

ADVANCED BIBLICAL COURSE



A | D | V | A | N | C | E | D
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The Doctrine of the Holy Spirit

INTRODUCTION

In spite of a great deal of emphasis being placed on the Holy Spirit in recent years, in particular on His power and gifts, He remains to be the least understood Person of the Godhead. A proper understanding of who is the Holy Spirit is both essential and basic to many doctrines of Scripture and facets of the Christian life.

The Holy Spirit is perceived by many as being merely an influence or a force. Some believe “Holy Spirit” to be just another name for God. The terms used concerning the Holy Spirit imply a vagueness of thought (understanding) and a lack of appreciation of the unique blessings to be derived from our Lord’s gift of His Spirit. Part of the reason why many people seem to have a rather vague idea of who the Holy Spirit is can be explained by the difficulty of forming a mental picture of Him.

Among the reasons for this is that we have less explicit revelation in the Bible regarding the Holy Spirit, as compared to what we find about either the Father or the Son. Perhaps this is due in part to the fact that a large share of the Holy Spirit’s ministry is to declare and glorify the Son. (John 16:14)

I THE MEANING OF “SPIRIT”

The Hebrew word translated “spirit” is ruach. The Greek word translated “spirit” is pneuma. Both words are used prolifically in the Bible – ruach 378 times and pneuma 379 times. Both have a similar meaning: Breath, wind, or spirit. In John 3:8, the English words “wind” and “spirit” are both translations of pneuma. Both words convey the idea of “air in motion” – “breath,” “wind,” “breeze,” “blowing,” or “spirit.” “...*The Spirit of God was hovering over the waters.*” (Genesis 1:2) “*Hovering*” is also used in Deuteronomy 32:11 to describe an eagle soaring over a nest and spreading its wings to protect and carry its young. It denotes controlled, but powerful, movement.

Both the Hebrew and Greek words show us that the Holy Spirit is vibrant, active and alive. There also is unpredictability about Him. As Jesus put it, He is like the wind, whose origin, destination and direction are not easily determined but whose power is very plain and real. (John 3:8)

II THE PERSONALITY OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

The Holy Spirit is not an impersonal force. This point is especially important at a time in which pantheistic tendencies are entering our culture through the influence of Eastern religions.

The Bible makes clear in several ways that the Holy Spirit is a Person and possesses all the qualities implied.

- ◆ The use of the masculine pronoun

It has sometimes been argued that the Holy Spirit is neuter or inanimate because the gender of the Greek word ‘pneuma’ is neuter. However, although the noun ‘pneuma’ is neuter, Jesus uses the masculine name of Counsellor (parakletos) when talking of the Spirit (John 14:16 & 26). He also employs specific masculine personal pronouns where grammatically neuter pronouns would be expected (John 14:26, 15:26 & 16:13-14). Jesus does not say, “*It will teach you...*” but “*He will teach you...*”

There is no question about the fact that Jesus thought of the Holy Spirit as a Person.

- ◆ The use of the name “*comforter*”

John 14:16, 26 – Jesus uses the word “*another comforter.*”

There are two Greek words translated into English as “*another*”: -

- “Allos” – another of the same kind/one more of the same kind.
- “Heteros” – another of a different kind.

Jesus used “allos” (John 14:16) meaning that the Holy Spirit is another of the same kind/one more of the same kind. The Holy Spirit is of the same kind as Jesus – which implies (when taken in the context of the rest of Scripture) that He is Person and also God.

The Greek word for “*comforter*” is “parakletos” and means “one called to the side of another.”

A parakletos might be: -

- A person called in to give witness in a court of Law in someone's favour.
- A person called in to plead the cause of someone under charge. (1 John 2:1)
- Someone called in to put new courage into a company of soldiers who are depressed and dispirited.
- Someone called in to help carry a heavy load.

Parakletos was exclusively applied to persons and conveys the idea of someone called in or alongside in order to help (assist) one in need.

◆ The characteristics of personality

There are three basic elements in personality. These are the mind (knowledge and intelligence), emotions (feelings) and volition (will). A person (personal being) must possess these three characteristics. It can be clearly shown from Scripture that these three elements are present in the actions of the Holy Spirit.

- **Intelligence (mind, knowing)**
 - There are many references to the Spirit's knowing.
 - He is called the Spirit of wisdom, understanding and knowledge. (Isaiah 11:2)
 - The first two gifts of the Spirit are words of wisdom and knowledge. (1 Corinthians 12:8)
 - He searches the heart. (Romans 8:27)
 - He is intelligent. (1 Corinthians 2:10-11)
 - He decides. (1 Corinthians 12:11)
 - He teaches. (Luke 12:12 & John 14:26)
 - He guides. (John 16:13)
 - He knows. (1 Corinthians 2:11)
 - The story of Ananias and Sapphira clearly illustrates not only that the Holy Spirit knows, but also that He knows what people normally don't know. (Acts 5:1 ff)
- **Emotions (feelings)**
 - The Holy Spirit can be grieved (Ephesians 4:30) and insulted (Hebrews 10:29).
 - Love is a special quality of the Spirit. It develops as the result of the Spirit's presence (Galatians 5:22) and is poured out into our lives by the Spirit (Romans 5:5).
- **Volition (will)**
 - The Holy Spirit is sovereign. What He wills He does and performs.
 - He chooses what gifts He bestows "*just as He determines.*" (1 Corinthians 12:11)
 - He controls the life submitted to Him. (Romans 8:9)

- He decides that Paul and Barnabas should be sent out in missionary endeavour (Acts 13:2) and later leads them to Phrygia, having prevented them from ministering in Asia (Acts 16:6). He also forbids them from going to Mysia (Acts 16:7).
- The Holy Spirit oversaw the writing, gathering and compilation of the Scriptures. (2 Peter 1:21)

Furthermore the Holy Spirit performs miracles (Acts 8:39), prays for us (Romans 8:26) and speaks to us (Revelation 2:7).

A basic attribute of personality is language. In biological terms, this is the one thing that distinguishes humans from animals. Our ability to communicate rationally is a key factor in enabling us to fulfil the Genesis mandate to exercise mastery over the earth.

The many biblical references to the Holy Spirit speaking, teaching, leading, guiding and the like are further clear evidence of His personhood.

◆ Relationship with other persons

The Holy Spirit's name is used in juxtaposition with the names of the Father and the Son. (Matthew 28:19 & 2 Corinthians 13:14) The baptismal formula does not refer to two persons and one "thing" but to three persons.

The Spirit relates to people, as another person would do. He can be lied to (Acts 5:3), blasphemed (Matthew 12:31), grieved (Ephesians 4:30), insulted (Hebrews 10:29) and resisted (Acts 7:51). The use of this terminology would make no sense if the Spirit were not a Person.

◆ The use of non-personal terms

The question may be asked "But what about those places where the Spirit is spoken of in non-personal terms – as being poured out (Acts 2:33) or given as a gift (Acts 2:38)?"

People are said to be "baptised" in the Spirit. (Acts 1:5) The Spirit can be quenched. (1 Thessalonians 5:19) Other symbols used of the Spirit are not suggestive of personality e.g. oil, fire, wind, etc.

It is clear that in these cases the statements are metaphorical. They are of the same kind as the phrases Jesus used when He described Himself as bread, light, gate or a road. (John 6:35, 8:12, 10:17 & 14:6)

Similarly, Paul wrote of being poured out. (2 Timothy 4:6) Sometimes we speak of someone in terms of a particular person being a gift to us, or of someone being crushed/shattered.

III THE DEITY OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

The “proof” of the personality of the Spirit does not, of course, include the proof that He is God. The reverse is true, however, for if He is God He must also be a person as God is. The denial of deity and personality usually go together, though some believe He is a person without believing that He is divine. In Acts 5:3-4 the Holy Spirit is called God.

◆ He possesses divine attributes

- He is omnipresent. (Psalm 139:7-10)
- He is omniscient. (John 14:26 & 16:12 & 13 & 1Corinthians 2:10-12)
- He is omnipotent. (Job 33:4; Luke 1:35 & Acts 1:8)
- He is eternal. (Hebrews 9:14)

◆ He does divine works

Certain works, which only God can do and which the Holy Spirit does, show that He must be God: -

- Creation. (Job 33:4 & Psalm 104:30)
- Caused Mary to conceive. (Luke 1:35)
- Regeneration. (John 3:5-6)
- Imparts life. (John 6:63)
- Inspires prophecy. (2 Peter 1:21)

◆ He is associated on an equal plane with the Father and the Son

Evidence for the equal association of the Holy Spirit with the Father and the Son is seen in the baptismal formula prescribed in the Great Commission. (Matthew 28:19)

The Pauline benediction in 2 Corinthians 13:14 is further evidence and Peter also sees Father, Son and Holy Spirit to be on an equal plane of deity. (1 Peter 1:2)

In passages where the Old Testament records that Yahweh said something and the New Testament quotation of that same passage is attributed to the Spirit as the Speaker, it is seen that the Holy Spirit is equal to the Father. (Isaiah 6:1-13; Acts 28:25-27; Jeremiah 31:31-34 & Hebrews 10:15-17)

Jesus speaks of an “*unpardonable sin,*” which consists of dishonouring, and blasphemy spoken against, the Holy Spirit. It is asserted that this is an even worse form of blasphemy than “*blasphemy against the Son of man,*” a strong evidence that it is regarded as the act of discrediting a divine Person. (Matthew 12:31-32 & Acts 5:3-4)

The New Testament references to the Spirit would be equally befitting of the other Persons of the Trinity. For example, He is the source of enlightenment, the teacher, the sanctifier and the object of worship. The Christian's body is described as a “*temple*” for the Spirit. (1 Corinthians 6:19)

◆ He is distinct from the Father and the Son

Could the name “*Holy Spirit*” be just another name for the Father or the Son?

The answer is no because: -

- The three persons are referred to together. (Matthew 28:19 & 2 Corinthians 13:14)
- The Son prays to the Father to send the Spirit. (John 14:16)
- The Father and Son together send the Spirit. (John 14:26 & 15:26)

The Holy Spirit is God in the same fashion and to the same degree as is the Father and the Son. He is distinct from the Father and the Son but is in no way inferior to either the Father or the Son. He is God – the Third Person of the Trinity, equal to the Father and the Son in every respect.

IV IMPLICATIONS OF THE PERSONALITY AND DEITY OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

A correct understanding of who and what the Holy Spirit is carries certain implications: -

- ◆ The Holy Spirit is a person, not a vague force. Thus, he is someone with whom we can have a personal relationship, someone to whom we can and should pray.
- ◆ The Holy Spirit, being fully divine, is to be accorded the same honour and respect that we give to the Father and the Son. It is appropriate to worship God – Father, Son and Holy Spirit. He should not be thought of as in any sense inferior in essence to them, although his role may sometimes be subordinated to theirs.

- ◆ The Holy Spirit is one with the Father and the Son; His work is the expression and execution of what the three of them have planned together. There is no tension among their persons and activities.
- ◆ God is not far off. In the Holy Spirit, the Triune God comes close, so close as to actually enter into each believer: He is even more intimate with us now than in the incarnation. Through the operation of the Spirit he has truly become Immanuel, “God with us” – Christian Theology, M.J. Erickson P 862.

V THE WORK OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

The work of the Holy Spirit is of special interest to Christians for it is particularly through this work that God is personally involved and active in the life of the believer.

- ◆ The work of the Holy Spirit in the old testament

It is often difficult to identify the Holy Spirit within the Old Testament, for it reflects the earliest stages of progressive revelation. In fact, the term “*Holy Spirit*” is rarely employed in the Old Testament. The usual expression is “*the Spirit of God*” and this term is synonymous with the Holy Spirit.

- **His work in creation**

In the creation account we find a reference to the presence and activity of the Spirit of God. (Genesis 1:2) God's continued working with the creation is attributed to the Holy Spirit. (Job 26:13) God gave man the gift of life by His Spirit. The maintenance and renewal of all life is through the Spirit of God. (Job 33:4 & Psalm 104:29-30)

- **His work in revelation**

One of the greatest wonders of all time is the remarkable way in which God revealed Himself to His prize creation – man. The chief human instrument that God used to give His message to man was the prophet, but behind the prophet was the Holy Spirit moving and guiding so that the writer communicated exactly what God wanted man to know.

The Old Testament prophets testified that their speaking and writing were a result of the Spirit's coming upon them. (Ezekiel 2:2 & 11:24; Numbers 24:2 & 1 Samuel 10:10)

Peter confirmed the testimony of the prophets regarding their experience: “*no prophecy was ever made by an act of human will, but men moved by the Holy Spirit spoke from God.*” (2 Peter 1:21)

The book of Acts gives witness that the Holy Spirit spoke by the mouth of David. (Acts 1:16 & 4:25) Since the Holy Spirit produced the Scriptures, they can be referred to as “God-breathed.” (Theopneustos - 2 Timothy 3:16)

- **His work in enabling and indwelling people**

- These men received wisdom, authority, and gifts for leadership from, and were indwelt by, the Holy Spirit: -
 - Joseph (Genesis 41:38-39)
 - Joshua (Numbers 27:18)
 - Saul (1Samuel 10:6)
 - David (1 Samuel 16:13)
- These men are enabled and indwelt by Holy Spirit at the following: -
 - Othniel (Judges 3:9-10) had the ability to judge wisely.
 - Gideon (Judges 6:34) was endowed with military might and ability.
 - Samson (Judges 13:25, 14:6 & 15:14) was granted physical strength.
 - Bezalel (Exodus 31:1-7) received understanding, knowledge and craftsmanship.

There is within the Old Testament witness to the Spirit in anticipation of a coming time when the ministry of the Spirit is to be more complete. Part of this relates to the coming Messiah, upon whom the Spirit is to rest in an unusual degree and fashion. (Isaiah 11:1-5, 42:1-4 & 61:1-3) Jesus quotes the opening verses of Isaiah 61 and indicates that they are now being fulfilled in Him. (Luke 4:18-21) There is a more generalised promise, however; one which is not restricted to the Messiah. (Joel 2:28-29) At Pentecost Peter quoted this prophecy, indicating that it had now been fulfilled.

◆ The work of the Holy Spirit in the life of Jesus

When we examine Jesus' life, we find a pervasive and powerful presence and activity of the Spirit throughout.

- Jesus was conceived by the Spirit. (Luke 1:35 & Matthew 1:18, 20)
- The Spirit is present in dramatic form from the very beginning of Jesus' public ministry. (Matthew 3:16; Mark 1:10; Luke 3:22 & John 1:32)
- Jesus was led and guided by the Holy Spirit. (Matthew 4:1 & Luke 4:1-2)

- He was empowered by the Spirit to do miracles and drive out demons. (Matthew 12:25-32)
- Jesus preached in the power of the Spirit. (Luke 4:18)
- He rejoiced in the Holy Spirit. (Luke 10:21)

There is no aspect of Jesus' life or His ministry that was conducted apart from the anointing and help of the Holy Spirit.

◆ The work of the Holy Spirit in the life of the believer

- **The Holy Spirit convicts** the individual of his true state before God and places the truth of the Gospel in a clear light. (John 16:7-11)
- **He regenerates.** Regeneration is the miraculous transformation of the individual and implantation of spiritual energy. It is God's supernatural act of imparting eternal life. (Titus 3:5) The Holy Spirit is the One who brings about this "new birth." (John 3:3-8)
- **He lives in us.** (Romans 8:9) He comforts, teaches, reminds, helps and guides those He indwells. (John 14:13-18 & 26 & Romans 8:14)
- **We are sealed** by the indwelling Holy Spirit. (Ephesians 1:13-14 & 4:30)
- **He baptises** us into the Body of Christ. (1 Corinthians 12:13)
- **He sanctifies** us. By sanctification is meant the continued transformation of moral and spiritual character so that the life of the believer actually comes to mirror the standing, which he/she already has in God's sight. (Romans 15:16; 2 Thessalonians 2:13 & Titus 3:5)
- **He bears witness** to the fact that we are the children of God. (Romans 8:16)
- **He enables** the believer to: -
 - be victorious over the old nature. (Romans 8: 2 & 13)
 - overcome our weaknesses. (Romans 8:26)
 - worship God. (Ephesians 5:18-20 & Philippians 3:3)
- **He empowers** the children of God. (Acts 1:8)
- **He strengthens** us. (Romans 8:11 & Ephesians 3:16)
- **He bestows gifts.** (1Corinthians 12:8-11)

VI THE BAPTISM AND FULLNESS OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

The Christian life is life in the Spirit. Every Christian believer has an experience of the Holy Spirit from the very first moments of his Christian life. The Christian life begins with a new birth and the new birth is a birth "*of the Spirit.*" (John 3:3-8) He is "*the Spirit of life,*" and it is He who imparts

life to our dead souls. More than this, He, Himself comes to dwell within. The indwelling of the Holy Spirit is the common possession of all God's children. (1 Corinthians 6:19-20) It is impossible to have the Spirit without being a child of God or to be a child of God without having the Holy Spirit. (Romans 8:9, 11, 15 & 16 & Galatians 4:6) Most Christians are agreed on this. But when the question “Is this promised ‘gift’ of the Spirit the same as the ‘baptism’ of the Spirit?” is asked, convictions differ.

VII THE BAPTISM OF THE SPIRIT

There are seven direct references to the baptism with the Spirit in the New Testament: Matthew 3:11; Mark 1:8; Luke 3:16; John 1:33; Acts 1:5 & 11:16 and 1 Corinthians 12:13.

The term “Baptism of the Spirit” is an exclusively New Testament expression. It is however a fulfilment of the Old Testament expectation. This expectation was usually expressed in terms of God's promise to “*pour out*” His Spirit. (Isaiah 32:15 & 44:3-5 & Joel 2:28-31)

John the Baptist, the last prophet of the old order, summarised this expectation in his familiar saying which ascribed the outpouring of the Spirit to the Messiah Himself: “*I have baptised with water, but He will baptise you with the Holy Spirit.*” (Mark 1:8)

From the Old Testament prophecies and the statement by John the Baptist, it becomes evident that the “*outpouring*” of God's Spirit is a promise of distinctive blessing, which inaugurates the age of the Spirit. This baptism of God's Spirit is a universal blessing. It will be available to all, not only a select few. It is the birthright of all God's children and will be accompanied by supernatural manifestations.

◆ The day of Pentecost

In Acts 1:5-8 Jesus tells the disciples to wait for the baptism with the Holy Spirit. As a result of the Spirit coming upon them they would receive power to be witnesses for Him. Two distinct groups of people experienced the fulfilment of this promise on the day of Pentecost (Acts 2) and it seems to have differed in each case.

The first group, comprising the 120 in the Upper Room, were believers already. For them the promise of the Holy Spirit's baptism and outpouring became a reality on this day. (Acts 2:1-4) These people were baptised and filled with the Holy Spirit at the same time,

although subsequent to their “conversion.” This does not imply, however, that this pattern is to be the norm for today as shall be seen. The fact that their experience was in two distinct stages was due simply to historical circumstances. They could not have received the Pentecostal gift before Pentecost. Their experience was accompanied by the manifestation of Tongues.

The second group were the 3000 who heard Peter's message and were convicted of their sin. They were told to “*repent and let each one of you be baptised in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit...*” (Acts 2:38) “*So then those who had received his word were baptised...*” (Acts 2:41) Although we are not specifically told that they received the remission of sins and the gift of the Spirit, it is strongly presumed that they did. This is not an argument from silence but is based on the unequivocal promise of Peter that they would receive these gifts if they repented, believed and were baptised. Since they thus fulfilled the conditions (verse 41), God must have fulfilled His promise and they were born again and baptised with the Holy Spirit. This second group do not seem to have experienced the same miraculous phenomena or manifestations as the 120 (the rushing mighty wind and the tongues of fire) At least nothing is said about these things.

The 120 were regenerated already and received the baptism of the Spirit only after waiting upon God for ten days. The 3000 on the other hand were unbelievers who when having repented, received the forgiveness of their sins and the gift of the Spirit simultaneously – and it happened immediately. They repented and believed, without any need to wait. “Baptism and Fullness” – John Stott, page 29.

It must be noted that the Promise of the Father is not optional and is essential in order to be effective witnesses. There are two passages of Scripture in the Acts of the Apostles in which we meet people who appear to have become Christians without receiving the Holy Spirit. But a closer look at these passages will soon show that there is something unusual – something irregular – about both situations.

◆ The Samaritan believers – Acts 8:5-17 (no mention of tongues)

Philip the evangelist preached the gospel in Samaria resulting in many having believed and being baptised. That they were soundly born again is proved by the fact that they were immediately baptised. No indication is given that their response was not genuine (Simon, the magician was the only exception).

The first sign that there is something unusual about this incident is that “*when the apostles at Jerusalem heard that Samaria had received the word of God, they sent them Peter and John.*” (verse 14) There is no evidence that on any other occasion evangelistic work had to be inspected or vetted by two apostles. Why, then, did God withhold His Holy Spirit (or perhaps the manifestations of the Holy Spirit?) on this unique occasion? Some are of the opinion that these Samaritans were not yet born-again. Some use this incident to “prove” that the baptism in the Spirit must (and can only be) an experience subsequent to conversion. This is however not the norm. The most probable answer lies in the fact that these converts were Samaritans.

For centuries there had been bitter rivalry between Jews and Samaritans. The Jews had no dealings with Samaritans. (John 4:9) But now not only had a Jew preached to Samaritans, but Samaritans had accepted the Jews' message. The question was whether these Samaritans would now be acceptable to the Jewish believers or not. Or would the ancient-Jewish Samaritan schism survive in the church. In order for Jews to accept the Samaritan's experience they would have to be present as “witnesses.”

“If the Holy Spirit had been given immediately upon profession of faith and baptism by the Samaritans this ancient schism might have continued and there would have been two churches, out of fellowship with each other. Acts 15 shows how carefully a decisive split between Jewish and Gentile Christianity was avoided by the early Christians. Acts 8 seems to stress that a similarly disastrous split was avoided at Samaria. God did not give his Holy Spirit (or, perhaps, the supernatural manifestations of the Spirit in tongues and prophecy?) to the Samaritans immediately: not until representatives from Jerusalem came down and expressed their solidarity with the converts by praying for them and laying their hands on them. Then they received the Holy Spirit; indeed, the use of the imperfect tense, “*elambonon,*” may be significant; they received repeated manifestations of the Holy Spirit. It was not so much an authorisation from Jerusalem or an extension of the Jerusalem church, as a divine veto on schism in the infant Church, a schism which could have slipped away almost unnoticed into the Christian fellowship, as converts from the two sides of the “Samaritan curtain” found Christ without finding each other. That would have been the denial of the one baptism and all it stood for. It was for this reason, I believe, that God made delay on this occasion. Acts 8 is recorded precisely to show the abnormality of a baptism, which does not lead to reception of the Holy Spirit. This passage (and the rest of

the New Testament states explicitly) implies the two belong together.” “I believe in the Holy Spirit.” – Michael Green.

◆ The Ephesian disciples – Acts 19:1-7 (accompanied by tongues and prophecies)

In this story it is evident that these people had not yet been born again. Paul asked them if they had received the Holy Spirit when they believed to which they replied, “No, we have not even heard whether there is a Holy Spirit.” He immediately questioned them about their conversion, which he put right and to which they readily responded. Having heard the Gospel and having put their faith in Jesus Christ, he baptised them (verse 5) and laid his hands on them, with the result that “the Holy Spirit came on them” with accompanying signs (tongues and prophecy) as visible and audible evidence.

◆ Paul's conversion – Acts 9:1-19 (no mention of accompanying signs such as tongues)

It would be very precarious to found a doctrine of two-stage initiation on the three-day delay in Paul's conversion experience.

After Paul's conversion on the Damascus Road, God sent Ananias to him to pray for the restoration of his sight and for him to be filled with the Spirit. There is no doubt that Paul did receive the Promise of the Holy Spirit at this point because of the evidence in the verses which follow, showing that he was definitely empowered to serve the Lord.

However, there was no specific manifestation at this point. We cannot of course argue from silence, but the whole passage seems to be carefully detailed (the scales falling from his eyes, taking food and being strengthened). It is therefore to be expected that such an important matter as some manifestation of the Spirit would also have been recorded.

It seems possible, therefore, to receive the Holy Spirit or the Promise of the Father without any noticeable manifestation. We do know however that Paul did speak in tongues later on. It is not the manifestations or the experience that are of primary importance but the receiving of the Promise of the Father by faith.

◆ Cornelius – Acts 10:44-48 (manifestation of tongues evident)

Here we have the story of Peter preaching the Gospel to the Gentiles in the house of Cornelius. It was the Holy Spirit Who "fell upon all those who were listening to the message" which appears to be in fulfilment of Joel's prophecy. The manifestation of “*tongues and exalting God*” is evident (verse 46).

Evidence from Scripture indicates that the “baptism” of the Spirit and the “gift” of the Spirit are identical. It is that which takes place when a person responds positively to the gospel message (Acts 2:38 ff). The repentant sinner is baptised into the realm of the Spirit and receives the gift of the Spirit. The Lord Jesus, the Mediator of the New Covenant and the Bestower of its blessings, gives both the forgiveness of sins and the gift of the Spirit to all who enter His covenant.

All Christians are described in the letter to the Hebrews as being “*partakers of the Holy Spirit,*” who have “*tasted the good word of God the powers of the age to come.*” (Hebrews 6:4-5)

After this initial conversion and “baptism” experience, believers are to continue to be filled with the Spirit and manifest this fullness in holiness of life and boldness of testimony. The emphasis of the New Testament is not to urge Christians to seek some entirely new and distinct (or subsequent) blessing (or blessings), but to remind us of what by grace we are and to urge us to live by it.

It cannot be maintained from Scripture that “tongues” always follow the reception of the Spirit. Of all the groups who received the Spirit in the book of Acts only three are said to have “*spoken in tongues.*” (Acts 2:1-4, 10:44-46 & 19:1-16) Since the other people and groups who received the Spirit are not said to have spoken in tongues, it would be arbitrary to assert that they did.

I do, however, believe that the gift of tongues is a gift to be sincerely desired by every believer. More on this when I deal with the “Gifts of the Spirit.”

VIII THE FULLNESS OF THE SPIRIT

“Baptism of the Spirit” refers to an initial once-for-all gift. When speaking of the “*fullness of the Spirit*” we acknowledge that this gift needs to be continuously and increasingly appropriated.

The fullness of the Spirit is the consequence of the baptism of the Spirit (Acts 2:4). John Stott says that the baptism is what Jesus did (pouring out the Spirit); the fullness is what the people experienced. The fullness is intended to be continuous, the permanent result of the Baptism of the Spirit.

The New Testament texts, which speak of “*being filled with the Spirit,*” imply that it is to be a normal characteristic of every dedicated Christian. It is given for the purpose of service (witness-bearing). (Acts 1:5, 4:8 & 31, 6:3-5, 11:24 & 13:52 & Luke 1:15-17, 41 & 67)

In addition to these varied descriptions of people being filled with the Spirit, either as a constant experience or for a specific purpose, Ephesians 5:18 contains the well-known command to all Christian people to be filled with the Spirit.

There are no similar statements or injunctions in the New Testament about the baptism of the Spirit.

EPHESIANS 5:18

◆ It is a Command.

Paul uses a two-fold command, “*do not get drunk with wine... but be filled with the Spirit.*” The two verbs are in the imperative - commanding Christians to be filled with the Spirit so that they may fulfil their light-bearing function in society. To be filled with the Spirit is not optional and is vital in order to be effective in mission. To be filled with the Spirit means to allow Jesus to have the fullest control in our lives that we are conscious of.

◆ Continuous appropriation

The verb is in the present continuous tense which means that we are to be continuously filled with the Spirit.

◆ It is for **all** Believers

The verb is in the plural form. The fullness of the Holy Spirit is to be the continual state of all Christians. No one is exempt or excluded. It is not only for the “elite.”

◆ Be filled

The passive use of the verb implies that we cannot fill ourselves but that we are to be filled. We are to allow Jesus to fill us with the Holy Spirit.

In order to be obedient to the command to be filled with the Spirit we are to come to the Saviour in faith and drink and drink and drink. (John 7:37-39) We are to yield to the Spirit's control, submit to His direction, surrender to His will and be totally influenced, motivated and empowered by Him.