

**Scriptures and Doctrine :: Baptism in the Spirit vs New Birth****Baptism in the Spirit vs New Birth - posted by jimbo, on: 2004/3/30 4:54**

Hi Everyone,

I'm new to all this and this is my first post. Baptism in the Spirit and the New Birth. I have been in charismatic/pentecostal churches since my conversion 17 years ago. My understanding of the Baptism was that it was a secondary experience following conversion or new birth.

Recently I have been thinking this through. I have come across a group of believers who believe that they are one and the same event. The quality of their lives has really made me sit up and take notice. I was wondering if anyone had any views. I could go on about all the verses and arguments either way but I will just put forward this one idea cos I read it this morning. In John 1:33 the Father identifies the key role of His Son as being a baptiser in the Holy Spirit. This seems to be the defining characteristic of his ministry. It is strange that there is no mention of the New Birth. Any thoughts?

Re: Baptism in the Spirit vs New Birth - posted by Janus (), on: 2004/3/30 5:21

Hi James

I don't really see myself as a teacher or someone with all the answers, but because you asked for views I might as well give you mine.

I believe and understand it through the scriptures that anyone who belongs to Christ has the Spirit. I've myself did some thinking on this topic. Something we as believers sometimes do is look at something in scripture and then make it a rule for everyone. Like when the Spirit was for the first time given to man at Pentecost. Some will now say that this is how God work. His disciples walked with Him for 3 years and then after a time they received the Spirit. But remember, this was only the first time the Spirit was given to man.

Somewhere else Paul write that he who has the Spirit belongs to Christ and he who does not, does not belong to Christ. If we then believe that we are born from above the day we go to Christ for forgiveness of our sins and believe in Him as our saviour, then of course we receive the Spirit the day we come to God through Christ. Did Christ not Himself say that the works He do within us He do through His Spirit? And is it not through His Spirit that our spirits are revived if one can call it that way?

I think the problem comes in when we look at someone and see a life CONTROLLED by the Spirit. That is something different. Every child of God has His spirit living in him, but not every child of God is controlled by His Spirit!!

And here again God doesn't always work in the same way. For some this may come with their conversion, for others later in life. That it is God's will for our lives is a definite.

I believe this day comes in one's life the day you give your life absolutely into His hands. Like falling into the ground to die so that He can live in and through you.

I believe God works different with each one of us and therefore we should not make it doctrine when God did something in a certain way in our lives. Some things we can accurately determine through His Word and when things work different than His word state, then we surely need to take a careful look at where it comes from.

May God bless you.

Janus

Re: Baptism in the Spirit vs New Birth - posted by philologos (), on: 2004/4/2 3:45

Hi James

I have just begun a thread called Christian Perfection in the Church History forum so I will keep my comments here to a minimum.

A simple illustration And a river went out of Eden to water the garden; and from thence it was parted, and became into four heads. Gen 2:10. Can you imagine the map of this? While there is only one river the land is clearly divided between this side and that side. Imagine now the river split into two and each new branch also split into two. Now imagine getting from one side to the other. Depending on your route you might make 1,2,3, or 4 river crossings to get from one side to the other. There may be many experiences but there is only one salvation. My biblical understanding causes me to favour a single crossing from this side to that side; in Adam or in Christ, but my pastoral activities have convinced me that most will make multiple crossings on the journey from this side to that.

This is saying pretty much the same as Janus, but in a way that has helped my own understanding.

Re: - posted by jimbo, on: 2004/4/2 5:56

Dear Janus and Philogos,

Thanks. I agree that God works in different ways with different people but at the same time he works in the same way with all people. For example, He requires that all must be born again, He requires that all are baptised in water. Now if baptism in the Spirit is one such requirement that is additional to new birth then it will radically affect the way one conducts one's spiritual life, for example, in that one will actively seek this second blessing.

I think I mentioned that my background has been charismatic/pentecostal. The second blessing view of baptism in the Spirit was the teaching I have been reared on. There seem some strong arguments in favour of it:

1. The disciples must have been born again (regenerate) by John 20:22 where they receive the Holy Spirit. Yet they subsequently experienced pentecost. Thus, it must at least be possible to be regenerate without being baptised in the Spirit.
2. Yes, if we do not have the Spirit of Christ we are not his. But doesn't the same passage show that the disciples had the Spirit before they were baptised in the Spirit. Indeed, could you argue that to have the Spirit of Christ could mean that the Spirit is either with you or in you (cf John 14:17)?
3. There seems to be a clear pattern in Acts that believers are born again and then subsequently baptised in the Spirit - the 120, Paul, Cornelius etc. Perhaps the clearest example of this is in Samaria (Acts 8). The Samaritans must have been regenerate - they are described as having "received the word of God." Philip had baptized them and he surely wouldn't do that unless they had truly believed and been born again. And yet, they clearly had not received the Holy Spirit. This only came with Peter and John laying hands on them.
4. The living water. In John 4 Jesus speaks to the woman at the well about a living water that would be a well of water springing up to eternal life. It was a water that "he would have given thee" (v.10) i.e. it was available there and then. In John 7 Jesus spoke in similar terms about a living water that would flow out of the believer (is there a difference there?). Now the author explicitly states that this water was the Holy Spirit that could not be given until he was glorified. Why does the author add this caveat but does not add it in John 4. I know that looking at the tense used in John 7 (if any man thirst let him come unto me and drink) rather undermines my argument about the tense in verse 4.

Now, as I say this has traditionally been my view and my experience (though we must of course never derive doctrine from experience but only from the word of God). However, recently I have been challenged to rethink. In particular I have thought:

1. It seems very odd that the Father (and John the Baptist) define the ministry of the Son in John 1:33 (and elsewhere) as baptism in the Spirit if this only refers to a secondary blessing.
2. Paul seems to make no mention of a secondary experience of baptism in the Spirit. This seems strange too. Why isn't he encouraging those who have only just been born again but not baptized in the spirit to seek it?

3. Paul's one reference to baptism in the spirit is in 1 Cor 12:13 - "By one Spirit we are all baptised into one body". Now if you look at the Greek the preposition for 'by' is exactly the same as the preposition for 'in'. Thus the phrase could equally well (if not more accurately) translated as "in one spirit we are all baptised into one body". Added to this is the fact that Paul is talking in this section about spiritual gifts which come (according to the Pentecostal doctrine) by baptism in the Spirit. Yet Paul makes a distinction between those in the church who have been baptized in the spirit and have gifts and those who do not. Because it would seem that in his mind there is none.

4. The meaning of baptism. Ron Bailey has an excellent series on this very topic. To be baptised means to be completely immersed in something so as to adopt its nature. The example given is of cloth being baptized in purple dye which was the exact word that people used for this process at the time the bible was written. In Christ we are made new creatures, given a new nature and a new heart. We put on Christ. We are baptised in Him. Question: is there a distinction to be drawn between baptism in the Spirit and baptism in Christ.

Finally, let me stress this. I have not got a been in bonnet about this. I am not trying to persuade anyone to adopt a particular view. I am genuinely reconsidering the whole issue and would be very grateful for any advice or help or support you could give.

With love in Him,

Jim

Re: - posted by nekaras, on: 2004/4/19 21:37

(http://www.tertullian.org/anf/anf03/anf03-49.htm#P11620_3275111) "On Baptism" written by Tertullian (an Ante-Nicene Father)

This is a great writing from one of the first century christians. A lot has changed from the time of the early church. I think we can learn a lot from these christians. From this writing, it is very clear that baptism was an absolute necessity for salvation.