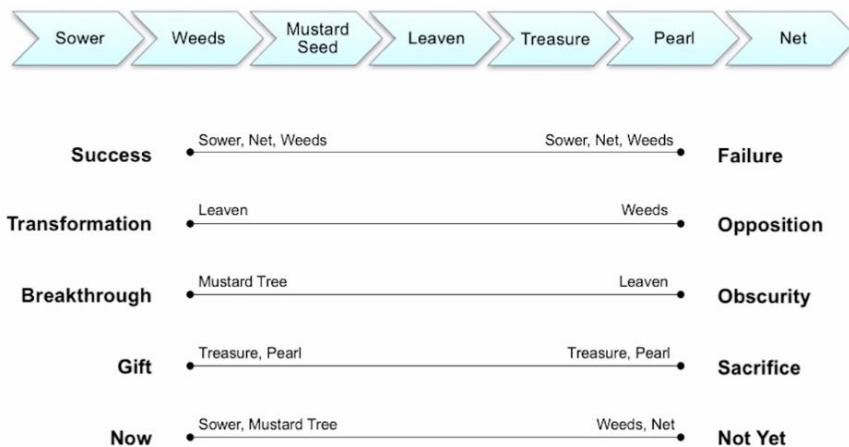


RESOURCES AND QUESTIONS ON OUR UNDERSTANDING OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

VIDEO 1: PARADOXES OF THE KINGDOM

From: Advance Theology Course (Module 5, Session 5)

Matthew 13: Paradoxes of the Kingdom



Question 1. The New Testament teaches the “already” and “not yet” tension in regard to God’s kingdom. Do you tend to emphasise one over the other?

VIDEO 2: BAPTISM IN THE SPIRIT

From: Advance Theology Course (Module 6, Session 1)

Baptism in the Spirit: Scores Out of Twelve?

■ How many of these statements do you agree with?

1. All who are in Christ today have been born of the Holy Spirit.
2. All who are in Christ today are indwelt by the Holy Spirit, and are temples of the Holy Spirit.
3. All who are in Christ today have been given the gift of the Holy Spirit.
4. All who are in Christ today have the Holy Spirit.
5. All who are in Christ today are led by the Holy Spirit.
6. All who are in Christ today have received the Holy Spirit.
7. All who are in Christ today have received the Spirit of adoption, by whom we cry out *Abba!*
8. All who are in Christ today have the Spirit like rivers of living water welling up within them.
9. All who are in Christ today have been given the Holy Spirit to drink.
10. All who are in Christ today have been sealed with the Holy Spirit.
11. All who are in Christ today have been filled with the Holy Spirit.
12. All who are in Christ today have been baptised in the Holy Spirit.

Baptism in the Spirit: Which Quadrant Are You In?

Descriptions of different interpretations

	Pentecostal	Empowerment / Assurance	Inauguration	Initiation
What?	Definitive experience other than conversion, resulting in greater power, with tongues as visible sign	Definitive experience other than conversion, resulting in greater power and assurance; tongues not necessarily	Not a technical term, but simply means 'drenching in the Spirit'; used by John to refer to the start of the new age of the Spirit	Spirit's activity at conversion / initiation, resulting in faith and integration into the church
When?	Always after conversion	May occur at conversion, but often afterwards	At and after conversion, repeatedly throughout life	Always at conversion
Where?	Acts 2	Acts 8 and 19	Matthew 3:11f and parallels	1 Corinthians 12
We ...?	'Tarry' (wait) for and seek it, like the Pentecost disciples	Pursue it, as we may be like those in Samaria or Ephesus	Go on being baptised / filled / drenched in the Spirit	Already received it; seek filling or 'fulness'

- You can be a Christian and never have been baptised in the Spirit, like those in Samaria (Acts 8) and Ephesus (Acts 19)

- A second experience is to be understood as a step change in the Christian life

- The main difference between the two is the role of tongues as a sign of Spirit-baptism

- You cannot be a Christian and never have been baptised in the Spirit (1 Corinthians 12:13; Romans 8:9); Acts 8 is unique, and those in Ephesus were never Christians at all

- A second experience is to be understood as a difference of degree, rather than of category

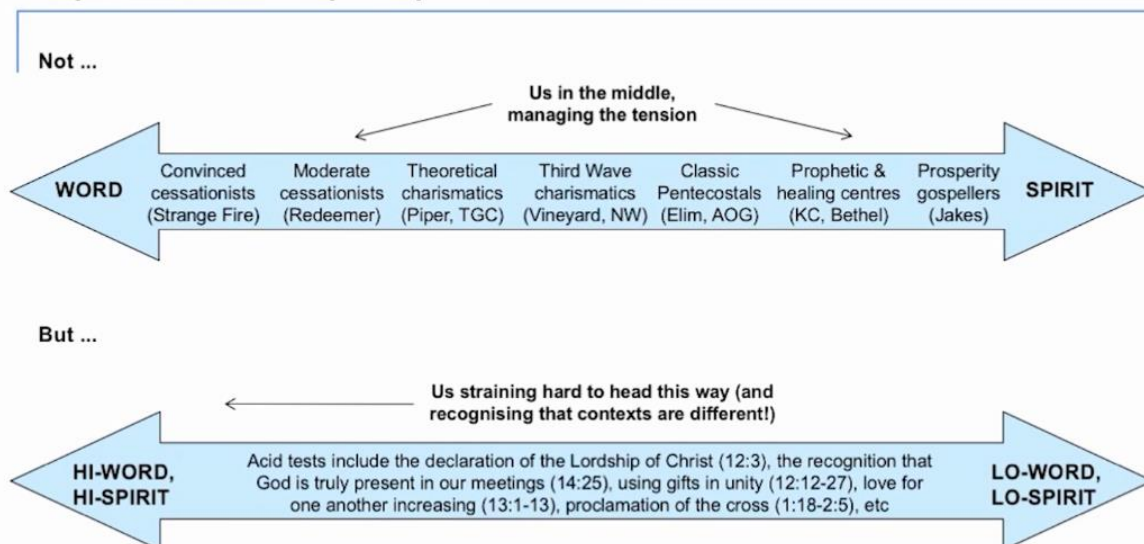
- The main disagreement is over whether Spirit-baptism is a one-off (at conversion) or an ongoing experience

Question 2: What are your responses to the baptism of the Spirit statements in the first slide? Which did you agree and disagree with? In which quadrant did you land in the second slide?

VIDEO 3: THE WORD-SPIRIT SPECTRUM?

From: Advance Theology Course (Module 6, Session 4)

People: The Word—Spirit Spectrum?



Question 3. Have you tended to think of Word and Spirit as being in tension, or pulling in the same direction? How closely does Grace Church correspond to the five "tests" of Hi-Word, Hi Spirit?

TWO REFLECTIONS ON THE SPIRIT

REFLECTION 1: OLD TESTAMENT VS. NEW TESTAMENT UNDERSTANDING

From: Lesslie Newbigin, *The Household of God* (London: SCM, 1953), pp. 103-4

I want not to consider a further distortion which has in fact arisen from isolating the truth that the Church is the community of the Holy Spirit and treating this as alone determinative of its nature. It may be described, borrowing a phrase of Dr. John Mackay, as the setting of ardour against order. That problem had already appeared in the time of St. Paul, as his first letter to the Corinthians shows, and it has constantly reappeared. The preference for the abnormal and the spectacular, the belief that what is extempore and unprepared is more spiritual than what is customary or planned, the tendency to regard order and organisation as antithetical to the life of the Spirit – these are all evidences of a conception of the Holy Spirit more characteristic of the Old Testament than the New. In the Old Testament the Holy Spirit is spoken of mainly as a power coming upon individuals at particular times and enabling them to perform mighty works, to speak God's word, to discern his will. The New Testament begins by describing how the Holy Spirit descended upon Jesus and abode upon Him, and how in the power of the Spirit He lived and spoke, and how that same Spirit was given to His Church to be the permanent principle of its life. By this *koinonia*, common sharing, in the Holy Spirit, Christ's people are enabled to acknowledge Him as Lord, to cry to God as Father, and to live together a common life in which the Spirit furnishes all those gifts which such a common life needs and of which the greatest is love. The Holy Spirit is now no more an occasional visitant to a favoured individual, but the abiding and indwelling principle of life in a fellowship. The supreme gift of the Spirit is not the spectacular power by which an individual may gain pre-eminence, but the humble and self-effacing love by which the body is build up and knit together. It follows that a decisive mark of the Spirit's presence will be a tender concern for the unity of the body, a horror of all that exalts some human leader or some party into the place which Christ alone can occupy.

REFLECTION 2: WHAT DOES BEING BAPTISED IN THE SPIRIT LOOK LIKE?

From: Andrew Wilson, Think Theology blog, 12 Nov 2012

An African man in his thirties reads his Bible, repents of his sins, believes in Jesus and gets baptised in water. He experiences joy in God, is deeply thankful for his salvation, is gifted as a preacher and a writer, and shapes the theology of lots of people - but he never prophesies, speaks in other languages or sees anybody physically healed. Has he been baptised in the Spirit?

A French theologian believes the revelatory gifts have ceased, and would never dream of eagerly desiring spontaneous prophetic revelation, or anything like that. He also has a tendency to be a bit strict on issues like church discipline and careful exposition of the scriptures. On the other hand, he loves Jesus, he is clearly a gifted teacher, he trains pastors, and ends up seeing a number of churches planted. Is he Spirit-filled?

A good, solid, evangelical Baptist goes overseas on mission, and preaches the gospel for the best part of his life. He never believes in a second experience after conversion, never falls over under the influence, and certainly doesn't believe in apostles today or the continuation of the supernatural gifts. But he preaches the cross to hitherto unreached people groups, sees numerous people saved and added to the church, and translates the Bible into several languages. Has he experienced the baptism of the Holy Spirit?

An Anglican vicar is a paedobaptist and a cessationist, and he speaks against the charismatic movement, occasionally suggesting it is the Colossian heresy. He is an extremely gifted preacher, however, who is full of joy in God, leads a consistent and godly life, sees many converted and discipled, trains preachers, writes books which sell around the world, leads a large church in central London, and lives with confident assurance in Christ. Has he been filled with the Spirit?

A tattooed, drug-using, sexually abusive young man gets dramatically converted, and almost immediately experiences the miraculous power of God. He begins leading people into powerful encounters with the Holy Spirit, and sees many people healed, including on television. But behind the scenes, his lifestyle raises questions, and he eventually has to step out of ministry for marital reasons. Has he been baptised in the Spirit?

You see where this is going, I guess. Clearly there are some people, including many who have been influential on me personally, who say they went suddenly from a joyless, legalistic, noncharismatic, unevangelistic, assurance-lacking, nominal, disobedient Christianity, into an encounter with God which brought them into an experience of joy, grace, spiritual gifts, power, sonship, mission and obedience. Whatever you think “baptism in the Spirit” is in the Bible, it’s hard to disagree that this sort of sudden transition could easily be described as a drenching in, or a filling with, the Holy Spirit. But there are also a huge number of people whose experience is not like that - like the examples I’ve just given - and who live their whole lives with some of these things and not others. When that’s the case, how do we know whether to use the language of “Spirit-filled” or not? And there are also lots of people, including me, who had a whole series of encounters that led them into greater intimacy with God, spiritual experience and obedience, but no single experience which could be said to tower above the others. How do we talk about baptism in the Spirit when that happens?

So: Augustine, John Calvin, William Carey, Dick Lucas, Todd Bentley, and me. Which of us have been baptised in the Spirit? And how could you tell?

Question 4: How do Newbigin’s and Wilson’s reflections challenge your understanding of the Spirit? In what way(s) are they helpful?

EXTRACT: THE GIFTS OF THE SPIRIT

From: Andrew Wilson, *Spirit and Sacrament* (Grand Rapids, Zondervan, 2018), pp. 94-96

“You are not lacking in any gift,” Paul tells [the Corinthians] in his (breath-takingly confident) opening paragraph, “as you wait for the revealing of our Lord Jesus Christ, who will sustain you to the end, guiltless in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ” [1 Corinthians 1:7]. You are not lacking in any *charismata*. Collectively, you have *all* of them. And this to a church of nobodies, bunglers, squabblers, and boasters. It almost beggars belief.

It is not until chapter twelve that we start to get an idea of what these spiritual gifts are. Paul, eager that the Corinthians not be “uninformed” on the subject, explains that “to each is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good,” and then mentions a bunch of examples: the utterance of wisdom, the utterance of knowledge, faith, gifts of healing, the working of miracles, prophecy, the ability to distinguish between spirits, various kinds of tongues, and the interpretation of

tongues [12:7-10]. We can be fairly sure that this is not an exhaustive list.¹ Nothing Paul says here indicates that there is anything anomalous, or weird, about the fact that the Corinthians have these gifts. Far from it: he grounds it all in their conversion (12:2-3), the Trinity (vv. 4-6), the common good of the church (vv. 7-11), the gift of the Spirit to all believers (vv. 12-13), and the interdependence of the church body (vv. 14-31).

So whatever else we may say about the experience and gifts of the Spirit, it is clear that to be a Christian in Greece in the AD 50s meant at least five things. One: you had already been baptised, or drenched, in one Spirit into one body. Two: you had been given one Spirit to drink. Taken together, these two images and highly experiential – if you are drenched, or have a drink, you really know it – and suggest that the experience of the Spirit is both initiatory and ongoing.² Three: you had been given some gifts (or manifestations) of the Spirit for the common good, whether gifts of wisdom, knowledge or prophecy, healing or miracles, languages or their interpretation, faith or distinguishing between spirits, or whatever else. Four: you had not been given all of these gifts, and nor were any gifts common to all believers. Five: as a result, you were called to serve the other members of the body with your gifts, just as you needed them to serve you with theirs. That meant you had to see your gifts as a means of exercising love for others, rather than a means of spiritual gratification or showing off, a point which Paul then develops at some length, both in principle (1 Corinthians 13) and in practice (chapter 14).

It is worth pointing out that those five things present challenges to certain forms of charismatic Christianity today. They problematize readings of Paul that identify two types of believer: those who drink of and are drenched in the Spirit (Pentecostals or charismatics), and those who don't and aren't (everyone else). They challenge the use of any one gift as a shibboleth to mark out those who are truly full of the Spirit, as Pentecostals have traditionally done with the gift of languages. They show that the gift of healing is a gift, given to some in particular measure, rather than something that all believers would be able to do on demand if they simply had enough faith or prayed a certain way or adopted a particular technique. In centering on the metaphor of a human body, and the need to love and serve one another, they also call all believers to repent of using the gifts in service of sectarianism, individualism, division, or pride, let alone the greed and falsehood that can be found in so much "prosperity" Christianity.

At the same time, they reveal two striking features of the New Testament church. Unless the Corinthians were a strange anomaly in this respect – and, as we have seen, both Acts and the other epistles indicate that they were not – normal Christianity involved emphatic encounters with the person of the Holy Spirit, such that metaphors like "filling", "drinking", and "drenching" seemed appropriate, and an expectation of spiritual gifts like prophecy, healing, languages, or miracles. Neither of these things were reserved for the superstars or the key leaders or the eyewitnesses of the resurrection. They were part of the everyday experience of ordinary Christians, everywhere.

Question 5: Do you agree with Andrew Wilson's take on Spiritual gifts from 1 Corinthians?

¹ The fact that the list is not exhaustive seems clear from a comparison with the other lists in Paul, including 1 Corinthians 12:27-30 (apostles, prophets, teachers, miracles, gifts of healing, helping, administrating, various kinds of tongues) and Romans 12:6-8 (prophesying, serving, teaching, exhorting, giving, leading, showing mercy).

² This combination of initiatory and ongoing experience is also apparent from the accounts of filling with the Spirit in Acts (2:4; 4:8, 31; 9:17; 13:9, 52), Paul's exhortation to the Ephesians (5:18) and Jesus's language in John's gospel (cp. 4:14 and 7:37-39).