

40-03-02.wpd --The Baptism Jesus Brought
baptism, sanctification, purification, washing, Holy Spirit, Pentecost
Mat 3:11-16

The Holy Spirit transforms Kingdom thinking into Kingdom living.

INTRODUCTION:

Text [about John the Baptist] Mat 3:11-16, "I baptize you with water for repentance. But after me will come one who is more powerful than I, whose sandals I am not fit to carry. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and with fire. {12} His winnowing fork is in his hand, and he will clear his threshing floor, gathering his wheat into the barn and burning up the chaff with unquenchable fire." {13} Then Jesus came from Galilee to the Jordan to be baptized by John. {14} But John tried to deter him, saying, "I need to be baptized by you, and do you come to me?" {15} Jesus replied, "Let it be so now; it is proper for us to do this to fulfill all righteousness." Then John consented. {16} 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.

--The baptism predicted by John is **The Baptism Jesus Brought** on the Day of Pentecost. Some say John is talking about a dual baptism, one of believers in the Spirit, and one of unbelievers in hellfire. But John says, "I baptize *you* with water for repentance," then continues by saying, "He [the Messiah] will baptize *you* with the Holy Spirit and with fire."

--I believe the fire mentioned is the fire of the Holy Spirit, which was manifested at Pentecost as "tongues of fire" hovering over the disciples. This Spirit baptism is *so important* that when Jesus came for baptism, John himself said, "I need to be baptized by you, and do you come to me?"

--You may wonder the same thing. If Holy Spirit baptism is so needful, why do we still have water baptism? Christ answered that question in His response to John: "it is proper for us to do this to fulfill all righteousness."

I. Why Is Water Baptism So Important?

- A. John's baptism was a complete washing [the Mikveh ritual with full nakedness and full submersion, to symbolize a return to a fully innocent state like that of Adam and Eve in the Garden before sin]
1. *John's baptism* was based on a complete repentance-- Mat 3:5-9, People went out to him from Jerusalem and all Judea and the whole region of the Jordan. Confessing their sins, they were baptized by him in the Jordan River. But when he saw many of the Pharisees and Sadducees coming to where he was baptizing, he said to them: "You brood of vipers! Who warned you to flee from the coming wrath? Produce fruit in keeping with repentance. And do not think you can say to yourselves, 'We have Abraham as our father.'

I tell you that out of these stones God can raise up children for Abraham. (**appl.:** Our standing with God is not dependent on any human association except one: *direct relationship* with Jesus Christ!)

2. Water baptism has lasting importance, because Jesus made it part of His ministry-- John 4:1-2, The Pharisees heard that Jesus was gaining and baptizing more disciples than John, although in fact it was not Jesus who baptized, but his disciples. (**appl.:** Not baptized? Get baptized!)
- B. How does it work "to fulfill all righteousness"? (Why did Jesus do it?)
1. Jesus didn't need to repent, but He had to publicly identify with the meaning of repentance [*metanoia*, "change of mind"] (Identifying with God's Kingdom means *living with a mind in line with God's way of thinking* instead of the world's. Baptism is a public statement of choosing to identify with God's will and His Reign.)
 2. It is a preparation for service (Only *after water baptism* did Jesus receive His anointing by the Spirit for ministry.) [In the hospital, when I am asked to baptize stillborns, I tell the parents I am not doing it to symbolize the washing away of sins, but as preparation for ministry in Heaven, just as Jesus was baptized in preparation for ministry on Earth.] (**appl.:** the Christian faith is *not about selfishness*, but *service*.)

TRANS: *Repentance* is not a past attitude in a Christian's mind, but *an ongoing platform* for a Christian's life. **The Holy Spirit transforms Kingdom thinking into Kingdom living**. But this is not always a pleasant or quick process. That's why we must carefully look at the description of **The Baptism Jesus Brought** and recognize....

II. Spirit Baptism Is Even More Important, v.12

- A. **It's a separating baptism:** "His winnowing fork is in his hand," [winnowing in the AHDict: "To separate the chaff from grain by means of a current of air.... To rid of undesirable parts.... To blow chaff off or away...."]
1. Jesus wants to baptize (or *immerse*) believers (those with minds set on following and serving Him) in the wind of the Holy Spirit, so that we are "rid of undesirable parts." (It's not "*blow us away*, but to free us from worthless or harmful things that we cling to.)
 2. Repentance is an attitude we have as we enter the Kingdom, but we do not see our own faults as others do, and the Holy Spirit sees even the ones others miss. (**appl.:** the "Wind, Wind" chorus should be a real prayer: "Wind, Wind, blow on me; Wind, Wind, set me free; Wind, Wind, the Father sent the Blessed Holy Spirit.")

- B. **It's a *cleansing baptism*:** "*he will clear his threshing floor*" (NKJV, He will **thoroughly clean out** His threshing floor) [the "*threshing floor*" was not an enclosure, but *level* and *open to the wind*, so that winnowing would work]
1. **John the Baptist did a *leveling work*** to prepare for Jesus' work--
Isa 40:3-4, A voice of one calling: "In the desert prepare the way for the LORD ; make straight in the wilderness a highway for our God. Every valley shall be raised up, every mountain and hill made low; the rough ground shall become level, the rugged places a plain.
 - a. *Pride* ("every mountain and hill") **needed to be *abased*** ("made low"),
 - b. Hiding places of *false humility* ("Every valley") had to be "raised up" to the wind-level, fully exposed for winnowing.
 2. **The baptism Jesus brought is *not superficial*** (**appl.:** He wants to "**thoroughly clean out** "all areas of our lives, not just *proud areas*, which we think are out-of-reach for scrutiny, but *false lowliness*, where we think God will overlook because He's unconcerned.)
- C. **It's a *preserving baptism*:** "*gathering his wheat into the barn*" [When we try to unclutter our homes, we do a winnowing process, separating what should be saved and discarding what should be thrown out. I use the word *try*, because, I have a hard time with success in discarding.] We're not on our own with Jesus. His Spirit baptism puts everything into a proper light, God's light, so that we what needs to go, and what He wants to stay.
- D. **It's a *purging baptism*:** "*burning up the chaff with unquenchable fire*" -- God's description in Heb 12:29, "...our "God is a consuming fire" [The color of Pentecost season is red, and the red is to remind us that one of the main symbols of the Holy Spirit is fire.] Our faith may be sincere, but it often needs to be purged from things foreign to God's Kingdom, as gold and silver are purged from foreign elements in the refiner's fire.

CONCLUSION:

--The *baptism of repentance* establishes *proper thinking*, but the **baptism Jesus brings** transforms Kingdom thinking into Kingdom living. It's how God works "*to fulfill all righteousness*," a Baptism in the *Holy Spirit*, to make us not just *holy in thought* but *in deed*.

--We need to pray for this baptism, as did Amy Carmichael in the first stanza of her poem, "Make Pure" -- "Lord, more and more // I pray: Whether by wind or fire, // Make pure my inmost heart's desire, // And purge the clinging chaff from off the floor."