

Elementary Doctrines Baptism by the Spirit

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In our discussion of the elementary doctrines we've concluded that one of the reasons people are not growing up today and becoming mature in Christ is because they don't know the elementary doctrines. Elementary doctrines do not mean that they are unimportant, much the same way that before you can read the newspaper you have to go to elementary school. Before you can figure out complicated mathematical formulas you have to become familiar with numbers. Elementary school is vitally important when you are a child because it brings you into contact with the most basic foundations of our educational system. In the same way, when you are young in the faith you must be brought into contact with the elementary things of our faith. Elementary then, does not mean simple or unimportant; it means those things that you must have in your foundation—if you have a foundation at all.

Presently the church culture is based largely on personalities... people follow leaders, and whatever the leader is “into” distinguishes one group from another. However, if you are ever going to grow up in the Lord there are some things you have to know and the writer of the book of **Hebrews**, in the **6th chapter** has set them out. They are: repentance from acts that lead to death, faith toward God, baptisms, the laying on of hands, the resurrection of the dead and eternal judgment. These are found in the first few verses of the **6th chapter** of the book of **Hebrews**. (Inserted – actual verse—“**Therefore let us leave the elementary teachings about Christ and go on to maturity, not laying again the foundation of repentance from acts that lead to death, and of faith in God, instruction about baptisms, the laying on of hands, the resurrection of the dead, and eternal judgment.**” – **Hebrews 6:1,2**)

So far in our discussion we have examined “repentance from acts that lead to death”. We've also considered—and looked at—“faith toward God” and we are discussing “baptisms”. We saw that there were four of them: baptism “by” the Spirit, baptism “of” the Spirit, baptism in fire and baptism in water and for our purposes in this particular program it is our intention to pick up and discuss “baptism of fire”. We're introduced to the concept of “baptism of fire” in the **3rd chapter** of the book of **Luke** and it is John

the Baptist who tells us about it. We have looked at this Scripture previously when we considered baptism “of” the Spirit—when we saw that baptism “of” the Spirit is the thing that Jesus does—the baptism of Jesus is the baptism “of” the Spirit.

But the second baptism that Jesus puts you through is the baptism of fire. Listen to this from **Luke 3, verse 15**—it says, **“The people were waiting expectantly and were all wondering in their hearts if John might possibly be the Christ.”** So then John disabuses them of that notion and this is what he says in **verse 16**, **“John answered them all, ‘I baptize you with water. But one more powerful than I will come, the thongs of whose sandals I am not worthy to untie. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and with fire.’”** There are two baptisms that—if you walk with Jesus—He will administer to you, neither of which He administered while He was here on the earth.

We’ve examined already the baptism of the Spirit and saw that Jesus baptized no one in the Spirit while He was on the earth. He didn’t baptize anyone else, also, with the baptism of fire while He was on the earth but you who pursue the Lord Jesus Christ, be sure of this: that throughout the course of your Christian life, by the hand of Jesus Christ himself, you will experience “fire”. Now the assumption is that the baptism of fire was what happened when—on the day of Pentecost—cloven tongues, like as of fire sat on the heads of the apostles. (Inserted – actual verse—**“When the day of Pentecost came, they were all together in one place. Suddenly a sound like the blowing of a violent wind came from heaven and filled the whole house where they were sitting. They saw what seemed to be tongues of fire that separated and came to rest on each of them.”** – **Acts 2:1-3**)

However, what you begin to see is that the baptism of fire is described in the Scriptures as a baptism of suffering, where you become a partaker of the sufferings of Christ. The cloven tongues like as of fire were actually the sign of the Holy Spirit himself, like the Holy Spirit descended on Jesus in the form of a dove on another occasion, He descended in the form of like cloven or split tongues of fire. (Inserted – actual verse—**“As soon as Jesus was baptized, he went up out of the water. At that moment heaven was opened, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and lighting on him.”** – **Matthew 3:16**) But the baptism—walking through the fire—is part of your experience as a believer and if you have suffered nothing as a believer then the chances are that you have not acquired much maturity because God has a special place for suffering in the life of a believer.

In fact, it’s referred to by Peter, here in the first book that Peter wrote—**chapter 4, I Peter, verse 12**, he says, **“Dear friends, do not be surprised at the painful trial you are suffering, as though something strange were happening to you. But rejoice that you participate in the sufferings of Christ, so that you may be overjoyed when his glory is revealed.”** (Inserted – **I Peter 4:12,13**) And then he goes on to talk about what it

is to participate in the sufferings of Christ and then in **verse 19** he says, **“So then, those who suffer according to God’s will should commit themselves to their faithful Creator and continue to do good.”** (Inserted – **I Peter 4:19**)

What is the purpose of suffering as a believer and why is it considered the “baptism of suffering”? Literally, you’ll walk under suffering in some part of your life. And why is it that it is Jesus himself, who administrates this suffering in your life? Well normally today, if someone suffers as a believer, it is common to come under the scrutiny of other believers and to come under the judgment that accompanies that scrutiny and that judgment typically is: “Well, you are suffering because you are doing something wrong.” Or, “You are suffering because God is mad at you.” I know that in my own turn as a believer, when suffering has attended me, I have sought through my life to try to find what it is that I’ve been doing wrong and to gladly to repent of it because when you are suffering the thing you want is relief. So, if you even think that you might have done something wrong you’ll repent of it.

In times of suffering I’ve repented of things I even thought of doing, let alone the things that I’ve done and I’ve repented several times of the things I knew for sure that I had done but that didn’t change my circumstance and I kept on being held in this place of suffering. And then you go through... your enemy makes a “pitch” and tells you, “Perhaps you didn’t really repent.” So you repent all over again and you repent as often as you think you need to because you think that the way to alleviate the suffering—the suffering, for example, that comes through uncertainty or suffering that comes by the uncomfortable nature of your situation, the lack of direction, the lack of a sense of purpose, the sense that every opportunity has escaped you, the sense that you are without the sufficiency of means—whether financial, health, that problems are going on in your life with your children or your jobs and so on and so on. And the thought is that if you could only find what the root of your suffering is, what you have done that caused this suffering to come to you—if you could only find that, repent of it and get on with your life—then everything should be fine.

So it becomes quite a point of consternation when you do all of what you think you should do and nothing changes. When that happens, you should understand something: the role of suffering in the life of a believer has very little to do with things that you are doing that’s wrong. We keep the same tract of our lives and we stay on that tract unless and until something happens that causes us to examine whether or not it is time to change. You see, the human being has a spirit, he has a soul and he has a body. Here it is in the book of **I Thessalonians, chapter 5, verse 23**, and there it says, **“May God himself, the God of peace, sanctify you through and through. May your whole spirit, soul and body be kept blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. The one who calls you (namely the Lord) is faithful and he will do it.”** (Inserted – **I Thessalonians 5:23,24**)

You have a spirit, you have a soul and you have a body and normally the soul “runs the show”. Let me take one other moment and show you that in Jesus’ case he also had a spirit, a soul and a body. In the **14th chapter** of the gospel of **Mark**, beginning at **verse 32**, going through **verse 38**, Jesus says there, “My soul is exceedingly sorrowful even unto death” (so he had soul). “My soul.” and He says, “What shall I say, Father save me from this hour.” Then He goes on to say, “For the spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak.” (Inserted – actual verse—**“They went to a place called Gethsemane, and Jesus said to his disciples, ‘Sit here while I pray,’ He took Peter, James and John along with him, and he began to be deeply distressed and troubled. ‘My soul is overwhelmed with sorrow to the point of death,’ he said to them. ‘Stay here and keep watch.’ Going a little farther, he fell to the ground and prayed that if possible the hour might pass from him. ‘Abba, Father,’ he said, ‘everything is possible for you. Take this cup from me. Yet not what I will, but what you will.’ Then he returned to his disciples and found them sleeping. ‘Simon,’ he said to Peter, ‘are you asleep? Could you not keep watch for one hour? Watch and pray so that you will not fall into temptation. The spirit is willing, but the body is weak.”** – **Mark 14:32-38**)

So He has flesh, He has a spirit and He has a soul and in that case what we saw was that His spirit embraced the will of God but His soul fought against the oncoming crucifixion—but especially His soul fought against the oncoming requirement that He drink this cup that contained all of the sins of all mankind. His righteous soul could not stand the thought of being made sin—He who had no sin. Why would Jesus go through this suffering? Was it because of anything He had done? Clearly not. But it was the destiny to which He was born. He was born to be made sin so that everyone who was a sinner would find in Him the appropriate sacrifice—the exchange for their sins.

He who had no sin became the sinner so that everyone who is sinful—and indeed **“...All have sinned and fall short of the glory of God”** (Inserted – **Romans 3:23**)—might find in Him that very large word—the propitiation, the offer of satisfaction and fulfillment for their sins. That being so, we see that the baptism of suffering is not often related to things that you are doing that need to be corrected. Often however, the baptism of suffering has to do with this: that you have a destiny in the Lord and as you become more and more mature your soul needs to give way to the priorities established by the Holy Spirit to which your spirit is in agreement. It is the soul that is in conflict with the spirit—it is the human soul that is in conflict with the human spirit, which is also in fellowship with the Holy Spirit.

The Holy Spirit, who is the Spirit of God in fellowship with your spirit, reveals the mind of the Lord, but when that mind is revealed the human soul realizes that it loses its dominance and its pre-eminence and it does not like that. At some point what it will do is that it will fight against the Spirit of God, in fellowship with your spirit, so that it can

retain its dominance. The reason that the soul likes to retain its dominance is because the soul can more or less figure out what's going on and the soul knows the patterns of your life. The soul knows how to remain in control so it doesn't want to give up that control. Instead it wants to reduce the things of God to what it can control and make subject to the preferences of the human being.

When you do that then religion becomes the religion of works. You think up of what God would like and you give to God what you think God would like. That's fine if it worked, but inherently the human being does not know what the will of God is. God has to reveal His will for your life to you. You cannot figure it out and it is not some generic "good works" that you are called to do in order to meet the approval of God. God has a plan, known from the foundations of the world, for you. (Inserted – actual verse—**“For he chose us in him before the creation of the world to be holy and blameless in his sight. In love he predestined us to be adopted as his sons through Jesus Christ, in accordance with his pleasure and will—to the praise of his glorious grace, which he has freely given us in the One he loves.”** – **Ephesians 1:4-6**) It's how He specifically intends to live in you and how He specifically intends to live through you. You see, God prepared your person in such a unique way as He did because He wanted to come and live in you and then work through you when you gave your life to Him. He already knows what He wants to do through you and the only issue is whether or not you will allow yourself to become subject to His rule.

When you say to the Lord, "Lord, here's my life, You take it and You do with it what You want" we may think that's some great offering to God. But the fact is that God prepared a way of life that He intends to live through you when you will give the life that you have to Him and invite Him to take control. So it's not like He saves you and then gives the life back to you. He saves you for Himself and He takes that life that you have offered and He now intends to live through it but your soul doesn't like it—your soul wants a different outcome. So what the soul does is that it fights against the spirit.

Now suffering—in the life of the believer—is what focuses attention upon the way the soul is and brings the believer into conformity with how God designed them to live—indeed, what God intended to do in the person. So the conflict within the human being—between the soul and the spirit—is that conflict between whether the human will run the show or whether he will truly submit to God and the Spirit of God will direct his life. That's the conflict. Suffering is the way that the soul is saved. When you come to Jesus, He immediately saves your spirit. The Spirit of God comes in, takes residence and confirms that you are born again of God. This is what **Romans 8:11** and following says, "For the Spirit himself testifies with our spirits." (Inserted – actual verse—**“The Spirit himself testifies with our spirit that we are God's children.”** – **Romans 8:16**)

So salvation occurs when the Holy Spirit comes in and fellowships with the human spirit

and establishes the seal that you are born of God. The soul however, is saved progressively and that's when the soul is brought to the place where it is required to give up its will, its direction, its control over the human life and to yield that to the human spirit in fellowship with the Holy Spirit. The human spirit in fellowship with the Holy Spirit understands the mind of God and understands the purpose for which the human being was created and within that context then, a reformation occurs. The nature of the human being is transformed from being governed by his soul to being able and available to God for God to dwell in.

By the Spirit of God in fellowship with the human spirit, a whole different life is lived and it is the life that God envisioned for you before you were born, before you came into the world. The Lord said to Jeremiah, in **Jeremiah 1:4**, “Before you were in your mother’s womb I knew you... before you were born I set you apart. I appointed you a prophet to the nations.” (Inserted – actual verse—**“The word of the Lord came to me, saying, ‘Before I formed you in the womb I knew you, before you were born I set you apart; I appointed you as a prophet to the nations.’”**) And Paul, speaking of the same concept of destiny said that a grace was given to him “from his mother’s womb to preach the good news to the Gentiles.” (Inserted – actual verse—**“But when God, who set me apart from birth and called me by his grace, was pleased to reveal his Son in me so that I might preach him among the Gentiles, I did not consult any man,” – Galatians 1:15,16**)

Now with that being so, you came into the world with the specific intent of being useful to the Lord, for Him to live in you and for Him to live through you. Jesus said the very same thing in the gospel of **John**, the **5th chapter**, where He says, “The Son can do nothing of himself, only what the Father does, that’s what the Son does.” (Inserted – actual verse—**“Jesus gave them this answer: ‘I tell you the truth, the Son can do nothing by himself; he can do only what he sees his Father doing, because whatever the Father does the Son also does.’” – John 5:19**) He said to Philip, “Don’t you know me, Philip, after I’ve been with you for such a long time?” He said, “It’s the Father, living in me, who is doing His work.” (Inserted – actual verse—**“Jesus answered: ‘Don’t you know me, Philip, even after I have been among you such a long time? Anyone who has seen me has seen the Father. How can you say, ‘Show us the Father’? Don’t you believe that I am in the Father, and that the Father is in me? The words I say to you are not just my own. Rather, it is the Father, living in me, who is doing his work.’” – John 14:9,10**)

Suffering transforms you from what you think you can do for God... which is nothing, and useless... in fact, it’s characterized as works of iniquity when you are running the show and you are doing what you think is what God wants. You are transformed from that to submission to the Spirit of God. And by submission to the Spirit of God, He then directs your entire life beyond that point because the life beyond that point, you see, is

the life that God created you to live. And He created you as a vessel to which He could come, in which He could live and out of which people could see God's own goodness in your face. It is not normal for the human being to submit himself to God in this way because before you give your life to God your soul rules the show—you are governed by your emotions, you are governed by your own thoughts, you are governed by your own perspectives.

The fiery trials that you must go through are those things that God has designed to shift your perspective from this idea of what you can do for God to making you available to God so He can live in you and He can live through you. Suffering disabuses you of any notion of your own perfection and you only change incrementally when—by reason of suffering—you recognize that you must give up some area of control in your life that you've always had. When you give up that control, God comes and He takes it and in that place where you rule, He expands your capacity to receive new revelation, new understanding, new insights into the nature of God.

Unless you suffer, as a believer, your soul will always remain in control and when your soul is in control your view of God will always be what humans can come up with about God. When suffering works its work, your soul will be put down and your spirit, elevated and your spirit then is able to receive, from the Holy Spirit, the fresh impulses as to the nature of God. It is Jesus who holds the steady hand upon this baptism of suffering. He is the one who can be trusted to bring suffering into your life when He wants to and how He wants to. The baptism of suffering therefore, is one of the two baptisms that Jesus is qualified to administer in your life and He does it faithfully to bring about the necessary changes. We will continue to study the baptisms and we'll conclude this section on baptisms. I'm Sam Soleyn, God bless you and we'll talk more about this.

Scripture References:

Hebrews 6:1,2

Luke 3:15,16

Acts 2:1-3

Matthew 3:16

I Peter 4:12,13

I Peter 4:19

I Thessalonians 5:23,24

Mark 14:32-38

Romans 3:23

Ephesians 1:4-6

Romans 8:16

Jeremiah 1:4

Galatians 1:15,16

John 5:19

John 14:9,10