
THE FULL BLESSINGS OF PENTECOST

by Jonathan

“But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Sa-mar-i-a, and unto the uttermost part of the earth” (Acts 1:8).

“AND when the day of Pentecost was fully come, they were all with one accord in one place. And suddenly there came a sound from heaven as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting. And there appeared unto them cloven tongues like as of fire, and it sat upon each of them. And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance” (Acts 2:1-4).

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Before Christ returned to heaven, He specifically commanded the disciples not to depart from Jerusalem, but to “wait for the promise of the Father, which, saith he, ye have heard of me. For John truly baptized with water; but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost not many days hence” (Acts 1:4-5). Do we realize the import here? In essence, Jesus knew that apart from the infilling of the Holy Spirit, it is almost literally impossible for the disciples to accomplish the purpose of God in their lives. But whenever the descent of the Holy Spirit came to pass as graphically described in Acts 2, there was such a tremendous accompanying presence, power and ministry of the Holy Spirit that resulted in the birth of the church that was to change the course of history for all time and eternity. I can see a transformed Peter preaching boldly and fearlessly under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, a far cry from the man who denied Christ before Pilate. How can our poor, finite mind ever account for this miracle save to acknowledge that it is the ministry of the Holy Spirit that effects the evidence of the power of God in this man’s life.

WHY TONGUES IS THE INITIAL PHYSICAL EVIDENCE OF THE BAPTISM OF THE HOLY SPIRIT – OR IS IT?

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Actually, I can almost sympathize with the disposition of my denominational friends who question the validity of speaking in other tongues as the initial physical evidence of the Baptism of the Holy Spirit as I have “been there” as well. A seemingly powerful argument may well go like this: “We (denominational Christians) believe and have the Holy Spirit as you (Pentecostals) do. It is just that we cannot accept speaking in

tongues”. What can we say to a rationalization like this? In all truth, there is a difference between being *born* of the Spirit and being *filled with* the Spirit and we believe the Word of God bears this out.

Without question, a person becomes a “new creature” (2 Corinthians 5:17) whenever he or she is regenerated and is “born again” or “born of the Spirit”. However, the infilling or baptism of the Holy Spirit pertains to a spiritual experience *subsequent* to salvation (now, I would do well to explain that “subsequent” simply means “after” or “following in time or order”. Hence, it is possible to find individuals being filled with the Holy Spirit almost immediately after receiving Christ just as there are others who receive this baptism only after a few years or even many years as a Christian. Nevertheless, the only basic qualification for being a recipient of the baptism of the Holy Spirit is to be saved in the first place. Any genuine born again believer who hunger for more of God can ardently expect to be filled by an act of faith). To further illustrate the validity of this spiritual experience, we can turn to Acts 19:2 wherein it reads, “Have ye received the Holy Ghost since ye believed?” Obviously, when Paul used the words “since ye believed?”, he must be referring to believers. Hence, if our denominational friends are right (in saying that there is no such thing as a *subsequent* spiritual experience of the baptism in the Holy Spirit), then it would appear that Paul’s question of “Have ye received the Holy Ghost since ye believed?” would be out of order and place. But God forbid, it is not!

IN ALL HUMILITY AND SINCERITY, I SUBMIT MY DENOMINATIONAL FRIENDS TO THE AUTHORITY OF THE WORD OF GOD (EVEN AS I NEED TO CONTINUE TO BE TAUGHT OF GOD AS WELL)

“THOUGH I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, and have not charity, I am become as sounding brass, or a tinkling cymbal. And though I have the gift of prophecy, and understand all mysteries, and all knowledge; and though I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, and have not charity, I am nothing. And though I bestow all my goods to feed the poor, and though I give my body to be burned, and have not charity, it profiteth me nothing” (1 Corinthians 13:1-3).

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Even though I am hurt by people who oppose the mighty baptism in the Holy Spirit on the basis of speaking in other tongues, I am endeavouring to have no ill-will but love for them, as God enables. As a Pentecostal (even though I recognize my inadequacies and *unworthiness*), my desire is to live a life of holiness and to experience the anointing of the Holy Spirit. And allow me to confess that there are times when I have allowed the flesh to deter me from “walking holy before God”. Perhaps, I can understand a little of what Paul meant when he cried, “For that which I do I allow not:

for what I would, that do I not; but what I hate, that do I” (Romans 7:15). Still, I suspect that it is the mighty baptism in the Holy Spirit which provides the gateway to greater intimacy with the Lord Jesus Christ, “Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak: and he will shew you things to come. He shall glorify me: for he shall receive of mine, and shall shew it unto you” (John 16:13-14). Also, there is a beautiful and visible expression of worship whenever an individual is baptized in the Holy Spirit. Instead of a cold, formal, liturgical ritual, worship now takes on a new dimension as the anointing of the Holy Spirit ushers you into the “holy of holies”, the very Presence of God. This is the reason why Jesus said, “God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth” (John 4:24).

Another important fruit of the Baptism in the Holy Spirit, we believe, is the ability to face up to sin and confess it. But this is not all! The Holy Spirit further enables us to have the *power* to overcome sin and live victorious Christian lives. Because the Holy Spirit is the Comforter and “a helper”, He desires to help us with our inconsistencies and weaknesses- so that we can be overcoming (not defeated) Christians. However, I must share with you, my Christian friend, that unless and until we submit and yield to the Holy Spirit, He is not an automatic answer to all our problems and difficulties. He is nevertheless, a *tremendous* help because we are not to live this Christian experience in *our* strength, but in Him- “...greater is he that is in [us], than he that is in the world” (1 John 4:4).

SPEAKING IN OTHER TONGUES IS OF TREMENDOUS VALUE, BUT IT DOES NOT STOP THERE

“Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost. For the promise is unto you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call” (Acts 2:38-39).

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The spiritual experience of being baptized in the Holy Spirit is not a one-time blessing never to be experienced again. Instead, it is important that we *maintain* a fresh unction of the Holy Spirit continuously as Ephesians 5:18-21 exhorts, “And be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess; but be filled with the Spirit; Speaking to yourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord; Giving thanks always for all things unto God and the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ; Submitting yourselves one to another in the fear of God”. Next, the Baptism in the Holy Spirit can in a sense, provides an enduement for a Spirit-controlled speech life. As the tongue is the unruly

member of the body- “For in many things we offend all. If any man offend not in word, the same is a perfect man, and able also to bridle the whole body” (James 3:2), to have the Holy Spirit to have control over our tongues is so imperative.

Also, another great blessing of Pentecost is that it is a gateway to the gifts of the Spirit. As the gifts of the Spirit are the weapons of our warfare to the pulling down of strongholds (erected by the Devil), it is therefore absolutely necessary to move and operate in the spiritual gifts God has ordained.

THE CHURCH TODAY

“And it shall come to pass in the last days, saith God, I will pour out of my Spirit upon all flesh...” (Acts 2:17).

“And this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations; and then shall the end come” (Matthew 24:14).

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I believe in God’s priorities for these last days. When God said that “in the last days [He] will pour out of [His] Spirit upon all flesh”, it includes men, women, young or old, rich or poor. As with God’s most recent outpouring of the Holy Spirit (occurring since the ’60s), I believe God’s Spirit is “searching out” the hearts of individuals in these last days according to His Word. Accompanying this, I am also convinced that never has the world seen the *potential* of world evangelization. Yes, it has been said that we have the technology, the expertise and above all, the anointing and the calling of God to perform this specific task. And where the Spirit of God is moving, I (as well as others, I am positive) pray that I will not allow some other lesser preoccupations to distract me from God’s unmistakable priorities: the outpouring of the Holy Spirit and the import of world evangelization, as outlined in the Word of God. But I have a premonition I feel I must relate to you before I close this message. I believe that with almost every move and operation of the Holy Spirit, there will inevitably be much persecution. What I am about to say, I will say it with humility and with “fear and trembling”. I believe (and you can verify me, I think) we are witnessing religious politics that is “of the spirit of the world”. It is not of God! To you who read this, my Christian friend, I want to submit to you in love as unto the Lord. I want the fear of the Lord. I want the full blessings of Pentecost. I want the ways of the Spirit. Though the price is demanding, please pray with me (and others who want to fulfill God’s priorities too) that we will have His strength for this expressed purpose.

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