

The Spirit-Filled Christian

Bill Fallon – free@FreeGraceResources.org
Please see <http://www.FreeGraceResources.org>

An error that prevails today in Christian circles is the confusion between the meaning of the “*filling of the Spirit*” and the “*baptism of the Spirit*.” They are not the same. “Filling,” when referring to the Holy Spirit means “to be influenced or controlled by.” (Similar to the term “walk” in the Spirit, Gal. 5:25, which means “to be in line with, to agree with.” The word “baptism” means to “dip, immerse, overwhelm, with the inference of washing or cleansing.” (See Mark 7:4; “baptized” cups, pots, etc.).

The Bible also tells us that believers are indwelt by the Spirit (I Cor 6:19, 2:12, Rom. 8:9b) The Holy Spirit dwelling in us does not necessarily mean that He is filling or controlling us. Much of the New Testament exhorts us to do just that. (There are several other words that are translated “filled” in the New Testament but they have different meanings, such as being “filled,” meaning “satisfied,” with food or a basket being “filled,” meaning “overflowing”).

We sometimes assume that we are to seek the Baptism in the Spirit because it is urged on us from Bible teachers. Doctrine from well-meaning and sincere people may not always be correct. We must always judge our doctrine and our experience by God’s word. *The Bible nowhere tells us to be baptized by, in, or with, the Spirit.* There are only seven verses that speak of the baptism of the Spirit (Matt. 3:11; Mark 1:8; Luke 3:16; John 1:33; Acts 1:5; Acts 11:16; I Cor. 12:13). These are all in the indicative mood (informational) not imperative (commands). The reason that we are not told to be baptized with the Holy Spirit is that when we trust Jesus, God himself handles that process along with a number of others (see paragraph “What God Does”). This is not an experience that we must seek. It has already happened (I Cor. 12:13; “*For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free; and have been all made to drink into one Spirit*”).

In Acts, chapter two (the birthday of the Church, a historical event that cannot be repeated), we find the baptism and the filling of the Spirit occurring synonymously. Now, during the church age, we are indwelt and baptized by the Holy Spirit at the time of our salvation (I Cor. 3:16; 6:19, 20). Being filled or controlled by the Spirit is dependent upon our yieldedness or obedience to Him. We must act on God’s commands. That is why we are exhorted to continuously be filled with the Spirit. The following are commands to the believer directly concerning the Holy Spirit:

Gal. 5:16, *This I say then, Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh.*

Gal. 5:25, *If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit.*

Eph. 4:30, *And grieve not the Holy Spirit of God, whereby ye were sealed until the day of redemption.*

Eph. 5:18, *And be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess; but be filled with the Spirit;*

I Thess. 5:19. *Quench not the Spirit.*

These all have to do with being yielded to or obedient to God’s Holy Spirit. His commands are found in His Word. The believer who obeys the Holy Spirit is a Spirit-controlled or Spirit-filled person. Let us now confess our sins for forgiveness (I John 1:9) and get on with a Spirit-controlled and joy-filled life (Rom. 6:16; Gal. 5:22, 23).

What God Does

When we trust Jesus we are: sealed by the Holy Spirit, Eph. 4:13; born again (Lit. from above), John 3:1-5,16; children of God, Gal. 3:26; reconciled to Him, II Cor. 5:18, Rom. 5:10; redeemed and are forgiven, Col. 1:14; sanctified and perfected forever, Heb. 10:10,14; given access to God, the Father, Eph. 2:18, Heb. 4:16; assured of a place in heaven, reserved for us, I Pet. 1:4,5; indwelt by the Holy Spirit, I Cor 6:19, 2:12, Rom. 8:9b, and by His grace, much more.

Spirit Baptism Verses

Matt. 3:11. “*...he shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost and with fire.*”

Mark 1:8. “*I indeed have baptized you with water, but he shall baptize you with fire.*”

Luke 3:16. “*...he shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost and with fire.*”

John 1:33. “*...upon whom thou shalt see the Spirit descending, and remaining on him, the same is he which baptizeth with the Holy Ghost.*”

Acts 1:5. “*...but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost not many days hence*”

Acts 11:16. “*Then remembered I the word of the Lord, how that he said John indeed baptized with water; but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost.*”

The first five verses are all prophecies given before the beginning of the Church telling of Jesus, who, sometime in the future, would baptize in or by means of His Holy Spirit. The sixth verse is Peter’s reiteration of the what Jesus had told them just before Pentecost (Acts:1:5).

I Cor.12:13; “*For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free; and have been all made to drink into one Spirit.*”

This verse was written close to thirty years after the birth of the Church and states what has already occurred. “Baptized” here is in the “aorist” or simple past tense. It causes much confusion and spiritual damage to encourage a believer to earnestly seek something which he already has.

