

It is here that Paul illustrates, with the use of the human body, his whole point on spiritual gifts. They are given sovereignly by the Spirit (v. 11). The provision of these gifts and their exercise is just like members of the human body. Each one has its rightful role and place of operation. It is ridiculous to claim that each member of a body performs the function of the whole. Rather, there is an integrative relationship. The same concept is to be applied to spiritual gifts. Where then is the place for all this talk about "if you have the baptism, then you?" Such sort of reasoning is utterly baseless. It has no Scriptural foundation whatsoever!

Special Note: We affirm that the baptism with the Spirit is for the present Church (Body) Age only. It is an instantaneous act of the Spirit for all believers and is non-experiential. Like regeneration, however, it is a fact! There is no mention of the doctrine in the O.T. It was prophesied by John the Baptist and fulfilled for the early church on the Day of Pentecost (Acts 2:4; 11:16, 17). There is no ground for having another Pentecost, but there is ground for believing that the Spirit does baptize sinners into the Body. There is no testimony to this ministry of the Spirit after the translation (rapture) of the church (Body).

Conclusion "Spiritual gifts" are like parts of a body. Unless a part is in the body, it is useless to talk about its function. Unless one is in the Body of Christ and placed there by a sovereign act of the Spirit, it is hopeless to talk about gifts. The real issue is—Have you been baptized by the Spirit into the one Body? If so, when? This points to the hour when you believed on Christ as Lord. From that vantage point you may consider your profit to the total group in the matter of gifts (v. 7). Amen.

THE BOOK OF FIRST CORINTHIANS
"The Baptism With The Spirit"
1 Cor. 12:12-14

Introduction

1. One cannot speak of "spiritual gifts" without first speaking about the matter of the new birth. It will forever be true that "spiritualities" are for saved persons only (12:1-3).

2. Saved people are ministered to by the Trinity with respect to the distribution of spiritual gifts (12:4-6). In turn, the Spirit of God enables the believer to exhibit the gifts according to His own sovereign will (12:7-11).

3. If there is any point which Paul makes in his teaching on spiritual gifts, it is this: there is unity in diversity and diversity in unity. This is true because gifts are to a believer like parts are to a human body. The apostle supports this situation by the following thoughts:-

1. A COMPARISON v. 12.

The thrust of this verse is that there is unity in diversity. The human body is of common knowledge to all. There is harmony in the diversity of that body. There is a basic unity which none can deny.

The present tense "hath" shows that the unity of the body is something which is common and constant, but at the same moment maintaining the diversity through its members. Any statement concerning multiplicity of parts does not militate against the unity of the body.

The startling statement made by Paul is that the unified body and the diverse parts taken together are termed "the Christ". The original uses the definite article before the noun "christ". This shows that Christ as the Head of the church has a "body" composed of various members just like the human body. This is a fantastically deep thought and shows the organic relationship between believers and the Lord!

2. AN IMMERSION v. 13.

How the facts of the previous verse may be substantiated is the force of this present text. The apostle explains in three affirmations:-

a. Total identification. The aorist passive of the verb "baptize" notes immediately that an historical event is in view. Furthermore, the subject of the verb receives the action and there is not one solitary active movement by the subject! The outside Agent is the Holy Spirit! The obvious meaning is not to ritual baptism with physical water, but to real baptism by the Spirit of God. This means that the subject of the verb is brought under the transforming influence of the Holy Spirit. This is Spirit baptism. But the phrase has been abused and misinterpreted.

Prophetically, the matter of Spirit baptism is mentioned in several passages (Matt. 3:11; Mark 1:8; Luke 3:16; John 1:33; Acts 1:5; 11:16). In each of these instances, Christ is the One who is stated to "baptize with the Spirit" while the Spirit is the Influence which characterizes the baptism (the Acts' passages do not mention Christ as the subject but 1:5 is prophetic and 11:16 refers back to Pentecost). All promises were fulfilled at Pentecost.

That "Spirit baptism" was a reality after Pentecost indicates that it was not a single event never to be repeated! It means that He is still operating in this ministry (cf. Rom. 6:1-4; 1 Cor. 12:13; Gal. 3:27; Eph. 4:5; Col. 2:12). In these texts, the Agent of the baptism is the Holy Spirit and the "Body of Christ" is the receiving element. The use of the preposition "in" (1 Cor. 12:13) emphatically marks the direction in which the baptism moves. It results in a vital and all-changing relationship, namely, union with the "Body of Christ" (cf. Eph. 1:22, 23). This is true church membership and explains the only way by which one may join it. Succinctly stated, Spirit baptism is the sovereign act of the Holy Spirit whereby He places the believing

sinner into the Body of Christ which is the true Church of God.

b. Total inclusion. To show that Spirit baptism is the common lot of all believers, Paul mentions that "Jews and Greeks, bond and free" are all involved. This is an absolute miracle of God's grace. Never before in the history of men was it done (Eph. 3:1-12). Both the religious conditions (Jews and Greeks) and the social conditions (bond and free) are altered in the Body. The Spirit is the Means to accomplish this alteration and the one Body is the result attained. The fantastic truth taught here is accented when one considers the distance which at that time separated Jews and Gentiles, slaves and freemen. Just a little thought on this matter will begin to measure the power of the principle of union which by the Spirit filled the chasm represented! All glory to God alone!

c. Total participation. The final phrase of the verse includes another aorist passive to exhibit the fact that God works on the subjects (believers) who merely receive from HIM. There is no reasonable doubt that "all" participate in the Spirit. This indicates the precious doctrine of the indwelling of the Spirit in all believers (Rom. 8:9). Hence, the two related doctrines--baptism by the Spirit and His indwelling--are the common lot and experience of all members of the Body. Twice the original Greek uses the pronoun "all" to support this believer-wide blessing. There is absolutely no foundation whatsoever that the indwelling of the Spirit or the baptism of the Spirit is restricted to a few special Christians! Such a contention is entirely unwarranted.

3. A DIVISION v. 14.

Paul's insistence on unity does not teach the doctrine of uniformity for believers. There is diversity within the unity. Even in the Gospels, prior to Pentecost, our Lord taught that He did not operate with stereotypes (cf. John 21:18-23).