

DOCTRINE OF THE HOLY SPIRIT
Receiving, Pouring, Falling upon, and Baptism of the Holy Spirit
Lesson 6

The doctrine of the Baptism of the Spirit has been a confusing topic for many. Spirit baptism has been wrongly defined or associated with other works of the Spirit. In this study we will focus on Spirit baptism and several other terms which are closely related so that we can understand the various terms used to describe the Holy Spirit's work of baptizing men.

I. DEFINITION

A. Pouring out of the Holy Spirit

The pouring out of the Holy Spirit was predicted by the prophets (e.g., **Isa. 32:15-17; 44:3-4; Ezek. 39:27-29; Joel 2:28-29; Zech. 12:10**). The terminology is figuratively used of the Holy Spirit's abundant influence upon believers which is like water being poured out upon them. The pouring out of the Holy Spirit is not merely an affirmation of the Holy Spirit's omnipresence, nor is it a reference to the temporary empowering of the Holy Spirit. It is a general term used to describe the blessings of the Holy Spirit on people. Sometimes it produces the salvation of unbelievers and other times brings blessings to believers.

B. The Holy Spirit's Falling or Coming Upon Believers

Like the pouring out of the Spirit, the Bible also describes the Holy Spirit as "falling upon" certain individuals (e.g., **Ezek. 11:5; Acts 10:44; 11:15**) or "coming upon" them (e.g., **I Chron. 12:18**;). These are metaphors to describe the Spirit's special activity in a person's life. For Ezekiel the Holy Spirit fell upon him in order that he might prophesy. In Acts the Holy Spirit fell upon believing Gentiles causing them to speak in tongues and thus verifying to the Jews that the Gentiles too had received the Holy Spirit. "Falling" describes the sudden descent or impact of something upon someone or something. In the case of the Holy Spirit, He "fell" upon believers, suddenly, unexpectedly, and as a result, divine manifestations resulted i.e., prophecy or speaking in tongues.

C. Receiving the Holy Spirit

Receiving of the Holy Spirit is nearly synonymous with the baptism of the Holy Spirit (see below). The difference is that "receiving" emphasizes the coming of the Holy Spirit into a person's life at salvation (e.g., **Jn. 7:39; Acts 2:33, 38; 8:15, 17, 19; 10:47; 19:2; I Cor. 2:12; Gal. 3:2, 14**), with one exception (**Jn. 20:22**) where it seems to be speaking of empowering the Apostles after the resurrection but before Pentecost to either forgive sins (vs. 23) or as another promise that shortly after that, at Pentecost, they would receive the Holy Spirit.

D. Baptism of the Holy Spirit

1. *Understanding the Holy Spirit*: “The baptism of the Spirit is the primary blessing; it is, in short, the blessing of regeneration. When a man is baptized with the Spirit, he is born again.”¹
2. *Tyndale Bible Dictionary*: “Baptism of the Spirit [is a] popularly used phrase, which never occurs as such in the Bible. The NT always uses the verbal phrase “baptize [or baptized] in the Spirit.” That gives it a dynamic character that the noun phrase cannot fully convey. . . In the book of Acts the metaphor retains the initiatory significance given it by John the Baptist. Acts 2:4 fulfills the promise of Acts 1:5. Since the outpouring of the Spirit was seen as the mark of “the last days” (Is 44:3; Ez 39:29; Jl 2:28–29), it was by being thus baptized in Spirit that the disciples *began* to experience the last days for themselves (Acts 2:1–7, 18). Acts 11:17 speaks of Pentecost as the occasion when they came to believe in Jesus Christ as Lord. Similarly the apostle Paul sees the gift of the Spirit as the beginning of Christian experience (2 Cor 1:22; Gal 3:3), so that “having the Spirit of Christ” is the defining mark of the Christian (Rom 8:9). By being baptized in the Spirit, Cornelius and his friends received the forgiveness and salvation that Peter promised them (Acts 10:43–45; 11:13–18). “Baptized in Spirit” is there synonymous with “granted repentance unto life” (11:18) and “cleansed their hearts by faith” (15:8–9).”²
3. *The Moody Handbook of Theology* quoting Merrill F. Unger’s *The Baptism and Gifts of the Holy Spirit*, lists several key distinctions of the baptism of the Holy Spirit:
 - a. The baptism of the Holy Spirit is unique to the church age.
 - b. The baptism of the Holy Spirit includes all believers in this age.
 - c. The baptism of the Holy Spirit brings believers into union with other believers in the Body of Christ.
 - d. The baptism of the Holy Spirit brings believers into union with Christ.
 - e. The baptism of the Holy Spirit is not experiential.
 - f. The baptism of the Holy Spirit is performed by the Holy Spirit.³

¹G. Campbell Morgan, *Understanding the Holy Spirit*, pg. 113.

²Walter A. Elwell and Philip Wesley Comfort, *Tyndale Bible Dictionary*, Tyndale reference library (Wheaton, Ill.: Tyndale House Publishers, 2001), 147.

³Paul P. Enns, *The Moody Handbook of Theology* (Chicago, Ill.: Moody Press, 1997, c1989), 266.

4. In short, to baptize usually means “*to submerge or place into.*” When the New Testament speaks of the baptism of the spirit, it is talking about what happens to a person at salvation. They are placed into or submerged into the spiritual body of Christ, the church (e.g., **Rom. 6:1-11**; **I Cor. 12:13**).

II. SCRIPTURAL PROOF OF THE BAPTISM OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

A. Pouring out of the Holy Spirit:

1. Pouring out predicted:

- a. **Isa. 32:15-17** Until the Spirit is poured out upon us from on high, And the wilderness becomes a fertile field, And the fertile field is considered as a forest. 16 Then justice will dwell in the wilderness And righteousness will abide in the fertile field. 17 And the work of righteousness will be peace, And the service of righteousness, quietness and confidence forever.
- b. **Isa. 44:3-4** ‘For I will pour out water on the thirsty land And streams on the dry ground; I will pour out My Spirit on your offspring And My blessing on your descendants; 4 And they will spring up among the grass Like poplars by streams of water.’
- c. **Ezek. 39:27-29** “When I bring them back from the peoples and gather them from the lands of their enemies, then I shall be sanctified through them in the sight of the many nations. 28 “Then they will know that I am the Lord their God because I made them go into exile among the nations, and then gathered them again to their own land; and I will leave none of them there any longer. 29 “I will not hide My face from them any longer, for I will have poured out My Spirit on the house of Israel,” declares the Lord God.
- d. **Joel 2:28-29** “It will come about after this That I will pour out My Spirit on all mankind; And your sons and daughters will prophesy, Your old men will dream dreams, Your young men will see visions. 29 “Even on the male and female servants I will pour out My Spirit in those days.
- e. **Zech. 12:10** “I will pour out on the house of David and on the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the Spirit of grace and of supplication, so that they will look on Me whom they have pierced; and they will mourn for Him, as one mourns for an only son, and they will weep bitterly over Him like the bitter weeping over a firstborn.

2. Pouring out fulfilled

- a. **Acts 2:16-18, 33** but this is what was spoken of through the prophet Joel: 17 'And it shall be in the last days,' God says, 'That I will pour forth of My Spirit on all mankind; And your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, And your young men shall see visions, And your old men shall dream dreams; 18 Even on My bondslaves, both men and women, I will in those days pour forth of My Spirit And they shall prophesy. . . 33 "Therefore having been exalted to the right hand of God, and having received from the Father the promise of the Holy Spirit, He has poured forth this which you both see and hear.
- b. **Acts 10:45** All the circumcised believers who came with Peter were amazed, because the gift of the Holy Spirit had been poured out on the Gentiles also.

B. The Holy Spirit's Falling Upon Believers:

1. (*The Holy Spirit falling upon people = Gift of the Spirit = the Holy Spirit being poured out on people*) **Acts 10:44-45** While Peter was still speaking these words, the Holy Spirit fell upon all those who were listening to the message. 45 All the circumcised believers who came with Peter were amazed, because the gift of the Holy Spirit had been poured out on the Gentiles also.
2. (*The Holy Spirit falling upon people = being baptized by the Holy Spirit*) **Acts 11:15-16** "And as I began to speak, the Holy Spirit fell upon them just as He did upon us at the beginning. 16 "And I remembered the word of the Lord, how He used to say, 'John baptized with water, but you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit.' (Notice that "with fire" is left off, for the fire is a reference to unbelievers. Jesus baptizes believers with the Holy Spirit and unbelievers with the fires of judgment.)

C. Receiving the Holy Spirit:

1. Predicted

- a. **John 7:39** But this He spoke of the Spirit, whom those who believed in Him were to receive; for the Spirit was not yet given, because Jesus was not yet glorified.
- b. **John 14:16-17** "I will ask the Father, and He will give you another Helper, that He may be with you forever; 17 that is the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it does not see Him

or know Him, but you know Him because He abides with you and will be in you.

- c. **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 even to the remotest part of the earth.”

2. **Receiving the Holy Spirit before and after Pentecost at salvation:**

- a. **Acts 2:38** Peter said to them, “Repent, and each of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins; and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.
- b. **I Cor. 2:12** Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is from God, so that we may know the things freely given to us by God.
- c. **Gal. 3:2-3, 14** This is the only thing I want to find out from you: did you receive the Spirit by the works of the Law, or by hearing with faith? 3 Are you so foolish? Having begun by the Spirit, are you now being perfected by the flesh? 4 Did you suffer so many things in vain—if indeed it was in vain? . . . 14 in order that in Christ Jesus the blessing of Abraham might come to the Gentiles, so that we would receive the promise of the Spirit through faith.
- d. In **Acts 1:15** the gift of the Holy Spirit, promised by Jesus in **John chs. 14-16**, came. One hundred and twenty of the disciples received the gift of the Holy Spirit. They were already believers, but at Pentecost they were “baptized” with the Spirit into the body of Christ, the Church, a mystery revealed in the New Testament. In **Acts 2:38**, Peter preached the gospel and called upon the crowd to repent and be baptized (in water) so that they could receive the gift of the Holy Spirit (i.e., be baptized by the Holy Spirit). Some were believers and some were unbelievers but in the end, all who believed were “baptized by the Spirit” into the body of Christ. As an act of obedience they were also baptized in water to publically proclaim their commitment to Christ.

3. **Delayed receiving after Pentecost:**

- a. (Samaritans Receive the Holy Spirit) **Acts 8:14-19** Now when the apostles in Jerusalem heard that Samaria had received the word of God, they sent them Peter and John, 15 who came down and prayed for them that they might receive the Holy Spirit. 16 For He had not yet fallen upon any of them; they had simply been baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. 17 Then they began laying their hands on them, and they were receiving the Holy Spirit. 18 Now when Simon saw that the Spirit was bestowed through the laying

on of the apostles' hands, he offered them money, 19 saying, "Give this authority to me as well, so that everyone on whom I lay my hands may receive the Holy Spirit."

- b. (Gentiles Receive Holy Spirit) **Acts 10:44-48** While Peter was still speaking these words, the Holy Spirit fell upon all those who were listening to the message. 45 All the circumcised believers who came with Peter were amazed, because the gift of the Holy Spirit had been poured out on the Gentiles also. 46 For they were hearing them speaking with tongues and exalting God. Then Peter answered, 47 "Surely no one can refuse the water for these to be baptized who have received the Holy Spirit just as we did, can he?" 48 And he ordered them to be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ. Then they asked him to stay on for a few days.
- c. (John the Baptist's Disciples) **Acts 19:1-8** It happened that while Apollos was at Corinth, Paul passed through the upper country and came to Ephesus, and found some disciples. 2 He said to them, "Did you receive the Holy Spirit when you believed?" And they said to him, "No, we have not even heard whether there is a Holy Spirit." 3 And he said, "Into what then were you baptized?" And they said, "Into John's baptism." 4 Paul said, "John baptized with the baptism of repentance, telling the people to believe in Him who was coming after him, that is, in 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 Spirit came on them, and they began speaking with tongues and prophesying. 7 There were in all about twelve men. 8 And he entered the synagogue and continued speaking out boldly for three months, reasoning and persuading them about the kingdom of God.
- d. *Why did the three groups above receive the baptism of the Holy Spirit after Pentecost?* God did this to show the Jews that the Samaritans, Gentiles, and disciples of John were all to be considered members of the spiritual body of Christ, the church. In the Samaritans case the Holy Spirit came as a result of the apostles laying their hands on them. This helped unite both Jew and Samaritan believers who had a long history of hatred with each other. . Miraculous sign gifts were displayed as an outward confirmation of the baptism of the Holy Spirit in the lives of the believing Samaritans. When Paul preached to the Gentiles and the disciples of John, their baptism by the Holy Spirit was also accompanied by miraculous signs to verify that they too were accepted by God into the church. Thus in these rare, single occurrence instances, sign gifts were used by God to demonstrate that all who believe in Jesus for salvation are one in Christ, thereby unifying the church (**I Cor. 12:4, 8, 9, 11-13, 20, 25**).

D. Baptism of the Holy Spirit:

1. Predictions of the baptism of the Holy Spirit:

- a. **Luke 3:16** (also Matt. 3:11; Mark 1:7-8) John answered and said to them all, “As for me, I baptize you with water; but One is coming who is mightier than I, and I am not fit to untie the thong of His sandals; He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire.
- b. **John 1:33** (in) “I did not recognize Him, but He who sent me to baptize in water said to me, ‘He upon whom you see the Spirit descending and remaining upon Him, this is the One who baptizes in the Holy Spirit.’
- c. **Acts 1:5** (with) for John baptized with water, but you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days from now.”

2. Statements affirming the Holy Spirit baptizing all believers:

- a. **Acts 11:15-18** “And as I [Peter] began to speak [to the Gentiles], the Holy Spirit fell upon them just as He did upon us at the beginning. 16 “And I remembered the word of the Lord, how He used to say, ‘John baptized with water, but you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit.’ 17 “Therefore if God gave to them the same gift as He gave to us also after believing in the Lord Jesus Christ, who was I that I could stand in God’s way?” 18 When they heard this, they quieted down and glorified God, saying, “Well then, God has granted to the Gentiles also the repentance that leads to life.”
- b. **Rom. 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 as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, so we too might walk in newness of life.
- c. **Rom. 8:9** However, you are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if indeed the Spirit of God dwells in you. But if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he does not belong to Him.
- d. **I Cor. 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.⁴

⁴The KJV has incorrectly translated baptism in this verse as a present active indicative “by one Spirit are we all baptized” instead of an Aorist passive indicative. The NKJV has corrected the problem “by one Spirit we were all baptized.”

- e. **Eph. 4:4-6** There is one body and one Spirit, just as also you were called in one hope of your calling; 5 one Lord, one faith, one baptism, 6 one God and Father of all who is over all and through all and in all.

III. ERRORS CONCERNING BAPTISM OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

- A. *The New Dictionary of Theology* mentions a variety of errors concerning the baptism of the Holy Spirit and the people who promoted these false views saying: “The idea that the apostolic experience of Acts 2 (cf. 4:31) is a paradigmatic model and a personal necessity for all Christians has appeared within pietistic Protestantism in various forms.
 1. John Fletcher (1729–85), Wesley’s designated successor, and some later Reformed teachers too, spoke of repeatable baptisms of the Spirit, meaning intensifyings of assurance and enhanced enablings for holy living and powerful ministry.
 2. Charles Finney, D. L. Moody (1837–1899), R. A. Torrey (1856–1928), Andrew Murray, A. B. Simpson (1844–1919) and others echoed this, but assimilated it in different ways to the Wesleyan idea of a single ‘second-blessing’ experience that lifts one’s life to a permanently new level.
 3. Pentecostals and charismatics generally see Spirit-baptism in this Wesleyan way, relating it to the full reception or release of the Spirit in one’s personal being, in assurance, emotional exuberance, glossolalia, inward liberty to speak for Christ, and the blossoming of all kinds of gifts for ministry, including (so it is often claimed) prophetic and healing gifts. Tongues are often made the touchstone of Spirit-baptism.”⁵

Though many have taught that there is a “second baptism” of the Spirit, supposedly leading to one speaking in tongues, to attain perfection, or to reach a higher plain of spirituality, a global study of the Holy Spirit in Scripture proves these views to be false. For instance, **I Cor. 12:13** affirms all believers are “Baptized by one Spirit” into the body of Christ, yet Paul goes on to affirm in several places that all do not speak in tongues or have the same gifts (**I Cor. 12:30**). Therefore to make certain manifestations of certain gifts the norm for all is a false claim, unsupportable by Scripture and also upon the scrutiny of those who claim to have miraculous sign gifts.

- B. Error — Baptism of the Holy Spirit happens after salvation.

⁵Sinclair B. Ferguson and J.I. Packer, *New Dictionary of Theology*, electronic ed. (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2000, c1988), 73.

- C. Error – Baptism of the Holy Spirit is the same as being filled with the Holy Spirit.
- D. Error – Baptism of the Holy Spirit is always accompanied by miraculous sign gifts.
- E. Error – We need to pray in order to be baptized by the Spirit.

IV. APPLICATION OF THE BAPTISM OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

- A. If you are a true believer, you have been baptized by the Holy Spirit into the body of Christ once for all. You never need to worry about being removed from the one true universal church for you are “*sealed for the day of redemption*” (**Eph. 4:30**).
- B. Because all believers are baptized by the Holy Spirit, we know we always have the Holy Spirit within us to help us obey God in every area of our life.
- C. Spirit baptism identifies you with Christ’s death, burial and resurrection and all the benefits that come with the finished work of Christ.
- D. When you undergo Spirit baptism you are at once united with the universal body of true believers and have unity and fellowship with them in the Holy Spirit.