

Book review

The Baptism with the Holy Spirit: The reception of the Holy Spirit as Confirmed by Speaking in Tongues

VERNA M. LINZEY, 2004

Longdale: Xulon Press

180 pp., ISBN 1-594670-59-5

Linzey's book represents the 'classical Pentecostal' beliefs regarding the baptism with the Holy Spirit as expressed by the official statements of the Assemblies of God. The purpose of the book is on the one hand, to give a biblical foundation to the Pentecostal beliefs of the baptism with the Holy Spirit, while on the other, to give a practical guide on how to receive the Holy Spirit.

From the beginning of the book Linzey's opinions are clear: in order to be a victorious, dynamic, growing and holy Christian, the believer cannot do without the baptism with the Holy Spirit as confirmed by the speaking of tongues. Conversion and the baptism with the Holy Spirit are understood as two separate and distinct experiences. Conversion is the regeneration experience, essential for salvation, but the baptism with the Holy Spirit brings the believer into a deeper relationship with Christ and is the beginning of a fuller and richer spiritual life (Ch. 2). It is a definite experience by which people know whether or not they have received it. The primary evidence of having received the Holy Spirit is the sign of speaking in tongues. Linzey emphasizes the meaning of the tongue: it is a sign of surrender and shows the willingness to yield our tongues to God. Although the speaking in tongues combines the human and divine elements, tongues are the 'perfect prayer' and cannot but be the will of God (p.52, 53).

The baptism with the Holy Spirit is strongly connected to the holiness motive by Linzey. To overcome sin and to lead a pure life, the power of the Holy Spirit is necessary.

The doctrine of the second blessing is laid out in the book by many biblical references and references to other authors. Unfortunately this book does not link up with academic discussions among (Pentecostal) theologians. Other views or interpretations among Pentecostals are not brought into the discussion and are absent in the references.

The enumeration of lists of other authors regarding certain topics in the book is sometimes confusing for the reader. Integration of the used material into a more consistent argument would improve the legibility. A well-defined point of view of the author is often lacking. For instance, regarding the work of the Holy Spirit in the Old Testament and New Testament it is stated that it is characteristically the same (p.75) while it is earlier argued to be not the same (p.56). Also the baptism with the Spirit is presented as a definite experience while at the same time the need for continually being filled by the Spirit is mentioned (p.73). The meaning of the latter is however not explained.

Another point that remains unclear is the very limited discussion of the spiritual gifts. Linzey states that they are primarily for personal use (p.110). From the emphasis given in the book on the gift of tongues this can be understood. Theologically however, this is a narrow (individualistic) and limited interpretation. The relationship between gifts of the Spirit and the community of believers needs to be included, as is done for example by Gordon Fee in: *Paul, the Spirit and the People of God*.

The theological quality of the book is too meager but the biblical references give the reader enough insights in the construction of the classical Pentecostal doctrine concerning the baptism with the Holy Spirit and the speaking in tongues. This book is in the first place written for lay pastors and small group leaders within the Pentecostal tradition. They will find sufficient material to defend the traditional Pentecostal points of view regarding the baptism with the Spirit.

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REFERENCE

Fee, Gordon (1996) *Paul, the Spirit, and the People of God*, Peabody: Hendrickson.