

## **Baptized with the Holy Spirit**

### **David Feddes**

Recently we had a gathering for the National Day of Prayer, and a number of us from different churches were going to lead in prayer. Some other people gathered to join in prayer, and we also planned to sing some songs. So the keyboard from our church was brought to be used to accompany the singing, and it was an awkward moment because just before we were getting ready to start, the keyboard was sitting there and it had no power. No power cord was brought. Everything was there. The keys were there. That nice black box was there, and everything that goes into a keyboard. It looked great. The only problem was it had no power, no power cord, and would produce no music. Somebody looked around and found a cord nearby and plugged it in, and all of a sudden it was working.

Sometimes I am afraid that the church is a little too much like that keyboard. All the parts are there. The building is there. The programs are there. Sometimes even the vestments and the candles are there. Just about everything but the power and the music of God. That is where we would all be, and always be, without the Holy Spirit, because the Holy Spirit is God's personal presence and power at work in his church. Without it, without his presence and without his power, we are about as much good as that keyboard was without power. The church without the Holy Spirit really is not the church at all.

So I want to think with you today about the Holy Spirit and about being baptized with the Holy Spirit. To do that, we are going to look at something that happens at the very beginning of Jesus' ministry as described in the Gospel according to the apostle John. Here the apostle John is writing about another John, John the Baptist, and it tells us what John the Baptist says about our Lord Jesus Christ, from John 1 beginning at verse 29.

“The next day John saw Jesus coming toward him and said, ‘Behold, the lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world. This is he of whom I said, “A man comes after me who ranks before me because he was before me.” I myself did not know him, but for this purpose I came baptizing with water, that he might be revealed to Israel.’ And John bore witness: ‘I saw the Spirit descend from heaven like a dove, and it remained on him. I myself did not know him, but he who sent me to baptize with water said to me, “He on whom you see the Spirit descend and remain, this is he who baptizes with the Holy Spirit.” And I have seen and have borne witness that this is the Son of God’” (John 1:29–34).

Sometimes, if you want to get everything in just a few words, you can find it in just a few verses of the Bible. Here, in the description of John the Baptist, you find in just a few statements who Jesus is and the main purposes of his coming into the world. Who is Jesus? “I have seen and have borne witness that this is the Son of God” (John 1:34). That is John the Baptist's testimony. Jesus is the Son of God.

Why did Jesus come? Two main things. “Behold, the lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world” (John 1:29). That is the first great purpose of Jesus coming into the world as the Son of God and as a human among us. The second great purpose of his coming into the world is this: “This is he who baptizes with the Holy Spirit” (John 1:33).

All too often we separate those things or assume that one happens without the other. If you look at most of the emphasis we have on Jesus, many of us emphasize that Jesus came to take away sin. He died on the cross to pay the penalty for sin. He came to rescue us from hell. That is why Jesus came, and it is certainly true that Jesus is the lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world. But that is not the only reason he came. He had to do that in order for his great purpose to be fulfilled, to baptize with the Holy Spirit. Our sins have to be taken away. The barriers between us and God have to be removed, but not so that we will be forgiven and get off the hook, but so that the Holy Spirit of the living God can dwell among us and live within us. Jesus is the one who baptizes with the Holy Spirit.

If your understanding of Christianity is that Jesus came and died to take away your sins, that is half of it, and you cannot and should not assume that is all he came to do. He came to do more than that. At the same time, if you think that baptism with the Holy Spirit can easily be separated from the removal of sin, and you want to cut to the chase and go straight to that exciting part and ask God to fill you with his Holy Spirit and baptize you with his Holy Spirit while bypassing repentance of sin and cleansing by the blood of Christ, that is not how it works. Jesus is the Son of God who came as the lamb of God to take away the sins of the world and to baptize with the Holy Spirit.

In one sense, I am going to do something that I hope does not ruin the purposes of the Spirit among us. I am going to proceed in a question-and-answer format through this message today about the Holy Spirit and baptism in the Holy Spirit. Not because everything is sliced and diced and cut and dried when dealing with the Holy Spirit. Jesus himself said that the Spirit is like the wind. You do not know where it comes from or where it is going (John 3:8). There is a wonderful mystery to the work of the Holy Spirit. Nonetheless, the Bible does answer some things, and we want to be clear about what those answers are, not so that you can say, "I think I can get that item on the quiz," but so that we will be more aware of the Holy Spirit himself and have a better understanding of who he is and how the Holy Spirit carries out Jesus' purposes in us.

To begin with, how did Jesus himself speak and act with such power? You might say, "That is easy. He was the Son of God." That is true enough. But as the Son of God coming among us as a human, he lived as a human among us, and he did his mighty works, according to the Scriptures, by the power of the Holy Spirit upon him.

Already in the Old Testament, God had promised that there would come a new covenant, and that in this new covenant two things would happen: people's sins would be forgiven, and God would send his Spirit to live in people's hearts and write his law on their hearts (Jeremiah 31:31–34; Ezekiel 36:25–27). It promised that somebody in particular was going to bring that about. The prophet Isaiah said, "The Spirit of the Lord will rest on him, the Spirit of wisdom and of understanding, the Spirit of counsel and of power, the Spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the Lord" (Isaiah 11:2). In Isaiah 61 it says, "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because the Lord has anointed me to preach good news to the poor" (Isaiah 61:1).

There is this promise of a new covenant when the Holy Spirit will do amazing things among God's people, and all of God's people, not just one or two here or there. Moses had been a

prophet of God who spent intimate time with God, and when a few other people prophesied, they were scolded and reported to Moses. Moses said, “I wish that all the Lord’s people were prophets and that the Lord would put his Spirit on them” (Numbers 11:29). The prophecy was that someday all God’s people, men and women, young and old, would, like a prophet, have a closer intimacy in the presence of God and have God at work in their very lives in a sustained way, not just on rare occasions now and then.

All of this had been promised, and there was a Messiah coming who would be the key to all of this.

And so when Jesus came, and when John announced, “This is the one who will baptize with the Holy Spirit,” he was saying that Jesus is the key to this new covenant, this new way of God dealing with people. He said, “He whom God has sent speaks the words of God, for God gives the Spirit without measure” (John 3:34). God the Father gives the Spirit without measure to Christ his Son, the Messiah.

Jesus was, of course, one with God and the Spirit throughout eternity and throughout his life, but in his human life, when Jesus was baptized, the Spirit came from heaven like a dove and came upon him in power (Matthew 3:16; Mark 1:10; Luke 3:22). That is later explained in Acts 10 this way: “God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and power, and he went around doing good and healing all who were under the power of the devil, because God was with him” (Acts 10:38).

After the baptism of Jesus, it says that the Spirit drove him out into the desert (Mark 1:12). At Jesus’ baptism, the Spirit came down on him, and the voice from heaven said, “This is my Son, whom I love; with him I am well pleased” (Matthew 3:17). Then the Spirit drove him out into the desert for a showdown with Satan. In the power of the Holy Spirit and by the Word of God, Jesus overcame all of Satan’s temptations (Matthew 4:1–11). Then it says that Jesus, full of the Holy Spirit, returned to Galilee and began doing his mighty works, his miracles, and his powerful teaching (Luke 4:14). Jesus himself waited until this baptism of empowerment came upon him to begin his public ministry. He acted and spoke with such power by the Holy Spirit.

So who is the Holy Spirit? In one sense, that is beyond all expression or words. But Jesus tells us about the Holy Spirit when he says, “I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Counselor” (John 14:16). The Greek word is *paraclete*, and it is translated in a number of ways: comforter, counselor, helper, advocate, someone to be there with you and help you, and to be with you forever. Jesus calls him “the Spirit of truth” (John 14:17).

When the Bible speaks about the Holy Spirit and lying, it says that when you lie to the Holy Spirit, you lie to God (Acts 5:3–4). The Holy Spirit is God. The Bible also says, “May the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all” (2 Corinthians 13:14). That is saying that Father, Son, and Spirit are one God, the Holy Trinity. So who is the Holy Spirit? The Holy Spirit is God, the third person of the Holy Trinity. He is sent by the Father and sent by Jesus the Son from his throne after Jesus conquered sin and death. Jesus took his throne and sent the Spirit to live in believers and to help us.

Jesus says, “I am sending you another Counselor” (John 14:16). Jesus himself was a paraclete, a helper and counselor who did what we needed. He says, “It is for your good that I am going away. Unless I go away, the Counselor will not come to you; but if I go, I will send him to you” (John 16:7). This Spirit of truth is not only going to be with you, but he is going to be in you (John 14:17).

Who baptizes believers in the Holy Spirit, or with the Holy Spirit? I phrase it that way intentionally. In Greek, when it speaks of baptism by the Holy Spirit, in the Holy Spirit, or with the Holy Spirit, the same Greek word is used, *en*. It is very often translated “in,” and it can also mean “with.” When you baptize with water, you are also baptizing in water. When you baptize with the Holy Spirit, it is a baptism in the Holy Spirit. And who does that? Jesus does. John himself said, “He on whom you see the Spirit descend and remain is he who will baptize with the Holy Spirit” (John 1:33).

If you want to know who baptizes in the Holy Spirit, it is this Jesus, this lamb of God to whom John was pointing. In Peter’s Pentecost sermon, when the Spirit was poured out, Peter explained where this outpouring came from and the one from whom it came. “God has raised this Jesus to life, and we are all witnesses of the fact. Exalted to the right hand of God, he has received from the Father the promised Holy Spirit and has poured out what you now see and hear” (Acts 2:32–33).

Jesus was authorized by God the Father to pour out the Holy Spirit. Jesus had done everything necessary to make that possible. When he returned to his throne, the Father, who had already sent the Spirit upon him at his own baptism, authorized Jesus to pour out the Spirit on the day of Pentecost. We should never separate the Spirit from Jesus or from God the Father.

Where else does the Bible speak of Spirit baptism? There are basically seven texts that speak of being baptized in or with the Holy Spirit. One is the passage we have already quoted, where John the Baptist says that Jesus will baptize with the Holy Spirit (John 1:33). There are six more. John also says of Jesus, “He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and with fire” (Matthew 3:11; Luke 3:16). Jesus himself says in the book of Acts, “John baptized with water, but in a few days you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit” (Acts 1:5). That statement is echoed again later in Acts (Acts 11:16). Then 1 Corinthians 12:13 says, “For we were all baptized by one Spirit into one body.”

Those are all the passages in the Bible that speak explicitly of being baptized in the Holy Spirit, seven in total.

Who has been baptized with the Holy Spirit? Look at the context of that last verse from 1 Corinthians 12. It says, “For just as the body is one, it has many members. And all the members of the body, though many are one body, so it is with Christ. For in one spirit, we were all baptized into one body. Jews or Greeks, slaves are free, and all were made to drink of one spirit. (1 Corinthians 12:12-13). So, who has been baptized in the Holy Spirit? Everybody who is truly a member of the body of Jesus Christ, the church. Everybody who has faith in Jesus, has been born again through him, has been baptized in the Holy Spirit. That is what this text is saying.

There are some Christians who say, “This is something different in this verse from the others that talk about baptism in or with the Holy Spirit.” They say that in this case it is supposed to be baptism *by* the Holy Spirit, and that this is different from baptism *in* the Holy Spirit. That idea is based on a translation mistake. The Revised Standard Version of the Bible translated the verse as “by one Spirit you were baptized,” and some people took that wording and built a new theology on it. The original wording, however, is simply “in one Spirit,” just like all the other verses are (1 Corinthians 12:13).

All seven texts that speak explicitly about Spirit baptism are speaking of being baptized in the Holy Spirit. So if you wonder about the timing, or who has received it, it says very plainly here that all who are in the true body of Christ have received the baptism of the Holy Spirit.

When did Jesus baptize the first disciples with the Holy Spirit? On the day we are remembering today, Pentecost. Jesus told his disciples, “You will be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days from now” (Acts 1:5). Then, on Pentecost, we get that description: “<sup>1</sup>When the day of Pentecost came, they were all together in one place. <sup>2</sup>Suddenly a sound like the blowing of a violent wind came from heaven and filled the whole house where they were sitting” (Acts 2:1–2). That is the day, and “they were all filled with the Holy Spirit” (Acts 2:4). So he baptized those first disciples, the early church, on that day of Pentecost. That is when the church was baptized with the Holy Spirit.

Next question. When does Spirit baptism happen for Christians today? In Peter’s sermon, what did he say? The apostles and that small group of about 120 had been baptized with the Holy Spirit on that day, but what did Peter say to the crowd of thousands to whom he was preaching? He said, “<sup>3</sup>Repent and be 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). If you receive the forgiveness of your sins through Jesus by faith, you will also receive the gift of the Holy Spirit right then. We are baptized in the Spirit at the moment we inwardly repent of our sins and receive forgiveness by faith in Jesus’ blood. Water baptism is the outward sign of forgiveness by Jesus’ blood as well as Spirit baptism. Water, in fact, is often a sign of the Holy Spirit throughout the Bible. Spirit baptism happens when you enter the body of Christ, when you are saved.

Some people say, “I know Christians who believe that this happens in two very distinct stages, that you get saved at one point in time and then you are baptized with the Holy Spirit as a separate experience, often at a later point in time. Isn’t that what happened with the apostles?” They had been with Jesus, had put their faith in him after his resurrection, and yet Jesus told them to wait for the gift of God to come upon them. It was a two-step process for those first disciples, and that is true. They came to know Jesus and to receive forgiveness of sins before they received the baptism of the Holy Spirit.

The question is whether that two-stage experience of the disciples is a pattern for us, so that it should always happen in two stages. The very short answer is no. Why not? Because this was not merely an individual occurrence for them. This was a shift in the history of the world and in salvation history. They were living at a unique time, when Jesus came, died, rose again, and ascended. He did all that among them, and they came to know him and believe in him as their

Savior. Pentecost was the day of the shift from the old covenant to the new covenant. They received the baptism of the Holy Spirit on the first day that the Holy Spirit baptized his whole church. After that, God's people receive the baptism of the Holy Spirit at the same time as they receive salvation in the Lord Jesus Christ.

Dr. Wayne Grudem explains it this way. They received this remarkable new empowering from the Holy Spirit because they were living at the time of transition between the old covenant work of the Holy Spirit and the new covenant work of the Holy Spirit. Though it was a second experience of the Holy Spirit coming as it did long after their conversion, it is not to be taken as a pattern for us. We are not living at a time of transition in the work of the Holy Spirit. That was the time when it moved from the old age to the new age, from the old covenant to the new covenant. We already live in the time of the new covenant. What came to them in a couple of different stages can come to us in fullness all at the same time.

Another closely associated question is this. Do all Spirit-filled people speak in tongues? Do all Spirit-baptized people speak in tongues? On Pentecost they spoke in other languages, and later in the book of Acts you read of people speaking in tongues when the Holy Spirit came upon them. The short answer is no. Not all Spirit-filled people speak in tongues.

We need to keep this in mind. In one sense we should all be Pentecostal Christians, because we are heirs of Pentecost and the Holy Spirit who came on Pentecost is needed by all of us. But there is also a group of people called Pentecostal or charismatic Christians. What Pentecostal Christians often mean by speaking in tongues is not what happened on Pentecost. On Pentecost, believers were speaking other known languages to communicate with people from different parts of the world who spoke those languages (Acts 2:5–11). What many Pentecostal believers today mean by speaking in tongues is an ecstatic utterance, speaking in a language they do not understand, which gives a release and joy to their spirit. That is a different thing from speaking in a known language so that people can understand you in their own language.

In 1 Corinthians 12, where it talks about the body of Christ, being baptized in one Spirit, and drinking of one Spirit, it is very clear that not everybody receives the same gifts. Speaking in tongues was a gift that was highly prized in the church of Corinth. Paul is very clear and forceful in saying that not everybody has the same gift. “Are all apostles? Are all prophets? Are all teachers? Do all work miracles? <sup>30</sup>Do all have gifts of healing? Do all speak in tongues? Do all interpret?” (1 Corinthians 12:29–30). He also says, “<sup>18</sup>I thank God that I speak in tongues more than all of you” (1 Corinthians 14:18). He thinks it is a great gift. He is not knocking the gift. He is saying that God gives different gifts to different people who are all part of one body, because that is what God wants to do. He wants to distribute different gifts to different people so that they will work together and depend on one another.

There is another important consideration, though it is not at the same level as biblical revelation. Many of history's mightiest Spirit-filled Christians, leaders of great reformations and revivals who were used to win thousands to Christ, people of great virtue and power, did not speak in tongues. That is not a knock on speaking in tongues. It is simply a statement that not everybody who has been baptized with the Holy Spirit does so.

Having said all that, baptism in the Holy Spirit is not a separate experience from conversion. When you are converted to Christ and have faith in him, you are baptized in the Holy Spirit.

Does that mean there is never a separate experience or something that happens later? Are there ever amazing new experiences of the Holy Spirit after conversion? The short answer is yes. There are amazing things, and sometimes very stunning and remarkable things, that the Holy Spirit does long after you have been converted. This is one reason why some people have turned it into a whole theology, saying that you really have not been baptized with the Holy Spirit unless this special thing that happened to them has also happened to you.

It is incorrect to turn that into a different understanding of when you receive the baptism of the Holy Spirit. It is correct, however, to understand such experiences as having come from God, as great blessings from the Holy Spirit, and in many cases as huge leaps forward in a person's walk with God, in knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ, in boldness of testimony, in living for the Lord, and in assurance in him. A better Bible phrase for describing that is being filled with the Spirit rather than being baptized in the Holy Spirit. As we have seen, the seven texts that speak of being baptized in the Holy Spirit refer to the beginning of the Christian life, to becoming part of the body of Christ in the first place.

There are still degrees, in a sense, of how much of the Holy Spirit's influence we experience. If you have the Holy Spirit at all, you have the whole Holy Spirit. He does not get chopped up into little chunks. Yet the Spirit's influence can be much greater and more intensified. How much of you he has can also change from time to time, because there are times when we grieve the Holy Spirit or quench the Holy Spirit in particular areas of our life. We may not want him to meddle in that area. In that sense we are not filled, because we are keeping areas of our life that we do not want him controlling.

The Bible warns us not to grieve the Holy Spirit (Ephesians 4:30). He is a person, not merely a thing or a power. In that sense, my comparison to the keyboard without power could be misleading. The Holy Spirit is not something you just plug into. He is a person who comes and works within your personality. As a person, he can be grieved. You can grieve him by ignoring him, by not even being aware that he lives in you, by doing what you know to be wrong and contrary to his leading. There are ways of grieving him and of quenching him (1 Thessalonians 5:19), sometimes by not wanting to get too carried away. You want to stay prim and proper and completely in control, and you refuse to do anything that might seem off-kilter or embarrassing, even though you sense the Holy Spirit leading you. You can quench him that way.

You can also quench him in others. One way to quench him in others is when someone else is excited about a work of the Holy Spirit in their life, and you feel envious or think that person tends to get carried away. You then downplay a tremendous thing the Holy Spirit may have done in filling and equipping them and working a marvel in them.

There are amazing new experiences of the Holy Spirit after conversion, and sometimes those experiences are so definitive that a person can look back on a time when the Holy Spirit acted with such power and filling and say that it was a game-changer in their life. And in many cases, it was. The Holy Spirit, however, does not deal with everyone in the same way.

That brings us to the next question. Is the Spirit always spectacular? Does he always come with the sound of a mighty rushing wind and with flames of fire coming to rest on people's heads (Acts 2:2–3)? No. Does he always come with everyone in a gathering speaking in tongues at the same time? No. Does he always come in the way you read about in some revivals, where people fall to the floor together, weeping for their sins and crying out to God for salvation, where he does mighty wonders and huge segments of society are swept up within a few short months in the works of God? No. He sometimes does that, but not always.

So although we may pray for times of tremendous anointing and filling for ourselves, and for striking revival in our church and society, we should not despise or ignore the unspectacular ways in which the Spirit also chooses to work. For some people, there is a time when the Holy Spirit comes with such filling and power that it moves them from one place to another almost instantly in terms of obedience and spiritual power. For others, the movement may involve ups and downs over a longer period of time. When you look at their life, their impact, and their Christlikeness, you cannot say that the one who made the sudden leap is vastly superior to the one in whom the Holy Spirit worked gradually, in fits and starts. There can be gradual and quiet work, not only sudden and astonishing work, by the Spirit in a person's life.

There are also moments of instant empowerment. You see this with Stephen, who stands before his enemies, "full of the Holy Spirit," and speaks with boldness and power (Acts 7:55). Others may grow mainly through steady spiritual disciplines, daily prayer, daily Scripture reading, gaining a little more power, a little more knowledge of God, and a little more likeness to him day by day. Even for them, when they face a situation far beyond whatever level they think they have attained, the Holy Spirit can come upon them in a time of great need. They receive words from God they never thought of in advance, and power and boldness they had never known before.

Sometimes the most spectacular moments of the Holy Spirit come when we need them most, not simply when we say, "I would really like to have a spectacular and fabulous experience." You can pray for that, and then realize that God is answering when the rocks are flying and you are about to die, or when Peter is filled with the Holy Spirit and must speak to a hostile crowd of thousands (Acts 2:14–41). If you want a spectacular experience, be ready for the occasion that demands it, because God may put you in that position. When the need comes, he will supply it.

We also ought not to despise organization. I have to be honest, I do not like bureaucracy. I do not like meetings. I do not like organization, but we need it, and we need order. We need ways and patterns of doing things, not only ecstasy or spontaneity or doing things on the spur of the moment. The Spirit can work through what is spontaneous as well as through what is organized, as a Spirit of order.

We would all like to have the spectacular special vision. Maybe you ought to stick your nose between the pages of the Bible for a while if you really want to know God better and hear the Spirit speaking, because he may reveal special visions again, especially when they are most needed. His steady, usual way of instructing us is through the Word that he inspired. Even if we value and treasure special moments where he came on us in power or gave us a tremendous revelation of his love, there is a danger there too. You can always look back to a particular date and say, "Then I was filled with the Holy Spirit, so I have had the things that matter. I have been

saved. I have been filled with the Holy Spirit. End of discussion.” Not quite. That is the danger of saying there are only two key moments.

There can be many fillings of the Holy Spirit. Peter was filled with the Holy Spirit on Pentecost, and he was filled with the Holy Spirit again on several other occasions in the book of Acts when he needed special anointing and special power (Acts 2:4; Acts 4:8, 31). We ought always to ask that the Spirit be an abiding presence and a lifelong influence, not merely something we can point to and say, “Back on April 14 of such-and-such a year, I was baptized or filled with the Holy Spirit.” If you had such a tremendous experience, that is wonderful. He may give you more that makes that one look like small potatoes by comparison, or he may continue to work in you more gradually than he did on that one occasion. Be ready for his spectacular work, and be ready for his less spectacular work.

Who are you in the Spirit? Sometimes the reasons we want a greater filling of the Spirit are not all that noble. We are not very happy with who we are. There is something healthy about not being satisfied with who you are if it means getting rid of sin and gaining greater power for the Lord’s service. But some of us do not want to be ordinary. We want to be the hero of the movie, not one of the extras. We want to be the great revival leader or the mighty preacher or whoever it may be.

Who are you in the Holy Spirit? The Holy Spirit implants and activates the Christ life as it is meant to be expressed in your unique personality, the way God made you. He does not make you somebody else. In one sense you are a new person in Christ, but the new you is not a totally different you in the sense that you are no longer yourself. He makes the true you flourish according to the Creator’s design for you. You do not seek to be filled with the Holy Spirit so you can be who God never designed you to be in the first place or do what God never assigned you to do. You may say, “I wish I could speak in tongues. That is why I want to be filled with the Holy Spirit.” If God chooses to give that gift, fine. Or you may say, “If only I could be a preacher.” That is fine if God designed and called you to be a preacher, but maybe you are not. Maybe you have a different calling and different gifts on your life. The Spirit’s anointing on you is not going to turn you into who God never designed you to be in the first place. The Holy Spirit equips and empowers you for your particular calling and your particular task, not somebody else’s calling, somebody else’s personality, or somebody else’s task. Do not spend your time wishing you could be somebody else. Pray that God will make you the full you, the true you in Christ, as you were designed to be, and treasure what the Holy Spirit does in you. As Paul says, if you are part of the body, if you are an ear, do not spend all your time wishing you were an eye (1 Corinthians 12:14–21). Be a good ear.

Next question. What does the Spirit do for us in the new covenant age? This question could take a very long time. I will try not to take too long, though I have about seven categories, each with two or three items. It could easily make a series of twenty-five sermons. I will move more quickly and just highlight some of the things Scripture teaches. He is God. It is an amazing thing that God would come to dwell in us and live in us.

The first thing he does is convict. This is perhaps our least favorite part of the Holy Spirit’s work. Jesus said, “<sup>8</sup>When he comes, he will convict the world of guilt in regard to sin and

righteousness and judgment” (John 16:8). He shows us how badly we need Christ. What happened on Pentecost when Peter preached? The Bible does not say that everyone fell into laughter and said, “Isn’t this wonderful?” It says, “<sup>37</sup>When the people heard this, they were cut to the heart and said to Peter and the other apostles, ‘Brothers, what shall we do?’” (Acts 2:37). The Holy Spirit cut them to the heart and convicted them of their sin. Peter had said, “This man was handed over to you by God’s set purpose and foreknowledge; and you, with the help of wicked men, put him to death by nailing him to the cross” (Acts 2:23). When the Holy Spirit anoints that message, it cuts to the heart.

One of the great things the Holy Spirit does for you is show you that you are a sinner who needs to be saved. The Spirit’s work has not truly advanced in your life if he has not convicted you of your own sinfulness, your own failings, and your own need for a Savior.

The next thing he does, thank God, is give life. He does not merely convict us that we are dead in sin. He gives us life. Jesus said, “<sup>63</sup>The Spirit gives life; the flesh counts for nothing” (John 6:63). He said, “You must be born again” (John 3:7). “Flesh gives birth to flesh, but the Spirit gives birth to spirit” (John 3:6). The Holy Spirit gives life. He causes us to be born again to a new and eternal life, to abundant life. He is the life-giver.

The creeds speak of this as well. “I believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord and giver of life.” Everything in creation that is truly alive has received a kind of life from the Holy Spirit. But the life that comes when you believe in the Lord Jesus Christ and are baptized in the Holy Spirit is eternal life, the kind of life that never dies (John 3:16; John 10:28).

Another thing the Spirit does is indwell. He lives within us. “<sup>19</sup>Do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit, who is in you, whom you have received from God?” (1 Corinthians 6:19). He lives in you. When he lives in you, it says in Romans chapter 5, “<sup>5</sup>And hope does not disappoint us, because God has poured out his love into our hearts by the Holy Spirit, whom he has given us” (Romans 5:5). That can mean two different things. Does it mean that you love God, and that when the Holy Spirit is poured into you, love for God fills you? Or does it mean that you are flooded with a sense of how much God loves you? I think it is more likely in that passage to mean the latter, that he pours out an awareness of how much God loves you. But I would not want to separate those very far, because that same Spirit also gives you a tremendous love for God, which is a great part of his blessing.

As he pours out that love, he also gives assurance. He assures you that you are a child of God. Romans chapter 8 is one of the great passages on the work of the Holy Spirit, and it says, “<sup>15</sup>For you did not receive a spirit that makes you a slave again to fear, but you received the Spirit of sonship. And by him we cry, ‘Abba, Father.’ <sup>16</sup>The Spirit himself testifies with our spirit that we are God’s children” (Romans 8:15–16). When you are able to call God Father and to call Jesus Savior, that is not only your own spirit. That is the Holy Spirit stirring your spirit to believe in Jesus, to call God your Father, and to know that you are his child. He assures you.

The Holy Spirit also helps us in our prayer life. A little further in Romans 8 it says, “<sup>26</sup>In the same way, the Spirit helps us in our weakness. We do not know what we ought to pray for, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us with groans that words cannot express. <sup>27</sup>And he who searches

our hearts knows the mind of the Spirit, because the Spirit intercedes for the saints in accordance with God's will" (Romans 8:26–27). Intercedes is simply a word that means he speaks on our behalf what we are not very good at saying ourselves. We have someone living in us who is helping us to pray, the Holy Spirit. When we do not know how to pray, when we are frustrated, confused, or heartbroken and hardly feel like talking to God anymore, and all we can do is groan, that is God's Holy Spirit praying for us out of our brokenness and asking God for exactly what we need, even when we do not know what we need.

When the Holy Spirit is praying from within us, he brings that prayer before the Lord Jesus Christ at the throne. The Bible says, "Therefore he is able to save completely those who come to God through him, because he always lives to intercede for them" (Hebrews 7:25). Christ improves our prayers and presents them as the prayers we truly need. The Father, who has known all along what we need, takes those prayers that come from the Holy Spirit through Jesus and answers them. There is this tremendous indwelling, the love of God, assurance, and certainty. These things sometimes come by degree. Sometimes we experience God's love more strongly, sometimes less. Sometimes our assurance is stronger, sometimes weaker. But all the assurance we have comes from the Holy Spirit, and we can keep seeking that he will increase our knowledge of God's love.

Just as Jesus, when the Holy Spirit came down on him and anointed him at his baptism, heard the voice from heaven saying, "This is my Son, whom I love" (Matthew 3:17), so when that same Holy Spirit works in our hearts, God the Father is saying, "You are my son. You are my daughter, whom I love." That is the Spirit's work of indwelling and assurance.

The Spirit also reveals. That is a big one. Jesus said, "He will bring glory to me by taking from what is mine and making it known to you" (John 16:14). He also said, "I have much more to say to you, more than you can now bear" (John 16:12). He said this to the disciples, and then promised that the Spirit would make these things known. Sometimes our Bible verse of the month sounds like a direct promise to us that he will lead us into all truth, but in context Jesus was speaking to the disciples. It applies to us, but not in exactly the same way. He was saying that the Spirit would remind them of all these things and make known to them what was yet to come (John 14:26; 16:13). The Holy Spirit has a teaching ministry, and it always points to Jesus.

The Holy Spirit is never present simply to give a warm and fuzzy feeling. He is always pointing to Jesus. The great Pentecost sermon is all about Jesus. It speaks about the work and promises of the Holy Spirit, but it points to Jesus. That is his work. Through the apostles, the Holy Spirit gave us the New Testament, the new covenant message of Jesus, just as he inspired the Old Testament. The apostle Peter says, "For prophecy never had its origin in the will of man, but men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit" (2 Peter 1:21). The Holy Spirit gave Old Testament prophecy and guided the New Testament apostles.

Those apostles did not understand everything while they were living and walking with Jesus during those three years. But the Holy Spirit brought back to them all they had heard him say, and they finally understood it in a new light. He also communicated further truths to them about Jesus' ascension and reign. The Spirit reveals by pointing us to Jesus, by giving us the Bible, and by enlightening our minds to understand the Bible. "For who among men knows the thoughts

of a man except the man's spirit within him? In the same way no one knows the thoughts of God except the Spirit of God" (1 Corinthians 2:11). The only way to know God is to have the mind of Christ, to have the Holy Spirit living in you.

The Spirit also guides us on our personal path. You see this many times in the book of Acts, where the Spirit guides people in specific decisions to advance God's cause and carry out his ministry (Acts 13:2; 16:6–7). In your own life as well, the Holy Spirit is often the Spirit of wisdom, helping you make good decisions without a dramatic sense of direct command. At other times he gives a very clear, personal leading about what you need to do in a particular situation. When he does, you still test it by Scripture, but you should not make light of those powerful promptings of the Spirit revealing direction on your personal path.

The Spirit transforms. "We all, with unveiled faces, beholding the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same likeness from one degree of glory to another. For this comes from the Lord, who is the Spirit" (2 Corinthians 3:18).

That is how Scripture describes it. As he reveals Jesus to us and we behold the glory of Jesus, more and more of that glory comes into our life. The more you know Jesus and the more you are taken over by the Holy Spirit, the more the glory of God will shine from your life. A picture of that is Moses coming down from the mountain. He had spent time in God's presence, and he was shining with a light that people were almost afraid to look at (Exodus 34:29–30). That may not happen in a literal sense, where you are shining with visible light, but the presence of God and his impact on you will transform you.

Another way the Bible describes this is the fruit of the Spirit. "22But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, 23gentleness and self-control" (Galatians 5:22–23). You can make resolutions and say, "I want to be a better person." Good luck with that. When the Holy Spirit is at work in you, you are not only saying, "I am going to try to be a better person," but instead, "I have the Holy Spirit living in me, and he is going to grow fruit in my life." Every day you ask God to continue to grow that fruit of love and joy and peace and patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control.

In a church that has emphasized the family a lot, I repeat myself sometimes on this point. You can read this or that book about child rearing, about how to have a good marriage, about how to raise your children properly. Some of those books give good advice, and some maybe not so good. But if this is true, if the Holy Spirit is really living in you and God's glory is coming from you, and you and your home are characterized by love and joy and peace and patience and kindness and goodness and faithfulness and self-control, if that is increasingly marking who you are, you probably will not need to read many books on how to win your kids over or be a nicer spouse. Some practical advice is still good, but we need the Spirit and his fruit, and when we have that, many other things take care of themselves.

Power is another effect of the Spirit. Jesus said, "8But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses" (Acts 1:8). It is power for witness. In the Old Testament, the Spirit sometimes came almost more as a force than as a personal, ongoing indwelling. He came on Saul, a wicked king, at times with great power to accomplish great

things. He came on Samson, another man who often lived far from the Lord, yet he did mighty exploits when the Holy Spirit came on him (Judges 14:6; 15:14). In the New Testament, the Spirit's ministry is much more intimate, personal, and lasting, but he has not lost any force. He has not weakened in power.

Sometimes there is even a kind of severe power. When the apostle Paul was opposed by a false prophet, the Bible says, “<sup>9</sup>Then Saul, who was also called Paul, filled with the Holy Spirit, looked straight at Elymas and said, <sup>10</sup>‘You are a child of the devil and an enemy of everything that is right! You are full of all kinds of deceit and trickery. Will you never stop perverting the right ways of the Lord? <sup>11</sup>Now the hand of the Lord is against you. You are going to be blind, and for a time you will be unable to see the light of the sun’” (Acts 13:9–11). That force, even to pass an instant judgment, was sometimes given. We ought not to tamper with that or make it trivial. There is real power and force that come with the fullness of the Holy Spirit.

As I have said, being filled with the Spirit is a better biblical description than baptism in the Holy Spirit for these tremendous empowerments that come for particular needs and occasions. He also empowers and equips us with spiritual gifts, the ability to preach and teach, the ability to discern spirits and teaching, the ability to encourage others, the ability to be especially merciful, tender, and kind, and a whole host of other abilities. Everything the body of Christ needs is given by the Holy Spirit and distributed as he sees fit as gifts to us (1 Corinthians 12:4–11).

I am not going to go into that in detail today, but do ask yourself this question. What are my gifts? What am I especially good at? Am I using them for the Lord's glory? Ask that same question of other people. Sometimes we are not very good at answering it ourselves. It is the same with our faults. Some of our worst faults we are not very aware of, while the people around us know them very well. We do not like listening to them much. But it is not only true of our faults. It is often true of our gifts. You may have character traits or abilities you hardly recognize, and someone else needs to point them out. Let the Holy Spirit, in one of us, equip and encourage the Spirit's gifts in others among us.

A final point is that the Spirit unifies. Baptism in the Holy Spirit, as described in 1 Corinthians 12, means that “For we were all baptized by one Spirit into one body, whether Jews or Greeks, slave or free, and we were all given the one Spirit to drink” (1 Corinthians 12:13). There is no room for saying, “I am this kind of Christian, and those people over there are carnal Christians, but I am Spirit-baptized.” The fact is that Christians are a mixed bag. If someone is truly carnal, completely dominated by the flesh, without the life and power of the Holy Spirit, that person is not a Christian. There is no such thing as a completely carnal Christian who has no power or influence of the Holy Spirit. Someone without the life and power of the Holy Spirit is not a Christian.

Once we are in the Christian faith, some of us excel in one area and have grown a great deal. Some have grown in power and effectiveness but have not yet grown much in Christlikeness. Others have grown tremendously in character but are not as effective, perhaps because they do not have as much gifting or power, or because the Spirit has not chosen to emphasize that in their life. Some have grown a lot but are not as aware of the Spirit's empowerment as they should be. Rather than claiming superiority because of a certain experience or gift, we recognize that we are

unified by one Spirit. In the diversity that exists within that unity, we help one another grow toward greater fullness.

There is the fellowship of the Holy Spirit. That is the blessing we often use to open a service: “The fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all” (2 Corinthians 13:14). It is this bond that grows between people who love the Lord Jesus Christ. Scripture also says, “Make every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace” (Ephesians 4:3). These are some of the things the Spirit does for us in the new covenant age.

Some of you have tasted certain things on this list in greater fullness. Others have experienced only a small beginning. As you study the Scriptures and listen to other Spirit-baptized believers, keep seeking greater growth in the areas where you have not yet received as much. Ask the Lord to bind you to one another and to help you learn from one another.

How can Spirit-baptized people gain greater fullness? One thing I would not want to have happen as a result of this message is for people to say, “Whew, I guess being baptized with the Holy Spirit means that if I am a Christian, I have it, so now I do not have to be bothered by those Pentecostals anymore,” or to be troubled by the thought that they might have something I do not. They might have something you do not. It might not be accurately labeled baptism in the Holy Spirit, because as I have described it, baptism in the Holy Spirit refers to the giving of the Holy Spirit to us when we are saved. But it is very possible that there are many Spirit-filled people who have something I do not yet have.

So none of us should say, “Well, I guess I have what it takes to be a Christian now.” No, you have what it takes to begin to be a Christian. The lamb of God takes away your sin. He baptizes you with the Holy Spirit. Now the rest of your life is going to be a battle to become further and further free from sin and a process of growth further and further in the Holy Spirit. So how does that come about?

Some of the advice I will give you is advice that a good Pentecostal person or a good “second blessing” person might give you about seeking the baptism of the Holy Spirit. I will not use that label, but there is a reason why some of that teaching had a wonderful effect, even though some of it was incorrect. If you do these things, there is almost no doubt that something wonderful will continue to happen.

First, marvel at the Holy Spirit. Honor him. Marvel at the privilege that God the Spirit lives in you, and desire that God be glorified in you. Honor the Holy Spirit and want God’s glory. Think what an amazing, astounding, and fantastic thing it is that the God of the universe would make himself at home in you. Rather than ignoring him, honor him.

Then repent. You say, “I repented when I became a Christian.” Yes, but the rest of our life we need to keep confessing all known sins and turning away from anything that quenches, grieves, or offends the Spirit. Admit what might be an obstacle to fellowship with him and repent of it.

Then surrender. Commit every part of yourself and all of your goals to the reign of the Lord Jesus Christ. The Spirit is not going to anoint you with greater fullness to do your own selfish

thing. Commit every part of who you are and say, “Lord, if you want to change my goals, that is fine. I want to surrender to you whatever it is you want me to do, whoever it is you want me to be. I yield myself to you. Make of me what you will.”

Then ask. Jesus says, “<sup>11</sup>If you then, though you are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father in heaven give the Holy Spirit to those who ask him!” (Luke 11:13). You say, “But if I already have the Holy Spirit, why would I ask?” Jesus was speaking to disciples. When you ask for the Holy Spirit, you are not saying, “May I please have the Holy Spirit for the first time.” You keep on praying for the Holy Spirit. You have him, and yet you pray for him. You keep asking that he will increase his work in you, intensify his presence and his power in you. It is a matter of prayer.

You do not say, “Now that I have reached this level,” or “Now that our church has achieved this,” because if that is where we are, we are in a sad state. There is a lot of growing that I have to do, and there is a lot more that could be accomplished in our congregation, in the church of the Lord Jesus Christ, in our community, and in our world, if only there were a greater intensification of the presence and power of God, if only seasons of revival were to come. We should not despise what the Spirit has already done or be ungrateful for it, but to taste a little is to pray for more and to ask for more of his blessing, his work, his presence, and all his benefits. So let us do that right now.

## **Prayer**

Dear Lord, we honor you for this marvelous throne gift sent by our Lord Jesus Christ, your own precious Holy Spirit, to abide in us. We pray, Lord, that each day the glory of the Lord may more and more be revealed to us and then shine from us. Lord, help each of us to be realistic, to know what hinders our walk with you, the sins that still hamper our obedience. We confess them to you. Help each of us in our own hearts to know what they are. Help us to have a listening ear to those around us who love us and sometimes rebuke us, and to let go of the things we know to be contrary to your will, anything that offends you.

Take our lives and let them be consecrated, Lord, to thee. We consecrate ourselves and surrender to you. We pray that all of our goals may be your goals for us. We pray and beg and plead that you will, having given the Holy Spirit, having given your own Son and not withheld anything, help us to enter more fully into the benefits of what Christ has done and experience a greater and greater fullness of the Holy Spirit. We pray that the Spirit may strengthen our hearts and that Christ may dwell in us through faith, and that we may know how wide and long and high and deep is the love of Christ, and to know this love that surpasses knowledge (Ephesians 3:16–19). We pray that the eyes of our hearts may be enlightened (Ephesians 1:18), that we may have the Spirit of wisdom and revelation more and more shining upon us and then shining from us.

We thank you, Lord, that you have done all this. We praise you for the mystery. We pray that where these words bring clarity and helpfulness, they will lodge in our hearts. Where they were mistaken, take them away. Where your Spirit is going to do things above and beyond anything conceived or mentioned here, we pray for the mystery and the might of your rushing wind in our lives and in our church, for Jesus’ sake. Amen.

## **Baptized with the Holy Spirit**

**By David Feddes**

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**John 1:29-34**

<sup>29</sup> The next day John saw Jesus coming toward him, and said, “Behold, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world! <sup>30</sup> This is he of whom I said, ‘After me comes a man who ranks before me, because he was before me.’ <sup>31</sup> I myself did not know him, but for this purpose I came baptizing with water, that he might be revealed to Israel.”

<sup>32</sup> And John bore witness: “I saw the Spirit descend from heaven like a dove, and it remained on him. <sup>33</sup> I myself did not know him, but he who sent me to baptize with water said to me, ‘He on whom you see the Spirit descend and remain, this is he who baptizes with the Holy Spirit.’ <sup>34</sup> And I have seen and have borne witness that this is the Son of God.”

**“Behold, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!”**

**"This is he who baptizes with the Holy Spirit."**

### **How did Jesus speak and act with such power? By the Spirit!**

For he whom God has sent utters the words of God, for he gives the Spirit without measure. (John 3:34)

God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and with power. He went about doing good and healing all who were oppressed by the devil, for God was with him. (Acts 10:38)

### **Who is the Holy Spirit?**

I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Paraclete (Comforter, Counselor, Helper, Advocate) to help you and be with you forever—the Spirit of truth. (John 14:16-17)

- **The Holy Spirit is God, the third Person of the Holy Trinity, sent by Father and Son to live in believers and to help us.**

### **Who baptizes believers in/with the Holy Spirit? Jesus does!**

He on whom you see the Spirit descend and remain, this is he who baptizes in/with the Holy Spirit. (John 1:33)

This Jesus God raised up... Being therefore exalted at the right hand of God, and having received from the Father the promise of the Holy Spirit, he has poured out this that you yourselves are seeing and hearing. (Acts 2:32-33)

### **Where else does the Bible speak of Spirit baptism?**

John said of Jesus, “He will baptize you with/in the Holy Spirit and fire.” (Matthew 3:11; Luke 3:16) “He will baptize you in/with the Holy Spirit.” (Mark 1:8)

Jesus said, “John baptized with water, but you will be baptized in/with the Holy Spirit not many days from now.” (Acts 1:5; 11:16)

For in/with one Spirit we were all baptized into one body. (1 Corinthians 12:13)

### **Who has been baptized in/with the Holy Spirit?**

For just as the body is one and has many members, and all the members of the body, though many, are one body, so it is with Christ. For in one Spirit we were all baptized into one body—Jews or Greeks, slaves or free—and all were made to drink of one Spirit. (1 Cor 12:12-13)

- **All Christians in Christ’s body, the church, receive Spirit baptism.**

### **When did Jesus baptize the first disciples with the Holy Spirit?**

You will be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days from now. (Acts 1:5)

When the day of Pentecost arrived, they were all together in one place. And suddenly there came from heaven a sound like a mighty rushing wind, and it filled the entire house where they were sitting. (Acts 2:1-2)

- **Jesus baptized his church with the Holy Spirit on Pentecost.**

### **When does Spirit baptism happen for Christians today?**

Peter said to them, “Repent and be 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)

- We are baptized in the Spirit the moment we inwardly repent of sin and receive forgiveness through Jesus’ blood. Water baptism is the outward sign of forgiveness and Spirit baptism.

### **Is the two-stage experience of the disciples a pattern for us? No.**

They received this remarkable new empowering from the Holy Spirit *because they were living at the time of the transition between the old covenant work of the Holy Spirit and the new covenant work of the Holy Spirit*. Though it was a “second experience” of the Holy Spirit, coming as it did long after their conversion, it is not to be taken as a pattern for us, for we are not living at a time of transition in the work of the Holy Spirit. (Wayne Grudem)

### **Do all Spirit-filled people speak in tongues? No.**

- What Pentecostals mean by “speaking in tongues” is not what happened on Pentecost. On Pentecost believers were speaking other known languages, not ecstatically uttering sounds. (Acts 2)
- The Spirit gives ecstatic utterance as a gift to some but not all. (1 Corinthians 12)
- Many of history’s mightiest Spirit-filled Christians never spoke in tongues.

### **Are there ever amazing new experiences of the Spirit after conversion? Yes!**

- Such experiences are real and may have huge impact, although it is not biblically accurate to call such experiences “baptism in/with the Holy Spirit.”
- “Be filled with the Spirit.” (Ephesians 5:18)
- Do not grieve or quench the Spirit by denying or despising powerful filling.

### **Is the Spirit always spectacular?**

Sometimes Holy Spirit does spectacular things, but often the Spirit is unspectacular.

- Gradual and quiet, not just sudden and astonishing
- Steady spiritual disciplines, not just instant empowerments
- Organization, not just ecstasy or impulse
- Biblical instruction, not just special visions
- Lifelong influence, not just grand moment

### **Who are you in the Spirit?**

- The Holy Spirit implants and activates the Christ-life as it’s meant to be expressed in your unique personality. He doesn’t make you somebody else. He makes the true you flourish according to the Creator’s design.
- Don’t seek to be filled with the Holy Spirit so you can be who God didn’t design you be or do what God doesn’t assign you to do.
- The Holy Spirit equips and empowers you for your particular calling and task, not for someone else’s task.

### **What does the Spirit do for us in the new covenant age?**

- **Convicts:** sin, righteousness, judgment
- **Enlivens:** born again to new, abundant life
- **Indwells:** love, assurance, help in prayer

- **Reveals:** Jesus, Bible, personal path
- **Transforms:** glory, fruit
- **Empowers:** force, fullness, spiritual gifts
- **Unifies:** one body, fellowship, bond

**How can Spirit-baptized people gain greater fullness?**

- **Honor:** Marvel at the privilege of God the Spirit living in you, and desire God's glory.
- **Repent:** Confess all known sins and turn from anything that offends the Spirit.
- **Surrender:** Commit every part of yourself and all your goals to the reign of Jesus.
- **Ask:** Pray for the Spirit to increase and intensify his presence and power in you.

**"Behold, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!"**

**"This is he who baptizes with the Holy Spirit."**