

THE BAPTISM OF THE HOLY SPIRIT IN PROPHECY

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The subject of the baptism in the Holy Spirit has its foundation in the teaching of the Word of God. It is not an invention of the "Early Church Fathers", or the brainwork of some modern theologian. In fact, the experience is a fulfilment of Biblical prophecy. It was part and parcel of that ministry which the apostle Paul declared to be superior to the ministration of the letter, and exceeds in glory, and beauty, and scope, the Levitical system with its tabernacle, its services, and its priesthood. Through the ministration of the Spirit, Paul declared that God

"... hath made us able ministers of the New Testament; not of the letter, but of the Spirit: for the letter killeth, but the Spirit giveth life." (2 Cor. 3:6)

One of the major proofs of the inspiration of the Bible is the fulfilment of the prophetic utterances contained therein. Not only major events are foretold in Scriptures, but also many minute details of these events. Biblical records begin with prophetic declarations. Just as soon as man fell prey to the devil's trap, Jesus foretold the victory that the Church would eventually have over the devil. This is the truth couched in symbolic terminology in Gen. 3:15,

"And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shall bruise his heel."

In other words, the conflict between the Church of God, (the woman), and the devil, (the serpent), will bruise the head of satan, (a fatal blow), causing his ultimate defeat and destruction.

The coming of the Messiah, the Saviour of the world, was foretold in Old Testament Scriptures in hundreds of prophetic references, and every detail concerning His coming was fulfilled as foretold. The greatest event in history happened in a lowly Jewish village called Bethlehem. The Saviour of the world was born there in fulfilment of prophecy. See Micah 5:2. God, the Almighty, made sure there was plenty of information available so that the people could identify the Redeemer.

In spite of this, the very custodians of that knowledge did not recognize the Saviour. They possessed the divinely inspired information in the manuscripts held by the scribes, but their knowledge to correctly interpret these Scriptures, and identify the Redeemer, was confused and darkened by their manmade traditions.

Someone has said, "One thing man (mankind) has learned from history, is, that man, (mankind), does not learn from history."

Likewise with the present religious world. Modern Christendom, like the Jews of Jesus' day, though possessing the divinely inspired Word of God, which contains clearly defined information regarding the baptism in the Holy Spirit, has rejected this most precious legacy that Jesus left for the church. The truth of the infilling of the Holy Ghost, and the subsequent miraculous gifts of the Spirit, were foretold in the Bible.

In this chapter we will focus on these prophetic Scriptures. It is our prayer that a clearer understanding, and a receiving of the promise of the Spirit, shall be the portion of every reader.

Though increasing numbers of Bible believing Christians are coming to the knowledge of this marvelous experience, percentagewise, they are a small fraction of the religious community. Blessed are the people who study and discover the truth, for, as Jesus said,

"... ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free". (John 8: 32)

"I WILL POUR OUT MY SPIRIT"

The best known prophetic utterance regarding the outpouring of the Spirit of God recorded in the Old Testament, is found in Joel 2:28, 29,

"And it shall come to pass afterward, that I will pour out My Spirit upon all flesh; and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your old men shall dream dreams, your young men shall see visions: and also upon the servants and upon the handmaids in those days will I pour out My Spirit."

The apostle Peter recognized the fulfilment of this prophecy on the day of Pentecost, as we find in Acts 2:16-18 where he affirmed,

"... this is that which was spoken by the prophet Joel,"

And then he reiterates Joel's prophecy. (Joel 2:28, 29)

Recognizing this fact, we see then that the outpouring of the Spirit in New Testament times was not an afterthought with God, but rather, it was one phase of the working out of God's total plan in mankind's redemption. It was foretold by the prophet Joel some 800 years before it was fulfilled. Thus Biblical history confirmed Biblical prophecy, and is acknowledged by the apostle Peter, God's spokesman, on that memorable day of Pentecost, the birthday of the Christian Church.

The prophet Isaiah also foretold the same Spiritual phenomenon in chapter twenty-eight, verses eleven and twelve, in these words,

"For with stammering lips and another tongue will He speak to this people. To whom He said, This is the rest wherewith ye may cause the weary to rest; and this is the refreshing: ...

The Bible leaves us without doubt as to the meaning and application of this Old Testament declaration, for we find the apostle Paul making reference to this passage in the context of His teaching regarding the proper function and operation of the gift of tongues, the interpretation of tongues, and the gift of prophecy, in the New Testament Church. We call the reader's attention to the passage in 1 Cor. 14:21,

"In the law it is written, with men of other tongues and other lips will I speak unto this people; and yet for all that they will not hear Me, saith the Lord."

A careful study of the Scriptures will reveal the fact that Paul was referring to the passage in Isaiah referred to above. Now this was written some 750 years before its fulfilment. It had its fulfilment on the day of Pentecost. God spoke to His people, (the Jews), through the gift of tongues on the day of Pentecost, and

although 3,000 souls believed, the vast majority of Jews would not hear. They relegated the supernatural manifestation to drunkenness.

But, Praise God! Prophecy marches on! God's Word stands firm, and those who will hear shall be blessed. So we see through the testimony of another witness, God has a marvelous plan for a Spirit filled New Testament Church.

How wonderful to know, then, that what we believe and experience, is in fact supported by Biblical teaching and precedent. We wish to declare, moreover, that unless our teaching and experience is firmly rooted and grounded in Holy Scriptures, it is invalid, and must be rejected.

"HE SHALL BAPTIZE YOU"

We also find John the Baptist, the forerunner of Jesus, Divinely inspired as he also speaks prophetically when he declared,

"I indeed baptize you with water unto repentance: but He that cometh after me is mightier than I, Whose shoes I am not worthy to bear: He shall Baptize you with the Holy Ghost, and with fire."
(Matt. 3: 11)

The evidence is clear: Almighty God had a plan, and a time for the outpouring of His Spirit upon "all flesh", and when John the Baptist was used as another prophetic vehicle to announce this truth, he is adding his testimony to that of the other prophetic declarations.

Next, we find Jesus Himself speaking of the same thing, for He says in Acts 1:5,

"For John truly baptized with water; but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost not many days hence."

In fact, Jesus went so far as to command His disciples not to go evangelizing until they had received this power from on high. Here are His words,

"And, behold, I send the promise of My Father upon you: but tarry ye in the city of Jerusalem, until ye be endued with power from on high." (Luke 24:49)

In another remarkable situation we find Jesus saying these words,

"If any man thirst, let him come unto Me and drink. He that believeth on Me, as the Scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water."

John tells us that this was on the last day of the feast, (Tabernacles), and that Jesus spoke of the Spirit which they that believe in Him should receive, for the Holy Ghost was not yet given, because Jesus was not yet glorified. (John 7:37-39)

Note the prophetic significance: "The Holy Ghost was not yet given, because Jesus was not yet glorified." Note further that John says that they that believe on Jesus SHOULD receive the Holy Ghost, but that they COULD NOT receive until after Jesus had gone to heaven.

This then is another prophetic pronouncement concerning the baptism in the Holy Spirit which was future in John's day, but that it had its initial fulfilment on the day of Pentecost. Thus we see the prophets of the Old Testament foretelling a future outpouring of the Spirit of God, and Paul confirming the prophecy being fulfilled in his day. And we also have found that Jesus Himself forecast the same Spiritual manifestation.

The baptism of the Holy Spirit which was witnessed on the day of Pentecost, was a part of the fulfilling of God's plan and purpose in the establishment of the New Testament Church. The time had arrived for the message of the true Messiah to go to the whole world.

ISRAEL IN SPIRITUAL BONDAGE

Israel, in the Old Testament dispensation, failed to perform her duty in spreading the knowledge of the true God to all nations. Having custody of the Word of God, they became exclusive, they developed a "denomination", all other people were "unclean", "barbarous". Israel, God's vehicle for the spreading of the truth to the world, became self-righteous and sectarian. The word of truth was then polluted with idolatry.

The Jewish church, at the time of Christ, was in Spiritual bondage, manmade traditions were placed above the Word of God. The people of the Lord were held in servitude under the heel of a religious hierarchy. The true knowledge of Jehovah's plan of redemption was totally obscured. The Messianic message of the true prophets of God was adulterated so that when Jesus came, He was rejected. They chose a thief and a robber, and they killed the Lord of glory. Note Jesus' indictment of the religious leaders of His day,

"Woe unto you, lawyers! for ye take away the key of knowledge: ye entered not in yourselves, and them that were entering in ye hindered." (Luke 11:52)

Let us not be too sure that we cannot do the same thing today. I dare to declare that it is exactly what has been done. Religious bigotry, hypocrisy, dogmatism, and deception, has held sway for many centuries. We refer not only to the apostate Babylonian system centered in Rome, but even in small groups of people seeking for a better way, the "clergy" has deliberately withheld the truth from the people. This writer has personally experienced this kind of treatment in my pursuit for answers to Biblical questions. Many of the clergy of our day are doing the same thing that the Jews did when Jesus came.

A SPIRITUAL AWAKENING

But the Bible says that the common people heard Jesus eagerly. There was a Spiritual drought in Judaism brought about by the hypocritical religious leaders.

Jesus came to satisfy the longing in the heart of mankind that could not be fulfilled by the perfunctory, mechanical performance, of worn-out religious rituals and ceremonies.

We still have a similar situation in much of our religious community. And it is not restricted to any one sect. People who even hold the Sabbath truth resist and reject the baptism of the Holy Spirit. Fleshly carnal people, like the pious prelates of the dark ages, still attempt to control others by their words and actions. The Bible declares them to be false shepherds that make themselves fat in robbing the poor. (Ezek. 34:2)

But, as in Jesus' day, the Spiritually starving populace heard Him readily and received His gracious words of life, so today, many are "jumping denominational fences" in order that they may get a taste of Spiritual reality. This writer had to do this over forty years ago, and has never regretted the venture.

In fact, since that day of liberation, the study of God's Word has been an exhilarating and fulfilling experience, as the Word of God has opened up, and new revelations have dispelled the darkness of error. Oh what an experience! How wonderful to have the Spirit of God illuminate the Word of God to the human mind. Faith then takes hold of the promises of God, confirming the Word with miraculous signs in the believer's life.

In the midst of gross darkness", the bright light of the Spirit is again shining, and many are coming under its luminous canopy. Once again, as in the early Church, believers are being filled with the Holy Ghost, signs are following, and God is preparing for Himself a Bride that is to be without spot or wrinkle. Our prayer is that all who read these words will be challenged with the potential that is inherent in the "full gospel".

(Note: This booklet is chapter two of the larger publication entitled, "The Holy Spirit, complete edition".)