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## ***The Holy Spirit and You by Dennis & Rita Bennett***

Chapter 2 - The Bennetts view humans as threefold being: spirit, soul, and body. The spirit of a Christian is alive (as opposed to a non-Christian) and attempts to take charge over the soul and the body. The soul and the body, however, are not used to being submissive and so a struggle for control takes place. The solution for this dilemma is for the Holy Spirit to *flow out* of the spirit to fill the soul and body. This is called “Baptism in or with the Holy Spirit”, “receiving the Holy Spirit”, “Pentecost”, “receiving power”, or the Holy Spirit “coming or falling” upon you. This is seen as a second experience that is to come after salvation. Salvation is the “incoming of the Holy Spirit” while “receiving of the Holy Spirit” is the *welcoming* of the Holy Spirit.

There were a number of things about this chapter that made it questionable. First, his whole theory rests on the very debatable question of whether human beings are dichotomies or trichotomies. Second, his theory also seems to be based on the two different connotations that the word “receive” can have in English (*i.e.* to accept something and to welcome someone) when the ability of the Greek word to have the same two connotations is not at all evident. Third, it does not seem to me that Scripture refers to the problems that Christians have as a battle between the spirit and the body and soul. Even less does it seem that Scripture exhorts us to have a second experience with the Holy Spirit that will solve the problem.

Chapter 3 - Here the Bennetts take a look at the Bible to find support for their position. First, they sight Jesus and his baptism as an example of what should be the Christian’s experience. Conceived by the Holy Spirit = being born again; water baptism = water baptism; The Holy Spirit coming on him = baptism in the Holy Spirit. Next, they sight John 20:22 as the disciples being born again and then their experience at Pentecost as their being baptized in the Holy Spirit. Next, they sight a series of passages in Acts where they see a series of “Pentecosts” which further support their position. (Acts 8, 10, and 19). Sighting Ephesians 4:5 they say that the “one baptism” is actually three. These three separate experiences are normative for all Christians even though they happened closely in time in the NT but not today.

Again, their arguments are not very convincing. It is not clear that Jesus’ conception can be paralleled by our being born again. Also, they do not seem to take into account the fact that the experience of the disciples could have been different from our own in that the Holy Spirit could not be given in his fullest until Jesus had ascended to the Father. Also, the passages in Acts are not

examined while taking into account Luke's narrative flow and emphasis on Redemption History. It is also not at all clear that when Paul wrote "one baptism" Eph. 4:5 that he really meant three.

Chapter 4 - Based on their warning not to pray to be baptized in the Holy Spirit unless you are a Christian they delve into a somewhat lengthy examination of some of the major cult teachings. These include (although they are not specifically named) Christian Science, Buddhism, Jehovah's Witness, Mormon, some kind of Universalism, and pantheism. They also included in this discussion the branch of philosophy known as metaphysics which they seem to think is related to the occult. Next they delve into an extended discussion of the different forms that occultism can take (*e.g.* fortune-telling, astrology, etc.). These discussions are to provide guidelines for being able to tell if a person is involved in something that would bring harm to themselves if they were to seek the baptism of the Holy Spirit without renouncing their involvement first.

This chapter contained some valuable information on some of the cults and their teachings. It is probably true that a person who was involved in any of these cult or occult activities would only bring further spiritual bondage upon themselves if they were to attempt to be more open to the Holy Spirit without renouncing their anti-God orientation. It was somewhat startling to find metaphysics included in their discussions of cults and related (according to them) to the occult! I find no warrant for this other than that which can be considered as a warning that anything can be wrongly used.

Chapter 5 - This is the "how to" chapter. They say that "speaking in tongues" is *always* accompanied by the visible sign of having been baptized in the Holy Spirit. This is evidence that our spirit is speaking to God by the Holy Spirit. They sight Paul in I Cor. 14:5a as saying, "I want you all to speak in tongues." The intellect is humbled as it is "put in its place" in that it cannot understand what is being said. They say that emotionalism as well as an overactive intellect can get in the way of the Holy Spirit. Next, they describe the three step process by which people can be baptized in the Spirit. 1) Ask, 2) Believe and 3) Confess. Then simply open your mouth and by faith begin to speak in tongues! Even if all that comes out is some halting sounds that is a beginning. It is not an emotional experience so there need be no corresponding feeling with it. Every believer can speak in tongues if they are properly instructed and if they really trust in the Lord. This is only the beginning.

This chapter is based almost entirely on their experience. When they do sight Scripture it seems to be out of context or not fully representative of all of the pertinent passages. For example: when they sight I Cor. 14:5 they neglect to mention the second half of the verse which says "*but* I would

rather have you prophecy.” They also totally neglect passages like I Cor. 12:30 which says, “...Do all speak in tongues?” implying that all in fact do *not* speak in tongues. Overall, their experiences are interesting but hardly convincing.

## ***Baptism and Fullness* by John R. W. Stott**

Introduction - After admitting the need for a deeper working of the Holy Spirit in the Church today Stott goes on to specify four introductory points: 1) we must seek to enter into the full purpose of God for us, 2) this purpose is to be discovered in the Scriptures, 3) primarily in the didactic rather than the descriptive parts, and 4) for practical and personal rather than academic or controversial reasons.

These all seem reasonable without further explanation. All except the third point, that is. Although I understand the intention of his warning I think that he is just a little too narrow here. Surely the descriptive passages were written for a reason as well as the didactic passages. In narrative passages we must seek to discover the authors' intention for relaying the material to us. Narrative flow and context is very important for this but we need not "throw the baby out with the bath water!"

Chapter 1 - He begins by establishing that the indwelling of the Spirit is the common possession of all Christians. He argues that the "gift" of the Spirit is identical to the baptism of the Spirit. This is because Peter seems to have equated the two during his sermon on the day of Pentecost. (Acts 1:4-5, 2:17, 33, 39). He attempts to show the differences between how the Holy Spirit operated in the OT and in the NT. The promises concerning the Holy Spirit were fulfilled on the day of Pentecost. In this sense it is unrepeatable. The 3000 who were converted also received the Holy Spirit, however, the Bible does not say anything about them speaking in tongues. This group is representative of the norm for today. Next, he deals with the difficult passages in Acts 8 and 19. Then he deals with I Cor. 12:13 by arguing the "one baptism" is the initial experience of all Christians. Jesus should be understood as the one who baptizes in all seven occurrences of the verb (+ the Spirit). The Holy Spirit is the element into which we all are baptized. The purpose is the incorporation of us all into the one body of Christ. He notes that the emphasis of the NT is not to encourage us into having the "second blessing of the baptism of the Holy Spirit" but to realize what is already ours by God's grace and to grow toward maturity and Christ-likeness.

Stott's arguments seem very convincing to me. I was not completely satisfied with his discussions concerning Acts 8 and 19 but I do think that he takes into account Luke's intent and the narrative flow. I also agree that Scripture does not seem to speak about a distinct "second blessing." The emphasis is maturity not second blessings in the didactic passages of the NT.

Chapter 2 - The Fullness of the Spirit God intends to be a continuous experience for all Christians but it may fluctuate. The fullness of the Spirit is a consequence of the baptism of the Spirit. This fullness may be lost (*e.g.* by grieving the Spirit) and it can be repeated (Eph. 5:18). We are commanded to be filled but are never commanded to be baptized in the Spirit. Therefore, it is possible to be baptized with the Spirit but not full of the Spirit. The fruit of the Spirit and not the gifts of the Spirit are evidences that the Spirit is present. He sees a parallel between “drinking of the Spirit” and “being filled with the Spirit.” Eph. 5:19-21 describe the results of being filled with the Spirit. He tries to deal with some possible objections to his position by matching some experiences that people may have had with what he thinks Scripture really teaches (*i.e.* the filling of the Spirit). Other experiences can be explained by it either being demonic, psychological, or a real conversion. Deeper experiences of God are possible for the Christian and they may be either usual or unusual.

Again, I agree with much of what Stott wrote. He seems to have a balanced approach that is very helpful. He is right when he says that we need to be careful as to the source of the experience and that the words “Baptism in the Spirit” should not be used to describe a blessing subsequent to conversion.

### ***Showing the Spirit* by D. A. Carson**

A discussion of the last part of I Cor. 12:(12-30) - The church *is* the body of Christ. He discusses the phrase “*for* all of us were baptized into it.” This must refer to an experience of all believers. “We were all given the one Spirit to drink” does not parallel “baptism in the Spirit” but with “baptism in Spirit into the one body.” This must refer to all believers. The Spirit is to be understood as the medium into which we are all baptized. The gifts of the Spirit should not be divisive but should unify us as we all need each other. Not all speak in tongues. Therefore, we must not make any one gift the sign of the blessing of the Holy Spirit.

Dr. Carson has done a very thorough and careful yet concise job of exegeting these passages. It is hard to find anything to disagree with. I think he is right on all counts.

The first half of chapter 5 - Carson takes an in-depth look at Acts 2 which is seen as a climactic salvation-historical event from Luke’s perspective. He argues that it is arbitrary to argue that speaking in tongues is to be normative and not the sound of a mighty, rushing wind and the tongues of fire. Next, he closely examines Acts 8, 10-11, and 19. These are viewed through Luke’s interest in salvation history. He writes, “Acts provides not a paradigm for individual Christian experience, but the account of the gospel’s outward movement, geographically, racially, and above all theologically.” He disputes the argument that says that Paul and Luke should not be interpreted together. He argues that it is true that one should not confuse the theology of the two but if the resulting theologies are found to be contradictory then the understanding of one of the two theologies is wrong. The only gift that has ceased is that of the apostle. He also describes a number of differences between the tongues in Acts 2 and those in I Cor. 12-14. He believes that the Bible teaches that further experiences of God are possible but that they should not be called “baptism in the Spirit” or any other such name. The Holy Spirit may be “poured out” upon individual Christians in different *quantities*.

Again, Dr. Carson seems to be “right on!” He is very clear and concise. I could find no major weakness in his arguments. At times what he writes seems so obvious one wonders why it was not seen before!

### ***Conversion - Initiation and the Baptism of the Holy Spirit by Howard Ervin***

Chapter 3 - Ervin argues against Dunn and says, "What Jordan was to Jesus, Pentecost was to the disciples." He denies that Pentecost was the beginning of the new age and covenant. He says that because there was no water baptism at Pentecost it could not have been conversion-initiation and, therefore, it could not have been the disciples' new birth. Ervin says that Jesus' experience at the Jordan was his ordination to prophetic ministry. According to Gal. 3:14 he argues that the promise of the Holy Spirit is for power-in-mission, not entrance into the new covenant. He says that there is no mention of the "gift of the Spirit" in Acts 2:28. He also sights "Pentecostal" experience "as a corroborative witness to the biblical integrity of the Pentecostal Thesis."

Ervin's arguments are not superficial. However, I was not convinced by them. Not having read the work by Dunn that Ervin is responding to it is hard to know if Ervin has a correct understanding of Dunn's arguments. He seems to have failed to take into account that the experience of the disciples might not be normative because the Spirit could not have been given until Jesus had ascended to the Father. Also, the "Pentecostal" experience might also be a corroborative witness to the biblical integrity of theses other than the Pentecostal one!

Chapter 4 - He examines the Samaritan passage in Acts 8. He argues against a "defective faith" hypothesis. He says that "life through the indwelling Spirit" is different from the "baptism of the Spirit." The manifestation of the former is the fruit of the Spirit while the manifestation of the later is gifts (tongues, prophecy, healing, etc.) which results in power-in-mission. He determines that baptism equals filling equals the gift of the Holy Spirit because Luke uses all of these phrases when referring to Pentecost.

I agree with him in part in this chapter. I do not think that the Samaritan's faith was defective. However, it is not clear that "life through the indwelling Spirit" is different from the "baptism of the Spirit." He did bring up an interesting point that may affect one of Stott's arguments: Do all of the phrases that Luke uses when referring to Pentecost mean the same thing? If so, then neither Stott nor Ervin can distinguish between the gift, the baptism, the filling, etc. of the Holy Spirit! It is also not clear that the baptism of the Holy Spirit is for power-in-mission. He did not deal with I Cor. 12:13 in this regard.

Chapter 7 - Here Ervin looks at the Ephesian disciples in Acts 19. Since they were disciples of John the Baptist Paul rebaptized them. Since Apollos (in chapter 18) knew only John's baptism he would have needed to be rebaptized as well. He argues that the context shows that they believed

before they received the Holy Spirit. He argued that the laying on of hands is not parenthetical (as Dunn says) to the conversion-initiation process but is separate from it and for the purpose of the reception of the Holy Spirit for power-in-mission.

Even if the Ephesian disciples were not baptized by the Holy Spirit until after they believed it may not be anything more than what was seen in Chapters 8 and 10 - a Salvation Historical perspective. In either the case the delay appears to not have been long. It is also not clear from the context that the "baptism" that Ervin writes of brought about the Ephesian disciples' power-in-mission.

Chapter 8 - He argues in this chapter that according to Joel's prophecy, as recorded in Acts 2, the outpouring of the Spirit would not make them something that they already were (*i.e.* sons and daughters) but would give them power. Therefore, Pentecost cannot be conversion-initiation. He writes that it is wrong to attribute John's theology of regeneration to Luke's theology of power. He writes, "The Lukan gift of the Spirit is logically subsequent to conversion and initiation in the order of salvation. Its distinguishing characteristics are the supernatural charisms of the Spirit that reveal His power in operation." These charisms are tongues and prophesying. Again, he writes, "These provide objective criteria by which the gift of the Spirit was distinguished." Other than this, he agrees with Dunn as to the process of conversion.

I agree that the "baptism" brings power-in-mission but that is only part of it. Admitting this does not mean that I agree with his interpretation of Acts 2 which is about power. One must also remember that the Holy Spirit could not be given until Jesus had ascended to the Father. Thus, it would be wrong to make the disciples' experience normative for today because we live in a different period in salvation history. Also, it is not mixing categories *if* Luke's and John's theologies were the same. It is begging the question to assume that they are not and the burden of proof, it seems to me, is on the one who says they are different considering that we believe in the unity of the Scriptures. One might also ask if the "charisms" are the only way to tell if the Spirit's power is in operation.

I Cor. 12:13 - This is the only verse in the NT other than in Gospels or Acts that speaks of the baptism of the Spirit. He favors the preposition "by" because the Greek preposition is best translated that way three times in the immediate context. This would show that the baptism is done *by* the Holy Spirit. It is done into the one body through water baptism. Luke and Paul mean different things by the same phrase. He points out that it would be impossible for the masculine

plural adjective (all) to refer to the Holy Spirit because *pneuma* is neuter. He sees “drink deep in the Spirit” as a parallel with the “be filled” of Eph. 5:18. Thus the first half of verse 13 refers to conversion-initiation while the second half refers to the baptism by the Holy Spirit.

He is right about the fact that this verse is crucial in our understanding of the question. He is wrong about the fact that just because the Greek preposition is used three times in the context as “by” means that that is what it means in the phrase under examination. Especially since the phrase is exactly the same as the other six that specify that Jesus is the one who baptizes! He is also wrong about the problem with the lack of agreement in gender between the adjective (all) and the noun (spirit). For instance, in John 15:26, 16:7-8, 13-14 John used the masculine pronoun when the Holy Spirit was the antecedent. This “construction according to sense” seems to stress that the Holy Spirit is a person! I am also not convinced that there is a parallel between the verse and Eph. 5:18. The verb in 5:18 is an imperative while the one in I Cor. 12:13 is an indicative. They could easily refer to different events.

Conclusion - Here he summarizes all of his main points. He does not say anything new here but you get a good distillation of all of his conclusions.

His conclusions, of course, are all based on the arguments he gives earlier throughout the rest of the book. I disagree with most of conclusions because I do not accept most of his arguments. I have pointed out a few of the difficulties that I see in my comments above.