

## Baptism of the Spirit (1<sup>st</sup>)

(As stated in our last podcast, today we will study I Corinthians 12:13. This passage is often used by both Baptists and Protestants to teach what is considered “spirit baptism” or “regeneration.”)

Obviously, we cannot do a full study of the baptism of the Spirit as found in the early days of the history of Christianity and the question as to whether it continues today. That would be a lengthy study and require several podcasts. And though our purpose is to study I Corinthians 12:13 and its connection with the subject of baptism, it will be necessary to touch on such incidents as the Day of Pentecost and other like occurrences.

Often this passage is used by both Baptists and Protestants to teach what is considered “spirit baptism” or “regeneration.” Also, in modern times some have included Romans 6:3-6, Colossians 2:11-13, and Galatians 3:27 in connection with I Corinthians 12:13 to teach “spirit baptism” or “regeneration.” It must be admitted that this subject is not a simple matter and the interpretation of I Corinthians 12:13 is equally no easy subject. I believe the Baptist B. H. Carroll may have described the complexity of the subject as well as anyone. He said, “Indeed, I do not know a subject about which there is so much incorrect thinking and confusion of mind as about the baptism in the Spirit. Not one preacher in a thousand, whether he be ignorant or learned, has any clear conception of the signification of the Baptism of the Spirit.” With that being said, Carroll had his own unique interpretation of this passage. Also, I want to make it clear that I do not think that I have the last word on the subject and in light of what many of sound writers say regarding this text it is difficult to think it to mean otherwise. Many quotes could be supplied to show this, but we will limit ourselves to two.

From the *Works of Thomas Manton* (the Puritan) in volume 13, p. 236, gave the following regarding how believers are united to Christ. “Now a man is united to Christ two ways—

1. Externally.
2. Internally.
  1. Externally, by baptism and profession: John 15:2. ... [I do not understand the use of this text here.—JKB]
  2. Internally; when we are ingrafted into the mystical body of Christ by his Spirit, and have the real effect of our baptism and profession: 1 Cor. xii. 13.”

Next we will quote from the Baptist John Gill in his commentary on this verse. “*For by one Spirit are we all baptized*, This is to be understood not of water baptism; for the apostle says not in one, and the same water, but ‘by’, or ‘in’ one Spirit, are we all baptized; the baptism of water, and of the Spirit, are two different things; ... There is indeed an allusion made to water baptism, but it is the grace of the Spirit in regeneration and sanctification which is here intended ...”

As I said before, many such like quotes can be supplied to support this interpretation. Also, it might seem audacious and prideful to differ with men of such notability. Nevertheless, allow me to provide some things for your consideration regarding this passage.

First, we must consider how the Greek words for baptism were translated and used in the Scriptures.

1. *Βαπτίζω* is used 80 times in the New Testament. It is translated *baptize* 76 times, *wash* 2 times, *baptist* 1 time, *baptized* 1 time.
2. *Βαπτισμα* is used 22 times and is always translated *baptism*.
3. *Βαπτιστες* is used 14 times and is always translated *Baptist*.
4. *Βαπτω* is used 3 times and is always translated *dip*.
5. *Βαπτισμος* is used 4 times and is translated *washing* 3 times (Mk. 7:4, 8; Heb. 9:10) and *baptism* 1 time (Heb. 6:2).

Therefore, without question, when these Greek words are used in connection with the ordinance of baptism almost in every place it refers to water baptism. To my knowledge, the major exceptions are I Corinthians 12:13; Romans 6:3, 4; Colossians 2:12; and possibly Galatians 3:27. My question is, “Why should these four (4) passages mean something different from the rest of the New Testament?” Even when the words referred to washing, water was involved. (Obviously, when the words were used symbolically or metaphorically regarding suffering, the meaning would have no bearing on the rite of baptism other than that of immersion or being overwhelmed.) What is it about these passages that would cause the reader to immediately think the Lord was talking about something different from the overall use of the words? Why should we immediately think of being baptized by the Spirit (or even with the Spirit) when reading these verses regarding baptism when all others have to do with water?

The second consideration is the use of the Greek word βαπτίζω in this letter written to the congregation at Corinth. (None of the other Greek words for baptism are used in I Corinthians.) This word is used ten (10) times in this book. In chapter one, it is used six (6) times and it is obvious that it refers to water baptism. I Corinthians 10:2 is clearly used in a metaphorical way when referring to the Israelites being “baptized unto Moses in the cloud and in the sea.” However, it fits the picture of our baptism. When we are baptized in water we are submitting our lives to the Lord as our deliverer and leader, so likewise, did the Israelites when following Moses out of Egypt. The type and analogy matches in both cases. In chapter fifteen and verse twenty-nine, βαπτίζω is used two times. Regardless of the interpretation of this difficult passage, I believe everyone agrees that this passage is not related to “spirit baptism” but to that of water baptism. Therefore, why should the word for baptism in I Corinthians 12:13 refer to something different from the other uses of it in this epistle? What did Paul say or how did he use the Greek word βαπτίζω to cause the saints at Corinth to think differently about this word than how it was used throughout the epistle? It is generally considered when interpreting Scripture that we are to let the Scriptures interpret itself, and that we are to interpret in light of the clear teaching of the Scriptures and not build doctrines or form opinions on that which is unclear. Unless the Scriptures give a clear understanding that the word is used differently from the clear usage throughout the writing, then we should not read something else into the text.

A third question to consider regarding baptism is the *how*. In other words, how is baptism performed? On the surface this question will likely appear to be trite. However, I assure you it is of extreme importance. When baptism is performed, there must be the subject (who is baptized), the administrator (who is baptizing), and the element (into what is the subject baptized). Generally, baptism is performed by the believer being immersed in water by the minister. The believer is the subject, the element is water, and the minister is the administrator. But what about “spirit baptism”? Who is the administrator and what (or who) is the element and who is the subject?

On the day of Pentecost, when it is generally believed by all that there was a baptism of the Holy Spirit, we find all three parts of baptism: the subject; the element; the administrator. The “about an hundred and twenty” (Acts 1:15) were “in one place” (Acts 2:1). The spirit came and filled the house, Acts 2:2. After the people from the various countries heard the spirit filled people “speak ... the wonderful works of God,” some asked what it all meant, Acts 2:11-13. Others accused them of being drunk with wine. Peter addressed the crowd and said that it was a fulfilling of the prophet Joel. After quoting the prophecy of Joel and preaching other things concerning the prophecy and the work of Christ, Peter said, “Therefore (Christ) being by the right hand of God exalted, and having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Ghost, he hath shed forth this, which ye now see and hear,” Acts 2:33. Therefore, Christ, the administrator, baptized the believers, in the Holy Spirit. Even John Wickliffe connected the order of baptism of the Spirit on the day of Pentecost to that of water baptism. Notice this from Henry Danvers’ (a Baptist), in his book, *A Treatise of Baptism*, in 1674, p. 284 (p. 280 in Sprinkle reprint) where he outlines Wickliffe’s beliefs. He said, “... therefore faith and

repentance, or regeneration goes first, baptism of water follows after; in order to the baptism of the Spirit; as Acts 2:38.”

There is much discussion as to whether what took place at Samaria (Acts 8:14-17), at Caesarea, in Cornelius’ house (Acts 10:44-47), or at Ephesus (Acts 19:6) was the same thing as on the Day of Pentecost in Jerusalem. In reality, our study is not to answer the questions regarding those incidents or if such continues to happen today. However, assuming (for arguments sake) they are one and the same, the pattern is identical: Christ as the administrator; believers are the subjects; the Holy Spirit is the element. However, this is not the pattern that is presented regarding “spirit baptism” with I Corinthians 12:13.

Since our time is up for today, the Lord willing, we will have to continue this study in our next lesson. Please continue to be in prayer as we go forward with this subject.