

Great Article by Dan Gatlin.

The Baptism And Outpouring Of The Holy Spirit

by Dan Gatlin

“For John truly baptized with water, but you shall be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days from now” (Acts 1:5). “And it shall come to pass in the last days, says God, that I will pour out of my Spirit on all flesh; your sons and your daughters shall prophecy, your young men shall see visions, your old men shall dream dreams.” (Acts 2:17).

Some have wrongfully concluded based on the above passages that since Jesus promised to baptize with the Holy Spirit, and the “Holy Spirit was poured out”, that pouring is an acceptable form of baptism. Note the following quotations:

“(1) Pouring or effusion. Historically, pouring was applied by the one baptizing pouring water three times over the head of the one being baptized — once for each member of the Trinity. It is argued that pouring best illustrates the work of the Holy Spirit bestowed on the person (Acts 2:17-18).” (Moody Handbook of Theology, p.364)

The supposed connection between pouring and baptism is the work of the Spirit in Acts 2:17-18. Even a superficial consideration of this argument will show a primary fallacy. The author has taken a spiritual action accomplished by Deity and applied it to a physical action that is to be carried out by men. He has compared what is not intended to be compared, and by doing so, has redefined *baptizo*.

“To baptize literally means to immerse a person in water or to deluge him with it, usually as a mean of cleansing. When the term is applied to the Spirit, it appears to refer to the pouring out of the Spirit from on high by God and is associated with the forgiveness of sins (2:38).” (Tyndale New Testament Commentaries, I. Howard Marshall, p.58).

This is by no means a new argument. McGarvey deals with it in his commentary on Acts 2:17. He writes, “It is quite common with pedobaptist writers and speakers to make use of the expression, ‘I will pour out from my Spirit,’ to prove that pouring may be the action of baptism.” He spends the next several paragraphs dealing with the argument.

The assumption of these sectarian writers is that the baptism of the Spirit and the outpouring of the Spirit refers to the same thing. As we shall see, this is not so.

The Baptism of the Holy Spirit

Shortly before His ascension Jesus said, “Behold I send the Promise of My Father upon you; but tarry in the city of Jerusalem until you are endued with power from on high” (Lk. 24:49). The parallel account of this is found in Acts 1:4-5: “And being assembled together with them, He commanded them not to depart from Jerusalem, but to wait for the Promise of the Father, ‘which,’ He said, ‘you have heard from Me; for John truly baptized with water, but you shall be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days from now.’” Both passages speak of “the Promise of the Father” which is explained by the statements that follow the phrase. To be “endued with power from on high” and to be “baptized with the Holy Spirit” are the same thing. Luke 24:49 tells us what literally happened, while Acts 1:5 is a metonymy.

Some believe that the baptism of the Holy Spirit was given to the 120 who are mentioned in Acts 1:15. But, this cannot be so. The context shows that the promise was given only to the apostles, Acts 1:2-3. Further, Acts 2:1 states, “When the Day of Pentecost had fully come, they were all with one accord in one place.” The antecedent of “they” is the apostles in Acts 1:26, agreeing in gender and number.

The actual baptism of the Spirit is recorded in Acts 2:1-4: “When the Day of Pentecost had fully come, they were all with one accord in one place. And suddenly there came a sound from heaven, as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled the whole house where they were staying. Then there appeared to them divided tongues, as of fire, and one sat upon each of them. And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak with other tongues, as the

Spirit gave them utterance.” Although the apostles already possessed some miraculous gifts (Matt. 10:6-8; 17:14-21; Lk. 24:45), they were given a “fuller portion” as a result of the Spirit’s baptism. They alone could now pass on miraculous gifts to others (Acts 8:18-20; Rom. 1:11). Since the church was not established until Pentecost, the apostles would now occupy that unique office. Consider the following: “But to each one of us grace was given according to the measure of Christ’s gift. Therefore He says: ‘When He ascended on high, He led captivity captive, And gave gifts to men.’ (Now this, ‘He ascended’ —what does it mean but that He also first descended into the lower parts of the earth? He who descended is also the One who ascended far above all the heavens, that He might fill all things.) And He Himself gave some to be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers, for the equipping of the saints for the work of ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ, till we all come to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a perfect man, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ” (Eph. 4:7-13). It should be noted that verses 9 & 10 are parenthetical, explaining verse eight. Verse eight says that Jesus gave gifts to men “when He ascended on high.” Those gifts are enumerated in verse 11. It was not until the church was established that these offices were established within the church, including the office of apostle. One might note that in Matthew 10:2, the twelve are called “apostles” even though the church had not been established. This can be explained in two possible ways. First, Jesus’ words comprised a prolepsis (a speaking in anticipation, Bullinger, p.914). They were not apostles when Jesus spoke, but He knew they would be in the future. Or second, the reference to their being apostles has to do with the fact that Jesus sent them to preach to the “lost sheep of the house of Israel.”

The second recorded instance of the Baptism of the Holy Spirit is in Acts 10. We know that this was a baptism of the Holy Spirit because the Scriptures tell us so. “While Peter was still speaking these words, the Holy Spirit fell upon all those who heard the word. And those of the circumcision who believed were astonished, as many as came with Peter, because the gift of the Holy Spirit had been poured out on the Gentiles also. For they heard them speak with tongues and magnify God. Then Peter answered, ‘Can anyone forbid water, that these should not be baptized who have received the Holy Spirit just as we have?’” (Acts 10:44-47). In relating the events in the house of Cornelius to the church in Jerusalem, Peter stated, “And as I began to speak, the Holy Spirit fell upon them, as upon us at the beginning. Then I remembered the word of the Lord, how He said, ‘John indeed baptized with water, but you shall be baptized with the Holy Spirit.’” (Acts 11:15-16). Some suggest that the baptism of the Holy Spirit started on the day of Pentecost and continues today. But the language shows otherwise. The phrase (*en arche*) “at the beginning” would have to be changed. Arche is a locative of time which requires the preposition to mean “in” or “at”, not “from.”

The purpose of this baptism of the Spirit is obviously different with Cornelius. He was neither an apostle nor could he pass on miraculous gifts. Rather, this baptism of the Spirit was to show the Jews that God accepted the Gentiles into the kingdom.

The Outpouring of the Holy Spirit

The outpouring of the Spirit is distinct from the baptism of the Spirit. While the baptism of the Spirit was given to the apostles and Cornelius, the outpouring would be given to many others. Notice as Peter quotes from Joel 2: “And it will come to pass in the last days, says God, that I will pour out of My Spirit on all flesh; Your sons and your daughters shall prophecy, Your young men shall see visions, Your old men will dream dreams. And on My menservants and on My maidservants I will pour out my Spirit in those days; and they shall prophecy” (Acts 2:17-18). It is obvious that the outpouring of the Spirit is intended for more than just the apostles, since none of the apostles qualifies as a “daughter” or “maidservant”. Further, the outpouring would be upon “all flesh.” This does not mean that every human would receive the outpouring, but that it would be available without distinction in nationality or gender (c.f. Lk. 3:6; Jn. 17:2). It must also be remembered that “visions, prophecies, and dreams” ended after the New Testament was completed (1 Cor. 13). The outpouring of the Spirit would last only as long as the age of miracles.

We must also remember that the Holy Spirit was not poured out, as if He were some sort of liquid. Such an absurdity indicates figurative language. In fact, the grammar paints quite a different picture. The phrase

(ekcheo apo tou pneumatos mou) “I will pour out of (or from, dg) my Spirit” is the same in verses 17 and 18, though many translations ignore the preposition in verse 18. *Pneumatos* is in the ablative case (the case of source or origin) which causes the use of the preposition *apo*. And, *apo* “implies separation” (Dana & Mantey, p.101). So, the outpouring of (or from) the Spirit was something that the Spirit gave to man, but not the Spirit Himself. The Spirit was the source, not the substance, of the outpouring. What poured out “from the Spirit” was visions, prophecies, and dreams. This is exactly in keeping with the purpose of the Spirit who would guide those who were inspired “into all truth” (Jn.16:13).