



DEVOTIONAL MESSAGE - Part 1

Baptism in the Spirit ... by Stanley

READ MATTHEW 3: 1-6, 11

- **W**hat does it mean to be baptized **with** the Holy Spirit? What does John the Baptist mean when he says in *Matt.3:11: I indeed baptize you with water unto repentance, but He (Jesus) 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.*
- Let's begin by looking first at the Person of the Holy Spirit. Who or what is the Holy Spirit? There are those who believe that the Holy Spirit is nothing more than an influence; a good influence; a holy influence; a powerful influence, but nothing more than an influence. That is why they refer to the Holy Spirit as an "it." **Never** / refer to the Holy Spirit as an "it." The Holy Spirit is not an "it;" the Holy Spirit is a Person, and a very real Person at that; indeed as real a Person as God the Father, and as God the Son. All three Persons comprise the Godhead: the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit.
- Moreover, there is only **one** Father, and only **one** Son, and only **one** Holy Spirit. *There is **one** Spirit*, Paul told the believers in Ephesus in *Eph. 4:4*. That is why he told the same believers in *Eph. 2:18: For through him (Jesus)we both (Gentiles as well as Jews) have access by **one** Spirit to the Father.* Yes, there is only **one** Holy Spirit, although He is called by different names.
- Why am I underlining that there is only one Holy Spirit? For the very simple reason that there are those, and thank God they are few and far between, who differentiate between the Spirit of God and the Spirit of Christ. They're completely different, they tell us. Some have even said that you cannot **be** a child of God unless you possess the Spirit of God, **and** the Spirit of Christ. That is absolutely erroneous. There is only **one** Holy Spirit, although He is called by different names. I could give you many Scripture verses for each and every one, but one will have to suffice. For example:
 - He's called the **Spirit** in *Matt. 4: V.1.*
 - He's called the **Holy** Spirit in *Luke 11: V.13.*
 - He's called the Spirit of **God** in *Rom. 8: V.14.*
 - He's called the Spirit of the **Father** in *Matt.10: 20.*
 - He's called the Spirit of the **Son** in *Gal.4: V.6.*
 - He's called the Spirit of **Jesus Christ** in *Phil.1:19.*
 - He's called the Spirit of the **Lord** in *Acts 5: V.9.*
- These are but **some** of the names or titles which pertain to the Holy Spirit, and they always denote the very **same** Person, for there is only **one** Holy Spirit.
- Now before we consider what we mean by the Baptism **IN** the Holy Spirit, let me explain what we **do** not mean. In the first place, to be baptized **IN** the Holy Spirit is not the same as being baptized **BY** the Holy Spirit. As we saw in an earlier study, to be baptized **BY** the Holy Spirit, is to be baptized **BY** the Holy Spirit into the body of Christ. That said, it is **Christ** who baptizes us **IN** the Holy Spirit.

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- In the second place, the Baptism in the Holy Spirit is a **particular** experience. It is different from any **other** experience, including being **filled** with the Spirit. Let me share a personal testimony of when I was **filled** with the Holy Spirit, and for the very first time. I was 20 years of age, and in my first year in the Belfast Bible College. In spite of the busy schedule of the College, I continued my search after God, and a closer walk with Him. So I decided on a course of action, and which I shared with no one else.
- I got up every morning at 5 o'clock, and I made my way to the lecture room under cover of darkness. I fell on my knees, and I entreated God to fill me with the Holy Spirit. This I did, morning after morning, for the best part of two weeks.
- I was just about to call it a day, when something happened I will **never** forget. **God** came into that lecture room, and in quite an awesome manner. It was still dark at the time, and then a light - I much prefer the word effulgence - began to shine around and about me, but only lighting up that part of the room in which I had been kneeling. I was initially fearful to begin with, as I had never experienced the like of this before. Then fear gave way to reverential awe. So much so, that I could not but prostrate myself on the floor, my arms outstretched above my head. I lay there, unable to move for what seemed a very long time, but I knew, without the shadow of a doubt, that the God whom I had sought *had suddenly come to His temple*, to quote from Malachi 3:V.1.
- I have always looked back on that occasion as being the moment when I was filled **with** the Holy Spirit, and for the very first time in my life. To begin with, I began to feel the presence of God as I had never known it before. My spiritual life took on a new meaning, and my chief desire was to know God more, and to walk ever closer to Him. I also became extremely sensitive to sin, and to whatever would grieve the Holy Spirit who had become so real to me.
- I recall one occasion shortly after that when I was asked by the principal, as head student of the College, to organize a gardening session, but only for the male students. It was raining very heavy at the time, and I was very surprised at what he had asked me to do. Some time later, when the students and I were soaked to the skin, they began complaining to me for not having stood up to him. "The man's a fool," they said. "Did you ever see the like of it?" I did not make my feelings known to them, but I absolutely agreed inside with what they had said to me. As soon as I did, I knew right away I had grieved the Holy Spirit. How did I know? I immediately lost the conscious sense of His presence, and with it, the peace of God *which surpasses all understanding*.

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- Do you know what I did? No sooner had I changed my clothes, I made my way to the principal's office. I knocked on his door, and I was told to come in. I did not involve the other students, but I confessed to the principal I had thought him a fool in what he had asked us to do, and I wanted to say I was sorry. He looked at me for a moment, made a somewhat muted response, and then he told me to go. Believe it or not, but as **soon** as I left his office, I was strangely aware of God's presence again, and His peace which He had restored.
- Do you know something else? I learned a lesson that day I will never, **ever** forget. Do you know what it was? Keep short accounts with God. What do you mean? some may well ask. Very simply: As soon as you know you've done something you **shouldn't** have done; or you've said something you **shouldn't** have said; or you've gone somewhere you shouldn't have gone, put it right with God straight away. If you do, and **only** if you do, then the peace of God will flood your soul, and you will know His presence again.
- As I said, I was first filled with the Holy Spirit when I was in Bible College. But since that moment in time, I've been **filled** again and again with the Holy Spirit. I've been **anointed** again and again with the Holy Spirit. I've been **endued** again and again with the Holy Spirit. Moreover, I'll go **on** being filled again and again with the Holy Spirit. I'll go **on** being anointed again and again with the Holy Spirit. I'll go **on** being endued again and again with the Holy Spirit. But that said, let me say something before I close. It is possible to be **filled** with the Holy Spirit; to be **anointed** with the Holy Spirit; to be **endued** with the Holy Spirit, and yet not be baptized **IN** the Holy Spirit. I want to establish the truth of that, and I will deal with that, if God permits, the next time I am asked to speak.

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WEEKLY EVENTS/NOTICES

Week 50

Events /Notices

- ▶ **Carol Service** 16th December 7.00pm
- ▶ **Children's production** 12.30pm Sunday 23rd
December
- ▶ **There will be a special offering** Sunday the 16th Sunday the 23rd

Extra Services

If you have children with you, these are the facilities provided:

- ▶ Crèche and Pre-school Praise



- ▶ Sunday School



Come, my children, listen to me; I will teach you the fear of the LORD. (Psalm 34:11)

- ▶ Tea and Coffee



Hebrews 13:2