

*We exist to make disciples who delight in God and make Him known
by proclaiming the gospel of Jesus Christ.*

Clearing Up Confusion about The Spirit **Acts 11**

Keywords: Spirit Baptism, Holy Spirit, Empowerment, Pentecost, Indwelling Spirit, Filled with the Spirit

PowerPoint Presentation included: NONE

SermonAudio Blurb: There is much confusion and even division within the Church regarding the work of the Spirit. Often this is due to a poor understanding of terms that are vitally connected to His work in the Church. This sermon is designed to clarify and correct many misconceptions so that there might be better unity.

I. Introduction.

- A. Acts 11.
- B. Why this sermon?
 - 1. As I worked on Acts 11, I saw it needed to be preached in one sermon. Yet in our passage there were three sections where I knew I needed to develop, vss 17, 24 and 28.
 - 2. At issue is exactly what the Spirit is doing in the lives of Christians as well as in the Church as a whole. I have touched on this already but I want to take it a bit deeper by looking at a few key issues related to the Holy Spirit.
- C. So today I hope to clear up some common points of confusion about the Holy Spirit by building off of what I have already taught.
 - 1. The first is what John the Baptist was doing in his baptism as opposed to what Jesus was promised to do with His baptism.
 - 2. The second is to understand what is meant by being full the Holy Spirit.
 - 3. If we can get these worked out in our minds then so much so-called teaching about the work of the Holy Spirit will go away. And I think you will realize how truly futile so much of the pursuing after the work and power the Holy Spirit in one's life.
- D. These concepts about the Spirit are often misunderstood by us and as a result errors in our doctrine or practice occur. This is not theory or abstract thinking. This deals with very real things that we all face throughout our lives. So, they are vitally important to get right.

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II. The Works of The Trinity.

A. In Acts 11:16 we see reference to two baptisms.

1. What is important to note is that neither is what we call “baptism.” Now what is the big deal with this?

a. Firstly, there is a huge relationship between what the baptism of the Holy Spirit means and the common beliefs held within Pentecostal and Charismatic brethren.

b. Where is these two baptisms mentioned?

(1) Matthew 3:11

(2) Acts 1:5

c. The second reason is that the bible makes a strong distinction between his baptism and this new baptism.

(a) Matthew 3:11

(b) And again, Luke 3:16

(c) John 1:32-33.

(2) So let’s look at that time of outpouring.

(a) Acts 2:1-3—this is when they were baptized in the Spirit.

(b) Acts 8:9-24.

(c) Acts 10.

(d) 1 Corinthians 12:1-13.

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- (3) Therefore, how do we make a distinction between water baptism and Spirit baptism?
 - (a) The answer is that when the passage is speaking of us being placed in Christ it speaks of Spirit baptism.
 - (b) Romans 6:1-11.
 - (c) Galatians 3:27.
 - (d) Ephesians 4:4-7..
- d. So we see that there are four different ways baptism is used in the New Testament.
 - (1) John the Baptist's.
 - (2) Baptism by Jesus with the Spirit.
 - (3) Baptism by Jesus with fire/judgment.
 - (4) Baptism by water.
2. What, then, is being filled with the Spirit?
 - a. In the English we translate two different words in the Greek with the same word, "filled" or "full." This leads to some conclusions that they are the same when they are not.
 - b. These two terms are technical terms.
3. πίμπλημι (*pimplemi*) This word speaks of a **special empowerment** of the Spirit.
 - a. One of the common results of this is some great work of God occurring. We have seen these already so I can go quickly here.
 - b. Luke 1:15, Future looking to the Lord.
 - c. Luke 1:41, note what Elizabeth does.
 - d. Luke 1:67, note what Zacharias does.
 - e. Acts 2:4.
 - f. Acts 4:8.
 - g. All of these plus many others all speak of a unique work of the Spirit through a person.

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- (1) They are special fillings. **Not normative for the believer.**
 - (2) They are not only for the Church. In the O.T. we see this very frequently as well.
 - (3) This can certainly still happen today but it is not something we control or make happen anymore than all of the biblical references. I think this is what happened in moments of great revival such as Edward's sermon on *Sinners in The Hands of God*.
- h. What is interesting is that this is under the sovereign control of God. He determines if and when this occurs.
4. πλήρης (*pleres*) This word speaks of being under the **control**, or of an **abiding relationship** with the Holy Spirit.
- a. Luke 4:1
 - b. Acts 6:3, 5
 - c. Acts 13:52.
 - d. One last passage that has given people problems—Ephesians 5:18.
 - (1) “Filled” here is the verb form of πλήρης, πληρόω. It is present, passive imperative.
 - (a) Present tense is speaking of a consistent controlling of the Spirit.
 - (b) Passive means that it is done to you, not something you do yourself.
 - (c) It is a command.
 - (2) This is a parallel form making a distinction between drunkenness and filling.
 - (3) It is not telling us to have that special power of God come upon us. It is not telling us to be baptized with the Spirit.
 - (4) Application: one of the spiritual priorities that every Christian must have is that of being under the Spirit's control.

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- (a) There is a close connection between this command and the command in Galatians 5, where we are called to walk, be in step, by the Spirit.
- (b) In Col. 3:16 is the passage that is in parallel with Eph. 5. It says, “Let the word of Christ richly dwell within you”
- (c) Notice in vss. 19-21 we then see the results/evidences of being filled.
 - i) A horizontal aspect (19a).
 - ii) A vertical act of worship (19b “to the Lord).
 - iii) A vertical expression of thanksgiving (20).
 - iv) A horizontal subordination (21). This sets up Paul’s next section on how believers live out their worldly relationships with one another.

III. Conclusion.

- A. So now we can wrap up the various uses in Acts 11.
- B. The baptism of John was one of repentance, acknowledging the people’s sinfulness as God’s covenant people and a desire to return in preparation for the Messiah.
- C. The baptism of the Spirit was Christ creating and filling His Body, which is the Church, with people. It is an act done solely by Christ.
- D. The baptism of fire is one of eternal judgment against all who reject Jesus as Lord and Savior.
- E. The idea the Holy Spirit “falling” upon the people is the unique empowerment by the Spirit to testify that these people were full participants of God’s work of salvation.
- F. Barnabas was described as full of the Holy Spirit, which meant he consistently lived under the will of God as revealed in the Word and as such was strengthened by the Spirit to obey and be faithful.
- G. And when Agabus began to speak by the Spirit we are seeing again an empowerment by the Spirit for a very special and specific work.

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Benediction

Now may the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing the good news of Jesus Christ, so that you will abound in hope by the power of the Holy Spirit. Amen