

The Sound Doctrine of the Baptism of the Holy Spirit

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Over the years of preaching God's word I have often encountered those who question the doctrine I preach. I say "the doctrine" because it is not mine, I believe it to be sound doctrine and sound doctrine can only come through the word. I have received this doctrine not by blindly following man's own interpretation of the word, but by taking his interpretation and aligning it with the word through prayer and fasting. I do not believe there is anything such as "new" doctrine. I believe that Jesus gave Paul "the" sound doctrine *I want you to know, brothers, that the gospel I preached is not something that man made up. I did not receive it from any man, nor was I taught it; rather, I received it by revelation from Jesus Christ.* (Galatians 1:11, 12, NIV). Through the Spirit, the Apostles held to it and were continually led into the truth John 16:13 says, "*But when he, the Spirit of truth, comes, he will guide you into all truth. He will not speak on his own; he will speak only what he hears, and he will tell you what is yet to come* (NIV)." Though the Apostles were continually confronted with false doctrine, there is no evidence that they ever wavered from the truth, because they were led by the Spirit. Doctrine is not something we should take lightly; 1 Timothy 4:16 says, *Watch your life and doctrine closely. Persevere in them, because if you do, you will save both yourself and your hearers* (NIV). This scripture accentuates the importance of doctrine, for if one fails to watch and persevere they may lose their soul and lead others to hell in the process. It is with this knowledge, and strong conviction of the Holy Spirit that I hold to, and preach God's word—sound doctrine.

One of the questions that I seem to hear quite often in our pluralistic (diverse) ministry is: What is all this talk about the baptism of the Holy Spirit? Though I'm a credentialed minister in the Church of God, I am not speaking for them. However, I have included and may refer to our statement of faith throughout this paper. That sounds like a good place to start, what we (the Church of God) believe: (http://churchofgod.cc/about/declaration_of_faith.cfm)

1. In the verbal inspiration of the Bible.
2. In one God eternally existing in three persons; namely, the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost.
3. That Jesus Christ is the only begotten Son of the Father, conceived of the Holy Ghost, and born of the Virgin Mary. That Jesus was crucified, buried, and raised from the dead. That He ascended to heaven and is today at the right hand of the Father as the Intercessor.
4. That all have sinned and come short of the glory of God and that repentance is commanded of God for all and necessary for forgiveness of sins.

5. That justification, regeneration, and the new birth are wrought by faith in the blood of Jesus Christ.
6. In sanctification subsequent to the new birth, through faith in the blood of Christ; through the Word, and by the Holy Ghost.
7. Holiness to be God's standard of living for His people.
8. In the baptism with the Holy Ghost subsequent to a clean heart.
9. In speaking with other tongues as the Spirit gives utterance and that it is the initial evidence of the baptism of the Holy Ghost.
10. In water baptism by immersion, and all who repent should be baptized in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.
11. Divine healing is provided for all in the atonement.
12. In the Lord's Supper and washing of the saints' feet.
13. In the premillennial second coming of Jesus. First, to resurrect the righteous dead and to catch away the living saints to Him in the air. Second, to reign on the earth a thousand years.
14. In the bodily resurrection; eternal life for the righteous, and eternal punishment for the wicked.

The Church of God declares in their statement of faith (See 8 and 9 above) that they believe in the baptism of the Holy Spirit and in speaking in other tongues as the Spirit gives utterance and that speaking in tongues is the initial evidence of the baptism of the Holy Spirit. I believe that the baptism of the Holy Spirit is as sound a doctrine as salvation. Let's examine a few scriptures that may help one understand what the scripture and we as a Pentecostal church are talking about when we refer to the baptism of the Holy Spirit.

To begin, we must look at Joel 2:28, 29 *And afterward, I will pour out my Spirit on all people. Your sons and daughters will prophesy, your old men will dream dreams, your young men will see visions.* ²⁹*Even on my servants, both men and women, I will pour out my Spirit in those days* (NIV). We will talk briefly about this passage later, but for now I just wanted to reveal the prophetic voice of God declaring that His Spirit would one day be poured out. In Matthew 3:11 John said: *I baptize you with water for repentance. But after me will come one who is more powerful than I, whose sandals I am not fit to carry. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire* (NIV). Mark and Luke also record these words (Mk 1:8, Lk 3:16). Now let's look at Jesus' final moments with his disciples. In John 20:22 we see Jesus appearing to his disciples after his resurrection. The word simply says that he breathed on them and said receive the Holy Spirit. Some have interpreted this as being equivalent to the baptism of the Holy Spirit or being filled with the Spirit—it is not.

To be Spirit filled and baptized in the Spirit is the same thing, the terms are synonymous. When one is saved they are not necessarily filled with/baptized in the Spirit, unless they speak in tongues, but I'll get to that later. When one is saved they receive the Spirit, just as the disciples did when Jesus breathed on them. It's called new birth (born again) and it cannot happen without the Spirit. But it is totally separate and distinguished from the baptism of the Spirit. During one of the post resurrection appearances of Jesus to his disciples, he gave them this promise and command. *I am going to send you what my Father has promised; but stay in the city until you have been clothed with power from on high (Luke 24:49 NIV)*. When we come to God we must come to him in faith believing that he can cleanse us from our sin. When we pray the prayer (prayer of repentance) of faith he gives us his Spirit and we transition from believing to knowing—we know that he saved us. God has showed us in his word that he doesn't change his mind like a man would. He speaks and it comes to pass, he does not go back on his word (Numbers 23:19, Isaiah 55:11). He spoke his word through the prophet Joel some 900 years before Christ was born. Jesus promised to send what the father had promised—the Holy Spirit. Isaiah records that he would pour his spirit out (Is 32:15, 44:3); Ezekiel also prophesied that God would pour his Spirit out (Ezekiel 39:29).

I believe that God had you and me in mind when he promised to pour his Spirit out. We are (those who have accepted Jesus Christ as their savior) his people, a royal priest hood, a holy nation we've been grafted into the vine and his promises are for us (1Pet 2:9, Rom 11:11-24). That ought to make you shout, jump or something! Jesus told them to wait until they were clothed with power. Too many Christians today are not clothed in the power, they have rejected the Spirit and are handicapped in their walk because they cannot fulfill God's call on their own—though they try. Yes they are saved, but they lack the power God has for them. Take for example Peter, he was ambitious and vocal, but prior to Pentecost he could not even admit that he was with Jesus. How many Christians today can't even admit that they were with Jesus? Ashamed of the gospel they cannot in all sincerity quote Romans 1:16. We need the power, if we didn't God wouldn't have provided Him. Of course I'm referring to the Holy Spirit. As we observed, the disciples were saved, Jesus breathed on them and said receive the Spirit. He then told them to go and wait and that's exactly what we see them doing in Acts 1. Luke reminds us of Jesus'

command in Acts 1:4, 5 and in verse 8 He pontificates further as He says *you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you... (NIV)*.

One can see the purpose for the baptism in the Spirit—power to be witnesses for Christ. Jesus spoke a lot about the Holy Spirit in John 14:15-31, 15:26, 16:1-16, he was preparing his followers to walk as he walked—full of the Spirit! Finally, 900 plus years after God spoke to Joel He poured his Spirit out, (I told you I'd get back to it) read Acts chapter 2. Notice that 120 of the followers of Jesus tarried as he commanded, in the upper room, they didn't leave prematurely. They tarried until they knew beyond a shadow of a doubt that they were clothed with power. How did they know? Several signs were given, a sound of a violent blowing wind, the appearance of tongues of fire and then the scripture says they were filled with the Spirit and began to speak in other tongues as the Spirit enabled them. When this happened they knew that they had received the promise of the father, they knew that what God spoke to Joel had come to pass and they were first hand witnesses, yes, but even more than that, they were participants! Peter stood up and as he spoke with such boldness it was like being introduced to a new person for the first time. Who is this that just a few weeks earlier could not even admit that he was with Jesus or knew Jesus? Who is this that was once ashamed of the gospel message but now boldly proclaims the gospel—with power? It was the same Peter we've all come to know and love only now he was clothed with power; he had received the promise of the Father! Note that he was there in John 20:22 when Jesus breathed on them and said receive the Spirit. But now, now he's clothed in the power from on high, baptized in the Holy Ghost and what a difference!

I always tell people and have heard many testify as well, that when one is baptized in the Holy Spirit (Spirit filled) it's first off ineffable, but if one were able to put words to it, I would say and have, that it's like being born again all over again. So Peter stands up and says, hey fellas we're not drunk (as was the accusation) what you see is what the prophet Joel spoke about. This knowledge Peter demonstrated here was not his own, he was speaking under the anointing of the Holy Spirit. His sermon was not rehearsed, it was not given to him by someone else, but the Holy Spirit began to speak through him. The Holy Spirit still speaks in this way today, through men and women who have surrendered to God and received the fullness of the Spirit. Peter goes on to say in Acts 2:38 to repent and be baptized notice that this is the same message John the Baptist and Jesus came preaching. He said and you too will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.

The promise is for you and your children and for all who are far off—for all whom the Lord our God will call. As Pentecostals we believe that this promise is literally for all and that no one is excluded, all really does mean all. We know this to be true because of Acts 2:39 and John 14:16, Jesus, when specifically speaking about the Holy Spirit (Counselor) says he will be with you forever. We also know it to be true because of the evidence we see in each others lives. Case in point, when one prays for the baptism of the Holy Spirit and tarries for Him, they speak in tongues.

Before I move on I would like to talk about a doctrine that comes from 1 Corinthians 13:8-10. *Love never fails. But whether there are prophecies, they will fail; whether there are tongues, they will cease; whether there is knowledge, it will vanish away. For we know in part and we prophesy in part. But when that which is perfect has come, then that which is in part will be done away* (NKJV). Some have taken this passage and said that tongues have ceased. Their argument being that the perfect is God's word and once it came we didn't need the gifts of tongues, prophecy or knowledge anymore. I believe God's word to be completely inerrant; after all, it didn't come about by the will of man, but holy men of God spoke as they were moved upon by the Holy Spirit. John 1:1 tells us that in the beginning was the Word (Jesus) yes He is the Word and He is Perfect and when He comes we will not need these gifts anymore (there are more than just three, see 1 Corinthians 12:8-10). We are still waiting for his second coming, therefore we still need these gifts—all of them. Here are some sobering facts to consider: Those who believe in the fullness of the Spirit today, are used in all or some of these gifts. As I said earlier those who pray for the baptism of the Holy Spirit when they receive it, they speak in tongues (though this is not necessarily the gift of tongues, I'll cover in detail later) this is how they know they are filled. Not only that, wherever there is a body of believers that believe in the gifts of the Spirit, there is evidence within that body, the gifts are used not only by pastors but by members of the congregation as they prophetically speak unrehearsed spontaneous messages from God. They lay hands on the sick and they recover, they cast out devils. One note on the later though, is that they have the discernment to know when a devil needs cast out (see 1 Corinthians 12:10 discernment) this is one of the gifts that may be given to a Spirit filled Christian. They speak in tongues, they interpret tongues and they work miracles. All this should sound very familiar to a disciple of the Word, Mark 16:17, 18 Jesus said that those who believe

will do these things. So for those who believe that the Spirit is for today—these things are evident in their lives and in their church. For those who say these things ceased when the last apostle died or when the written word was put together—well it's not surprising that these things are missing from their life and their church.

If you have not accepted that the baptism of the Holy Spirit is for today and more specifically for you, then there is no point in continuing on. However, I urge you to serve the Lord with all your heart soul and strength and to be continually transformed by the renewing of your mind (Romans 12:1, 2), and to pray and seek God's face as never before. Be bold enough to ask God to baptize you and be brave enough to accept Him (the Holy Spirit is a He, part of the Trinity). Don't be surprised when you all of a sudden have a change in theology as you start speaking in tongues. It's happened to countless Christians who have simply come to a place where they said Lord if it's real I want it—and Jesus baptized them! I think I've covered the legitimacy of the baptism of the Holy Spirit according to scripture. Now let's take a quick look at why I believe and the Church of God believes that speaking in tongues is the initial evidence of the baptism of the Holy Spirit.

It all begins in Acts but before we go there I want to take a look at the law. Deuteronomy 19:15 says a matter must be established by the testimony of two or three witness. Yes it's talking about accusations before convicting a person, but it has doctrinal significance as well. Jesus said in Matthew 18:16 that every matter should be established by the testimony of two or three witness. I believe that our current topic would classify as a "matter", if someone disagrees that's fine too, because it really doesn't matter 😊. One thing every Christian should do is base all their doctrine on the word of God. If the word does not bear testimony then throw it out! I can list some things, but for the sake of time, space and focus I won't, let's press on. I've already covered Acts 2, however there are a couple of points I would like to reiterate are:

1. They spoke in tongues (verse 4) also note that this is testimony #1).
2. The word specifically says they were filled with the Holy Spirit, note the synonymous terms, baptized in/filled with the Holy Spirit?

Remember Jesus said in Acts 1:5 in a few days you'll be baptized in the Holy Spirit? Therefore the terms Spirit filled and baptized in the Spirit are one and the same according to scripture. Paul tells us in Ephesians 5:18 to be filled with the Spirit (keep in mind that he's speaking to saved

people); I think every Christian should consider what Paul is actually saying here. After chapter two the next time we see people speaking in tongues is in Acts 10:44-46. The scripture here refers to the baptism of the Holy Spirit as the gift of the Spirit and it is. Remember in Acts 1:4 Jesus said to wait for the gift the Father had promised? If only God's people would obey! Okay back to Acts 10:44-45 and testimony #2. I would ask that you prayerfully study this passage. Notice verse 45 the surprise of the Jews and then the transition? How did they know they were Spirit filled/baptized in the Holy Ghost? The scripture says (verse 46) "for they heard them speaking in tongues and praising God." They didn't for one moment assume that they received it without being witnesses to the evidence—for they heard them speaking in tongues! These people weren't even baptized in water yet! I don't know about you but I'm glad God does not change—if He did it for them and He did it for me He'll do it for you and countless others who have the guts to believe! Let's move on to testimony #3 Acts 19:1-6. Paul found the Ephesian disciples and like any Spirit filled baptized in the Holy Ghost preacher should, he asked them: have you received the Holy Spirit since you believed, or some translations did you receive the Holy Spirit when you believed? Their answer was simple, but profound and even shockingly prophetic in the fact that so many Christians today reply with the same answer! "We haven't even heard that there is a Holy Spirit...." How can that be? After all, He (the Holy Spirit) was living in them. They were saved, few would argue that. But they did not know the Spirit because no one taught them, no one told them to go and tarry, no one told them to ask and they didn't have the word like we do! So Paul says what baptism did you receive? They replied John's baptism, Paul said yes, but that is a baptism for repentance, let me tell you about the power—the baptism in the Holy Spirit. Of course I'm paraphrasing, but what I want you to see is that the scripture again specifically records that they spoke in tongues after he prayed for them. The scripture does not record Paul's prayer here, but one can assume that he asked for the Lord to baptize them in His Spirit and He did. There are countless testimonies, though the scripture simply says that "they" and does not give a number other than the 120 in the upper room who received the Spirit. I don't think anyone could ever speculate how many people have been filled with/baptized in the Holy Spirit, only eternity will tell—will you be one? Ask and you shall receive (John 16:24).

What about 1 Corinthians 12:30 you may ask? It says all will not speak in tongues. I mentioned earlier that I would cover this passage, so let's take a look at it—in context. I don't

know how many times I've heard people use this scripture as a means to justify their lack of being Spirit filled. Taken out of context, one could say that this means not everyone will be baptized in the Holy Ghost, but let's actually rightly divide the word here. What is Paul talking about? Isn't he speaking about the gifts of the Spirit? Yes he is and one must understand the difference. The baptism of the Spirit is a gift of the Father, and the gifts of the Spirit are only available to those who have accepted the gift of the Father, that is, those who have been baptized in the Holy Spirit. This, I know is not a very popular view. However, neither was Jesus' words on the bread of life in (John 6:25-71). I believe it boils down to ones pride, because people do not want to admit that they may be lacking the Holy Spirit or that they are not walking in the fullness of God's word and Spirit. However, it is vitally important for every Christian regardless of their denomination to hold to a doctrine that leaves room for them to grow in the word and the Spirit—with evidence I might add. As I mentioned earlier those who are Spirit filled are the ones we witness being used in all or some of the gifts of the Spirit. Therefore, note the difference. When you find someone who is inarguably, undeniably, beyond a shadow of doubt, all coincidences removed being used in all or some of the gifts on a regular basis, you will discover that they are Spirit filled—they pray in tongues. What Paul is talking about here in 1 Corinthians 12 are the gifts of the Spirit and tongues happens to be one of those gifts, now it needs to be understood that this is separate from the tongues received at the baptism of the Holy Spirit. Two different purposes, the gifts are for the edification of the church, for the building up of the body. The baptism of the Holy Spirit on the other hand is for the individual, and more specifically for power to witness. I am baptized in the Holy Spirit, I pray in tongues and according to 1 Corinthians 14:4 when I pray in tongues, its the Holy Spirit praying through me (Romans 8:26)—it edifies me, but I do not yet have or have not yet been used in the gift of speaking in tongues. The gift of tongues must be distinguished from the tongues one prays in when baptized in the Holy Spirit. Jesus baptizes us in the Holy Spirit and the Spirit in-turn gives us (those who seek them) His gifts as He wills (1 Corinthians 12:8-11). It is paramount to sound doctrine that one makes the distinction and understands that though all may not have the gift of tongues, all can be baptized in the Holy Spirit and pray in tongues. Since I already talked about the passage in 1 Corinthians 13:8-10 we will go on to 1 Corinthians 14, but first look at 1 Corinthians 13:31 again.

Paul said to eagerly desire the greater gifts. I have not seen a lot of eagerness among God's people concerning spiritual gifts. He reiterates in 14:1, but adds especially the gift of prophecy. After reading the first 5 verses it is clear that he who speaks in a tongue is speaking to God, not man. Paul says that he who prophesies is greater than he who speaks in tongues, many people like to put a period there, but have another look, he says unless he interprets. It is true that when God filled the 120 on the day of Pentecost that those who heard them speaking in tongues heard them in their own language. God did this for a specific purpose, can you imagine the confusion it would have caused if no one understood what they were saying, if they didn't hear them proclaiming the praises of God? God desires order and He has a message for the sinner—repent! Was not this the very message that followed the outpouring of the Holy Spirit? Verse 5 ends by stating that the church may be edified, note how those on Pentecost were edified because they understood the tongues and surrendered to the message that followed, read verses 6-13. Paul is addressing the disorder in the use of the gift of tongues in church service. If we come together and one begins to speak in tongues so as all can hear then the body will not be edified unless there is an interpretation. In verse 12 he says since you are eager to have spiritual gifts, try to excel in gifts that build up the church. Verses 13 he further expounds. For this reason (to build up the church) anyone who speaks in a tongue should pray that he may interpret what he says. This is so he can repeat the message that was spoken in tongues, so all can understand. It may be that there are several people in the body with the gift of interpretation, and it may be that there are none. That is why he says he who speaks in a tongue should pray that he may interpret. Let's move on, verses 14-19, notice in verse 14 that he specifically says "pray" in a tongue. Contrast this with verse 2, 3, 4, 5, 9 and 13 where the words speak and speaking are used. I am not a Greek scholar by any means (I'm still working on English☺), but I think it's significant that Paul uses the Greek word *laleo* in these passages. *Laleo* (lal-eh'-o) is Strong's Ref. # 2980 it is a prolonged form of an otherwise obsolete verb; to talk, i.e. utter words: KJV--preach, say, speak (after), talk, tell, utter. All these verses are referring to not just speaking, but speaking in the unlearned language of tongues as the spirit gives utterance (Acts 2:4). The Corinthians were guilty of being over zealous with their new found gift, which isn't necessarily a problem until it causes disorder, as in their case. Verse 14 Paul does not say speak in tongues, but pray in tongues. The Greek word here is *proseuchomai* (pros-yoo'-khom-ah-ee) Strong's Ref. # 4336 it means to pray to God, i.e. supplicate, worship: KJV--pray (earnestly, for), make prayer. This is

separate from speaking, for when one prays in a tongue they are not just babbling, but allowing the Spirit to pray through them (Romans 8:26) to accomplish great things. Paul goes on to say that, when he prays in a tongue his mind (understanding) is unfruitful for he himself (even if he has the gift of interpretation) cannot understand what he is praying—nonetheless he says, what shall I do? Both, I will pray in the Spirit and with understanding, I will sing and praise in the Spirit as well.

It is my belief according to the scriptures that all who are baptized with the Holy Spirit/filled with the Spirit will pray in tongues, period. One may say you're too dogmatic Lonny, but am I? I think the word itself has provided enough evidence to squash all doubts. Here is yet another point, if it is not so, why do millions of people all over the world speak in tongues after praying for the baptism of the Holy Spirit? I've heard several testimonies of those who mocked the Father's gift initially, but prayed to God "Lord if it's of you I want it," and God filled them as they began to speak in tongues! In verse 18 Paul said that he spoke in tongues more than the Corinthians! Don't you find this strange? They were guilty of using the gift out of order, not guilty of using it too much! When we come together for worship, if we are truly Spirit filled we will hear each other praying in tongues, we will see the gifts of the Spirit in operation throughout the service, but it is our responsibility to ensure we keep it in order, so as not to cause confusion.

I would ask you as I have already, to consider with all soberness the effect of the baptism of the Holy Spirit on the lives of the Apostles. Consider the affect of the Spirit's power on the church, now consider your life. What affect has the Spirit had on you? Have you received the baptism of the Holy Spirit? You may choose to believe you have it, though you don't speak in tongues or posses any of the other manifestation gifts as described in 1 Corinthians 12:7-11. If so, look at the scriptures again, the word sets the standard for what being Spirit filled/baptized in the Spirit is and isn't. The doctrine you choose will affect the rest of your life, fast, pray and do so with all your heart soul and strength. Let go of men's doctrines and humble yourself before the Lord, wait before Him and see what happens. He will fill you, just as He promised. The enemy of your soul will attempt to deceive you into thinking you have the power (baptism of the Holy Spirit), though you lack the evidence. However, those with the power (baptism of the Holy

Spirit), have the signs (evidence) following them. Do you have the power? If not, just ask! 1 Corinthians 14:39 says “do not forbid speaking in tongues.” This is His word not mine! If you choose to believe that it’s not for all, you have transgressed this scripture, for your doctrine is forbidding you to speak in tongues. May the God who filled me, fill you, not by my standards or your standards, but by His.

Eventually I will add personal testimonies to this article. Until then if you have comments or questions or would like to share your personal testimony with me, you can email me at lrb@bowerlife.com.