
Doctrine Class

Baptism in and Filling with the Holy Spirit

Defining Terms:

Pentecostal refers to any denomination or group that traces its historical origin back to the Pentecostal revival that began in the United States in 1901 and that holds to the doctrinal positions (a) that baptism in the Holy Spirit is ordinarily an event subsequent to conversion, and (b) that baptism in the Holy Spirit is made evident by the sign of speaking in tongues, and (c) that all the spiritual gifts mentioned in the New Testament are to be sought and used today. Pentecostal groups usually have their own distinct denominational structures, the most prominent of which is the Assemblies of God. -- Wayne Grudem

Charismatic refers to any groups (or people) that trace their historical origin to the charismatic renewal movement of the 1960s and 1970s, seek to practice all the spiritual gifts mentioned in the New Testament (including prophecy, healing, miracles, tongues, interpretation, and distinguishing between spirits), and allow differing viewpoints on whether baptism in the Holy Spirit is subsequent to conversion and whether tongues is a sign of baptism in the Holy Spirit. Charismatics will very often refrain from forming their own denomination, but will view themselves as a force for renewal within existing Protestant and Roman Catholic churches. There is no representative charismatic denomination in the United States today, but the most prominent charismatic spokesman is probably Pat Robertson with his Christian Broadcasting Network, the television program "The 700 Club," and Regent University (formerly CBN University). -- Wayne Grudem

In the 1980s yet a third renewal movement arose, called the "third wave" by missions professor C. Peter Wagner at Fuller Seminary (he referred to the Pentecostal renewal as the first wave of the Holy Spirit's renewing work in the modern church, and the charismatic movement as the second wave). "Third wave" people encourage the equipping of all believers to use New Testament spiritual gifts today, and say that the proclamation of the gospel should ordinarily be accompanied by "signs, wonders, and miracles," according to the New Testament pattern. They teach, however, that baptism in the Holy Spirit happens to all Christians at conversion, and that subsequent experiences are better called "filling" with the Holy Spirit. The most prominent representative of the "third wave" is John Wimber, senior pastor of the Vineyard Christian Fellowship in Anaheim, California, and leader of the Association of Vineyard Churches. Wimber's two most influential books, *Power Evangelism* (San Francisco: Harper and Row, 1986; rev. ed., 1992) and *Power Healing* (San Francisco: Harper and Row, 1987), both co-authored by Kevin Springer, are widely recognized as representative of distinctive "third wave" emphases. -- Wayne Grudem



What is the traditional Pentecostal or charismatic position regarding the baptism in the Holy Spirit?

Seven NT Passages

1. **Matthew 3:11 ESV**
11 “I baptize you with water for repentance, but he who is coming after me is mightier than I, whose sandals I am not worthy to carry. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire.
2. **Mark 1:8 ESV**
8 I have baptized you with water, but he will baptize you with the Holy Spirit.”
3. **Luke 3:16 ESV**
16 John answered them all, saying, “I baptize you with water, but he who is mightier than I is coming, the strap of whose sandals I am not worthy to untie. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and with fire.
4. **John 1:33 ESV**
33 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.’

All four of these passages record the words of John the Baptist. No explanation is given regarding precisely what this baptism is, but that Jesus is the one who will carry out this baptism.

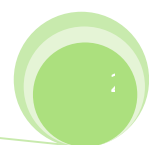
5. **Acts 1:5 ESV**
5 for John baptized with water, but you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days from now.”
6. **Acts 11:16 ESV**
16 And I remembered the word of the Lord, how he said, ‘John baptized with water, but you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit.’

These two references make it clear that whatever happened on the Day of Pentecost it was considered to be baptism in the Holy Spirit. The Acts 1:5 passages connect back to the John prophecies of the gospels. Acts 10 and 11 record for us the conversion of Cornelius and his household, a Roman. Their experience, the conversion of these gentiles, is likened to what happened at Pentecost and a fulfillment of the words of Jesus.

7. **1 Corinthians 12:13 ESV**
13 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.

“A share in the Spirit takes place at conversion. Paul says as much in 1 Cor. 12:13, the only NT reference apart from those in Luke-Acts, that speaks of being “baptized with the Spirit.” There Paul shows how epochal, once-for-all event of Pentecost subsequently becomes effective in the life of the individual believer. Two points are plain: 1) “All” in Christ’s body, the church, cf. v.12), not just some, have been Spirit-baptized; b) that experience takes place at the point of coming “into” the fellowship of Christ’s body (that is, at conversion), not subsequently.” -- Richard B. Gaffin Jr.

“But this has a significant implication for us: it means that, as far as the apostle Paul was concerned, *baptism in the Holy Spirit occurred at conversion*. He says that all the Corinthians were baptized in the



Holy Spirit and the result was that they became members of the body of Christ: “For we were all baptized in one Spirit into one body” (1 Cor. 12:13 NIV mg). “Baptism in the Holy Spirit,” therefore, must refer to the activity of the Holy Spirit at the beginning of the Christian life when he gives us new spiritual life (in regeneration) and cleanses us and gives a clear break with the power and love of sin (the initial stage of sanctification). In this way “baptism in the Holy Spirit” refers to all that the Holy Spirit does at the beginning of our Christian lives. But this means that it cannot refer to an experience after conversion, as the Pentecostal interpretation would have it.” -- Wayne Grudem

How are we to understand the references to baptism in the Holy Spirit in Acts 1:5 and Acts 11:16?

A **Pentecostal/charismatic** view basically sees these references (along with Acts 8 and 19 where the term “baptism with the Spirit” is not used) as support for a second experience.

The **Cessationist view** would argue that Pentecost was a unique one of a kind event that completed the work of Jesus in redemptive history. Richard Gaffin, for example, states:

Conclusion: Pentecost completes Christ’s finished work for or salvation. Without Pentecost, the accomplishment of redemption is incomplete and meaningless. To maintain the significance of Pentecost as a power experience enjoyed by some believers in distinction from others, one that is “beyond” salvation (seen only as the forgiveness of sins), is seriously inadequate. Such an appraisal makes too little, not too much, of Pentecost. Without Pentecost there is no salvation. Period. Why? Because without Pentecost there is no (resurrection) life in the Spirit, and without that eschatological life, sinners remain “dead in [their] transgressions and sins” (Eph. 2:1-5).

Pentecost publicly attests that the saving work of Christ is complete, that he has become “the life-giving Spirit.” Pentecost is the redemptive-historical Spirit-seal (cf. Eph. 1:13) of Christ to the church on the forgiveness and eschatological life secured in his death, resurrection, and ascension. To put it in formal, doctrinal categories, the “newness” of Pentecost is not, at least not primarily, anthropological-experiential but Christological and ecclesiological-missiological. Above all Pentecost means two things: (a) The Spirit is now present, at last and permanently, on the basis of the finished work of Christ; he is the eschatological Spirit; (b) the Spirit is now poured out “on all people” (Acts 2:17), gentiles as well as Jews; he is the universal Spirit.

The **third wave** view sees that Pentecost is a unique event that lies at the transition point between the work of the Holy Spirit under the old covenant and the work of the Holy Spirit under the New Covenant. The Spirit did work to bring regeneration in OT saints, though we don’t know exactly how that worked and it seems clear on the whole that this work was less dynamic and personal for old covenant believers (the Holy Spirit did come significantly to some believers, but this was exceptional and not normal). Wayne Grudem states:

But this fact helps us understand what happened to the disciples at Pentecost. 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. In their case, believers with an old covenant empowering from the Holy Spirit

NIV NIV—New International Version
mg mg.—margin or marginal notes



became believers with a new covenant empowering from the Holy Spirit. But we today do not first become believers with a weaker, old covenant work of the Holy Spirit in our hearts and wait until some later time to receive a new covenant work of the Holy Spirit. Rather, we are in the same position as those who became Christians in the church at Corinth: when we become Christians we are all “baptized in one Spirit into one body” (1 Cor. 12:13)—just as the Corinthians were, and just as were the new believers in many churches who were converted when Paul traveled on his missionary journeys.

In conclusion, the disciples certainly did experience “a baptism in the Holy Spirit” after conversion on the Day of Pentecost, but this happened because they were living at a unique point in history, and this event in their lives is therefore not a pattern that we are to seek to imitate.

How do we understand John 20:22?

John 20:22 ESV

22 And when he had said this, he breathed on them and said to them, “Receive the Holy Spirit.

It is probably best to see this verse describing an acted-out prophecy on the part of Jesus looking forward to what would happen at Pentecost.

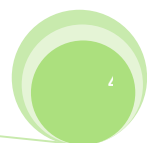
How should we understand the “second experiences in Acts?”

We have already looked at [Acts 2](#), the main “second experience” passage in Acts.

Next, we come to [Acts 8](#) (4-25). Here we have an account of the first salvation of Samaritans. It is difficult to argue, as some have tried, that the Samaritans were not really saved prior to the experience of the “receiving” the Holy Spirit. We know that it was impossible for them to be saved apart from the Holy Spirit at work in them (1 Cor. 12:3 and Romans 8:9), but a significant “second experience” is recorded here. Why?

A better understanding of this event would be that God, in his providence, sovereignly waited to give the new covenant empowering of the Holy Spirit to the Samaritans directly through the hands of the apostles (Acts 8:14–17)²⁴ so that it might be evident to the highest leadership in the Jerusalem church that the Samaritans were not second-class citizens but full members of the church. This was important because of the historical animosity between Jews and Samaritans (“Jews have no dealings with Samaritans,” John 4:9), and because Jesus had specified that the spread of the gospel to Samaria would be the next major step after it had been preached in Jerusalem and the region of Judea that surrounded Jerusalem: “You shall be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria and to the end of the earth” (Acts 1:8). Thus, the event in Acts 8 was a kind of “Samaritan Pentecost,” a special outpouring of the Holy Spirit on the people of Samaria, who were a mixed race of Jewish and Gentile ancestry, so that it might be evident to all that the full new covenant blessings and power of the Holy Spirit had come to this group of people as well, and were not confined to Jews only. Because this is a special event in the history of redemption, as the pattern of Acts 1:8 is worked out in the book of Acts, it is not a pattern for us to repeat today. It is simply part of the transition

²⁴ 24. In this section I am largely following the careful discussion of John Stott, *Baptism and Fullness* 2d ed. (Leicester and Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity Press, 1976), pp. 31–34.



between the old covenant experience of the Holy Spirit and the new covenant experience of the Holy Spirit.¹

In **Acts 10** we have the conversion of Gentiles (the house of Cornelius) and the retelling of the experience by Peter in **Acts 11**. This event does not appear to be involve a “second experience” so much as a very dynamic first experience!

In **Acts 19** we find the final “second experience” passage. Paul encounters here some disciples of John the Baptist. What is recorded is evidently the salvation experience which is quite unique; the uniqueness lie in the fact that they were already baptized into John’s baptism and were exercising their faith in a Messiah that they were waiting for. Wayne Grudem explains,

In Acts 19, once again we encounter a situation of some people who had not really heard the gospel of salvation through Christ. They had been baptized into the baptism of John the Baptist (Acts 19:3), so they were probably people who had heard John the Baptist preach, or had talked to others who had heard John the Baptist preach, and had been baptized “into John’s baptism” (Acts 19:3) as a sign that they were repenting of their sins and preparing for the Messiah who was to come...

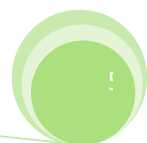
Because of this, these disciples at Ephesus are certainly not a pattern for us today either, for we do not first have faith in a Messiah that we are waiting for, and then later learn that Jesus has come and lived and died and risen again. We come into an understanding of the gospel of Christ immediately, and we, like the Corinthians, enter immediately into the new covenant experience of the power of the Holy Spirit.²⁶

How should we think and speak about increased empowering by the Holy Spirit that comes after conversion?

1. We should avoid insisting upon a one-time second experience subsequent to salvation.
 - a. This undermines the significance of the work of the Holy Spirit at conversion and violates the clear emphasis in scripture that the Spirit gives life in conversion.
 - b. This does harm by teaching a two-class Christianity.
 - c. We recognize that what sometimes appears to be a second experience for some is really a first experience.

¹Grudem, W. A. (1994). *Systematic theology : An introduction to biblical doctrine* (774). Leicester, England; Grand Rapids, Mich.: Inter-Varsity Press; Zondervan Pub. House.

²⁶ 26. Regarding Acts 19:1–7, [Howard M.] Ervin, *Conversion-Initiation and the Baptism in the Holy Spirit* pp. 55–59, objects that these disciples were first baptized and then, when Paul laid his hands on them, they were empowered with the Holy Spirit. We may admit that this is true, but the two events were so closely connected in time that it is hard to make a clear separation between them, and they certainly do not fit the common Pentecostal pattern of instruction and prayer, sometimes weeks or months or years after conversion, seeking a subsequent baptism in the Holy Spirit. If we had asked them later if their baptism in the Holy Spirit was “subsequent” to their conversion, they would probably have said that it was at the same time, so closely connected were these events in the actual historical sequence.



2. We should look for and expect salvation (baptism with the Spirit) to include all that the Bible promises. In other words, we need a dynamic and empowering view of salvation.
3. We should be ready for and desire many experiences and advances of empowering which takes us forward in fellowship with God, in power to witness and serve, and in Christian maturity.

Acts 2:4 ESV

4 And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues as the Spirit gave them utterance.

Acts 4:8 ESV

8 Then Peter, filled with the Holy Spirit, said to them, “Rulers of the people and elders,

Acts 4:31 ESV

31 And when they had prayed, the place in which they were gathered together was shaken, and they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and continued to speak the word of God with boldness.

4. It is best to speak of dynamic experiences with and in the Spirit subsequent to salvation as being filled with the Spirit.

Because of its frequent use in contexts that speak of Christian growth and ministry, this seems to me to be the best term to use to describe genuine “second experiences” today (or third or fourth experiences, etc.). Paul tells the Ephesians, “Do not get drunk with wine, for that is debauchery; but be filled with the Spirit” (Eph. 5:18). He uses a present tense imperative verb that could more explicitly be translated, “Be continually being filled with the Holy Spirit,” thus implying that this is something that should repeatedly be happening to Christians. Such fullness of the Holy Spirit will result in renewed worship and thanksgiving (Eph. 5:19–20), and in renewed relationships to others, especially those in authority over us or those under our authority (Eph. 5:21–6:9). In addition, since the Holy Spirit is the Spirit who sanctifies us, such a filling will often result in increased sanctification. Furthermore, since the Holy Spirit is the one who empowers us for Christian service and gives us spiritual gifts, such filling will often result in increased power for ministry and increased effectiveness and perhaps diversity in the use of spiritual gifts.²

5. Being filled with the Spirit does not always result in speaking in tongues or in the receiving of any other single gift. There is no “litmus test” gift for being filled with the Spirit.

1 Corinthians 12:11 ESV

11 All these are empowered by one and the same Spirit, who apportions to each one individually as he wills.

6. We should all seek to be continually filled with the Holy Spirit. The following will help us in that endeavor: confession and repentance, renewed commitment, heightened faith and expectation, praying for one another.
7. We praise God that the wider evangelical church is disagreeing less and getting along better on this important doctrinal issue as God gives more grace.

²Grudem, W. A. (1994). *Systematic theology : An introduction to biblical doctrine* (781). Leicester, England; Grand Rapids, Mich.: Inter-Varsity Press; Zondervan Pub. House.

