**Foundations (34 of 60) The Baptism of the Holy Spirit - RC Sproul**

What's the difference between water baptism and baptism by the Holy Spirit? That's our topic today on Renewing Your Mind. Welcome to Renewing Your Mind with Dr. R.C. Sproul, the founder of Ligonier Ministries, a teaching fellowship dedicated to helping Christians understand what and why they believe. Many people today are confused about the baptism of the Holy Spirit.

What's the purpose of this baptism? Who is it for, and when do we receive it? Continuing this 60-part series, Foundations, an overview of systematic theology, Dr. R.C. Sproul explains the meaning and significance of the baptism of the Holy Spirit in the life of believers. Just after today's message, he'll explain how you can receive the complete Foundation series on DVD. We're living now in a time in Christian history that is extremely unusual, at least in this respect.

There have been more books written on the person and work of God the Holy Spirit in the last 50 years than in all of the rest of Christian history combined. And that immediately raises the question, why? Why all of a sudden this tremendous outpouring of literature on the person and work of the Holy Ghost? Well, the answer is obvious. It's because of the impact in the world of the so-called charismatic movement that really had its roots in the 19th century but crossed over into the so-called mainline denominations in the middle of the 20th century.

Now, there's an unusual history behind the so-called charismatic movement, and that history has to do with the original roots of Pentecostalism and their doctrine and teaching about the concept of the baptism of the Holy Spirit. I think we've all heard people speak of the baptism of the Holy Spirit, and will say, I became a Christian at such and such a time, I was baptized in the Spirit at another time, and so on. Or they may ask you, have you been baptized in the Holy Ghost? And also, particularly, the way in which that concept of the baptism of the Holy Spirit has been linked so closely to the phenomenon of tongue speaking, that is, the glossolalia, or the speaking of tongues.

Now, in the original Pentecostal theology, the concept of the baptism of the Holy Spirit and the speaking in tongues was linked to a doctrine of sanctification, a kind of perfectionism that was expressed in terms of, quote, the second blessing, or the second work of grace. And the idea was that the first work of grace is in conversion. But beyond being converted to Christ through the power and presence of the Holy Spirit, and everybody acknowledged that the work of regenerating the soul was indeed the work of God the Holy Spirit, but there was a second operation of the Holy Ghost that was equally dramatic, equally instantaneous, and complete, called the second work of grace by which a person could have total sanctification in this life, where a person would be rendered perfect with respect to his spiritual obedience and righteousness.

And so the movement was called perfectionism. Now, I'm painting with a broad brush here because there were many different representatives of that movement and of that theology, and not everybody believed exactly the same thing. There were different degrees and different types of perfectionism that were espoused.

But the point is this. Originally, the idea of the baptism of the Holy Spirit was that it was related to this outpouring of God the Holy Spirit on the soul, whose function was to perfect or sanctify the person, and the sign of having received that baptism of the Holy Spirit was the speaking in tongues. Now, in the broader impact of the charismatic movement, where the whole experience of tongue speaking and the concept of the baptism of the Holy Spirit crossed over denominational boundaries and began to make an impact in the Roman Catholic Church, the Lutheran Church, the Episcopal Church, the Presbyterian Church, virtually every denomination there is, a whole lot of attention was now given to this idea in an attempt to integrate the theology of the baptism of the Holy Spirit with historic Christianity.

And so we now have what's called neo-Pentecostal theology, and the neo distinguishes it from old Pentecostal theology, and the chief difference is this, that now in the broader charismatic movement, the idea of the baptism of the Holy Spirit is no longer seen as a second work of grace for purposes of sanctification, but rather it is seen, and in this regard I believe in a much more biblical light, it's seen as a work of grace of the divine operation of the Spirit designed to gift people or empower people for ministry. And in that regard, that I think, as I said, fits much more closely to the New Testament concept of the function of the Spirit in the baptism of the Holy Ghost. But what has emerged from the neo-Pentecostal theology is again still not a monolithic agreement among all parties.

There are many people today who still believe that the indispensable sign of receiving the baptism of the Holy Spirit is the speaking in tongues, and if you haven't spoken in tongues, you simply haven't received the baptism. But there are others who believe that tongue speaking may or may not accompany the experience of the baptism of the Holy Spirit, so they do not insist that the presence of tongue speaking be there as evidence for the concept of the baptism. However, what is virtually monolithic is the idea that for the average Christian there is a time gap, not necessarily every time, but for the most part there is a time gap between conversion to Christ and the reception of the baptism of the Holy Spirit, which means that you can be a Christian, a true Christian, and not have the baptism of the Holy Ghost.

It also means that there are some Christians who are baptized in the Holy Spirit and other Christians who are not baptized in the Holy Spirit. The idea is that every Christian has the possibility of being baptized in the Holy Spirit, but not all as of yet have been baptized by the Holy Spirit. So in a sense you have the haves and the have-nots within the body of Christ.

Now, the biblical justification for this idea of a temporal gap between conversion and baptism in the Spirit and between the idea of having some Christians having been baptized and others not baptized in the Spirit is the narrative portions of the book of Acts, chiefly what we read in the book of Acts in chapter 2 with respect to the day of Pentecost. And it's because of the link between what is being experienced by people today in speaking in tongues and so on and the biblical narrative about what occurred on the day of Pentecost that this theology has emerged. So let's take a few moments to look at the biblical record.

In chapter 2 of Acts, beginning of the first verse, we read this, Now, 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 sitting. And 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. And then as we read on through the text of the people from the various provinces who were there and speaking in tongues and so on, verse 12 we read, So they were all amazed and perplexed, saying to one another, Whatever could this mean? So again, Luke concludes in his narrative there in chapter 2 not only the description of what happened, but the question of what is the meaning of what has happened here. So let's hear what he says.

Others, mocking, said, They are full of new wine. But Peter, standing up with the eleven, raised his voice and said to them, Men of Judea and all who dwell in Jerusalem, Let this be known to you, and heed my words, for these are not drunk, as you suppose, since it is only the third hour of the day. But this is what was spoken by the prophet Joel.

And now he quotes from Joel's prophecy, And it shall come to pass in the last days, says God, that I will pour out my Spirit on all flesh. Your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your young men shall see visions, your old men shall see dreams. I will pour out my Spirit in those days, etc.

Now, it's extremely important for us to understand that when this event transpired, there were all kinds of visible signs, and obviously, speaking in tongues was not a visible sign, it was an audible sign. But there was the sound also of the mighty rushing wind, there was the appearance of the pillars of fire, of doves coming down from heaven, which obviously do not attend the same kind of experiences today. But when Peter interprets the meaning of these actions on the day of Pentecost, he points the people to the Old Testament prophecy of Joel, where Joel was preaching about the future coming of the kingdom of God, in which when that kingdom came, God was going to pour out His Holy Spirit on all flesh.

And if you recall, when we looked at the function of the Holy Ghost in the Old Testament, where we saw the charismata, the gifts of the Spirit, being restricted only to certain individuals like Moses, or the judges, or the prophets, and we talked about what happened in Numbers 11, where Jethro rebuked Moses for taking all of the responsibility and the burden of ministry on himself, and he said, what you're doing is not good. And God told Moses that He was going to come down and take of the Holy Ghost that was upon him and distribute it to seventy elders in the community. And when He did that, and the Spirit fell upon the seventy elders, they began to prophesy.

Now, two of them, Eldad and Medad, wandered out of the immediate environment, and Joshua saw this, and he was upset, and he came to Moses, and he said, Moses, Eldad and Medad are prophesying in the camp. Forbid them! Because Joshua had been accustomed to thinking that only Moses had been anointed for ministry, and now here are these other fellows giving outward signs of having been endowed and gifted by the Holy Ghost. And he thought this was kind of a maverick, renegade group of self-appointed prophets, because Joshua wasn't there when Moses received the instructions.

Now, the key thing is that when Moses heard the complaint of Joshua, he said to him, Joshua, envious thou for my sake? He said, would to God that all of the Lord's people were prophets and that He would put His Spirit upon all of them. So what Moses is saying is, you shouldn't be jealous about what's going on here because God now has broadened the distribution of the anointing power of the Holy Ghost. I only wish, Moses said, that it were greater.

I wish that He would give His Spirit to all of the people of the community, not just the 70 of them. Now, that was Moses' plea. That was his prayer.

It wasn't a prophecy. But by the time we get to Joel, the prayer of Moses becomes a prophecy, and Joel is saying that the time will come when God would pour His Spirit on the whole of God's people, not just some of them. So there wouldn't be any haves and have-nots.

Now, it's very striking to me that when this event is recorded in the book of Acts, that Peter sees it as the fulfillment of Joel, which would be completely contrary to the idea that God was now giving His Holy Spirit to some of the believers and not to all of the believers in the Pentecostal experience. Now, there are some other things we have to note and note carefully about what's being recorded for us in the book of Acts. The first is that when we read chapter 2, we see a couple of things that are important to notice.

First, that the people who were gathered there on this occasion were Jewish believers. From all of the different provinces, these Jewish believers were assembled now to celebrate the Old Testament feast of Pentecost. And while the Jewish believers were assembled for this reason, the Holy Spirit came upon them, and it's instructive for us to notice that when the Spirit fell upon the Jewish believers, it fell on all of them.

Every one of those Jewish believers who were assembled at Pentecost received this outpouring of the Holy Ghost. It didn't come to just part of them. It came to all of them.

Now, they had been believers before they had been experiencing this baptism, if you will, of the Holy Ghost because of this period in redemptive history. Pentecost marks a new incident in God's plan of redemption. So obviously, there were people who had been believers before they received this endowment or gifting of God the Holy Spirit.

But then we see, wait a minute, we see three other episodes in the book of Acts that are what I call mini-Pentecost. If you read in chapter 7 of the book of Acts, we read of the giving of the Holy Spirit to the Samaritan believers in chapter 8, verse 14. Now, when the apostles who were at Jerusalem heard that Samaria had received the Word of God, they sent Peter and John to them, who when they had come down prayed for them that they might receive the Holy Spirit.

For as yet, he had fallen on none of them. So here you see why people say there's a time gap between conversion and receiving the Spirit because it was certainly the case for the Samaritan believers who had received Jesus, they believed in Jesus, but they had not yet received the Holy Spirit. For as yet, he had fallen upon none of them.

They had only been baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. Then they laid hands on them, and they received the Holy Ghost. So now the Samaritans have a Pentecost, and all of those believing Samaritans receive the Holy Ghost.

Then you go to Acts chapter 10 to the account of what happens in Cornelius' household with Peter, verse 44, 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. Now, you understand what's happening here. Peter is visiting Cornelius, who is identified in the New Testament as a God-fearer.

He's a Gentile believer in Judaism. Those Gentiles who converted to Judaism, but who remained uncircumcised, were called God-fearers. And Peter now is at Cornelius' house, and the Holy Ghost falls upon these God-fearing Gentiles.

And Peter said, Can anyone forbid water that these should not be baptized who has received the Holy Spirit just as we have? And he commanded them to be baptized in the name of the Lord, and they asked him to stay a few days. Now, Peter's comments there, in response to the astonishment of the Jewish contingent when they saw the Holy Spirit falling upon Gentiles, for heaven's sakes, Peter says, What's the significance of this? The significance is we have to baptize these people. We have to engraft them into the New Testament church.

They are to be full members in the New Covenant community, because God has given to them the same thing He gave to us. Now, again, later on in Acts 19, we have the same kind of thing taking place with the Ephesian Christians, in which they also then receive the Holy Ghost, even as we read in these other experiences. So what we have are four accounts of Pentecostal outpourings of the Holy Spirit in the book of Acts.

Now, two things I want you to see are these. Number one, that all of the people who were present as believers in these episodes received the Holy Ghost. That's significant.

Number two, that the record that we have here describes four distinct groups of people that we encounter in the New Testament. And they are, first of all, the Jews, second of all, the Samaritans, third of all, the God-fearers, and fourth, the Gentiles, the Ephesians. Now, if we read carefully the Acts, the book of Acts, and the epistles of the apostle Paul, we see that one of the biggest controversies in the opening years of the Christian church was the question, where do Gentiles fit in the body of Christ? Gentiles were aliens to the commonwealth of Israel.

They were strangers to the covenant in the Old Testament. There was partial membership given to God-fearers, absolutely no membership given to Samaritans, and the Gentiles were considered outside the camp. So now, as the gospel is preached to these groups, the issue was, what do we do with Samaritans who become believers? What do we do with God-fearers who become believers? What do we do with Gentiles who become believers? Are they to have full membership in the body of Christ or not? Now, it's striking to me that if you look at the literary structure and progress of the outline of the book of Acts, you see that what Luke does in his narrative is that he traces the expansion of the apostolic church from Jerusalem to Judea to Samaria to the ends of the earth.

Just as Christ gives the Great Commission where He commands His disciples to stay first in Jerusalem until the Holy Ghost comes upon them in power, then they are to reach out to Judea, to Samaria, to the ends of the earth. And that's how the book unfolds. As each element is reached, each segment is touched, Samaritans, God-fearers, the Gentiles, God verifies their inclusion with full privileges and membership in the New Testament church by giving them the Holy Spirit.

My problem with Pentecostal theology is that in my opinion it has way too low of a view of Pentecost. The significance the New Testament gives to Pentecost is that this is the outpouring of the Holy Spirit to the whole church which is to include every believer in the church. As Paul in the didactic literature says, were we not all baptized into one spirit? So the biblical doctrine has no room in my judgment for a concept of Christians who have the baptism of the Holy Spirit and Christians who don't have it.

Now it comes with conversion. It's not the same thing as conversion, but the principle is all Christians receive the baptism of the Holy Ghost. We'll explore this more fully when we look at the gifts of the Holy Spirit which are part and parcel of the 20th century concern.

Continuing our overview of systematic theology, Dr. R.C. Sproul has titled today's message, The Baptism of the Holy Spirit. You're listening to the weekend edition of Renewing Your Mind. It's our great joy to spend 30 minutes with you on a weekend searching through the scriptures and studying biblical theology.

We need to grasp the foundations of our faith as presented in God's Word so that we know what we believe, why we believe it, how to live it, and how to share it. And today's study of the baptism of the Holy Spirit is certainly one step toward that goal. The complete series on systematic theology from R.C. Sproul is titled Foundations.

There are 60 lessons in all, and it will take us quite a while to hear them all. So, here at the ministry, we suggest that you contact us for the complete DVD copy of the teaching and watch the lessons right away. It's more than 23 hours of content from R.C. Sproul available to you whenever you're ready to study the basics of your faith.

The Foundations DVD series is yours when you give a donation to support this ministry. Call 1-800-435-4343 or go online to rymoffer.com. You'll not only receive the DVDs in order to watch Dr. Sproul teach, but we'll also include an extra CD-ROM that contains all of the audio files as well. And this bonus disc even includes a complete study guide that you can print out or view on your computer.

The complete resource kit is quite extensive and meant to guide you to a better understanding of the Bible and a deeper respect for God's holiness. Again, when you give a donation to support the ministry, you're invited to request this complete overview of systematic theology titled Foundations. Call 1-800-435-4343 or go online to rymoffer.com. This webpage is for today's special offer only.

Dr. Sproul is founder and chairman of Ligonier Ministries, the home of Renewing Your Mind. Ligonier seeks to bridge the gap between Sunday school and seminary by helping Bible students understand the history of Orthodox Christianity and the essential doctrines of the Bible. We want to help people grow deeper in their knowledge of God and His holiness.

Thank you for supporting this mission with a donation of any amount. Next weekend, Dr. Sproul continues his study of the Holy Spirit with a look at the gifts he gives. What are your spiritual gifts and how will you use them to edify the church? These are the questions we'll address next weekend.

So join us right here again one week from now on Renewing Your Mind with R.C. Sproul.