

Born of, Baptized in and Filled with the Spirit

By Bill Scheidler

We are now living in the Age of the Spirit. The Father has had His work to do particularly in **CREATION**. The Age of the Father extended from the father of all who are alive, Adam, up to the father of all who believe, Abraham.

The Son has had His work to do particularly in **REDEMPTION**. The Age of the Son extended from the symbolic sacrifice of the only begotten son of the Old Testament, Isaac, to the incarnation, death, burial and ascension of the only begotten Son of the New Testament, Jesus.

The Spirit has His work to do particularly in **SANCTIFICATION**. The Age of the Spirit extends from the Early Rain outpouring of the Holy Spirit on the Day of Pentecost (Acts 2) to the Latter Rain outpouring of the Holy Spirit just prior to the Second Coming of Christ.

The Age of the Spirit is also referred to as the Church Age. This Age is that period of time when the Holy Spirit works in believers to bring to fulfillment all that has been provided for them by the Father and the Son, and to assist believers in becoming all that God in Christ has made it possible for them to become.

Encounters with the Spirit

The believer has three major power encounters with the Holy Spirit that all help the believer to achieve destiny. While there are many operations of the Spirit in the life of the believer, it is these three encounters that form the basis for our ability to walk by the Spirit.

Every person is to experience these three encounters. Every believer is to be born of the Spirit (John 3:5-6), baptized in or with the Spirit (Luke 3:16; Acts 1:5) and filled with the Spirit (Eph. 5:18-19).

If, however, we are to receive the full benefit of these experiences, we must understand the purpose and the distinction between each of them.

Born of the Spirit

Being born of the Spirit is *a one-time experience* that is important for every believer. In fact, Jesus said that in order to even enter the Kingdom of God a person had to be born-again or born of water and the Spirit (Jn. 3:3,5).

A person is born of the Spirit when they truly repent of their sins and acknowledge the Lordship of Christ in their lives (Rom. 10:8-13).

When a person is born again, the Holy Spirit is joined to our human spirit and we become a child of God and the temple of the Holy Spirit (I Cor. 3:16-17; 6:17; II Cor. 6:16).

The evidence that we have been born of the Spirit is the inner witness of the Spirit that we are the children of God (Rom. 8:16). This is why when you ask someone if they are “saved” and they do not have an inner confidence that they are, perhaps that is a sign that they are not.

When someone is truly born-again you can expect to see the fruit of this experience operating in his or her life. The outcome or fruit of this experience is the fruit of the Spirit. Jesus said you would know them by their fruit.

If we are truly born-again and the Spirit of God is living in us, we should begin to see the fruit of the Spirit or the CHARACTER OF CHRIST developing within us. This is the starting place for the believer. But that is not all that God wants us to experience in this Age of the Spirit.

Baptized with or in the Spirit

Individuals who are born-again are also to be baptized in or with the Spirit. Jesus told His believer disciples to wait in Jerusalem until they would receive this baptism (Acts 1:4-8).

The baptism of the Holy Spirit is also *a one-time experience* in the life of the believer. It is an experience that is subsequent to or perhaps even simultaneous with the salvation or born-again experience (Acts 8:12-17).

It is an endowment with power from on High to fulfill the commission of God in our lives (Luke 24:49; Acts 18). And, for this reason, it is an experience that Christ wants every believer to have (John 7:37-39; Acts 2:38). He said it was for everyone who would be called by God.

While being born-again involves the Holy Spirit entering *into* a person’s spirit, the baptism of the Spirit is an anointing *upon* the believer (Luke 24:49; Acts 10:44).

In the New Testament when someone was baptized in the Spirit they received the evidence of speaking with other tongues (Acts 10:45-46).

When someone receives this experience it seems to open them up in a new way to the ABILITY OR POWER OF CHRIST. The outcome or fruit of this experience is a greater release of and sensitivity to the gifts of the Spirit (I Cor. 12:7-11).

Filled with the Spirit

The third experience or encounter with the Holy Spirit that should be a part of every believer’s life is that of being filled the Holy Spirit. Sometimes this terminology has been confused with the baptism of the Spirit.

However, unlike the baptism of the Spirit that is a one-time event in the life of the believer, being filled with the Spirit is meant to be *an ongoing, daily experience* for the believer.

Being filled with the Spirit is an experience that is available to anyone who is in covenant relationship with God in both the Old and New Testaments (Ex. 38:3; Luke 1:15, 41).

When someone is “filled” with the Spirit the Holy Spirit fills the heart and mind of the believer so that every thought, determination and action is under the pervading influence and direction of the Holy Spirit (When something is filled it is completely taken up in, saturated by and permeated with that substance.).

This is something that every believer should seek for every day. It is to be a continual and daily experience of every believer (Eph. 5:18-19). If the believer is to endure in the race of life without running out of spiritual energy, that person must be running on the fuel of the Spirit. The purpose of this experience is greater ENDURANCE in the life of the believer.

There are many indications of a person being filled with the Spirit including righteousness, peace and joy (Rom. 14:17; Acts 6:15; 7:55). When the disciples (who had already been baptized in the Holy Spirit) were filled with the Spirit the evidence was a new boldness to preach and testify to their faith (Acts 4:31).

Part of the reason why this experience is often confused with the baptism of the Spirit is that most of the time when someone is “baptized” in the Spirit they are simultaneously “filled” with the Spirit (Acts 2:1-4).

The Experience of Jesus

Jesus was the first one in history to receive all three of these experiences. He stood at the transition point of the ages and became the pattern for all believers. When you look at Jesus’ life, He was born of the Spirit in the fullest sense when the Holy Spirit actually provided the seed for His natural birth (Mt. 1:20).

Later He was baptized in the Holy Spirit at the Jordan River (Mt. 3:16). As He walked in the Spirit He walked a life that was filled with or full of the Spirit (Luke 4:1).

The Experience of the Apostles

The early apostles had the same experience that Jesus had. They were born of the Spirit when Jesus came to them after His resurrection and breathed on them in the upper room and said, “Receive the Spirit” (John 20:22). They were baptized in the Spirit and simultaneously filled with the Spirit on the day of Pentecost as they waited according to the instructions of Jesus (Acts 1:5; 2:4).

Later, these same disciples who had been born of the Spirit (one-time experience) and baptized in the Spirit (one-time experience), were again “filled” with the Spirit (ongoing experiences) and spoke the Word of God with boldness (Acts 4:23-31).

Paul’s Command to Be Filled

When Paul wrote to the believers at the church at Ephesus who had been born of the Spirit and baptized with the Spirit (Acts 19), he commanded them to be “filled” with the Spirit (Eph. 5:18-19).

Paul was saying that this is not an optional experience for the believer. You must be filled with the Spirit if you are going to be able to function as an overcomer on a day-to-day basis. Actually the Greek tense that Paul used for “be filled” indicates that he was admonishing them to “be continually filled with the Spirit.”

The Holy Spirit is the fuel or the oil keeps the engine of the believer running. In this sense it parallels the oil in relation to the lamp stand in the Tabernacle of Moses. If the lamps were going to fulfill their function (to be lights), they had to have oil—not just a one-time application of oil at the inauguration of the tabernacle, but a twice-daily filling.

We are like that lamp stand. We are called to be lights. We too are to have oil in our lamps. We receive an initial filling when we are born of the Spirit and baptized in the Spirit, but we all need a daily filling or refueling so that we will not burn out.

So much is said today about “burnout.” It is a serious problem with many people, especially those in “the ministry.” I wonder if we are staying filled with the oil of the Spirit or if we are, in fact, burning on the wick. The wick in an oil lamp can last a lifetime if the supply of oil never runs dry. But when the same lamp runs out of oil, the wick is consumed very quickly.

The Need for Continual Filling

As believers, we need to believe for a continual filling. There are so many things that can leave us dry in spirit. The very routines of life can drain us of spiritual vitality and energy. The constant barrage from the enemy can deplete us. The special challenges that each day holds can blind-side us. The opposition from unbelievers can discourage us (Acts 4:23ff.). In all of these things we need a fresh touch of the Spirit on a daily basis.

The good news is that a fresh touch of the Spirit is always available to us. We don’t have to dry up in our spiritual walk. We don’t have to just go forward on sheer will power. The Holy Spirit is an inexhaustible resource that is ever available to us.

The Path to Continual Filling

If that is true (and it is), then what must we do to follow Paul’s admonition to “be filled with the Spirit?” There are some things that we can and must do. Paul put the responsibility on us to position ourselves for this kind of encounter with the Spirit.

First, we must recognize that we have a need (Mt. 5:3; Acts 4:29). If we do not see this as something that we need, we will not follow the necessary steps to get it. This is the first step to getting anything in the Kingdom.

Second, we must take the initiative (Eph. 5:18-19). No one is going to do this for us. The pastor, our parents, our counselor or our boss will not be able to do this for us. We must take personal responsibility for our own condition.

Third, we must hunger and thirst after the Lord (Mt. 5:6). It is those that hunger and thirst after the Lord who will be filled. It is the little bird with the mouth open that will get the mother's attention.

Fourth, we must ask (Luke 4:13). That means spending some time daily before the Lord in prayer and supplication. Sometimes we have not because we ask not. God is the source and we are His children. As we come before Him regularly, as regularly as the priest supplied oil to the lamp stand, our heavenly High Priest will pour out His Spirit upon us.

Finally, we must do this often (Eph. 5:18-19). We shouldn't wait until the tank is completely empty to fill it up.

Keep the Tank Full

I have little tolerance for people who continually run out of gas. Apart from the initial investment, it is just as easy to keep the top half of the tank filled as the bottom half. Some people put five dollars worth of gas into an empty tank. They are not really saving anything yet they are always living on the edge of total depletion.

Why not adopt the spiritual principle of filling the tank daily. Don't wait. Top it off. Top it off often. You will never run dry.

Listen to Jesus words in John 7:37-38, "If anyone thirsts, let him come to Me and drink. He who believes in Me, out of his heart will flow rivers of living water." John goes on to say, "But this he spoke of the Spirit, whom those believing in Him would receive" (John 7:39).