

## I. Review

A. Last Sunday we looked at the second story in this first chapter of John, and this story is about John the Baptist confirming that Jesus is both human and divine. Today, we will return to that story to look at one part of it which we did not have time to consider last Sunday. So I am not going to read the whole story, but I will begin reading at vs 31 –

1. John 1:31-34 . . . “I did not recognize Him (I did not know that my relative, Jesus, was the Messiah), but so that He (Jesus) might be manifested to Israel (revealed to be the Messiah), I came baptizing in water.” [32] John testified saying, “I have seen the [Holy] Spirit descending as a dove out of heaven, and He remained upon [Jesus]. [33] (When I started to baptize Jesus), I did not recognize Him (as the Messiah, or the Christ), but [God] who sent me to baptize in water said to me, ‘He upon whom you see the [Holy] Spirit descending and remaining upon Him, this is the One who baptizes in the Holy Spirit.’ [34] I myself have seen (in other words, while I was baptizing Him, I saw the Spirit descending as a dove and remaining on Him, and I heard the voice from Heaven saying, ‘You are My beloved Son, in You I am well-pleased.’), and [I] have testified that this is the Son of God.”
2. One of the things we learn from this story is that God told John the Baptist to baptize in water for the purpose of identifying who the Messiah was. And we also learn that God told John that the Messiah (or the Christ) will baptize in the Holy Spirit, and this is the statement we will focus on today.

## B. Pray

## II. Water Baptism, Spirit Baptism

A. John the Baptist baptized in water – and from the Day of Pentecost up until now, the church has baptized new converts in water. But we also see from the verses I just read that Jesus baptizes in the Holy Spirit – which raises the question: “What is the significant difference between baptizing in water and baptizing in the Holy Spirit?”

1. But before considering that question, I want to make three observations about the two baptisms.

- a. First, water baptism is visible, and most Christians treat its significance as being a public demonstration of their conversion and a symbolic act of dying and rising with Christ. Spirit baptism is invisible, and most treat it as spiritual and mystical.
  - b. Second, neither water nor Spirit baptism guarantees the intended results. In other words, being baptized in water and/or in the Holy Spirit does not automatically or magically make us holy in all our behavior. Neither does it automatically make us humble servants of Jesus Christ.
    - (1) Any baptized believer at any time can turn away from doing what they know is right and return to practicing some sin. They can stop living to please God and return to living to please themselves. They can rise out of the baptismal waters or move forward after receiving the Holy Spirit and live a double-minded, hypocritical, mediocre Christian life.
    - (2) My point is, neither water nor Spirit baptism guarantees their intended results.
  - c. Third, both baptisms are validated as either being effectual or ineffectual by how we live following our baptisms. If, after being baptized, we proceed to pursue being holy as God is holy, and if we pursue humble service to God, then that is proof we have taken our water and Spirit baptism seriously and are cooperating with their intended purposes as we ought.
    - (1) Interestingly, in the early church, salvation and water baptism were so united into a single whole that if a baptized believer returned to practicing sin, he was spoken of as being unfaithful to his baptism, or as having fallen away from his baptism – just as some today would say he has fallen away from the faith.
    - (2) Of course, there will always be those who think that because they prayed the sinner’s prayer to receive Christ and were baptized, they are assured eternal life regardless of how they live from that time forward.
    - (3) And there will always be those who affirm the validity of their faith in Christ and baptism in water and in the Holy Spirit by proceeding to live a godly life from then on.
2. Now, let's return to our question: “What is the significant difference between baptizing in water and baptizing in the Holy Spirit?”
- a. First, both are intended to purify the one being baptized. And though outwardly water baptism is a symbolic purification, it has

always been God's intention that it produce an inward purification that produces a transformed life. And when I say it has always been God's intention, this type of purification began in the OT.

- (1) For example, under the Law, God instituted the ritual cleansing bath for the purpose of symbolically purifying the one who had been contaminated for some reason in order to show that God required purity in one's personal life and in the nation of Israel.
  - (2) As part of converting to Judaism and becoming a member of God's people, new converts were required to take a ritual bath to symbolize the actual cleansing away of the old and coming into God's family in a pure and clean condition.
  - (3) In the Temple, one of the important items was the Laver, which was used for washing the Priests' hands and feet to make sure they were outwardly pure as a symbol of being inwardly pure before they performed their priestly duties.
- b. In other words, since the giving of the Law, God has made it clear that He requires purity from His people – be they OT Israelites or NT believers. And let me add that just as He required purity of the priests who served in the Temple, so He requires purity of those in church leadership or any other form of ministry today.
- (1) Of course, whether it be the OT purification in water or the NT baptisms, our cleansing is not to be the purification of what is on the outside only, but also the purification of what is on the inside. God intends to purify our heart, mind, passions, desires, feelings, words, and deeds.
  - (2) Therefore, baptism in water and in the Holy Spirit are two of God's initiating means to cleanse away the new believer's old sinful self and bring him into God's family with the purity God requires.
- c. The NT scriptures speak of this purity in a number of places, and uses words like "cleanse" and "purify" to convey the message. For example –
- (1) Titus 2:14 tells us that Jesus gave Himself for us – to redeem us from every lawless deed, and to purify for Himself a people for His own possession, zealous for good deeds.
  - (2) 1 John 1:7 says that if we walk in the Light as God is in the Light (perfectly and wholly), we will have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus His Son will continue to cleanse us from all sin.

- (3) In Ephesians 5:25-27 we read that Christ loves the church and gave Himself up for her in order to sanctify her, having cleansed her by the washing of water with the word, [27] that He might present to Himself the church in all her glory, having no spot or wrinkle or any such thing; but that she would be holy and blameless (pure).
  - (4) And 2 Peter 1:8-9 reminds us that if we are purposefully growing in Christ-likeness, we will lead useful and fruitful lives of godliness and service. But if we fail to purposefully grow in Christ-likeness, it means we are blind or short-sighted (foolish), and that we have forgotten God's purifying work of baptism which purified us from our former sins.
- d. However, being baptized in the Holy Spirit is not only intended to purify us, it is also intended to empower and assist us in living the Christ-like life. For example, in Romans 8:9, 12-14 –
- (1) Paul writes that we are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if indeed the Spirit of God dwells in us. In other words, in spite of how self-disciplined we are or how self-motivated we are, we are not living the Christ-like life under our own power or human knowledge and wisdom. Rather, we are living the Christ-like life by the empowerment and wisdom and leading of the Holy Spirit – which empowers and assists whatever human resources we bring to the process.
  - (2) Then Paul goes on to say that if we do not have the Spirit of Christ (i.e., Holy Spirit), we do not belong to Christ.
  - (3) But since we are Christians, we have the Holy Spirit – which means we belong to Christ, and that we are no longer under obligation to the flesh, to live according to the flesh – for if we live according to the flesh, we must die.
  - (4) However, if by the empowerment and assistance of the Holy Spirit we are putting to death the deeds of the body – that is, the impurity without and within, we will live.
  - (5) And why will we live? Because all those who follow the leading of the Spirit of God, are [children] of God.
- e. Now I want to make this clear – just because baptism in the Holy Spirit is vital to Christian living, that does not mean we should forgo water baptism. As Christians, we ought to enter into both baptisms. However, what the baptism in the Holy Spirit does, is give us the enabling power, the needed help, and the leading and guiding to become holy and pure in all our behavior, and to

continue being holy and pure so that we walk worthy of the calling with which we have been called. For example –

- (1) The Holy Spirit renews us – that is, He brings us from the old life of pride, selfishness, and sin, into the new life of Christ, humility, and righteousness, and then He continues to work with and in us to transform us – in every area and every way – so that we become like Christ (Titus 3:5).
- (2) The Holy Spirit sanctifies us (Romans 15:16; 1 Peter 1:2).
- (3) The Holy Spirit convicts us of sin, righteousness, and the judgment to come – which enables us to be sensitive to when we are going astray, and know when we are on the narrow path. And this convicting work of the Holy Spirit also reminds us that we must give an accounting to God for how we lived in this life (John 16:8-11).
- (4) The Holy Spirit guides us into all truth and teaches us all the things necessary for knowing God and knowing how to live a godly life (John 14:26, 16:13).
- (5) The Holy Spirit reveals to us how God thinks, and what God has prepared for us – so that we have at least a reasonable idea of where God is taking us and why He is doing it the way He is (1 Corinthians 2:10-13).
- (6) The Holy Spirit – as God’s mouthpiece – speaks to us about what we should and should not do (Revelation 2:7, 29). In a way, He is like a super-charged version of our conscience.
- (7) The Holy Spirit strengthens and empowers us for godly living and for God pleasing service (Ephesians 3:16; 2 Thessalonians 3:3).
- (8) The Holy Spirit provides the church with spiritual gifts, and He leads God’s people into possessing godly qualities – which the Bible speaks of as the fruit of the Spirit (1 Corinthians 12:7; Galatians 5:22-23).
- (9) The Holy Spirit helps us pray, and even prays for us when we don’t know what to pray (Romans 8:26).
- (10) The Holy Spirit seals us unto the day when we are taken home to live with God for eternity (2 Corinthians 1:22, 5:5; Ephesians 1:13).
- (11) The Holy Spirit unifies the members of the church so that we can live together in peace and unity (Ephesians 3:16).
- (12) And the Holy Spirit dwells in us – which means He is not only with us, but part of us (1 Corinthians 3:16).

3. Now that we have looked at water baptism and Spirit baptism, I want to summarize the similarities and difference between being baptized in water and being baptized in the Holy Spirit.
  - a. Both water baptism and Spirit baptism are for new converts to the Christian faith.
  - b. Water baptism is visible and outward while Holy Spirit baptism is invisible and inward – yet both water and Spirit baptism are intended to purify us inwardly as well as outwardly.
  - c. However, the primary focus of water baptism is on breaking our enslavement to sin by dying to sin and our old nature, and enslaving us to righteousness by rising to live unto God and to serve God – according to God’s will and word (Romans 6).
  - d. The primary focus of Spirit baptism is on empowerment and assistance, enlightenment and leading, conviction and hearing – all which enable us to change inwardly so that our growth in godliness is as real and complete on the inside as it appears to be on the outside.
4. Several OT prophets prophesied about this work of the Holy Spirit. For example –
  - a. Joel 2:28-29 . . . It will come about after this that I will pour out My Spirit on all mankind (regardless of one’s heritage or position) and your sons and daughters will prophesy, your old men will dream dreams, your young men will see visions. [29] Even on the male and female servants I will pour out My Spirit in those days.
  - b. Isaiah 44:3-5 . . . For I will pour out water on the thirsty land and streams on the dry ground; I will pour out My Spirit on your offspring and My blessing on your descendants; [4] and they will spring up among the grass like poplars by streams of water. [5] This one will say, 'I am the LORD'S'; and that one will call on the name of Jacob; and another will write on his hand, 'Belonging to the LORD,' and will name Israel's name with honor (live a God honoring life).
5. It appears Paul spoke of the combined work of water and Spirit baptism in Titus 3:4-7 . . . But when the kindness of God our Savior and His love for mankind appeared, [5] He saved us, not on the basis of deeds which we have done in righteousness, but according to His mercy, by the washing of regeneration (water baptism) and renewing by the Holy Spirit (Spirit baptism), [6] whom He poured out upon us richly through Jesus Christ our Savior, [7] so that being justified

by His grace we would be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life.

6. And it appears Jesus presented this same truth to Nicodemus in John 3:5 . . . Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born of water (water baptism) and the Spirit (Spirit baptism) he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.
7. Finally, in writing to the church at Corinth, Paul says, “do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived; neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor homosexuals, [10] nor thieves, nor the covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor swindlers, will inherit the kingdom of God. [11] Such were some of you; but you were washed (water baptism) but you were sanctified (Spirit baptism), but you were justified (redeeming work of Jesus Christ) in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and in the Spirit of our God” (1 Corinthians 6:9-11).

### III. Conclusion

- A. God has given us everything necessary for godly living, including water baptism and Spirit baptism.
- B. Are you making choices and praying and studying God’s word and giving the necessary time to prepare each day in order to live according to the purposes and intent of your baptisms?
- C. In writing to the Galatians, Paul said, “let us walk by the Spirit so that we do not carry out the desires of the flesh (the result of Spirit baptism), for in reality, those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires (the result of water baptism)” (Galatians 5:16, 24).