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How Should I Respond to Someone Who Is Word-Faith and Believes in a Second Baptism of the Holy Spirit?

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#STRask - Stand to Reason

Questions about how to respond to someone who is Word-Faith and believes in a second baptism of the Holy Spirit and what the Bible is saying about how we experience the Spirit when it says we know we're in Christ because he has given us of his Spirit.

* How should I respond to my sister who is Word-Faith and believes in a second baptism of the Holy Spirit? What's the best Scripture to use?

* The Bible says we know we're in Christ because he has given us of his Spirit (1 John 4:13), who is a pledge of our inheritance (Eph. 1:13-14), but what does that mean? How do we experience the Spirit?

Transcript

This is Amy Holland, Greg Cockel, and you're listening to Stand to Reason's hashtag S-C-R-S-C-Podcast. Greg, today we have some questions about the Holy Spirit. Okay, well today maybe you will have some answers about the Holy Spirit.

Good luck to you. Good, thank you. Alright, the first question comes from Sarah W. My sister is Word-Faith.

She believes in Second Baptism of the Holy Spirit and discounts my challenges as just a lack of the Spirit. What's your advice, the best scripture to use? Thanks. Well, this is a tough nut to crack, I think.

Not because the point can't be made properly from scripture, except it's that a lot of times people in Word-Faith are going in with a whole mindset and then they understand the passages in the light of this mindset. I will tell you my general approach to Word-Faith, which is kind of a prosperity gospel. This is my down-dirty quick shot.

First Peter was written to suffering Christians. First Thessalonians was written to suffering Christians. Second Thessalonians was written to suffering Christians.

Hebrews was written to suffering Christians. Philippians was written to suffering, no Philippians, Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians were written by Paul when he was in jail and Second Timothy. I mean, I could keep going on.

If the Word-Faith approach or understanding that a Christian life is accurate, why is it that so much was written to encourage Christians that are suffering? In other words, the corpus of scripture, you take a full look at it as opposed to cherry picking individual verses, makes it clear that the Word-Faith doctrine is not sound or else all these epistles would read differently. To me, that's the best simplest way of making the point. Why do we have all of these books and Jesus saying, in the world you will have tribulation, but be of good cheer, I've overcome the world.

Are we going to understand that means that we aren't going to have tribulation? He overcomes by giving us prosperity. But wait a minute, why does he say, you will have tribulation, but I've overcome it. Because in the midst of the tribulation, there is a resource by Jesus.

The idea that there are dual experiences with the Holy Spirit has been around for quite a while. It was part of the holiness movement in the late 19th century, the Keswick Revival in England, the deeper life movement. It's got a kind of noble history.

I don't think it's true. I don't think that view of sanctification is sound, but that became a precursor then to the early 21st century or rather 20th century Pentecostal Revival. So then the second experience, the second baptism, so to speak, is evidenced by speaking in tongues.

So there's kind of an odd history of these two experiences with the Spirit that apparently has been co-opted by the word faith movement, which comes out of the Pentecostal movement. But it's not limited to the word faith. No, it's not limited to that.

I just don't think it's good theology. If you look in Ephesians chapter 1, it says, having believed you received the Holy Spirit of promise and you were sealed in that Holy Spirit. And you're sealing, Paul mentions in chapter 4, I think of Ephesus, was until the day of redemption.

Now, God doesn't give the Spirit in pieces. I actually think of the verse that says that. In the new covenant, we are regenerated because the Holy Spirit, if you will, is united, takes up residence within us and that is the source of our regeneration.

That means we have the Spirit in virtue of our belief and that Spirit is sealed within us. It doesn't make any sense really biblically to fuss about prepositions baptized in the Spirit, baptized of the Spirit, baptized by the Spirit. These are all talking about one event.

And by the way, the word baptize is not a translation. It's a transliteration. That is, you take the Greek word and you make it sound English.

So the Greek word is baptism. Now baptism was a word that was when they would take, say, a white shirt and they would dip it into a vat of dye and then pull it out and the shirt that was white is now completely permeated with the color of the dye so that the shirt and the dye are no longer two, but they're one, baptism. So when we are baptized in by of the Holy Spirit, we are, if you follow the picture, immersed in the Spirit and the Spirit is immersed in us and actually we're mystically immersed in the body of Christ too, so that what the Spirit is becomes completely connected with us.

That's the word picture there. And of course, that's the description, you know, having believed received, sealed until the day of redemption. And this is our earnest, this is our down payment.

This is like our first fruits, the first taste of what is to come. That's the way Paul describes it. So in that developed theology, I shouldn't say developed, I haven't developed very far, but I've laid some foundational concepts there.

There is no room for this other concept. The problem is, is people don't have a foundational doctrine of the Spirit. They have these little things that people tell them the Spirit does.

And then they get mixed up with these prepositions and they that gives birth to all these kinds of odd doctrines and applications that have no place in scripture that actually taken as a whole contradict the spirit of the text taken as a whole, which is why I cited the circumstances of those to whom Paul was writing in all of those books, which clearly contradicts the basic thrust of the word faith movement. Do you know, Greg, what scripture they would use to argue for a second baptism of the Holy Spirit? Well, the way they usually argue, it's a genuine Pentecostal kind of maneuver here. And when I say this, there is a, how can I put this? There is a honorable history here of interpretation.

I think it's heterodox. I think it's false, but it's not heretical. What has happened with word faith people is they've taken this whole thing to a bizarre kind of non-biblical conclusion.

But the classic way of characterizing it is, look, we have people getting saved clearly in the New Testament, but then sometimes the spirit is given right away. And at other times the spirit is given in a second setting. That's characteristically when Philip is gone, he goes to Samaria and he's preaching, the apostles come down and then they lay hands on and there's a reception of the Holy Spirit there.

We also have in the book of Acts some others who are familiar with the preaching of John, the Baptist, and hadn't heard anything about the spirit. And so they were, they seemed to be converts of sorts, but hadn't received the spirit. And so there's an active laying out of hands to receive the spirit.

Now, looking at those individual circumstances, it looks like, well, see, they believers and there's some spiritual activity going on. And then subsequent to that, they receive something else of the Holy Spirit. This is the second blessing.

Okay. And that second blessing is characterized differently with the holiness crowd of the late 19th century and the Pentecostal crowd of the early 20th century. But it's still based on a similar kind of idea that there's a second step of the Holy Spirit's work in your life.

In the Pentecostal movement, this is characterized generally as evidencing the baptism of the spirit by speaking in tongues. So if you haven't spoken in tongues, then you haven't been baptized in this other sense, which you need to be. Now, this I think is an error.

And it's unrelated to my view of gifts or anything like that, because I'm not a cessationist. But I think that this is a mischaracteration of the text. I think the best way to understand what's happening there in the book of Acts is that you have a promise of the Holy Spirit that is given as part of the new covenant, but it's dispensed at least initially in different stages.

And notice that first it goes to the disciples and the Jews there in Jerusalem, then it goes to Samaritans. These are half reads, right? And then it goes to Cornelius in Acts chapter 10, who is a Gentile, but manifests the fruits of the Spirit there. And they say, look at, they're doing the same thing that we did, Peter says, when we receive the Spirit, so we can baptize them.

And so of necessity, you have kind of a progressive movement of the Spirit and expanding into these different groups. But once that kind of that ice is broken, so to speak, what seems to take place after that is what Paul describes in Ephesians, when you believe you receive, because now the new covenant has been fully inaugurated. It just seems like, and I don't know why God did it this way, he could have done it differently, but we're just looking at the historical record there in the book of Acts, in certain circumstances, and there were the three that I mentioned.

You have the Samaritans, you have the Gentiles, and then you have the disciples of John, John the Baptist, who then received the Spirit. Those seem to be examples of still this piecemeal, progressive launching of the new covenant, which then doesn't continue piecemeal after that, because there's no characterization of that in any of the epistles. It is a description of things that happened in the book of Acts, but remember a description isn't a prescription, just because it happened this way, doesn't mean this is the way it's always supposed to happen.

It's the epistles that are the place where we're going to get the prescriptive. This is the doctrine solidifying our understanding or stabilizing, providing a foundation for understanding the Spirit. And when we look at things like Ephesians chapter one, we find

out that believers in virtue of believing get the Holy Spirit and are sealed in it, dipped in it, soaked in it, it belongs there.

That's it. Yeah. And Paul says in Romans eight, if you do not have the Spirit, we're going to say that.

All right. I'm jumping all over you here. Okay.

Go ahead. I have it ready to go. All right.

But before I get to that, I just want to add to what you were saying and say, there's no, there's no direct teaching of what they're saying. All the direct teaching about the Holy Spirit is saying what we say, which is there is one giving of the Holy Spirit. There's any other explanation would be some sort of indirect way of determining this is the usual thing to happen.

But whenever it's described as the usual theological thing, it's one receiving of the Spirit. When the theology proper is developed in the epistles, that's what we learn. Even though there's these odd circumstances of the kind of the unfolding of the new covenant with different people groups there in that region.

So the passage you mentioned, Greg, in chapter eight, that's exactly where I was going to go because this one is very clear about equating being in Christ with having the Spirit. So here's what it says, you are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if indeed the Spirit of God dwells in you. But if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he does not belong to him.

In other words, if you're in Christ, you have the Spirit. If you don't have the Spirit, you're not in Christ. That's right.

They're one and the same. And you're not his. Right.

But a clarification needs to be added here because there's a common mistake that happens and it's understandable that in Christian circles, we use certain phrases and terms that we understand with a particular meaning in our Christian community, like in the flesh and in the Spirit. And it turns out, in those cases, that the biblical writers have a different definition of those terms than we frequently have here, but we will read our modern definition into the ancient text and therefore misunderstand what's being said. So just to be clear here, when we say we're in the Spirit, that means generally, we mean that we're having a spiritual moment.

We went to church and praise the Lord and everything's cool. And then we go to the beach, oh man, I was in the flesh and we understand what we're talking about. And that means we were carnal.

We were giving into sensual impulses that we weren't being careful. And so we got to get back in the Spirit again. Okay.

We understand what you're talking about. That's not what Paul means in this passage. All right.

What Paul means by the phrase in the Spirit is to be regenerate, regardless of your circumstances in the moment. And to be in the flesh is to be unregenerate. And that's why he says, if you are in the flesh, you cannot, in this passage, you don't read this part of it, but this is entailed there as well.

If you're in the flesh, in the sense that Paul means you cannot please God. It's impossible to do so. But you, he says, are not in the flesh if the Spirit of God dwells in you.

And if he doesn't, you're none of his. Yeah, this whole, this whole chapter is in a flow of thought explaining where he, he explains that you cannot follow, the law does not give you the power to follow it. And so you will always, if you're trying to do it to kill your sin without the Spirit, you will always fail.

The law cannot give you the power to fulfill the law. And then he says, but now we have received the Spirit and the Spirit gives life to our mortal bodies, enables us to put our sin to death, he prays for us, then it moves into how God is making us like Christ. And the Spirit is the key to our sanctification here on earth as we're killing our sin.

So those are in the flesh is when you don't have the Spirit. And in the Spirit means you have the Spirit if you're in Christ, which he explained back in chapter five, which is trusting in Christ. So the way this works out for this question is, Paul makes it clear that Christians have the Spirit.

Now there have the Spirit in virtue of the baptism of the Spirit, the immersion in the Spirit, the event that takes place on believing, according to Paul in Ephesians 1, that then the Spirit is completely joined to you just like the die is soaked into a fabric, word picture again. And this passage reinforces that. What you can't do is you can't look at some historical circumstances where it seems like you have some odd things going on and have that be what informs your theology of the Holy Spirit.

We can't just ignore them. These are things that happen, but we have to understand what's going on there in the book of Acts, for example, in light of the foundational theological points that the biblical writers are making in other places in the epistles. And here Romans 8 is an example from Paul.

We're also talking about Ephesians 1 as an example. We learn very particular things about the Spirit. This is a huge problem though of people not having a foundational understanding of basic biblical doctrines regarding biblical things.

Now some people are saying, oh, that's a hoity toy to you. You knuckleheads who are really into that stuff, then you could do that. But everybody's not into that.

Look at, if you're not into that in the sense that's basic and foundational, then you're going to be into error. That's why people get taken in by things like the word faith movement. And it's all in Romans.

All you have to do is read Romans. It won't take you very long. If you can understand Romans, just read it once a day for 30 days, you will be surprised how much more theology you will understand because Paul is so clear about so many things.

And the last thing I want to say about this is another reason why it doesn't make sense to think about two baptisms of the Holy Spirit is because the Holy Spirit is not some sort of power that you get some of it at one point and some of it at another point. The Holy Spirit is a person. You don't get a little bit of him.

And then the rest of him later, the Holy Spirit comes to you as a person, as a full person. And he's doing particular things, but he's not holding out on you until you have. But I also want to say too, even with the gifts of the Holy Spirit, Paul is very clear that not everyone has every single gift.

They're given to certain people. So if you measure whether or not you have the Spirit by one particular gift, then you like tongues, then you're making a mistake because Paul is very clear that not everyone speaks in tongues. Now in that spot like you were in another show, I'm trying to remember one other thing I had to say about this, but the giving of the Spirit and now it slips my mind.

So maybe it'll come back in a little bit. Well, we're going to squeeze one more in here, Greg. This one comes from Stewart.

1 John 4:13 says, we know he lives in us because he's given us of his Spirit. Other scripture talks about the Spirit being our seal and guarantee. After decades, I still don't understand that.

How do we experience the Spirit? This feels like the hearing God issue. Well, it, gee, I guess I'm having a hard time understanding the question. I think it's entirely safe to say that when you know Christ, there certainly is a subjective element that for maybe lack of a better word right now, it imbues us with a certain familiarity with God.

You know, this is why Paul says in Romans chapter 8 that the Spirit in us causes us to cry out Abba Father. So when we become regenerate, the Spirit now dwells within us. So I remember what I was going to say, this Spirit dwelling in us as a permanent possession, that's part of the New Covenant.

The Old Testament thing was different. It was a Spirit coming on people and empowering

them for special works, but not being their permanent possession. That's a function of the New Covenant and that changes everything.

Okay. So now I lost my track of what was the question together. So he wants to understand how we experience this.

Okay. So there is an awareness. I don't know how else to say this and different people have stronger or lesser because I think personalities are involved in whatever, but there is an awareness that things are different and we are his, we belong to him.

And maybe this is what John is referring to. We know how does that go? By this, we know that we abide in him and he and us because he has given us of his Spirit. And so there is this, I have no other way of describing it but saying that there's this subjective awareness at some level, a belonging to him in virtue of the fact that the Spirit is in us.

His Spirit is in us. We are attached to him in a very profound way that's sometimes hard to describe, but it's very real and different people feel it at different times. And there are times, look at where you don't feel connected at all.

And this is where we go by promise and not by our feelings, but the feelings are there. This is nothing to do in my view with the issue of hearing from God because the hearing from God is the claim that we can get private revelation just for us from God and that's a spiritual capability that we can develop. Okay.

This is not taught in Scripture. What is taught is our awareness of the Spirit in our lives and a closeness with God as a result. The Holy Spirit is our paraclete.

He's our comforter. He's one who comes alongside us and helps us. So these have subjective elements to them.

All right. We feel joy in the Holy Spirit. So there are many subjective elements that are a result of us being united with God in the Spirit that don't entail God giving us individual special revelation.

That's my concern because that's not biblical. All the rest of these things are. And I can't think of any chapter that talks more about this than Romans eight.

Romans eight talks about our experience of the Spirit more than once. So you mentioned the part about where we receive a spirit of adoption as sons by which we cry out Abba Father and the Spirit himself testifies with our spirit that we are children of God. And chapter eight also talks about I mean here's the difference he describes between those who are in the flesh without the Spirit and those who are in the Spirit who have the Spirit.

Yeah. For those who are according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh

but those who are according to the Spirit the things of the Spirit. For the mindset on the flesh is death but the mindset on the Spirit is life and peace because the mindset on the flesh is hostile toward God.

For it does not subject itself to the law of God for it's not even able to do so and those who are in the flesh cannot please God. So the Holy Spirit is it's it he yes he changes the way we look at everything. He he communicates God's life and peace.

He enables us to kill our sin. He testifies with our spirit that we our children of God. He's constantly giving life to our dead bodies dead because of sin so that we can bear fruit for God and the all the fruit that we're bearing for God is the result of the Holy Spirit.

And that's what Paul says when you know when they died to the law and they were joined to Christ they died with him in his burial they're raised with him in his resurrection. That's what enabled them to bear fruit for God because now they have the Holy Spirit and they can put their sin to death. So all of this and then it goes on chapter eight goes on and talks about how the Holy Spirit intercedes for us.

So as we are groaning in these bodies where we are sinful the Holy Spirit is interceding for us when we don't even know what it is we need. So chapter eight I think is a great place to go if you want to learn about how the Holy Spirit is related to us. Can you think of any other I guess another passage would be the gifts of the Holy Spirit.

Well that's in 1 Corinthians 12 and Romans 12 and Ephesians 4 there's a smaller lesson 1 Peter 4 I think also but in those longer passages the point is not so much about the gifts as it is about the unity and diversity of the body. The point you made earlier we don't all have the same gift we have different gifts but there's one body so they're all meant to work together even though we have different different capabilities we are joined together in the body to accomplish a goal but that's another passage Ephesians 1 passage is a good one too and of course Jesus promises the gift of the Spirit Jeremiah 31 let me just think actually I don't think the Spirit is mentioned Jeremiah 31 31 and following it's in Ezekiel 36 where which is some apparent concept where Ezekiel now who is also a prophet of the exile along with Jeremiah is talking about this new covenant that's going to be given and he talks about the giving of the Spirit and that's just before the I think it's 37 is it 37 where you have the dry bones prophecy and then the bones all you know have life and whatever so there are different places in scripture where it talks about the Spirit to be given in the new covenant. Well I hope that helps Stuart and Sarah thank you for your questions you can send us your question on X with the hashtag STRask or you can go to our website at str.org just look for the hashtag STRask podcast page and you'll find a link there and all we ask is that you keep your questions short it should be the size of a tweet that's just like two sentences but you know make it long enough so that we understand your question but keep it short it's an exercise in writing for you there you go but we'd love to hear from you this is Amy Hall and Greg Cogle for a

stand to reason.