



Lecture 6

The Ministry of the Holy Spirit

THE BAPTISM BY THE HOLY SPIRIT

Acts 1:4-8 (Wuest translation)

“And being assembled together with them He charged them not to go away from Jerusalem, but to be waiting for the promise of the Father which you heard from me, because John indeed baptised by means of water, but as for you, by the agency of the Holy Spirit you will be baptised not many days from now. Then indeed having assembled together, they went to asking Him, saying, Lord, at this time are you restoring to its former state the kingdom to Israel? He said to them, It is not yours to know the chronological events in the passing of time nor the strategic, epochal periods of time which the Father placed within the sphere of His own private authority. But you shall receive power of the kind which God has and exerts after the Holy Spirit has come upon you. And you shall be those who testify of what they have seen and experienced, my witnesses, both in Jerusalem and in all Judaea and in Samaria and to the end of the earth.”

THE BEGINNING OF THE MINISTRY OF JESUS

Jesus’s ministry on earth only began after He was indwelt by the Holy Spirit while He was baptised in water by the Apostle John, and the voice of the Father confirmed it.

Luke 3:21-22 (Wuest translation)

Now, it came to pass that at the time when all the people were baptised, Jesus also was baptised, and while He was praying, the heaven was opened, and the Holy Spirit in a form like that of a dove descended upon Him, and a voice came out of heaven, As for you, you are my Son, the beloved one, in whom I take pleasure.”

The word “baptise” is used in the New Testament in two ways: one is a ceremony exercised by man (water baptism), the other is the intervention of God’s power; this Scripture refers to the act of the Holy Spirit baptising the believer into the Body of Christ.

THE BEGINNING OF THE CHURCH/PENTECOST

Acts 2:1-4 (Wuest translation)

“And when the day of Pentecost was in progress of being fulfilled, they were all together in the same place. And suddenly there came an echoing sound out of heaven as of a wind borne along violently. And it filled the whole house where they were sitting. And there appeared to them tongues that had the appearance of fire, these tongues took up a position upon each of them. And all were controlled by the Holy Spirit and began to be uttering words in languages different from their own native language and different from those spoken by the others, even as the Spirit kept giving them ability to

“speak forth, not in words of everyday speech but in words belonging to dignified and elevated discourse.”

Imagine the extraordinary nature of this moment! Each of the disciples who had gathered to await the promise of the Holy Spirit began to speak, not in their own language, but in a completely foreign language which they themselves had never spoken before. They each worshipped and glorified God in a language they themselves did not even understand! And they did so with such fluency and clarity that pilgrims from other regions - gathered in Jerusalem for Pentecost - immediately recognised their own languages being spoken by these Hebrew men. This moment was a powerful, supernatural sign attesting to a new work of God. To quote Kenneth S. Wuest, *“behind these signs and symbols, there was the reality of the unseen, unheard, but profoundly experienced baptism by the Spirit of all the disciples into one body: also the filling of each individual by the Holy Spirit of God.”*

This was the beginning of the Church of Jesus Christ, the Holy Spirit now indwelt the believers, and the Church (the Bride of Christ) was established by God Himself.

In the Old Testament, the Holy Spirit “came upon” a specific person for a specific time or purpose as God intervened to outwork His plan for Israel.

1 Corinthians 12:13 (Wuest translation)

“For by one Spirit we were all baptised into one body, whether Jews or Greeks, whether slaves or free, and we were all made to drink of one Spirit.”

Note that Pentecost was a very special event. God performed a mighty manifestation and display of His power by making this supernatural event seen and known to mankind. All of a sudden everyone who was gathered awaiting the promise of the Father (the Holy Spirit) began speaking fluently in another language, i.e. languages from other countries. They onlookers, who were foreigners from other countries, immediately recognised their native languages and were bewildered and amazed to hear their own languages being spoken by men from Galilee.

The age of grace began at Pentecost until the rapture of the church. God’s Spirit empowering the believers to spread the Gospel and to be ambassadors of Christ on earth.

There is only one placing (*baptising*) into the Body of Christ by the Holy Spirit:

Ephesians 4:4-6 (Wuest translation)

There is one Body and one Spirit, even as also you were called in one hope of your calling, one Lord, one Faith, one placing (*baptising*) into [the Body of Christ by the Holy Spirit], one God and Father of all, the One above all and through all and in all.

The baptism by the Holy Spirit happens once, at salvation. The believers at Pentecost did not need another “Spirit baptism”. Some denominations teach a second “baptism of the Holy Spirit” which we will cover in our next lecture.

God’s Word exhorts believers to be eager to live by the power of the Holy Spirit as imitators of Christ.