh’s will that it should be.

***Speaking in Tongues**

Spirit – inspired speaking (Gk. Glosolalia) in which the conscious mind plays no part. It is speaking in a language (whether earthly or heavenly) that is not known by the speaker
(1 Cor. 12:10,28)

***Prophecy**

Declaring the heart of Yahweh to His Church for the purpose of edification, exhortation and comfort. It is not a skill, aptitude, or talent. It is the actual speaking forth of words given by the Spirit of Yahweh
(1Cor. 12:10,28; Rom. 12:6)

**“As the soul does not live idly in the body,
but gives motion and vigour to every member and part,
so the Spirit of Yahweh cannot dwell in us without manifesting
Himself by the outward effects.”**

John Calvin

At this stage let me add a word of warning with regard to the infilling of the holy Spirit. It is important that we approach this experience with the seriousness and dignity it deserves. The holy Spirit is more than just a gift of power to enable you to speak in tongues. Yahshua said, “...you will receive power when the holy Spirit comes on you...”³ The holy Spirit is the gift of Yahweh, Himself, to radically change your life and make you like Yahshua in both word and deed.

There are many deceiving spirits in the world today which, if we allow them, will cause havoc in the lives of Yahweh’s people. The person who disturbs a meeting and then claims, “*I couldn’t help it, the holy Spirit made me do it*”, has a false

¹ Acts 19:6;

² See Acts 4:8,31

³ Acts 1:8;

picture of the holy Spirit. The Spirit of Yahweh is not a dictator who makes us do certain things, neither is He a substitute for any other provision of Yahweh. Paul, writing to the church at Corinth regarding worship stated, “*The spirits of prophets are subject to the control of prophets. For [Yahweh] is not an [EI] of disorder but of peace.*”¹ Here Paul suggests that prophecy (as well as tongues) was not an uncontrollable, emotional ecstasy but that these gifts, given by the holy Spirit, were actually under the control of the recipient. The gifts were not to be used for self-gratification.

Having been baptised in the holy Spirit and received the gifts of tongues or prophecy, the believer must begin to recognise when the holy Spirit wants him to use the gifts to edify the congregation.²

Whenever we are filled with the holy Spirit we will find that the enemy of souls will step up his effort to pull us down. Being filled with the Spirit ushers us into a new realm – a realm of spiritual conflict; we must be on our guard against the clever schemes of the enemy; we must know the Word of Yahweh (the Bible) and obey it.

Some guidelines

I would now like to set out some scriptural guidelines concerning the baptism in the holy Spirit. There are a number of steps we can take to cultivate a fertile environment for the holy Spirit’s sovereign activity in our lives.

- 1. Firstly, we must keep our hearts clean, for sin grieves the holy Spirit. John points out that as we confess our conscious sins, Yahshua is faithful and just to forgive us and purify us from all unrighteousness.³ If you have any unconfessed sin in your life, confess it to Yahweh right now!**
- 2. Secondly, we must thirst for the holy Spirit.⁴ In this passage Yahshua is calling us to a jealous thirst, one in which nothing else will satisfy the longing of our hearts. “*Though He tarries, wait for Him.*”**
- 3. Thirdly, by faith, we must call for the presence of the holy Spirit, praying for Him to come into our lives.**
“This is the confidence we have in approaching Yahweh, that if we ask anything according to His will, He hears us.”⁵
When many believed and were baptised in Samaria, they called for the apostles to come and *lay hands on them.⁶ It is appropriate for you to ask the senior minister of your congregation to pray for you concerning your baptism in the holy Spirit.
- 4. Finally, we must make ourselves available to the holy Spirit through obedience to Yahweh’s Word. In obedience to Yahshua the disciples who gathered in Jerusalem at Pentecost, were filled with the Spirit, “...and began to speak in other tongues as the Spirit enabled them.”⁷ When**

¹ 1 Cor. 14:32,33;

² See 1 Cor. 12:7; 1 Pet. 4:10,11.

³ John 1:9;

⁴ John 7:37-39;

⁵ 1 John 5:14;

⁶ Acts 8:14-16

⁷ Acts 2:4

we are where Yahweh wants us to be, doing what Yahweh wants us to do, His Spirit comes.

***The Laying on of hands**

One of the seven foundation doctrines of church (Heb. 6:1-2); the placing of one's hands on a person for a spiritual purpose. It is used to impart either a new spiritual reality or to recognise one that already exists.

Expectations

Having done all this, what are we to expect? The scriptures leave us in no doubt; we can expect the holy Spirit to manifest Himself through us by speaking in other languages. I have heard of men in the past, and even of men in our day, who have been greatly used of Yahweh but have never spoken in tongues. I am not discrediting the work of the holy Spirit in and through them, but I do see a pattern in the book of Acts whereby the infilling of the holy Spirit is always accompanied by speaking in tongues. Personally, I find this ability of immense value when worshipping Yahweh and praying for myself and others, since, so often, I am unsure of how to adequately express my feelings, or how to pray effectively. At these times the holy Spirit can speak or pray through me and do the work.

Please do not get the impression that the holy Spirit is only a gift of power, He is much more than that. He is the presence of Yahweh imparted to our lives. Allow Him to take full control, to influence your words, thoughts and actions, to lead and guide you in the way of holiness; to empower you to be an effective witness of Yahshua in this evil generation, that many might be turned from sin to righteousness. Be filled with the holy Spirit – He is only a prayer away!