

What Do “Baptize” and “Holy Spirit” Mean?

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Last Sunday, we talked about who the Holy Spirit is: The Holy Spirit is the Spirit of Jesus. Jesus explained that He gave us the Holy Spirit to come in His place to be with us always—Forever! We ended last Sunday with Jesus, after His resurrection, telling His disciples to wait in Jerusalem to be baptized with the Holy Spirit. But, what does “baptize” mean? And, what do the words “Holy Spirit” mean?

Baptize in Greek, βαπτίζω, *baptidzo*: means to dip in, submerge. It means to be completely covered in something. By the way, this is not a discussion of the different ways that church denominations baptize Believers with water. This is simply studying God’s Word to understand correctly what “Baptize with the Holy Spirit” means. Is baptize the same as to sprinkle or pour? For example, the author of Hebrews uses the word, “sprinkled” several times (Greek, ραντίζω, *rhantid’zó*) when talking about the blood of the sacrifice being “sprinkled” on the altar. Clearly, “baptize” is not “sprinkled”. Does baptize mean “poured”, like Angels we see in the book of Revelation “pour out” the Wrath of God? (In Greek, ἐκχέω, *ekche’o*). No. Jesus chose the word “baptize”. So, it is clear that Jesus meant “baptize” in the Holy Spirit.

One more point, the Holy Spirit had never come upon the Believers before. In the Old Testament and in the Gospels, we see that the Holy Spirit only came to one or another person at one time. And, then, it was only for a certain, limited time. But, Jesus had said that the Holy Spirit would now be with *all* believers, at *all* times! This is new. This is part of the new work that Jesus was now bringing to Earth for the first time. Never before had anyone or a group of people received the Spirit of God to be with them forever.

And yet, now, it is recorded in the beginning of the book of Acts, that the Father in Heaven, through Jesus, gives us the Holy Spirit and “baptizes” or submerges us in the Spirit. We receive not a little, but ALL the Holy Spirit. It is necessary to be completely covered in the Holy Spirit, from within and without, in order to live for Jesus.

What does “Holy Spirit” mean?

But, what is a “Holy Spirit”? Don’t we already have a spirit? And, what is the “Holy Spirit”? What do those words mean in Greek? “Holy” literally means to *set apart as holy, special, sacred, of God* (Greek, **Holy**, ἅγιος, *hagios*: set apart by or for God, holy, sacred) This Spirit is different from all other spirits because it is sacred and *of God*. And Spirit means, πνεῦμα, *pneuma*: wind, breath, spirit. The Holy Spirit is the Spirit which comes *only from God*.

It is different from the “Breath of Life” at Creation. In Genesis 2:7 in Hebrew “breath”, נְשָׁמָה, is neshamah’. That is where God “breathed” into Adam, the “Breath of Life”. It is not our “soul” which in Hebrew נֶפֶשׁ, is ne’phesh. Nephesh is what makes each of our personalities *unique*: Our mind, emotion and will. Each of us has a “ne’phesh”. So, we each have “neshamah” or “breath of Life” and, we each have “ne’phesh” which is our Soul, our personality. But, the Holy Spirit *is* the “soul” of God. It is the unique Mind, emotion and will—the “soul”—of the Creator. God’s “soul” is called “ru’ach” (Hebrew, רוּחַ, ru’ach). In Genesis 1:2, the “ruach” was above the waters. The Holy Spirit is the “ruach” of God, the Spirit of the Creator. You may remember that all things were created through Jesus. Therefore, the Holy Spirit is the “soul” of Jesus—who is God. The Holy Spirit is the “ruach” of Jesus, the Creator of All things, from the beginning of Creation.

Therefore, before we become Christians, we each have 1) “breath of Life” (Genesis 2:7 “breath” Hebrew, נְשָׁמָה, neshamah’); and, 2) our “soul” (Hebrew, נֶפֶשׁ, ne’phesh), our personality. Everyone has both *breath of life* and a unique *soul*.

But, after we receive Jesus, we also receive *His* spirit, the “ruach of God” or “soul” of Jesus comes to live within each of us. Jesus makes His home *inside* of *each* Believer. Amazing! Miraculous! This is truly an honor and a remarkable privilege to have the God of the Universe live *within* us. Thank you, Jesus!

We will learn more of what the Holy Spirit *does* in our lives, the reasons God gives us the Holy Spirit, next Sunday. But, for now, Praise be to our Creator who has come to live with us, and in us, for His Glory! Amen.

Let us pray...