

Matthew 3:11-12

Preached by Greg Lundstedt at Vancouver Bible Fellowship Church on 5/31/2009

Three Baptisms: John's, the Holy Spirit and Fire

Prayer

Father, as we look into Your Word and to this passage which You've given us, I pray that You would help us understand it, that You would give us wisdom and insight as we look into Your Word. I pray no one here today would come to Your Word with any sin, I pray we would simply confess those sins to You, whatever they might be. And we know that if we confess our sins, You are faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and cleanse us from all unrighteousness. May we come clean before You so that we may not be like the forgetful hearers who, who hear the Word, get convicted, and walk away and forget what You have said. May Your Word abide with us, and remain with us so that our lives would reflect Christ. We commit this time to You, we pray that You would be greatly honored and glorified in it now, in Jesus' name. Amen, amen.

Sermon

I don't know if you've noticed in many churches these days, but a lot of the focus is on our emotions and feelings, things that drive us. It's very heartbreaking when I see those things, when I see church, the opposite of what Dennis shared in Revelation, where I see "so-called" worship the opposite of what we see in scripture, which is the declaration of truth concerning God, and then a response from us. It burdens my heart when I see it so subtly twisted to be about us. And today we're going to be looking at an issue that comes from our passage today concerning the baptism of the Holy Spirit. And there are many, many churches that have a theology that encourages you to seek and experience it, and they point to this as a reason why you should seek that experience. Well today as we go through the book of Matthew, we're continuing our look, we're not choosing theological topics to throw at you each Sunday, but as we go through the Word of God we're going to look at this issue today concerning the baptism of the Holy Spirit, but also the baptism of fire, and we're going to review what John's baptism was about.

So would you turn with me in your Bibles to the book of Matthew and we've come to chapter 3, and we're going to begin in verse 11 today. Now this is a really complex subject today, there's a lot of passages concerning the Holy Spirit, there's issues of tongues, there's all sorts of stuff and I just felt like the Lord was convicting me through His Word to not shrink back from declaring to you everything that was profitable, that I wouldn't shrink back from those things that are profitable. So we're going to look at a lot of verses today, a lot of passages and so, I just encourage you the pray that God would grant you wisdom to understand His Word today as we look at it.

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So with that in mind, buckle up your belts and we'll get started here. We've gone through the book of Matthew, we are in chapter 3, and in chapter 1 we saw that Jesus Christ is the rightful King, we saw the genealogy of Christ which shows that He is the King. We saw the birth of King Jesus, we saw the announcement and birth of the miraculous birth, that Mary would be found with Child by the Holy Spirit. And Joseph was commanded to marry Mary, because it was from the Holy Spirit, and also because Jesus would save His people from their sins. We see "you shall name His name Jesus, for He shall save His people from their sins".

And then in chapter 2 the responses to the birth of King Jesus. We saw the response of the magi, which was a joyful worship, these Gentle magi who had limited revelation came to worship Christ. And then we saw the amazingly surprising response of the Jews, who should have desired to go 7 miles to check and see if that is truly the Messiah, but they were agitated and fearful. We also saw the murderous hate of king Herod, we saw the responses to the birth of King Jesus, that King Jesus gets in the way of you and I if we are kings of our own lives, and we saw what Herod did to get rid of Him, as he desired to secretly and deceptively kill the King of Kings and Lord of Lords. But God was gracious and faithful and protected the Lord Jesus, protected the babe, and we saw in the end of chapter 2 and then in chapter 3 the predictions of scripture that Christ fulfilled, that He is the one who fulfills the redemptive promises of Israel, that He is the one in the midst of mourning and crying and despair that brings hope, and that He is the one who is despised and forsaken, He was one who would be called a Nazarene, a lowlife in Israel, but yet this so called lowlife was the King of Kings and Lord of Lords who brings salvation. He fulfilled those prophecies.

And then we came to chapter 3, in which we saw John the Baptist, 30 or so years later from Jesus's infancy, now, we see John the Baptist appearing the wilderness crying out "repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand, repent". There is a preparation for King Jesus, there is a preparation for the King of Kings and Lord of Lords who has taken on human flesh, and that preparation we looked at in detail is repentance. It is a change of mind, it is a turning from sin to God, it is a true change of mind. Some people say "well I changed my mind", but they don't change their behavior, their minds have not changed. It is a turning to God from sin, which prepares the way, it makes the path straight, it makes His paths straight.

And then we saw those who came out to be baptized by John. We saw the Jews who were initially confessing their sins, you see, it wasn't the water baptism that brought repentance, it was the confession of sin, and then that baptism was a symbol that they had that they confessed their sins. And then we saw the Pharisees and Sadducees coming out to be baptized by **Jesus (should this be John??)**. These religious leaders, we looked at this last week, and John calls a spade a spade, they weren't coming out to confess their sins, they were coming out for the outward symbol, the baptism, just like all those who don't know Christ, focus on the externals rather than on what Christ does to change our hearts. So they were coming out to be baptized, and what does John say to them? He says "oh wonderful, you Pharisees and Sadducees, come on in and get baptized", no he says "You brood of vipers, you offspring of venomous snakes, who warned you to flee from the wrath to come? Who warned you about this?".

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Now he wasn't saying that they actually understood that this would deliver from the wrath, he was being sarcastic to them, he was calling them offspring of snakes. And we see their murderous poison throughout as they twist the Word of God and twist the truth of God, and make their converts twice the sons of hell as they focus on the externals and not the truth concerning the Lord Jesus Christ. And then at this point we come to our passage today in the book of Matthew, and we're going to be look at verse 11, last week we saw that John, right before that in verse 9-10, that John warned them that the axe was at the root of the tree. Your brood of vipers, you better repent, you better repent because the axe is there, it's ready to cut it down, it's right there, you better show forth fruit in keeping with repentance.

And we saw that true repentance will truly bear forth fruit. But evidently, John was not expecting the Pharisees to bear fruit because their hearts were evil and hardened.

And that brings us now to our passage today, in which we will see in the reception of King Jesus, first of all, we need to prepare the way with repentance, we need to have repented of our sins, we need to not be hypocrites in that way like the Pharisees. And then ultimately we see here that we need to recognize that John prepares the way, repentance prepares that way but King Jesus does the saving, the Lord Jesus is the one who brings salvation. So we're in Matthew 3:11, "¹¹ "As for me, I baptize you with water for repentance, but He who is coming after me is mightier than I, and I am not fit to remove His sandals; He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire. ¹² "And His winnowing fork is in His hand, and He will thoroughly clear His threshing floor; and He will gather His wheat into the barn, but He will burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire."

Today we're going to see three baptisms, we're going to see John talking about his baptism, then we're going to look at the baptism of the Holy Spirit, and the baptism of fire. Three baptisms, and we need to be reminded what the term baptize means, we've looked at it in the past few weeks, so I'm not going to review all that, but I'm going to briefly share the term *baptizo* speaks of dipping or immersing. In this day they would take cloth and they would dip it or immerse it in a dye and it would come out identified with the new color. It speaks of identification, it speaks of being placed into. And we saw in 1 Corinthians 10 an example of this, this concept of being identified with. If you want to turn briefly to 1 Corinthians 10 I'm going to read the first four verses here where we see what this word baptism means. Because we need to be careful that we don't just think of it as getting dunked in the water, that's certainly part of it, but we need to understand. 1 Corinthians 10:1, the apostle Paul is speaking to the Corinthian church that is out of order and he wants to remind them, or share with them things which they might be unaware of. 1 Corinthians 10:1, "For I do not want you to be unaware, brethren, that our fathers were all under the cloud, and all passed through the sea; ² and all were baptized into Moses in the cloud and in the sea; ³ and all ate the same spiritual food; ⁴ and all drank the same spiritual drink, for they were drinking from a spiritual rock which followed them; and the rock was Christ."

Now we see here that all were baptized into Moses. They were all baptized into Moses, well what does that mean? What does it mean to be placed into? What it means is that they were identified with Moses who was leaving the sons of Israel under God's command and they all went through the same

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experiences as they followed Moses. They all went through the same experience, they identified with Moses. Now in short, baptism in general speaks of being identified with, or placed into.

And with that in mind we come to three baptism in the book of Matthew. Let's look at the first one here, John's baptism. He says ¹¹ "As for me, I baptize you with water for repentance" (Matt. 3:11). In this case I actually prefer the New King James version, I think they do a better job translating it, they say, it literally says "I indeed baptize you with water unto repentance". This is what I am doing, John is saying, I do it with water unto repentance. And remember we saw earlier this baptism in the early portions of chapter 3, but what is this? What is this water baptism? In scripture we have two specific water baptisms, the baptism of John, and we'll also see later on the baptism that Jesus commanded all who believe in Him in Matthew 28.

We see in Matthew 28 that all true believers are to be baptized, and I'll read that. Matthew 28:19-20 ¹⁹ "Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, ²⁰ teaching them to observe all that I commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age." Go and make disciples, two things, baptizing and teaching. Make disciples, baptizing, you're affirming outwardly that they have come into a relationship with the Lord Jesus Christ, they are identified with Him, and then teaching. So we have this baptism that Jesus shares, and we also have the baptism of John.

But what is John's baptism? What is John's baptism? Well we see first of all it is a baptism in water for repentance. He says indeed, or literally, emphatically "I indeed baptize you with water unto repentance". This is what I'm doing, I'm placing you in water unto repentance. And now we know that John is not saying I am baptizing you so that you will be repenting, he's saying it that he's baptizing you because you have repented. Remember earlier, they were confessing their sins, as they were baptized. So then John's baptism ultimately shows an outward identification with the fact that one had repented. When someone came to be baptized, they were outwardly demonstrating that they had repented of their sins. And that's one of the reasons John got so upset at the Pharisees because they only came seeking the outward symbol. If you'll notice we saw last week, they weren't confessing their sins, they came desiring to be baptized, and he said, you brood of vipers.

So we have this outward identification here, with the fact that they had repented of their sins. And this is the first step, no one can come to Jesus, no one can accept Jesus, no one can be saved apart from repenting of their sins, it's actually a part of faith. Repent and believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, for repentance be proclaimed throughout the entire nations as Jesus would say in Luke 24. It is a turning to God in faith from sin. And John was preparing the way for the Lord Jesus Christ.

But we have some more baptism here, and we should never stop at the point of repenting of our sins and that's it. We get convicted and we stop there, "Ok, I'm a sinner, that's it, I agree." Should we stop at that point? Absolutely not, because we are not saved at that point, we haven't cried out to the one who can save us from our sins, the Lord Jesus Christ. And so we have a comparison here now, and a contrast,

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verse 11 ¹¹ "As for me, I baptize you with water for repentance, but He who is coming after me is mightier than I, and I am not fit to remove His sandals; He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire."

Notice there's a contrast here, but, as for me, I baptize with water for repentance, but He who is coming after me, He's going to baptize with the Holy Spirit and fire. We have the contrast between John and He who is coming afterwards. We have a contrast between the baptism and John and the baptisms we see that Jesus will bring about. But who is the one, who is the He who is coming after me? Who is that? Well certainly in the book of Matthew we know so far that the book is completely about the Lord Jesus Christ. We saw in chapter 1 it was about Jesus who will save His people from their sins. We saw His Kingly lineage, His miraculous conception and birth. We saw He was the one who fulfills the promises of scripture concerning salvation and the Messiah. We saw that John was preparing the way for Him, and then notice immediately after our passage today in verse 13, "Then Jesus arrived from Galilee at the Jordan coming to John to be baptized by Him."

In context He who is coming after is the Lord Jesus Christ, but if you're still unclear, turn with me to John 1, and we'll look at a parallel portion. John 1:31 ³¹ "And I did not recognize Him, but in order that He might be manifested to Israel, I came baptizing in water." (that's what John says right? This is John the Baptist being recorded by John, this is so that Christ would be manifest, he came baptizing in water.) ³² And John bore witness saying, "I have beheld the Spirit descending as a dove out of heaven, and He remained upon Him. ³³ "And I did not recognize Him, but He who sent me to baptize in water said to me, 'He upon whom you see the Spirit descending and remaining upon Him, this is the one who baptizes in the Holy Spirit.'" It's the Lord Jesus Christ who is the one who is coming after, He is the one who baptizes with the Holy Spirit, and as we will see, fire.

Obviously John is preparing the way for the Lord Jesus Christ, the King, the one who brings salvation. And the contrast is between John and the one coming after, it's between John and the Lord Jesus. And certainly we see John rightly understands his position as a servant and a created being, versus the Creator and Lord of the Universe. And he says ¹¹ "As for me, I baptize you with water (back in chapter 3 of Matthew) for repentance, but He who is coming after me is mightier than I, and I am not fit to remove His sandals."

Term mightier speaks of inherent power or strength, inherent power, strength, or might, He has inherent power, He is mightier than me. The one who is coming after, Jesus Christ, is mightier than John. But secondly notice he says, and I am not fit to remove his sandals. One of the lowest jobs of a slave was to remove the sandals, to untie the sandal, and John uses this as an illustration to show how infinitely more worthy Christ is than him. How infinitely more worthy the one who saves than the messenger who proclaims salvation in Christ. He says here, ¹¹ "As for me, I baptize you with water for repentance, but He who is coming after me is mightier than I, and I am not fit to remove His sandals."

Now if you'll remember we looked at it partially last week in Matthew 11:11, Jesus said "Truly, I say to you, among those born of women there has not arisen *anyone* greater than John the Baptist." At this time, John was the greatest. And John says, He is mightier than me, I am not fit to remove His sandal, as

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even a slave. There's a contrast here. Yes, the baptism of repentance, yes repenting is mandatory, but it not how we are saved, it is part of salvation. Repentance and faith are part that, but if I repent and do not trust in Christ Jesus to deliver me, I'm not saved. John was preparing the way, but he did not bring salvation, it was Christ who would bring salvation.

Folks a knowledge of sin is the first step, but it's not enough, for one to be saved, he or she must be saved by the Savior Jesus Christ. So here in context John is saying, yes, I do the water baptizing which identifies you with repentance, I'm doing this symbolic act, but there is one coming after me mightier than me, awesome, who will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire. He is the one that really counts. He is the one. So we have our text, John was preparing the way for the one Jesus Christ, repentance prepares the way. And then we see our text, that He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit.

And this leads to the question that I shared, and that I studied and spent much time on this week, what about the baptism of the Holy Spirit, what is that? What is the baptism of the Holy Spirit, there's a lot of things thrown around in Christian circles concerning a second blessing, or baptism of the Holy Spirit. What does that mean? What does it mean He's going to baptize with the Holy Spirit, what does that mean when John says Jesus will do that?

Well first of all we need to recognize there was the future promise of the Holy Spirit being poured out upon the Lord's people. Isaiah 32:15, you can read these on your own time, be a Berean. Chapter 44:3 (of Isaiah), and then from Ezekiel chapters 36 to 39, remember when we went through Ezekiel, we saw that God would pour out His people when they came to faith. And then in Joel 2, that which Peter quoted in Acts 2:28-29, we see that God will pour out His Spirit on mankind, to all mankind. So we have these passages in the Old Testament which point to the pouring out of His Spirit, and also those passages in Ezekiel that show that they will be indwelt by the Spirit, wonderful passages. And then we have another portion in Acts which shows us what will happen, if you want to turn to Acts 1, and while you're turning there just to note in your heads, we have parallel passages concerning our Matthew passage in Mark 1:7-8, Luke 3:16, and as we read earlier, John 1:33, all of the Gospels speak of Christ coming to baptize in the Holy Spirit. And then we have Acts 1 where it is predicted, Acts 1, we'll start at verse 3, "³ To these He also presented Himself alive, after His suffering, by many convincing proofs, appearing to them over a *period of* forty days, and speaking of the things concerning the kingdom of God. ⁴ And gathering them together, He commanded them not to leave Jerusalem, but to wait for what the Father had promised (what's what you see in those Old Testament passages), "Which," *He said*, "you heard of from Me (that's what we see in the Gospels right?); ⁵ for John baptized with water, but you shall be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days from now."

Again that contrast, John did this, but that's not it, you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit, not many days from now. And then in chapter 2 of Acts we see a little later that not specifically these words that the Word of God did come upon the church, or come upon the believers who were gathered as the church was born, Acts 2. But besides Acts 2, what other direct references do we have about the baptism of the Holy Spirit? Turn to Acts 11, and we'll look at that, and we'll look at verse 14. Acts 11:14, and he says here, this is Acts 11, this is where Peter is recounting what happened with the first Gentile converts,

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he is recounting to those in Jerusalem how this happened. And he recounts the words of Cornelius who is sharing with Peter what he had been told concerning Peter's coming, (Acts 11:14) "and he will speak words to you by which you will be saved, (Cornelius was being told this concerning Peter, that's really important) you and your household. And as I began to speak (this is Peter) the Holy Spirit fell upon them just as He did upon us at the beginning. (just like Pentecost) And I remembered the Word of the Lord, how He used to say 'John baptized with water, but you shall be baptized with the Holy Spirit'."

Now he started out that conversation with the fact that you will hear the Words of God and you will be saved, and Peter came and preached the Word of God and they were saved and in that they were baptized in the Holy Spirit. Verse 17 "If God therefore gave to them the same gift as He has given to us after believing in the Lord Jesus Christ (he says clearly they got that gift after they believed) who was I that I would stand in God's way"? God, and we'll see this, was affirming that salvation had moved, and he was using an outward affirmation by the Holy Spirit coming upon them mightily. (Acts 11:18) "And when they heard this, they quieted down, (there must have been an uproar right?) and glorified God (Notice how they glorify God, they just declared truth) saying 'Well then, God has granted to the Gentiles also the repentance that leads to life'."

They're getting saved too. Ok Peter, so we see this baptism of the Holy Spirit associated with the Holy Spirit there, they heard the Gospel, they believed, and they were baptized with the Holy Spirit, having received the gift of the Holy Spirit which was poured out upon them when they were saved by hearing the Word of God, that God had granted them repentance that leads to life. So we have, first of all, prophetic passages, and we have historic passages in Acts, but we also have what we call didactic passages. We have prophetic which show us the promise of the Holy Spirit coming, we have historical passages in the book of Acts which speak of the baptism of the Holy Spirit, it's simply looking at what happened to the church, historical passage, and then we have didactic passages, which speak of teaching. So would you turn with me to 1 Corinthians 12 where we see this baptism of the Holy Spirit, 1 Corinthians 12. And again, just a little context, Corinth was all messed up, they were seeking all the showy gifts, they were all focused, and they were divided, it was a bad scene in Corinth, and God was gracious in Paul to address it, and we benefit from that.

1 Corinthians 12:12 " ¹² For even as the body is one (speaking of a physical body) and yet has many members (all the parts), and all the members of the body, though they are many, are one body, so also is Christ." Paul is using an illustration of the human body to show us concerning this mystical body of Christ, we don't understand it, when I say mystical I mean it's a mystery how this works. He says then " ¹³ For by one Spirit we were all baptized into one body, whether Jews or Greeks, whether slaves or free, and we were all made to drink of one Spirit. ¹⁴ For the body is not one member, but many."

He's saying the whole church was made to drink of one Spirit, he says the Spirit baptized us all into one body, we were all made to partake of one Spirit, there's not a few of you who haven't partaken, there's not a few who might have partaken, all the believers in Corinth, the saints in Corinth, chapter 1 verse 1, had been placed into the body of Christ, they had been baptized. And again as I share this, we see every believers, Jew, Greek, slave, free were all baptized into one body. In Corinth, things were out of order as

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I shared, they were focusing on lesser gifts such as just tongues, there were divisions, and Paul straightens them out, pointing to the fact that everyone has been baptized into one body, and been made to drink of one Spirit.

Ephesians 1, they heard the Word, they believed, and they received the Spirit as a pledge. Acts 19 Paul says "Did you receive the Spirit when you believed?". Ephesians 4, Paul makes it clear there is one faith, one baptism. There's not a bunch of baptisms concerning salvation. There's not a bunch of faiths, there is one that counts, the rest are symbolic. Ephesians 4:4 " ⁴ *There is one body (that's the body of Christ) and one Spirit (that's God's Spirit), just as also you were called in one hope of your calling; ⁵ one Lord, one faith, one baptism,*". It is through the Holy Spirit that we were immersed, placed into the body of Christ. This is how receiving the Spirit, we partake of Him. It speaks of being placed into, identified, and it is the Lord Jesus behind this, as He baptizes us with His Spirit, He uses His Spirit to place us into the body of Christ. He will baptize you with His Spirit, He uses His Spirit as the means to bring us into a relationship, a saving relationship.

And so see see that, it's the same concept we see in scripture concerning being baptized into Christ. When you place your faith in Jesus Christ you are placed into, identified with, united with the Lord Jesus Christ. We are united and identified with His death, burial and reservation on our behalf. Turn to Romans 6, and we did this a couple weeks ago, but let's look again at that, and we see this term baptism. In Romans 5 he's just made the point where sinned increased grace increased. Wonderful truth that God's grace covers our sin, and now he's going to cut off the pass, someone who might erroneously think in their unbelief that "wow, if grace increases, let's just continue to sin". So he answers that, but we have a wonderful discourse, such an important discourse on what happens to us when we believe in the Lord Jesus Christ. Romans 6:1 "What shall we say then? Are we to continue in sin that grace might increase? ² May it never be! (May you never ever think that way). How shall we who died to sin still live in it? ³ Or do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus have been baptized into His death?"

All of you who when you placed your faith in Christ were placed into the body of Christ, you were identified and baptized into Christ Jesus, have been baptized into His death. You've been identified with His death. How so? When you are united with Christ, His death pays your penalty. His death applies to you. When you are in Christ, everything Christ did applies to you. (Romans 6:4) " ⁴ *Therefore we have been buried with Him through baptism into death, in order that as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, so we too might walk in newness of life. ⁵ For if we have become united with Him in the likeness of His death, certainly we shall be also in the likeness of His resurrection,*".

When you placed in Christ you were united with Christ, you were placed into the body of Christ by the Holy Spirit. We see this truth also in Galatians 3:26-28 and I'm going to read that for you " ²⁶ *For you are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus (It's by faith). ²⁷ For all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ. ²⁸ There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free man, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus*". Salvation levels the playing field, for all of you who were baptized into Christ, placed into. So we see here it is the same concept we

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see, it is through the Holy Spirit, through Christ's direction that we were immersed, placed into the body of Christ. This is how we receive and partake of Him, it speaks of being placed into, identified with Jesus Christ. Does that make sense? Hopefully, if not you can say it later.

It's what the Lord does when we are saved, He uses His Spirit, He places us in via His Spirit, He baptizes us with His Spirit. Now we're going to talk more about this because there are some difficulties within different denominations and different thinkings. We're going to look at that. When you hear the Gospel, repenting of your sins, trusting in Christ, the Spirit of God places you into the body of Christ, to unite you with Christ. You were baptized with the Holy Spirit, you are identified with Christ, and everything Christ did now applies to you, His death for sin, His resurrection to life, and we receive that Spirit, we partake of the Spirit of God, having received Him as a gift, as a down payment of the redemption of our bodies, the promise that He will give us ultimately what He has promised. So although it's somewhat of a mystery, every believer since the day of Pentecost has been placed into the body of Christ. And this is what I believe what we see back in Matthew and in the other Gospels predicting.

Back to 1st Corinthians, I'll read this again (1 Cor. 12:13) "For by one Spirit we were all baptized into one body, whether Jews or Greeks, whether slaves or free, and we were all made to drink of one Spirit." Baptism of the Holy Spirit is universal, we were all. And Jesus uses His Spirit to identify us with His mystical body, the church. We are placed into it by Christ by His Spirit. And thus, we are in Christ, He is the head of the body, the Church, Colossians 1:18. But some of you may have come from different churches, different denominations, you may have watched TBN or something and you would say "well what about the second blessing, what about tongues? How does this apply because when I hear of the baptism of the Holy Spirit I hear of tongues, I see that in Acts, I hear of this, what about that? What about this second blessing that I've been told to seek?". What about that?

I'm going to briefly give you an argument here, and then you can look at the scriptures later, but there is much within Pentecostal churches and charismatic churches concerning the second blessing, there is a lot there. There's a lot of focus on that right? And it's what they would call the baptism of the Holy Spirit. And if you did understand Pentecostal theology and much charismatic theology and even in churches that are not so openly charismatic, you would find out that they believe there is a second blessing, subsequent to salvation, and that it is a blessing that you are to seek after. And it is a blessing that is evidenced by speaking in tongues. They believe there is a special post conversion experience in which the Holy Spirit is poured out on you in all His fullness. And they say it is a higher and greater blessing than salvation. They believe it is spiritual experience to be sought and looked for, and they are taught in essence that they are not to content with just salvation, but to seek this higher blessing, this baptism of the Holy Spirit.

If you go to the Assemblies of God website, I don't recommend it because of their bad teaching, but if you were to go there, you would see what they would say concerning the baptism of the Holy Spirit. This is from their website: "All believers are entitled to and should ardently expect and earnestly seek the promise of the Father, the baptism in the Holy Spirit and fire (now interesting they had add that part, we'll look at that in a minute), according to the command of our Lord Jesus Christ. This was the normal

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experience of all in the early church. With it comes the endowment of power for life and service, the bestowment of the gifts and their uses in the work of the ministry.”

They say you should ardently seek it, you should go after this, all believers should. It's going to empower you to greater ministry, it's what opens you up the Lord pours out His Spirit in its fullness to help you do His will in His Word. But is that what scripture teaches? Is that what the Word of God teaches? First of all if you were to go into certain passages in Acts, on the surface, it appears that that is what is happening. That those who had already believed at a time previous received the Spirit of God, that baptism of the Holy Spirit at a later time, and received that blessing and spoke in tongues. But folks we need to be Bereans, and I believe if you interpret those passages rightly, in the historical context of the book of Acts, they do not prove a second blessing. What they do demonstrate is a special time during the birth of the Church in Jerusalem, and then spreading to Judea, Samaria, and the outermost parts of the earth. You say, ok, what are you talking about now?

Well folks, God did things in a special way in the beginning of the Church. Things were very special in the beginning, but in scripture we see this, it proved not to be the norm, as we see later. And the reason why I believe He did things in a special was He was affirming that the Jews had rejected Christ, and salvation as moving from Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria and the outermost parts, and we see this later tongues speaking and Holy Spirit always happening at these events as the Gospel moved outward from Jerusalem. I believe Pentecostals make serious errors in their interpretation because they take Acts in a doctrinal fashion, ripping it from its historical context.

Acts is a historical book, we see the history of the Church inspired by the Holy Spirit, is there doctrine and teaching in there? Yes, but it's in a context of history. It is the history, it is the history of the Acts of the Spirit of God through the apostles. For example, there are those who validate a second blessing with the events in Pentecost in Acts 2. Where in obedience 120, the Lord commands, including the apostles, are waiting for the promise of the Holy Spirit. And on the day of Pentecost, Acts 2, these believers received the Spirit of God, but folks, we need to be careful that we do not become immersed in pride and think we are like those 120, that we are in their same footsteps, that we are the ones waiting for that promise. He was telling them to wait for it. It was a special event, it was the birth of the Church, it was not until the Lord was glorified that He would send His Spirit as promised, Acts 2. And let's take a look at that,

Acts 2:1, “And when the day of Pentecost had come, they were all together in one place. ² And suddenly there came from heaven a noise like a violent, rushing wind, and it filled the whole house where they were sitting. ³ And there appeared to them tongues as of fire distributing themselves (and we'll look at that in a minute, what that fire represents), and they rested on each one of them. ⁴ And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit was giving them utterance. ⁵ Now there were Jews living in Jerusalem, devout men, from every nation under heaven. ⁶ And when this sound occurred, the multitude came together, and were bewildered, because they were each one hearing them speak in his own language. ⁷ And they were amazed and marveled, saying, “Why, are not all these who are speaking Galileans? ⁸” And how is it that we each hear *them* in

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our own language to which we were born? (They're hearing in their languages) ⁹ "Parthians and Medes and Elamites, and residents of Mesopotamia, Judea and Cappadocia, Pontus and Asia, ¹⁰ Phrygia and Pamphylia, Egypt and the districts of Libya around Cyrene, and visitors from Rome, both Jews and proselytes, ¹¹ Cretans and Arabs-- we hear them in our *own* tongues speaking of the mighty deeds of God." ¹² And they all continued in amazement and great perplexity, saying to one another, "What does this mean?" (What does it mean) ¹³ But others were mocking and saying, "They are full of sweet wine."

We see first of all the event of the Spirit coming upon believers who were told to wait, right? These were believers who had to wait for Christ to be glorified, He said wait, and they waited and He was glorified and He poured out His Spirit on the day of Pentecost. His Spirit upon the church. And there was an evidence of that in their speaking in tongues, and we're going to look at that in a little bit. Well what about other events in Acts that appear to support this second blessing. Remember Acts 8 we have those in Judea and Samaria hearing the Gospel, it's going from Jerusalem now to Judea, Samaria, and yet they hadn't received the Holy Spirit, they hadn't received it. And when do they receive it? When the apostles come from Jerusalem.

Acts 8:14 " ¹⁴ Now when the apostles in Jerusalem heard that Samaria had received the word of God (that's synonymous with believing, they believed, they heard the Word, they heard this, wow! Wait a second, Samaria has received the Word of God) , they sent them Peter and John, ¹⁵ who came down and prayed for them, that they might receive the Holy Spirit. ¹⁶ For He had not yet fallen upon any of them; they had simply been baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. ¹⁷ Then they *began* laying their hands on them, and they were receiving the Holy Spirit."

Well that seems like, wow, that's what we should do. We should be praying for the Holy Spirit to come, laying hands on one another, but is that what we should be doing? Or is this showing us the history of the church moving from Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria, and the affirmation that God was in this, which the Jews would have never thought was possible. They would have never thought that the Gospel was moving from them outward. Why wasn't the Holy Spirit poured out when they believed, special time as God affirmed this truth by having the apostles present when they received the Spirit of God.

Well what about Acts 10, we have it from Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria, now we're going to have it go unto the outer most parts as we see it go to the Gentiles. Acts 10:43, and notice right away they receive when they believe. Acts 10:43. Peter is preaching to Cornelius and his household, ⁴³ "Of Him (that's Jesus) all the prophets bear witness that through His name everyone who believes in Him receives forgiveness of sins." (what a wonderful, wonderful truth) ⁴⁴ While Peter was still speaking these words, the Holy Spirit fell upon all those who were listening to the message. ⁴⁵ And all the circumcised believers who had come with Peter were amazed, (notice it's a sign, and they're seeing something happening right?) because the gift of the Holy Spirit had been poured out upon the Gentiles also. ⁴⁶ For they were hearing them speaking with tongues and exalting God. (Now listen here, he says) Then Peter answered, ⁴⁷ "Surely no one can refuse the water for these to be baptized who have received the Holy Spirit just as we *did*, can he?"

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It was an affirmation in the presence of the apostles that the Gospel was moving from Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria, to Gentiles. Unfathomable for those. And then we see in Acts 19, when the Ephesians came to faith, about 10 men coming to faith, wonderful beginning of the Ephesian church. Acts 10 (Acts 19?), actually let's go to Acts 11 before that, let's go back to 11. We also see this receiving of the Spirit is not a second blessing but it has to do with repentance.

Acts 11:14 "and he shall speak words to you by which you will be saved, you and all your household. ¹⁵ "And as I began to speak, (he's recounting what we just saw in Acts 10, and I began to speak Peter's saying) the Holy Spirit fell upon them, just as *He did* upon us at the beginning. ¹⁶ "And I remembered the word of the Lord, how He used to say, 'John baptized with water, but you shall be baptized with the Holy Spirit.' ¹⁷ "If God therefore gave to them the same gift as He gave to us also after believing in the Lord Jesus Christ, who was I that I could stand in God's way?" ¹⁸ And when they heard this, they quieted down, and glorified God, saying, "Well then, God has granted to the Gentiles also the repentance *that leads to life.*"

It was a big issue that salvation was moving, they didn't believe it, they needed these signs from God to affirm that it had moved from there. And we see it happening. Acts 19 now. Verse 1 "And it came about that while Apollos was at Corinth, Paul having passed through the upper country came to Ephesus, and found some disciples, ² and he said to them, "Did you receive the Holy Spirit when you believed?" (Did you receive the Holy Spirit? That's the norm, did you receive Him when you believed? He didn't say did you pray for it, and get the Holy Spirit and finally get Him? Did you receive Him when you believed?)

And they *said* to him, "No, we have not even heard whether there is a Holy Spirit." ³ And he said, "Into what then were you baptized?" And they said, "Into John's baptism." (They just heard about repentance, they hadn't heard about faith in Christ). ⁴ And Paul said, "John baptized with the baptism of repentance, telling the people to believe in Him who was coming after him, that is, in Jesus." (Now he's sharing the Gospel with them) ⁵ And when they heard this (they heard the Word), they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. ⁶ And when Paul had laid his hands upon them, the Holy Spirit came on them, and they *began* speaking with tongues and prophesying. ⁷ And there were in all about twelve men."

The book of Acts as we'll see was a transitional period, where God was affirming His salvation was moving from Jews to Gentiles. We see it transition from the beginning of the church where they were waiting, true believers are waiting already. He affirmed in a very special way, allowing those who were newly saved to be identified with the apostles, when they received the Holy Spirit. Then the Jews could not deny that salvation had moved to the Gentiles. I encourage you and exhort you not to make the error of ripping Acts out of its historical context. We see a special time when it moved from Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria, and the outermost parts.

But you say "Ok, I think I get that, but what about tongues? What about this tongues thing? That's all throughout this baptism of the Holy Spirit, what about that?" I want to say, do you have another ten hours? It's a long issue, and we have papers on the wall about tongues, and you can grab those, I'm not going to go through everything or we'd be here a long time. But I'm going share some things relating to

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what we've seen already, and also if they're gone afterwards, we've got it on the website, you can look it up in terms of what we believe the Bible says concerning tongues. But what about tongues? I believe we need to know a few things.

First of all, what are tongues? The word simply means "languages". Do you remember what we saw in Acts 2? Tongues were languages the speaker didn't previously know, that were heard. We see in scripture that tongues must be interpreted, 1 Corinthians 14, or heard by those who understand, Acts 2, right? Interpreted or heard. Secondly, I believe this is the most important point you'll gather about tongues, is we need to recognize the primary purpose of tongues as revealed in scripture. If you get this, you will not be side tracked by the deceivers and the deceived. Turn with me to 1 Corinthians 14:20, this is really important. Yes there are other issues concerning tongues, but this is the reason why. And Paul says I don't want you guys to be childish in your thinking, I'm going to tell you why. I'm going to give you the reason why there were tongues.

1 Corinthians 14:20, "²⁰ Brethren, do not be children in your thinking; (that's what Corinth was like, little babies that didn't understand the truth, and they were all over the place) yet in evil be babes (I think he's implying you're in the realm and sphere of evil guys, don't be that way), but in your thinking be mature. (Be complete, grow up) ²¹ In the Law it is written, "By men of strange tongues and by the lips of strangers I will speak to this people, and even so they will not listen to Me," says the Lord. (He's saying that there will be those of strange tongues that speaks to this people, that's the Jews. And they will not listen, they are unbelievers). ²² So then tongues are for a sign, not to those who believe, but to unbelievers;"

These churches go around saying, tongues is the sign that you've received the Spirit, to believers. It's not a sign to believers, it's a sign to unbelievers. It was a sign on the day of Pentecost that the Jews had rejected their Messiah, by men of strange tongues, I will speak to these people, it is a sign. They were declaring the mighty deeds of God, it was a sign to the Jews, this people, that they had missed their Messiah. Although the speaking of tongues interpreted will bring about edification, because it is declaring the mighty deeds of God. The primary purpose of the tongues back there was a sign to those who did not believe, in the context unbelieving Jews, and Paul would go on later to say that if there is prophecy it will be done away with, if there are tongues, they will cease (1 Cor. 13:8).

Tongues was a sign to unbelieving Jews, it was a sign I believe that they had missed the Messiah, and that the Gospel was spreading. The Gospel was spreading to the nations. Then that was God's plan from the beginning, Romans 11, that because of the unbelief of the Jews it would go to the nations. And then the nations would make the Jews jealous, and everyone ultimately that God had called would be saved. This is why I believe there was the symbolism in the tongues of fire appearing on them on that day. Fire is judgment in scripture most of the time. Those tongues of fire, that was revealing that what these people were saying, these mighty deeds of God were a judgment to those who heard and did not believe. It was a condemnation, the mighty deeds of God, spoken in other tongues, condemning the Jews who had not believed.

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Folks there's so much about tongues, but just these little portions here, speaking in tongues is not a sign of the second blessing, it is a sign to the Jews, to unbelievers that they missed the Messiah. The apostle Paul also shared, now, the Pentecostal denominations say that everyone should seek this, that everyone should have this second blessing. But Paul said, not all speak in tongues, not everyone, that's one portion of the gift at that time. Why would the apostle Paul relate that fact that not everyone spoke in tongues, if tongues was a sign of the second blessing, that is supposedly encouraged by everyone? Tongues was not a sign of the second blessing of the Holy Spirit, was a sign that they Jews had missed their Messiah. When they had come to faith, notice how the tongues was used when it went from Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria, and out to the Gentiles. It was an evidence that it had happened.

I have a ton more to say on that, but you can go again, look at that paper, there's a lot more to it, it's a lot more complex issue. But nowhere in scripture are we told to seek the baptism of the Holy Spirit, nowhere. And when someone tells you to do that, they are speaking apart from the Word of God, they are twisting the Word of God. And maybe you've been told this, maybe you've bought into this whole second blessing thing, and focusing on this experience, and I tell you right now, in light of the word of God, you need to go before the Lord and say "Lord I'm sorry, I'm sorry that I bought into this, I'm sorry".

Contrary to the Pentecostal teaching that shows there's something greater than salvation to be sought, that would empower us to greater works, God is made it clear in His Word that we have received everything pertaining to life and godliness through the true knowledge of Him 2nd Peter 1. That we are complete in Christ, not after a second blessing, but when we are saved, Colossians 2:10. Don't let people deceive you, taking you captive with the fleshy experience.

Listen to what the great expositor Martin Lloyd Jones says "What must we say about this doctrine by way of evaluation? Should Christians be seeking this second blessing, this baptism with the Holy Spirit? Is there something more for us? We say a resounding no! This is emphatically not something to be sought, because it is not a blessing God has promised His people! This Pentecostal teaching is a deception of the most serious sort! It has confused, misled, and shaken the faith of many. It is to be condemned and rejected, categorically!" And I agree whole-heartedly.

So then in summary, what is the baptism of the Holy Spirit? Is it a second blessing, I don't think so. I believe it is speaking of in this context as we will see, of salvation, the work of Christ, brought about by the Spirit of God in the life of the one who believes. That's what it is, and in that, we receive this baptism of the Holy Spirit. Everyone who has believed in Jesus Christ has received the Spirit, placed into the body of Christ by the Spirit of God. It is the work of the Spirit, it is accomplished when one believes. There is one faith, one baptism.

So with that in mind, unfortunately with all the doctrine that has infiltrated the church, we needed to pull away from our passage, but let's get back to our passage as we finish up here. Matthew 3:11 "11 "As for me, I baptize you with water for repentance, but He who is coming after me is mightier than I, and I am not fit to remove His sandals; He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit (and then he says) and fire." I think the point of this is John is saying, it's not just repentance by itself that saves you. That's nothing

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compared to what Christ is going to do, it prepares the way, but Christ is the Savior, He will baptize you with the Spirit, He will use His Spirit to bring about new life in you. He will do that.

Now secondly we see another baptism here. He says with the Holy Spirit and fire. Now as I read on that Pentecostal website, the Assemblies of God, we see that they believe the baptism of the Holy Spirit and fire is actually the second blessing, that fire is too. And they believe certainly that fire speaks of purification, and we do know that we have the idea of a refiner's fire that purifies things. But is John saying that Christ is going to baptize you with the Spirit, you're going to be saved through the work of the Spirit of God, and then He's going to purify you with fire, is that what he's saying? I don't think so, in context. I don't think so. Certainly God does purify, and that's truth, but is that truth from this passage?

There is no evidence whatsoever in the context here that points to purification, there's not, you've got to make it up, you've got to take it from other places and import it in here. On the contrary, there is tremendous contextual evidence that it points to the fact that this baptism of fire is judgment. Let's look at verses 11 and 12 together. As we see a life and death illustration, "¹¹ "As for me, I baptize you with water for repentance, but He who is coming after me is mightier than I, and I am not fit to remove His sandals; He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire. (Two choices there) ¹² "And His winnowing fork is in His hand, and He will thoroughly clear His threshing floor; and He will gather His wheat into the barn, but He will burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire."

I don't think he's talking about purification here when he says unquenchable fire. I believe we see in this illustration, we have an illustration of a farmer with his fork who is separating from his threshing floor the wheat and the chaff, and the chaff is going in the air and it will be burned up. Usually when they separated they didn't burn the chaff actually, the chaff was thrown into the air and was blown away by the wind. Here he says it will be burned up with unquenchable fire. And if you say I still think it means purification, don't let your theology interpret how you look at the Word, let the Word interpret your theology. I shared this earlier, but I believe those tongues as of fire, because the Lord said I will speak through this people, men of strange tongues, unbelievers a sign, it was a sign of judgment. That's what I believe it is. Like chaff.

We see in Psalm 1: "⁴ The wicked are not so, But they are like chaff which the wind drives away. (It's the stuff that's worthless) ⁵ Therefore the wicked will not stand in the judgment, Nor sinners in the assembly of the righteous. ⁶ For the LORD knows the way of the righteous, But the way of the wicked will perish. "

Strong statement, if you don't know Christ, everything you're doing is meaningless, it's worthless. And if you don't bear fruit, the axe is at the tree. And Christ is going to baptize one way or another, you're going to be placed into the body of Christ, or you're going to be placed into judgment. There's two choices for everyone, there were two choices for the Jews. The work of Christ is salvation and judgment, salvation and judgment, this is the work of Christ. John says, I am nothing compared, I'm sharing repentance but He will baptize you with the Spirit and fire. Two possibilities when we are confronted with Jesus. One is to believe in Him, repenting of sin and being placed into His body, experiencing life by

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His Spirit. The other is to reject Him and to be placed into eternal fire. To be baptized in unquenchable fire.

That's the work of Christ, you reject His first work and He will perform His second work on you. He has no problem with saying, depart from me you who practice lawlessness, He has no problem with sending you to hell if you reject Him. What you do with Christ determines what you are placed into. Baptized into, fire, or the Holy Spirit. Will you be placed into the body of Christ, receiving all the benefits of His death, burial and resurrection, eternal life, or will you be placed into fire for rejecting Christ. Which baptism will He perform on you? Which one? Today we've seen three baptisms, John's repentance to prepare the way, outward symbolizing a heart of repentance, preparing the way for Jesus Christ, you must repent, unless ye repent you will perish. You must turn to God and acknowledge your sin before Him, this prepares the way for the Lord. Jesus will baptize in one way or another.

In the very last book of the Old Testament, the Jews would have understood this in Malachi 4:1 " "For behold, the day is coming, burning like a furnace; and all the arrogant and every evildoer will be chaff; and the day that is coming will set them ablaze," says the LORD of hosts". Which baptism will be yours? Have you repented of your sins and trusted in Christ? What a wonderful God, who would bear your sins for you. You don't have to do it, you don't have to try to get out of sin, you can't do it. Jesus bore your sins in His body on the cross, and if you believe in Him, repenting of sins, He will place you into a relationship with Him, forever. If you reject that, He has no alternative because He is a righteous and just God to place you into judgment. Which baptism?

Prayer

Dear Lord, I thank You for Your Word, I thank You for what it says, and I pray we would not be distracted by the fleshy theologies that pull it way from the Gospel, that make it about us, and experience. How evil it is to take the truth of Your Word and to make it about us and experience, rather than about what Your Son has done. I thank you so much for what You have done, You are so great and wonderful. I pray for anyone here who has not been placed into Your Son's body by believing in Christ, that they would do so, that they would trust you, that they would believe Lord God. And I also pray for anyone here who hasn't done that, that they would be clear in their minds, the choice they are making, that You Son will baptize them in fire if they reject Him. Lord thank You for Your Word, thank You for warning us, thank you for the wonderful truth in Your Word. May we stay centered on Christ, for His glory, in Jesus' name. Amen.

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