

Lesson 14 – The Fullness of the Holy Spirit

Up until the early 20th Century, almost all Christians used the terms *Baptism of the Holy Spirit* and *Filling of the Holy Spirit* interchangeably. Many Bible preachers of many denominations preached on the necessity of receiving the Baptism of the Holy Spirit after a person was converted. Then, in 1906, the Pentecostal Movement began near the corner of Azusa Street and San Pedro Street, in what is now the Little Tokyo section of downtown Los Angeles. People began falling into trances and speaking ecstatic utterances. They equated these utterances with the speaking in tongues of the New Testament, and they believed that this was the evidence that they had been baptized in the Holy Spirit. Although there had been some accounts of these phenomena in Houston and Wichita, this was the event that put the modern day Pentecostal movement on the map. Several denominations later developed out of this movement, including the Assemblies of God, the Church of God in Christ, The Foursquare Church, The Church of God of Prophecy, and several denominations simply called The Church of God. (Another Church of God, headquartered in Anderson, Indiana, is not a part of the tongues movement).

Many of these people were genuine Christians, but they were misled. ***They were using their experience to interpret the Bible, rather than letting the Bible interpret experience.*** The effect on the Christian world was tragic. There were at least two tragic results of their experience and teaching:

1. They equated their emotional experience with the filling of the Holy Spirit. For the most part, all they had was emotionalism. Some of them (a minority) ended up engaging in a mild form of occultism.
2. Other Christians steered away from the Biblical truth of the filling of the Holy Spirit, because they didn't want to be identified with the emotionalism of Azusa Street. This is the great tragedy. A lot of Christians – including a lot of Baptists – have steered so clear of anything that appears to resemble Pentecostalism, they have also steered clear of this important Biblical truth. We have thrown the baby out with the bathwater. As a result, we are weak and anemic in our efforts to serve God.
 - a. We don't turn the world upside down – Acts 17:6
 - b. We don't fill our cities with the Gospel – Acts 5:28
 - c. We put more time and emphasis on entertaining worship services, gimmicks and technology than we do on prayer and the Power of God to build our churches and reach our communities with the Gospel.
 - d. We are retreating instead of advancing.
 - i. In 1890, 75% of Americans belonged to churches that taught “you must be born again.”
 - ii. Today most churches don't believe in born again salvation, and only a small minority of Americans goes to any church of any kind.
 - iii. It has been estimated that 35% of Americans believe the Bible is the Word of God in 2006. At the present rate of evangelism, it is estimated that a generation from now, only 4% will claim to believe the Bible is the Word of God.

When Jesus appeared to His disciples after the Resurrection, He continued teaching them many things. This time they had more of an understanding of His plan, since they had seen Him

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crucified, they had evidence of His resurrection, and now they were experiencing Him in their lives again.

Shortly before He was taken up into Heaven (the Ascension of Christ), He began to tell them what He wanted them to do after His departure:

1. Wait to receive the Power of God on their lives. This experience was called by several names in Scripture:
 - a. **The Promise of the Father** – Luke 24:49; Acts 1:4
 - b. Being **endued with power from on high** – Luke 24:49
 - c. Being **baptized with (or in) the Holy Spirit** – Acts 1:5
The word translated “with” in this verse is the Greek preposition *en*, which can mean “in,” “with,” or “by.” Since we know the word *baptize* always means “to immerse,” the most logical translation of the preposition *en* would be “in” – “baptized **IN** the Holy Spirit,” just as a new believer is baptized in water.
 - d. **Receiving power when “the Holy Spirit has come upon you”** – Acts 1:8
 - e. **Being filled with the Holy Spirit** – Acts 2:4
2. Go into all the world with the Gospel. – After receiving the Holy Spirit Power
 - a. Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations – Matt. 28:19
 - b. Go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature. – Mark 16:15
 - c. . . . that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in His name to all nations, beginning at Jerusalem. – Luke 24:47
 - d. . . . you shall be witnesses to Me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth. – Acts 1:8

What do we call it – The Baptism of the Holy Spirit – or The Filling of the Holy Spirit?

It’s a matter of semantics. After the start of the Pentecostal Movement in 1906, most non-Pentecostal Christians began to shy away from the term “Baptism of the Holy Spirit” when referring to the filling of the Spirit. This was clearly a reaction to the tongues-talkers.

The important thing is not what you call it. It’s that you get it.

1. What the Filling of the Holy Spirit Is Not

- a. It is not salvation
 - i. The Holy Spirit indwells all Christians beginning the moment of their conversion – Rom. 8:9
 - ii. Believers – who are indwelt by the Holy Spirit – are commanded to be filled with the Spirit – Eph. 5:18
 - iii. Therefore, we understand
 1. All genuine Christians are indwelt with the Holy Spirit
 2. All Christians are commanded to be filled with the Holy Spirit
 3. Some Christians are not filled with the Holy Spirit
 4. Some Christians are filled with the Holy Spirit.
 - iv. The big question is
 1. Have you received the filling of the Holy Spirit? – and –
 2. Are you filled with the Holy Spirit right now?
- b. It is not the baptism by the Spirit into the Body of Christ, which comes at salvation – 1 Cor. 12:13

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- i. At salvation we are baptized **BY** the Holy Spirit **INTO** the Body – 1 Cor. 12:13
 - ii. In the filling of the Spirit we are baptized **BY** Jesus **IN** the Holy Spirit – Luke 3:16; Acts 1:5
 - c. It is not the eradication of the sin nature
 - i. Some people have taught that a person can have an experience after salvation that would bring them to a level where they would never sin again.
 - ii. The Bible says they are deceiving themselves – 1 John 1:8-9
 - d. It is not speaking in tongues
 - i. It is true that some people were given the supernatural power to speak in languages they had not learned when they were filled with the Holy Spirit on the Day of Pentecost – Acts 2:4-11
 - ii. There is no mention of tongues when they were filled on another occasion – Acts 4:31
 - iii. There is not one verse in the Bible that says this is the norm when a person is filled with the Spirit.
 - iv. The notion that speaking in tongues is the “evidence of being filled with the Holy Spirit” as some teach is not true to Scripture
 1. This not taught anywhere in the Bible.
 2. When people spoke in tongues, it was always legitimate foreign languages – Acts 2:4-11
 - a. Languages which they had never learned
 - b. Languages which were understood by people who were present
 3. When people did speak in tongues, it was a sign to unbelievers, not believers – 1 Cor. 14:22
 - a. The unbelievers knew beyond the shadow of a doubt that something amazing was happening
 - b. The unbelievers who did not want to believe had to make up an excuse to justify their unbelief when faced with such clear evidence that God was working through the disciples and was inviting them to come to Christ – Acts 2:12-13
 - c. When it happened on the Day of Pentecost, 3000 people got saved and baptized – Acts 2:41
 - e. It is not spiritual growth
 - i. Spiritual growth is the gradual coming to maturity of the believer
 - ii. There is no such thing as “instant maturity.” It is a process
 - iii. The filling of the Spirit was always an instantaneous experience in the Scriptures. There were no exceptions.
 - iv. We have no Biblical reason to believe that the filling of the Spirit is any different today.
- 2. What the Filling of the Holy Spirit Is**
- a. It is being under the control of the Holy Spirit
 - i. Greek “filled” *πιμπλημι* *pimplemi* – Acts 2:4; 4:8, 31; 9:17; 13:9
 1. Persons to be filled with something, i.e., to be wholly imbued, affected, influenced with or by something, with the gen. of thing as with the Holy Spirit

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2. “To be filled with anything is a phrase denoting that all the faculties are pervaded by it, engaged in it, or under its influence” (*Barnes Notes on the Bible*)
 - ii. Greek “filled” πληρόω *pleróō* - Eph. 5:18; Acts 13:52
 1. To fill, to make full
 2. To fill a vessel or hollow place
 3. Figuratively, to fill, supply abundantly with something, impart richly, imbue with
 - b. Being filled with the Holy Spirit what happens to the believer when he or she yields control of self to the Holy Spirit and invites the Holy Spirit to take full control of life. It often involves an intense struggle with self.
 - i. It initially happens at a point in time – Acts 2:4
 - ii. Once filled, we are commanded to continually be filled – Eph. 5:18
 - iii. Sometimes believers – who have already been filled with the Spirit – need a fresh enduement with power – Acts 4:31
 - c. It is being supernaturally empowered by the Holy Spirit
 - i. Empowered to preach the Gospel in another language, when God desires to give that supernatural ability.
 - ii. Empowered with massive results in their soul winning efforts – Acts 2:41-47
 - iii. Empowered with boldness to speak the Word in the face of dangerous opposition – Acts 4:31
 - d. It is a definite crisis experience in the life of the obedient believer
 - i. Just as salvation is an event in the life of a person, being filled with the Holy Spirit is an event in the life of the believer.
 - ii. A Christian who has not had this event is not filled with the Holy Spirit.

3. How to be Filled with the Holy Spirit

“I firmly believe that the moment our hearts are emptied of pride and selfishness and ambition and self-seeking and every thing that is contrary to God's law, the Holy Ghost will come and fill every corner of our hearts; but if we are full of pride and conceit and ambition and self-seeking and pleasure and the world, there is no room for the Spirit of God; and I believe many a man is praying to God to fill him when he is full already with something else.” – D.L. Moody

- a. Do not tolerate any known sin in your life – 1 John 1:9
 - b. Ask – Luke 11:13
 - c. Believe God for His Power – implied in Luke 11:13
 - d. Wait on God for Power – Luke 24:49
 - e. Evan Roberts, a leader who was used of God in a mighty revival in Wales in the early 1900's used to teach:
 - i. You must put away any unconfessed sin.
 - ii. You must put away any doubtful habit.
 - iii. You must obey the Spirit promptly.
 - iv. You must confess Christ publicly.
- ### 4. How to know you are filled with the Holy Spirit
- a. You will have more power over sin in your life.
 - b. You will have more boldness in witnessing. – Acts 4:31
 - c. You will see people get saved as a result of your witnessing. – Acts 2:41, 47

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The Testimony and Teaching of Great Preachers of the Past

Charles Finney

Charles Finney was one of the most influential evangelists in American history. Some secular historians have said he was one of the most powerful influences on American culture in the 19th Century. Finney testified,

I was powerfully converted on the morning of the 10th of October, 1821. In the evening of the same day I received overwhelming baptisms of the Holy Ghost, that went through me, as it seemed to me, body and soul. I immediately found myself endued with such power from on high that a few words dropped here and there to individuals were the means of their immediate conversion. My words seemed to fasten like barbed arrows in the souls of men. They cut like a sword. . .

D.L. Moody

D.L. Moody was the greatest American evangelist of the latter 19th Century. Hundreds of thousands of people were saved under his ministry. He wrote:

Dr. R.A. Torrey presented a message on *Why God Used D.L. Moody*. In that message, he named seven qualities that Mr. Moody had that God used. He said:

The seventh thing that was the secret of why God used D.D. Moody was that, *he had a very definite endowment with power from on high, a very clear and definite baptism with the Holy Ghost*. Mr. Moody knew he had the “baptism with the Holy Ghost”; he had no doubt about it.

R.A. Torrey

R.A. Torrey was a Biblical scholar as well as a powerful evangelist. He worked closely with D.L. Moody for a number of years before coming to Los Angeles to serve as pastor of the Church of the Open Door (now in Glendora, CA) and found the Bible Institute of Los Angeles (now Biola University in La Mirada, CA).

R.A. Torrey testified that he had been in the ministry for some time before he became convinced that he needed to be filled with the Holy Spirit. In his book, *The Holy Spirit: who He Is, and What He Does*, pp. 107-08, he stated:

As I studied the subject still further, I became convinced that they described an experience which I myself did not possess, and I went to work to secure for myself the experience thus described. I sought earnestly that I might ‘be baptized in the Holy Spirit.’ . . . And the result was a transformed Christian life and a transformed ministry.

Billy Sunday

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Billy Sunday was one of the greatest evangelists of the 20th Century. Over 1 million souls were converted under his ministry.

Every time Billy Sunday preached he opened his Bible to one text of Scripture that declares, ‘The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me, because the Lord hath anointed me to preach .. .’, laid his sermon notes upon that scripture and preached with the fire and power of God! (Quoted in *How Great Soul Winners Were Filled With the Holy Spirit*, John R. Rice, p. 14)

Homer Rodehaver, Billy Sunday’s song leader, said that that page in the Book of Isaiah in his Bible was almost worn out.

Charles Spurgeon

Charles Spurgeon was one of the most influential preachers in the history of England. He is sometimes called the Prince of Preachers, and many people say that he was the greatest preacher to ever preach in English. The auditorium of his church seated several thousand. It is said that there isn’t a seat in that auditorium where somebody didn’t get saved under Spurgeon’s preaching. He wrote:

Remember, the Holy Spirit will not come to us as a church, unless we seek Him. ‘For this thing will I be enquired of by the house of Israel to do it for them.’ ‘Prove me now here, saith the Lord of hosts, and see if I do not pour you out a blessing so that there shall not be room to receive it.’ Let us meet and pray, and if God doth not hear us, it will be the first time He has broken His promise.

None of these great men of God spoke in tongues. None of them believed in the Pentecostal or Charismatic movement. They just sought God for His power, and He gave it to them through the filling of the Holy Spirit.