

The Baptism of the Holy Spirit

By A.G. Wagar

John the Baptist spoke these words, "There cometh one mightier than I after me, the latchet of whose shoes I am not worthy to stoop down and unloose. I indeed have baptized you with water, but he shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost." (Mark 1:7-8)

The one whom he was speaking of was Jesus. Let us read the account of Jesus being baptized.

John 1:29-34, "The next day John seeth Jesus coming unto him, and saith, Behold the lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world. This is He of whom I said, after me cometh a man which is preferred before me, for He was before me. And I knew Him not but that he should be made manifest to Israel, therefore am I come baptizing with water. And John bare record, saying, I saw the Spirit descending from heaven like a dove, and it abode upon him. And I knew Him not, but he that sent me to baptize with water the same said unto me, Upon whom thou shalt see the Spirit descending and remaining on Him, the same is he which baptizeth with the Holy Ghost. And I saw and bare record that this is the Son of God."

When one has believed in Christ, experiencing the joy and peace of sins forgiven, enjoying the presence of Christ dwelling within the heart, the next step in the believer's experience is to let Christ baptize him with the Holy Ghost.

Jesus promised the disciples that after His departure He would pray the Father and that He would give them another Comforter that He might abide with them and be in them. (John 14:16)

This word comforter is translated from the Greek word *Parakletos* meaning one called alongside to help. It is translated, advocate, in 1 John 2:1. Christ is the believer's advocate with the Father when he sins. The Holy Spirit is the believer's indwelling advocate or intercessor, to help him in the things he doesn't know or understand and to make intercessions for him. (Rom 8:26-27)

I perhaps should mention here, the words Ghost and Spirit are synonyms, so when the scriptures speak of the Holy Ghost, the Holy Spirit, the Spirit of God, they are speaking of the same person. The Holy Spirit is a person; personal pronouns are used in referring to Him. He is a part of the Godhead, Jesus said the Comforter and the Spirit of Truth is the Holy Ghost. (John 14:16-17, 26)

After the resurrection, Jesus commissioned His disciples to minister and to be witnesses of Him with these words, "And Behold I send the promise of my Father, upon you, but tarry ye in Jerusalem until ye be endued with power from on high." (Luke 24:49) We read of this same account in Acts 1:4-5. "And being assembled together with them, commanded them they should not depart from Jerusalem, but 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."

Verse 8: "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 Judea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth."

Everyone born into the family of God is called to be a witness of Christ, not all in the same way. Every member of Christ's body has a different ministry, some may be similar but they are different. Some may function more within the body than others. All are written epistles of Him and are known and read of all men. (2 Cor. 3:2) We must never forget this. We too are weak in our strength. Like the disciples of old we must be endued with power from above in order to fulfill our ministry and have our lives bare witness of Him living within.

The disciples obeyed and tarried in Jerusalem, the account of their receiving the promise is in Acts 2:1-6. "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. And there were dwelling at Jerusalem Jews, devout men, out of every nation under heaven. Now, when this was noised abroad, the multitude came together and were confounded, because that every man heard them speak in his own language."

As we read the book of Acts we can see how tremendous this experience was. The baptism in the Holy Ghost was the enduement of power from heaven that Jesus told them of. His disciples now moved and ministered in the Spirit that He lived and ministered in.

Peter, the one that was weak and denied Christ when they took Him to be crucified, now was strong. With great boldness he spoke to the multitude that had gathered around. They staggered at this phenomenal thing that was taking place before their eyes. They heard their own tongue spoken. As they questioned among themselves, Peter stood up and proclaimed unto them with a mighty anointing, how that they were witnessing that which Joel prophesied, "That in the last days God would pour out His Spirit." (Acts 2:15-39) In his first message he outlined the great redemptive plan of God through, Jesus Christ. He exhorted them all to repent and be baptized for the remission of sins that they also should receive the Gift of the Holy Ghost. In closing he said these wonderful words, verse 39: "For the promise is unto you, and your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call."

That verse included every believer from that day on to the end of time. It includes you and me also.

In the days that followed the power of the Holy Spirit was manifested in all believers. The Gifts of The Spirit were all in operation; Words of wisdom and knowledge flowed mightily; Great faith in God was exercised; The sick were healed; Miracles were wrought; Prophecy went forth; Evil Spirits were discerned and cast out; The gifts of languages and interpretation were in operation. The twelve entered into their ministry of apostleship. They began laying a firm foundation for the church to build upon and many believed and were added to the church daily.

After the day of Pentecost and the initial outpouring of the Spirit, the Baptism of the Holy Ghost was imparted by the laying on of hands. When Philip had converts down in Samaria, Peter and John were sent by the other apostles, Acts 8:15, who when they were come down prayed for them that they might receive the Holy Ghost. Verse 17, "Then laid they their hands on them and they received the Holy Ghost."

When Saul was converted, Ananias laid his hands upon him for the healing of his eyes and the receiving of the Holy Ghost. In Acts 19:6, Paul laid his hands on the Ephesians for the receiving of the Holy Ghost. The only other occasion in the scriptures where the Holy Spirit fell upon them without the laying on of hands took place in Caesarea. Peter was speaking in the

house of Cornelius and the Holy Ghost fell upon them like He did in the beginning. I think there is a significance here, in that, not only were believers being filled with the Spirit, but it was also the opening of a new dispensation, one of Grace which both Jew and Gentile could enter into. On both the day of Pentecost and in the house of Cornelius, God was dealing with a people, not a person.

In the beginning of this move of the Spirit, God led us in the laying on of hands for the baptism of the Spirit, and many have received in this way.

The terms baptized, filled with, received the Holy Ghost, and a few others are used in the scriptures in speaking of this experience. If I use the various terms you will understand I am still speaking of the same wonderful experience.

The speaking in other tongues accompanied the receiving of the Holy Ghost on most occasions recorded. Such was the case on the day of Pentecost (Acts 2:4); at the house of Cornelius (Acts 10:46); at Ephesus (Acts 19:6). It is not hard to believe that this always took place. At Samaria something of a spectacular nature happened. Simon, the sorcerer, saw that through the laying on of the apostle's hands the Holy Ghost was given and he offered them money. (Acts 8:18) I believe he saw the Spirit of God upon them and heard them speak with other tongues. When Ananias laid his hands on Paul to receive the Holy Ghost I believe he spoke in other tongues. In 1 Cor. 14:18 Paul said this, "I thank my God, I speak with tongues more than ye all." People should receive liberty to speak in tongues when hands are laid upon them and the Holy Ghost comes upon them.

The ability of the Spirit-filled believer to speak in other tongues does not mean that he has the Gift of Tongues, which is the ability to speak with earthly languages by the Spirit and ministers to the foreigner as a sign when the Gift of Interpretation is present. (1 Cor. 14:22) But there is an unknown tongue that no man understands. It is a heavenly tongue that only God understands. It is this tongue that everyone who receives the Holy Spirit should have liberty in. It is a wonderful avenue of prayer. Let me quote from 1 Cor. 14:2. "For he that speaketh in an UNKNOWN TONGUE speaketh NOT UNTO MEN, but UNTO GOD. FOR NO MAN UNDERSTANDETH HIM, howbeit IN THE SPIRIT HE SPEAKETH MYSTERIES." Verse 4 says: "He that speaketh in an UNKNOWN TONGUE EDIFIETH himself. He that PROPHESIETH EDIFIETH THE CHURCH." Verses 14-15: "For if I pray in an UNKNOWN TONGUE, MY SPIRIT prayeth, but MY UNDERSTANDING IS UNFRUITFUL. What is it then? I will pray with the Spirit, and I will pray with the understanding also: I will sing with the Spirit, and I will sing with the understanding also."

Jude 20-21: "But ye, beloved, building up yourselves on your most Holy faith, praying in the Holy Ghost. Keep yourselves in the love of God, looking for the mercy our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life."

These scriptures point out very clearly the benefits that are derived from praying in other tongues. To edify yourself is having the anointing of God flowing in your life. It gives you greater confidence and understanding in the eternal things of God. It causes them to become real in your life. You will receive more and more of that power that Jesus spoke of so that you might fill your place in the body of Christ, that you may stand firm in God in the hour of trial. It brings a closeness to God that every believer needs. I would that you all speak in tongues in your daily prayers and that you pray with the understanding also, even as Paul declared.

Today there are many people receiving the baptism of the Holy Ghost and are speaking in tongues in various denominations. Because of this the news media have sent their interviewers to find out all about it. Some that I have heard interviewed gave some interesting observations.

A linguistic professor said that those he had heard speak, spoke languages, and while he didn't understand them he said a linguist can write a true language but gibberish cannot be written. He and his colleagues were able to write what they had heard. A psychiatrist didn't think it was a true language or a spiritual experience. His interpretation of what he witnessed was that people were carried away in their own emotions; however, it made a great impression upon him. He said he wished that everyone that had nervous problems and frustration were able to enter into this, (speaking in tongues). Those that do so he said, receive as much help in twenty minutes as six shock treatments.

These testimonies given by these professional men, from strictly professional viewpoints cannot help but encourage our hearts. They confirm to our hearts that truly this is an experience from God that is real and fulfills an important work in our lives. They declare the scripture to be true when it teaches, "He that speaketh in an UNKNOWN tongue speaketh not unto men, but unto God. For NO MAN UNDERSTANDETH Him, howbeit in the Spirit he speaketh mysteries. He that speaketh in an unknown tongue EDIFIETH HIMSELF." (1 Cor. 14:2-4)

It is not enough to testify to being baptized with the Spirit and speaking in tongues on that occasion. This avenue of prayer is given to be used often, that the anointing of the Holy Ghost will be flowing continually in your life.

We have a tremendous need for the Spirit of God to permeate every fiber of our being. Without Him we are overcome by the frustrations of this life. He is our comforter, our Intercessor. In this world of hate, fear and wickedness, we need to be filled with Him. The Love of God is the answer in dealing with these terrible things that cause so many frustrations, heartaches, and troubles.

The work of the Holy Spirit is to produce love within our hearts, for love is a fruit of the Spirit. (Gal. 5:22) He also causes others to receive of it. (Rom. 5:5) The love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost, which is given unto us. We live in a day when many problems in our lives cause these frustrations, depressions and sicknesses, which are brought about by fears. The Holy Spirit will cause these fears to be dismissed from our life if we submit ourselves fully unto Him. "For God HATH NOT given us the SPIRIT OF FEAR but of POWER, and of LOVE and of a sound mind." (2 Tim. 1:7) Let us take this teaching of the scriptures to heart, and know that as we yield to the Holy Spirit our fears can vanish away. We can have a peace that passeth all understanding. We are granted power to witness (minister) for Him and confess our faith in Christ before men. There need be no fanaticism in our lives for the Holy Spirit is of a sound mind, which produces a solidity in our lives that gives wisdom and understanding to cope with the every day situations that arise in this life, at home, church, and work. When we realize that He is the Spirit of love, let us remember what John said, "There is NO FEAR IN LOVE but PERFECT LOVE CASTETH OUT FEAR," (1 John 4:18)

There are nine fruits of the Spirit that will become evident in the Spirit-filled believer's life that he can partake of daily as well as those around him. They are given in Gal. 5:22-23. "But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance."

There is a manifestation of the Spirit through the giving of the nine gifts of the Spirit that every man may profit. (1 Cor. 12:7)

In verses 8-11 they are named: "For to one is given by the Spirit the Word of Wisdom, to another the Word of Knowledge by the same Spirit. To another Faith by the same Spirit, to another the Gifts of Healing by the same Spirit. To another the Working of Miracles, to another Prophecy, to another Discerning of Spirits, to another Divers Kinds of Tongues, to another the Interpretation of Tongues. But all these WORKETH that one and the selfsame Spirit, dividing to every man severally as he will."

Everyone should have gifts of the Spirit operative in their lives that they may fulfill their ministry in the body of Christ. By the Holy Spirit we exercise our ministry and are changed into His likeness. (2 Cor. 3:18)

We are so dependent upon the work of the Holy Spirit in our lives in order to walk in a way that pleases God. The Holy Spirit sanctifies us and sets us apart from this world. (Rom. 15:16; 2 Thess 2:13; 1 Peter 1:2)

Without the Holy Spirit we cannot understand God and that which pertains to Him, nor can we understand that which He has prepared for them that love Him. By Him we become partakers of the mind of Christ. (1 Cor. 2:10-16) We are also able to enter the realm of the Kingdom of God even while we are upon this earth in this present evil day. Jesus said, "The Kingdom of God is within you." Rom. 14:17 puts it this way, "For the Kingdom of God is not meat and drink, but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the HOLY GHOST."

To receive anything from God we must have a real desire and hunger for it. Jesus said, "They that hunger and thirst after righteousness shall be filled." (Matt. 5:6) He also said, "If we seek WE SHALL FIND. If we knock IT SHALL BE OPENED. If we ask IT SHALL BE GIVEN." (Luke 11:9-10) He also said this, "If ye being evil know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more shall your Heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask Him." (Luke 11:13)

Those of you that haven't been baptized with the Holy Spirit should seek God with all your heart. If you do, God will prepare your heart and when the brethren lay hands upon you, you will receive as they did in Ephesus. (Acts 19:5-6) Here you will note in verse 6 that three things occurred.

1. The ministry laid hands on them.
2. The Holy Spirit came upon them.
3. "They" spoke in tongues and prophesied.

The brethren will do their part, the Holy Spirit will do His part and you have the privilege in doing your part in speaking in the unknown tongue and when your faith grows, as it will, you will prophesy. The Holy Spirit will be to you all the scriptures declare of Him. He will open new doors for you. Your life will be changed as it takes on new meaning and new purpose. It is not a goal, but a doorway into a life, in the Spirit, which leads to Sonship.

"This I say then, walk in the Spirit and ye shall not fulfill the lust of the flesh." (Gal. 5:16)

"If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit." (Gal. 5:25) "For as many as are LED by the Spirit of God, they ARE the SONS of God."