

PathLights

*"Your word is a lamp to my feet
and a light to my path"
Psalm 119:104*

November 27, 2016

Holy Spirit Baptism or Water Baptism?

by Frank Himmel

A well-known televangelist was preaching on Romans 6. He asserted that the baptism Paul discusses there, that which is into Christ, into His death (v. 3), is Holy Spirit baptism, not water baptism. It reminded me of a Bible study I had with a woman a number of years ago. She tried to make almost every reference to baptism Holy Spirit baptism. Both she and the TV preacher believed water baptism has a place, just not the place the Bible gives it.

Let's briefly look at some passages on the subject in their context..

Jesus told the apostles to go make disciples, baptizing them in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit (Matthew 28:19). That has to be water baptism. Why? No apostle ever baptized anyone in the Holy Spirit. None could. Only the Lord can do that (Matthew 3:11; Acts 2:33; 11:17).



Baptism in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of sins (Acts 2:38) has to be water baptism. Why?

It was Peter's answer to the question, "What shall we do?" (v. 37). Holy Spirit baptism is not something we can do. Water baptism is.

Water baptism is clearly what the Samaritans did in Acts 8. It was the same as in Acts 2, "in the name of Jesus Christ" (v. 16). The Samaritans did not receive the Holy Spirit until later, after the apostles laid hands on them (vv. 15-16).

The other case in Acts 8, the Ethiopian eunuch, is unmistakably water baptism. "Look! Water! What prevents me from being baptized? . . . They both went down into the water, Philip as well as the eunuch, and he baptized him. When they came up out of the water . . ." (vv. 36-39).

Acts 9 relates Saul's baptism. It was his response to Ananias's instruction to "arise and be baptized and wash away your sins, calling on His name" (22:16). That, in turn, was the answer to Saul's question, "What shall I do?" (Acts 22:10). Since it was something Saul was to do, it had to be water baptism.

In Acts 10, after Cornelius and his household *received* Holy Spirit baptism (theirs was one of only two such cases), they were *commanded* to be baptized in water (vv. 47-48). Notice again that baptism "in the name of the Lord Jesus," the baptism Jesus commanded (Matthew 28:19), is water baptism. ▶



When Peter said baptism saves us (1 Peter 3:21), he was talking about water baptism. That is unmistakable: in the preceding verse, he pointed out that Noah and his family were brought safely through water. “And corresponding to that, baptism now saves you...”

What about Romans 6? The baptism in view is one in which the readers died to sin and were freed from sin (vv. 4-6). Later in the same chapter, Paul told them that freedom occurred when they “became obedient from the heart to that form of teaching to which you were committed” (vv. 17-18; cf. 1 Peter 1:22-23). No one can obey a command to be baptized in the Holy Spirit! This, too, must be water baptism.

Conclusion

Those who insert Holy Spirit baptism into these and similar passages must ignore contextual specifics in order to do so. And they have an insurmountable problem when they get to Ephesians 4:5, which plainly says there is one baptism. The truth is, Holy Spirit baptism was a temporary measure. New Testament references to baptism are to water baptism unless the context demands otherwise. ■

Overflowing

by Frank Himmel



Overflowing or abounding is a common New Testament picture. Among other things, Christians are urged to overflow with...

Hope. “Now may the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, so that you will abound in hope by the power of the Holy Spirit” (Romans 15:13).

Work. “Therefore, my beloved brethren, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that your toil is not in vain in the Lord” (1 Corinthians 15:58).

Love. “And may the Lord cause you to increase and abound in love for one another, and for all people, just as we also do for you” (1 Thessalonians 3:12).

Growth. “ But also for this very reason, giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue, to virtue knowledge, to knowledge self-control, to self-control perseverance, to perseverance godliness, to godliness brotherly kindness, and to brotherly kindness love. For if these things are yours and abound, you will be neither barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ” (2 Peter 1:5-8, NKJV).

Giving. “And God is able to make all grace abound to you, so that always having all sufficiency in everything, you may have an abundance for every good deed” (2 Corinthians 8:8).

Thanksgiving. “... And overflowing with gratitude” (Colossians 2:7).

Service Leaders for the Week

	Sunday Morning	Sunday Evening	Wednesday Evening
GREETER	Greg Winget	Adam Gibson	David Gray
SONG LEADER	Bruce Williams	J B Williams	John Baucom
OPENING PRAYER	Jason Chandler	Albert Harrison Sr	
LORD'S SUPPER			
BREAD	Brian Wilson	Brian Wilson	
CUP	David Gray	David Gray	
CONTRIBUTION PRAYER	Jason Chandler		
SERMON/INVITATION	Frank Himmel	Frank Himmel	Chris Brooks
CLOSING PRAYER	Chris Brooks	Albert Lee Harrison	Albert Harrison Sr