

## **Biblical Theology**

### **Unit 6: Doctrine of The Holy Spirit – Lesson 5: Coming of the Holy Spirit II**

#### **Cessationist View**

Definition: View that asserts that the coming of the Holy Spirit in the New Testament age endowed believers with various supernatural gifts to authenticate the continuing message and ministry of salvation through Jesus Christ but that these supernatural gifts ceased at the end of the apostolic age (when the apostles died).

- Traditional Cessationist View

#### **1. Believes Spiritual Gifts Have Ceased**

- **1 Corinthians 13:8-13** - *Love never fails. But where there are prophecies, they will cease; where there are tongues, they will be stilled; where there is knowledge, it will pass away. For we know in part and we prophesy in part, but when completeness comes, what is in part disappears. When I was a child, I talked like a child, I thought like a child, I reasoned like a child. When I became a man, I put the ways of childhood behind me. For now we see only a reflection as in a mirror; then we shall see face to face. Now I know in part; then I shall know fully, even as I am fully known. And now these three remain: faith, hope and love. But the greatest of these is love.*
  - Assert that the scriptures speak of a coming age (post-apostolic) when the supernatural gifts will depart and love will be all that is necessary to authenticate Gospel.
  - Those who disagree believe this coming age is the return of Christ.

#### **2. Believe Biblical Accounts are Not Normative**

- Most cessationists believe that the manifestations of the outpouring of the Holy Spirit in the book of Acts are descriptive, not prescriptive (Not Normative).

#### **Non-Cessationist Views**

Definition: View that does not see any indication in the Scriptures that the gifts of the Holy Spirit have ceased but vary with other non-cessationists as to the extent to which supernatural gifts are active today.

- Traditional Pentecostal View (Assemblies of God)

#### **1. Associates the “baptism of the Holy Spirit” with the bestowment of supernatural gifts.**

- “All believers are entitled to and should ardently expect and earnestly seek the promise of the Father, the baptism in the Holy Spirit and fire, according to the command of our Lord Jesus Christ. This was the normal experience of all in the early Christian Church. With it comes the endowment of power for life and service, the bestowment of the gifts and their uses in the work of the ministry.”
- **Luke 24:49** - *I am going to send you what my Father has promised; but stay in the city until you have been clothed with power from on high.”*
- **Acts 1:4** - *On one occasion, while he was eating with them, he gave them this command: “Do not leave Jerusalem, but wait for the gift my Father promised, which you have heard me speak about.*
- **Acts 1:8** - *But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.”*

#### **2. Put an emphasis on speaking in tongues as the initial physical evidence of the “baptism of the Holy Spirit” and believe if someone is baptized in the Holy Spirit, they will speak in tongues.**

- "The baptism of believers in the Holy Spirit is witnessed by the initial sign of speaking with other tongues as the Spirit of God gives them utterance (Acts 2:4)." The evidence always occurred (and still does today) at the time believers were baptized in the Spirit, not at some indeterminate future time.
- **Luke 3:16** - *John answered them all, "I baptize you with water. But one who is more powerful than I will come, the straps of whose sandals I am not worthy to untie. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire. (Matthew 3:11; Mark 1:8; John 1:33)*
  - This is where term "baptism of the Holy Spirit" is associated with speaking in tongues in Pentecostal circles.
- **Acts 2:1-4** - *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. All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues as the Spirit enabled them.*
- **Acts 10:44-47** - *The circumcised believers who had come with Peter were astonished that the gift of the Holy Spirit had been poured out even on Gentiles. For they heard them speaking in tongues and praising God.*
- **Acts 19:1-7** - *On hearing this, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. When Paul placed his hands on them, the Holy Spirit came on them, and they spoke in tongues and prophesied. There were about twelve men in all.*
- **Acts 8:14-19** - *Then Peter and John placed their hands on them, and they received the Holy Spirit.*
- **Acts 9:17-19** - *"Brother Saul, the Lord—Jesus, who appeared to you on the road as you were coming here—has sent me so that you may see again and be filled with the Holy Spirit."*

**3. Believes the "baptism of the Holy Spirit" to be a subsequent experience to regeneration.**

- **Acts 8:15-17** - *When they arrived, they prayed for the new believers there that they might receive the Holy Spirit, because the Holy Spirit had not yet come on any of them; they had simply been baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. Then Peter and John placed their hands on them, and they received the Holy Spirit.*
- **Acts 10:44-46** - *While Peter was still speaking these words, the Holy Spirit came on all who heard the message. The circumcised believers who had come with Peter were astonished that the gift of the Holy Spirit had been poured out even on Gentiles. For they heard them speaking in tongues and praising God.*

- Non-Pentecostal, Non-Cessationist View

1. **Believes that the Holy Spirit establishes a supernatural presence in the life of every believer and endows believers with certain (not all) gifts for the purposes of personal and corporate edification and for ministry of the Gospel.**
  - 1 Corinthians 12 & 13
2. **Careful to understand the occurrences in the book of Acts as historical descriptions of events that took place during a unique point in history rather than a pattern that believers should seek to imitate.**
3. **Sees the filling of the Holy Spirit as an ongoing experience but not necessarily a subsequent event.**
  - "Being filled with the Spirit is not so much a matter of our getting more of the Spirit as it is a matter of his possessing more of our lives."
  - This may at times mean supernatural manifestations.

### **Practical Reality of Each View**

- Cessationist View:
  - More formal and academic approach to faith and liturgical approach to worship.
  - Tend to write off non-cessationist beliefs and practices as psychological and, in some cases, demonic.
- Pentecostal / Charismatic View
  - More experiential and emotional approach to faith and free-flowing corporate worship.
  - Tend to consider cessationists as believers who are not experiencing the “Full Gospel”.
- Non-Pentecostal, Non-Cessationist View
  - Worship styles vary.
  - Can fall prey to indifferent or non-committal views on the gifts of the Holy Spirit.

### **Discussion Questions**

1. Which of the views discussed in this lesson do you identify with most? What is the reasoning you identify with your position, study you have done, teachings you have received, or encounters you have experienced?
2. Do you believe there are aspects of other views worth considering? If so, which ones and why?
3. How can we guard against topics like this causing division between other believers who don't believe the way you do?