

WHAT PENTECOST IS ALL ABOUT

by Jackson Morro

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Christ's Chapel
PO Box 3182
Fall River, MA 02722

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WHAT PENTECOST IS ALL ABOUT

INTRODUCTION

Dear Friend in Christ –

Hello and God bless you.

In this booklet I have gathered six lessons which I believe will introduce any reader to what is the “essence of Pentecostalism.” I believe with all my heart that the experience of the early church in the Book of Acts was meant to continue in its fullness right until the second coming of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Some of these lessons are transcripts of our television program, *Words of Life*. A few lessons have been published in other books from Christ’s Chapel. The last two chapters have been specifically written for this booklet. May the power of the risen Lord Jesus Christ be real to you every day because of the precious presence of the Holy Spirit.

Take care and God bless you.

January 2008

WHAT PENTECOST IS ALL ABOUT 1

The Book of Acts of the Apostles is the history of the early church. The Day of Pentecost is the central event in the Book of Acts. What is the meaning and significance of Pentecost?

As the Book of Acts opens, we see the Risen Lord Jesus Christ telling His Apostles to wait at Jerusalem and expect something special. They must wait for the power of the Holy Spirit to come upon them and empower them for ministry. Years after Pentecost, the Apostle Paul wrote, “For the Kingdom of God does not consist in words, but in power.” (1 Corinthians 4:20)

The Book of Acts was written by the evangelist Luke, who also wrote the Gospel of Luke. For all practical purposes, the Book of Acts is meant to be a continuation of the Gospel of Luke. We could really call Acts as “Luke – Part Two.” Although the Book of Acts tells the history of the exploits of the early church, the Apostles, and the disciples of Jesus, the real focus is on the Risen Lord Jesus Himself Who now continues His ministry on earth through the actions of His followers. Although Jesus has returned to heaven and acts invisibly, He does so with the same power He had in His earthly ministry – the power of the Third Person of the Trinity, the Holy Spirit.

As the Book of Acts begins, we see Jesus, after His resurrection spending 40 days teaching His disciples before He ascends into heaven. His last promise and last command to them is to wait at Jerusalem until He sends the Holy Spirit so they can undergo the experience known as the Baptism with the Holy Spirit. This experience will empower them to be His witnesses to the farthest reaches of the earth. This experience, the Baptism with the Holy Spirit, is so important, it is mentioned in all four gospels. Jesus tells them the power of the Holy Spirit will come upon them and all believers and empower them with the very same anointing that Jesus had, so they can go about doing good, healing all who are oppressed by the devil (see Acts 10:38) and destroying works of darkness (see 1 John 3:8). Jesus’ followers would have the same Person and the same power, the Holy Spirit, that was present at creation and brought order to the primordial chaos; the same Holy Spirit that empowered the Old Testament saints; and the same Holy Spirit that worked mighty and supernatural miracles in the ministry of Jesus.

The power of the Holy Spirit accomplished many things. 1) It set people free from sin. 2) It made the Word of God real to peoples’ hearts. 3) It healed sick bodies. 4) It overpowered and cast out demonic powers. 5) It could fix anything in a person’s life that was broken.

ALSO – the power of the Person of the Holy Spirit gave the ability to

break free from habits, addictions, and bondages, and it gave *freedom from making the same mistakes over and over again*. There is a very rich and beautiful story in John's Gospel, Chapter 4. The Word of God shows us many lessons in John 4, as Jesus met and talked with a Samaritan woman who had made many mistakes in her life. It showed that Jesus was against racial discrimination – He talked with a Samaritan. It showed He was against discrimination against women because the Samaritan was a woman, and rabbis didn't talk to women in public in those days. John 4 also shows how to witness and present the Gospel to people as Jesus did. And later, Jesus discusses what true worship is.

But also hidden in that chapter is the lesson that we don't have to keep making the same mistakes over and over again. The Samaritan woman had been married five times and all five had failed. Now, she had become so discouraged and hardened toward life that she wasn't even married, but was just living with a man. She had probably been so optimistic, like all new brides, at her first marriage. Then, perhaps, she was still hopeful at her second. But after her third, fourth and fifth marriages failed, she probably just gave up and said, "What's the use?" As she was drawing water from a well, Jesus told her that He had a different kind of water for her. If she drank of His living water, she would never thirst again. Of course, Jesus revealed to her that the living water was the power of the Holy Spirit that could free her from her pattern of mistakes. She believed in Jesus and her broken life was put back together.

So, as the Book of Acts opens, Jesus tells His followers to wait for the outpouring of the Holy Spirit so the ministry of His church would demonstrate power and not be just a ministry of words.

The earthly ministry of Jesus had been a demonstration of supernatural power –

No sin was so bad it couldn't be forgiven.
No body was so sick it couldn't be healed.
No demon was so strong it couldn't be cast out.
No problem was so broken it couldn't be fixed.
And you don't have to keep making the same mistakes!

Jesus declares, as the Book of Acts opens, that His church is to walk in the same demonstration of the Holy Spirit's power that Jesus Himself walked in.

The Apostle Paul knew how *central* and *important* the power of the Holy Spirit was to the Christian church. In 1 Corinthians 4:20, Paul stated, "For

the Kingdom of God does not consist in words, but in power.” In fact, Paul reminded the churches he established, when he wrote them letters, that his own ministry to them was not in word only but in the demonstration of the power of the Holy Spirit. He reminded the Thessalonian church of this in 1 Thessalonians 1:5 –

For our gospel did not come to you in word only, but also in power and in the Holy Spirit and with full conviction; just as you know what kind of men we proved to be among you for your sake.

In effect, Paul said, “Thessalonians, when I was with you, I taught a lot of good truths and I hope you remember all of them. But if you forget everything else, remember that when I was with you and presented the power in the Name of the Risen Jesus Christ, you saw, Thessalonians, that –

No sin was so bad it couldn't be forgiven.
No body was so sick it couldn't be healed.
No demon was so strong it couldn't be cast out.
No problem was so broken it couldn't be fixed.
And you don't have to keep making the same mistakes!”

LATER, PAUL REMINDED THE CORINTHIANS OF THE SAME THING –

And my message and my preaching were not in persuasive words of wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power, that your faith should not rest on the wisdom of men, but on the power of God. (1 Corinthians 2:4-5)

Again, Paul was saying, “Corinthians, when I was with you, I taught a lot of good truths, and I hope you remember them all. But if you forget everything else, remember that when I was with you and presented the power in the Name of the Risen Jesus Christ, you saw –

No sin was so bad it couldn't be forgiven.
No body was so sick it couldn't be healed.
No demon was so strong it couldn't be cast out.
No problem was so broken it couldn't be fixed.
And you don't have to keep making the same mistakes!”

The message of the Book of Acts to the sick and dying world of the 21st century is that Jesus Christ lives and moves through His TRUE CHURCH in

the same power of the Holy Spirit and EVEN IN THE 21ST CENTURY –

No sin was so bad it couldn't be forgiven.
No body was so sick it couldn't be healed.
No demon was so strong it couldn't be cast out.
No problem was so broken it couldn't be fixed.
And you don't have to keep making the same mistakes!

AND THAT'S WHAT PENTECOST IS ALL ABOUT!

THE BAPTISM **WITH THE HOLY SPIRIT** 2

In the beginning, God originally created the first man Adam with a physical body, a mind, and a spirit. God then placed the Holy Spirit within Adam's spirit, bringing man's spirit to life. "And the Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul." (Genesis 2:7)

Adam received two great benefits from having the Holy Spirit within him. First, he had a special unity with God. Adam (and Eve) actually communicated with God just as you and I might communicate with our husband, wife, or best friend. In fact, it was a deeper communication than we humans have with each other; it was a communication based on trust and intimacy. God and man were comfortable with each other; there were no misunderstandings. The Holy Spirit within Adam was the link between God's mind and Adam's mind and between God's Spirit and man's spirit. God and man walked and talked together in the Garden of Eden (Genesis 3:8). God would give man any guidance he wanted or needed.

Adam's second great benefit from having the Holy Spirit within was power. Adam actually shared in God's creative and ruling power over the earth and everything in it. Adam had within himself the same power that caused the explosion through which the universe came into being. This power would help man be fruitful. God had said, "Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth, and subdue it; and rule over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the sky, and over every living thing that moves on the earth." (Genesis 1:28)

Man was to have a life of growth, optimism, and victory. He was to be

master of all he surveyed. Man was also to have dominion over nature. He could control the animals and even the weather because of the power of the Holy Spirit. Adam was to tend the Garden of Eden and dress it. He was to work but it would not be drudgery; it would be fun and a creative challenge (Genesis 2:8). Man would not taste death; the Holy Spirit within him would constantly renew and replenish his life (Genesis 2:7).

Adam lost all these benefits when he sinned. The Holy Spirit cannot abide in the presence of sin because of God's goodness and justice. God is love; sin is anti-love. God is holy; sin is anti-holy. God and sin are like gasoline and water; they just don't mix. When Adam sinned, the Holy Spirit departed from Adam. Without the Holy Spirit within, Adam lost direction for his life and became alienated from God. The lines of communication broke down. Without the Holy Spirit's power, sin became easier for Adam and his descendants. Adam was filled with gloom, selfishness, and self-pity. He lost his power. Man's lifespan became shorter because sin weakened his body. He lost control over nature and over himself. Without the Holy Spirit, man was little more than a clever animal.

God, however, did not desert man. Whenever man messes up the original plan that God has for his life, a loving, patient God simply formulates a new plan which is usually better than the original because it is filled with mercy and forgiveness; then he offers it again to man. Through Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and later under the leadership of Moses, God formed the nation of Israel (read Genesis and Exodus in the Bible). God would send the world the Savior through this nation; this Savior would restore the Holy Spirit.

Throughout the Old Testament, the Holy Spirit was not Available to all people, but God would from time to time send the Holy Spirit upon the leaders and teachers of Israel so they would have special power and communication with God to accomplish His purposes. Samson, for example, received great strength to protect his people. Once, a lion attacked Samson. "Behold, a young lion came roaring toward him. And the Spirit of the Lord came upon him mightily, so that he (Samson) tore him (the lion) as one tears a kid, though he had nothing in the hand." (Judges 14:5-6) The great King David had similar power and guidance to rule. God also gave the Holy Spirit to His prophets, special men chosen to teach Israel the ways of God and to warn political leaders and people to repent when they had turned from holiness and justice. The prophets had a special communication with God. The prophet Ezekiel, for example, said, "And the word of the Lord came to me saying, 'Son of man, set your face toward the mountains of Israel, and prophesy against them.'" (Ezekiel 6:1-2) Although God only gave the Holy Spirit to certain individuals on a "here and there" and "now and then" basis,

He promised through the prophets that a day would come when he would restore the Holy Spirit and power on a mass basis to whosoever would come to Him and ask for the Holy Spirit.

And it will come about after this that I will pour out My Spirit on all mankind; and your sons and daughters will prophesy, your old men will dream dreams, your young men will see visions. And even on the male and female servants I will pour out My Spirit in those days... And it will come about that whoever calls upon the name of the Lord will be delivered. (Joel 2:28-32)

This restoration of the Holy Spirit's power came as a result of the life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. Jesus was the Savior God had promised Who would not only save man from sin but also restore the creative power of the Holy Spirit which had been lost. This restoration began on the day of Pentecost (Acts 2) and will continue until the end of what we call "the Church Age."

So, one of the most important parts of Jesus' mission was to make available to people the Baptism with the Holy Spirit. When you are baptized in water, you are dunked or soaked in water, and you come up dripping wet. When you are baptized with the Holy Spirit, you are dunked or soaked into the person of the Holy Spirit and you are dripping with God's love, strength, and power. It is a spiritual event that you can't see physically but it is very real because of the tremendous effect it has upon your life and behavior. You are in a new dimension with God. Being born again is like a cake and the Baptism with the Holy Spirit is like the frosting on the cake.

John the Baptist preached about this baptism Jesus would give: "After me One is coming who is mightier than I, and I am not fit to stoop down and untie the thong of His sandals. I baptized you with water, but He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit." (Mark 1:7-8)

After He rose from the dead, Jesus Himself told His disciples to wait until they were baptized with the Holy Spirit when they would receive power. The Greek word for power is *dunamis*, or dynamite. The Holy Spirit would be like spiritual dynamite within them and they would become "dynamic" people. Jesus said, "And behold, I am sending forth the promise of My Father (the Holy Spirit) upon you; but you are to stay in the city until you are clothed with power from on high." (Luke 24:49)

Just before He ascended into heaven, Jesus told them, "John baptized with water, but you shall be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days from now... But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon

you.” (Acts 1:5,8) Notice that Jesus didn’t give the disciples an option; He gave them a command. He didn’t say, “Be baptized with the Holy Spirit if you like,” or “It would be nice if you were baptized with the Holy Spirit.” No, He commanded them to wait for this power because it was an essential step in the restoration of their broken, fragmented, defeated humanity. In fact, this power is absolutely essential for the ministry of healing and reconciliation that Jesus established.

True to both His and the Father’s promise, Jesus sent the Holy Spirit on the Day of Pentecost when 120 followers, including His mother Mary, were baptized with the Holy Spirit and spoke in a new prayer language we call “tongues” (read Acts Chapter 2). The first thing that occurred was that the disciples were restored to a special unity with God. Small flames of fire rested on each of their heads. This was to symbolize that the Holy Spirit was now available again to each individual.

In the Old Testament (read Exodus, Chapter 3), God appeared in a burning bush, and only Moses, His appointed leaser, could talk To Him. The other people couldn’t approach God. But on the Day of Pentecost, the burning bush broke up into little flames and the Holy Spirit took up residence within each person. Their power was restored; they were ready to take on the world; nothing could stop them; the sky, literally, was the limit. Peter, who had been weak-willed and had denied Jesus, was now a bold preacher. Miracles followed: the sick were healed, the dead were raised, bruised and broken hearts and spirits were set free and made whole (Acts 3:4-8; Acts 8:5-8; Acts 9:36-41). Love abounded everywhere (Acts 2:44-47).

This Baptism with the Holy Spirit is still available to us today. Millions have undergone this experience. We receive the same Holy Spirit the disciples received. He has the very same effect on us. Our unity with God is restored and there is a new awareness of the presence of God. We become constantly aware of God’s presence even as we go about our daily business. It’s an amazing experience. Also, we feel new power within. We are better able to resist sin and do positive good. Love, compassion and patience flow more easily from our personality. It’s easier to reach out to other people and be an instrument of strength to them. And, each and every person begins sharing in Jesus’ ministry of healing and reconciliation through the supernatural gifts of the Holy Spirit (1 Corinthians, Chapter 12).

Along with the Baptism with the Holy Spirit comes the power to pray in “tongues” just as the disciples did on the Day of Pentecost. “Tongues” is the word used to describe praying in a language you don’t understand. You open your mouth and start speaking words you don’t understand with your mind. It is actually the Holy Spirit within you praying to God on your behalf. The

Holy Spirit prays to God the Father for us night and day, and when we pray out loud in tongues we are consciously joining in the prayer the Holy Spirit is praying for us at that very moment (Romans 8:26-27).

All who are baptized with the Holy Spirit have the power to pray in tongues from the moment they receive this baptism. They may or may not actually pray in tongues, but whether they do or not, they have the power within them to do so.

Because “tongues” is a real language, there is always an interpretation or translation of everything spoken in tongues. How does it work? Well, first you pray in tongues. Then you let your mind clear. The first thought that comes to your mind after letting it clear is Jesus Christ speaking to you through the Holy Spirit. The thought that comes to your mind always is in agreement with Scripture in the Bible. It’s really so simple and yet so miraculous! It’s the same as God walking and talking with Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden, only He’s walking and talking with you! The ability to pray in tongues and communicate with God is His gift to you; you can use it any time you choose, day or night. You simply operate by faith and believe God is meeting you and communicating with you whenever you exercise praying in tongues because He promised He would, and He is faithful to His promises.

Although you have the power to pray in tongues and interpret at any moment in your life once you are baptized with the Holy Spirit, there are some times when it is not appropriate to do so. In other words, there are some “do”s and “don’t”s involved in praying in tongues. Everyone should have a private prayer time every day and this is a good time to also pray in tongues. Do pray in tongues at small, home-type prayer meetings. I love to go to home prayer meetings of about a dozen people or so. We talk about the Bible, pray together, and sometimes end with coffee and cake and fellowship. Often, during prayer time, some of us will pray in tongues, worshipping and praising God in our unknown language. It is a beautiful, moving experience.

Some of the “don’t”s of praying in tongues involve larger public gatherings and church services. One should never use tongues or the interpretation of tongues to disrupt a church service. One shouldn’t interrupt a preacher in the middle of his sermon with tongues and interpretations because this causes confusion in the church, and the Holy Spirit *never* causes confusion. Also, *don’t* hold conversations with other people in tongues. The Apostle Paul wrote, “For he that speaketh in an unknown tongue speaketh not unto men, but unto God.” (1 Corinthians 14:2, King James Version) “Tongues” is vertical, between God and man, not horizontal, between man

and man. I once saw two men in a church shaking hands and talking to each other in tongues. They *looked* ridiculous and *were* ridiculous because they were abusing God's gift.

Now it sometimes happens in large assemblies or church services that Jesus wants to give a message to the assembly or to an individual through the operation of tongues and interpretation. When this happens, someone will stand up in the church and pray in tongues or go up to an individual and pray over them in tongues. Then someone else will stand up and give the interpretation. This manner of operating tongues in public is good. It usually happens at a quiet moment in the service set aside for ministering to those who are sick or depressed by other needs. The tongues and interpretation are not a disruption to the sermon or service, but are to help to comfort someone in need. This is good. This is a "do."

How much importance should you place behind a message you receive in this manner? Sometimes an important decision in your life may be involved. The Bible has some good guidelines to follow in 1 Corinthians 14. If the message deals with something you have been worried about that no one else knows about, this should give you confidence in the interpretation that God is revealing something to you. Once I was worried about something and a woman in church gave me a "tongues" interpretation about the problem. No one knew I was worried about that problem. Therefore, I had great confidence in that interpretation when it offered me comfort and a solution to the problem.

Another way of proving the truth of such a message is to hear it two or three different times from two or three different people in two or three different places. It's like God confirming something to you again and again. This would be a true message. The person interpreting the tongues message, furthermore, should be known in the church and have a reputation for love and humility. Also, you can ask the church leaders to judge the prophecy or interpretation and evaluate it. Paul said, "Let the prophets speak two or three, and let the other judge." (1 Corinthians 14:29, King James Version)

Finally, you ask, "How can I receive the Baptism with the Holy Spirit? How can I enter into this close relationship with God and receive this power within me?" There are three basic things you must do.

First, you must be "born again" (John 3:3 and 3:7). This is a must. The Holy Spirit's power will not be given to someone who has not asked forgiveness for their sins and for Jesus to come live in their heart. You must be truly sorry for your sins, believe that Jesus is the Son of God Who rose from the dead, and ask Him to forgive your sins and come and live in your heart. On the day of Pentecost, when the crowds asked Peter how they could

receive the Holy Spirit, he said, “Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of your sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost.” (Acts 2:38, King James Version) In other words, there can be no sin standing between you and God; the way to get rid of sin is by asking God’s forgiveness.

Second, because Jesus Christ is the One Who baptizes with the Holy Spirit, you must be seeking a closer relationship with Him. Other people may idolize or copy movie stars, sports heroes or political figures, but your desire is to copy Jesus Christ so that when you walk down the street, people almost don’t see you anymore, but they see Jesus Christ. Jesus will honor your seeking and baptize you with the Holy Spirit so you will have the power to be like Him. The Holy spirit will reproduce the fullness of Jesus’ life within you.

Third, you must have an attitude of praise, joy and love. You must be thanking God and encouraging people. You can’t have resentment in your heart or a grudge against anyone. If Jesus could forgive those who crucified Him even while He was on the cross, you must forgive anyone who has hurt you.

If you meet these requirements, you are in a position to receive the Baptism with the Holy Spirit and have this deep experience with God. Sometimes people who belong to a prayer group find it helpful to have the leaders of the group lay hands on them and pray for them to receive the Holy Spirit. Some people in the Bible received the Holy Spirit this way (Acts, Chapters 8, 9 and 19). At other times, the Holy Spirit just instantly came upon people who were seeking a closer relationship with Jesus and no laying on of hands was involved (Acts 10). There is no one set way; God can act in many ways. The important thing is that you are seeking a closer relationship with Jesus.

I can’t tell you how you will receive the Holy Spirit, but I promise you *will* receive the Holy Spirit if you are seeking Jesus. Jesus said, “If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children: how much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask Him?” (Luke 11:13, King James Version).

This lesson deals with the eighth gift listed in 1Corinthians 12, “Speaking in Tongues,” also at times called “Praying in Tongues,” or also “Praying in the Spirit.” For a proper understanding of this gift we must give a careful study to Acts, Chapter 2 where we see THE FIRST OUTPOURING OF THE HOLY SPIRIT which took place on the Day of Pentecost (Acts 2:1), the official birthday of the Christian Church. Pentecost means “50th” – seven weeks and one day after Passover. Back in the Book of Exodus, on the night before God led the Israelites out of slavery in Egypt, God commanded each Israelite family to kill a lamb and place the blood on the doorpost. They were then to cook and eat the lamb and get ready to leave. The blood would protect the families when the angel of death came to kill the firstborn in each Egyptian family. Fifty days after Passover, God gave Moses the Law, summed up in the Ten Commandments.

On Good Friday, Our Lord Jesus Christ was sacrificed on the cross to save us from eternal spiritual death. (He is called the Lamb of God [John 1:29] and Christ our Passover [1 Corinthians 5:7]). Fifty days after Jesus’ sacrifice we have the outpouring of the Holy Spirit on the Day of Pentecost which opened up a new way of living through Jesus Christ. We read in Acts 1:13-14 there were 120 people together in the Upper Room at Jerusalem. These included the twelve disciples of Jesus and Mary the mother of Jesus.

Suddenly (Acts 2:2), while they were waiting and praying as Jesus had commanded them to do, the Holy Spirit began manifesting Himself. First, He manifested Himself as the *sound* of a mighty rushing wind. (As an aside, we should note that the 120 were sitting and praying. Our physical position – kneeling, standing, sitting – is not as important as the “inner position” of our heart.)

Next (Acts 2:3), the Holy Spirit manifested Himself as tongues of fire that rested on the head of each one. In Exodus, when God gave the Law and the Commandments to Moses, there were lightning bolts and earthquakes. On Pentecost, God, through these power manifestations, is now showing that His approved way is now through His Son Jesus, and no longer through the Law of Moses (John 1:17). As a result, we see the outpouring in Acts 2:4. At Mount Sinai, the earthquake and the lightning were of secondary importance to the Law given to Moses. On the Day of Pentecost, the wind and the fire were of secondary importance (but pointed to) to the outpouring of the Holy

Spirit and the power the disciples received. In effect, Jesus was saying, “Look, I’ve arrived in Heaven and now I’ve sent the Holy Spirit, just as I promised. Two things happened: 1) they were all filled with the Holy Spirit, with a new kind of power, and 2) they all (including Mary, the mother of Jesus) began speaking or praying in tongues, in a brand new language their mind did not understand, but which the Holy Spirit led them to speak from their innermost being.

It’s at this point we first see the PHENOMENON OF SPEAKING IN TONGUES. The importance of this moment is they were all filled with the Holy Spirit, or baptized with, or “dunked in,” the power of the Holy Spirit. What is most important? The Baptism with the Holy Spirit or Speaking in Tongues? Of course, the Baptism with the Holy Spirit, which brings the power to operate the Gifts, is most important. What comes first? Of course, the Baptism which enables us to pray or speak in tongues. The key result of speaking or praying in tongues is that we can speak to God, spirit to Spirit, bypassing the limits of our mind.

In Acts 2:5-8 we begin to see something exciting happen. The outpouring of the Holy Spirit began almost as a private event among the 120, but its effects start spreading instantly throughout Jerusalem. There were at the time many devout Jewish people from all over the known world who had come to Jerusalem to celebrate the Passover. When they heard the noise, they apparently gathered at the location and now they see 120 Galileans in spiritual joy and ecstasy praising God. Galileans came from the north of Israel and were considered uncouth, uneducated, uncultured, and ready to fight at the drop of a hat. They were being led by Simon Peter, the roughest of the lot.

In Acts 2:12, these onlookers are trying to figure them out.

In Acts 2:13, some said the disciples must be drunk (on cheap wine). But what was really happening? A group of Jesus’ followers had been deeply hurt and scarred. They were hurt and scarred by their own sense of failure. They had seen their beloved Master executed in a most sudden, violent, and shameful way on the cross. Everything He had tried to accomplish had seemingly been turned into failure. Adding to their trauma of seeing Jesus so horribly treated was their own deep sense of personal failure, that they had somehow failed Him terribly at a critical moment by deserting Him. Even after the resurrection they must have carried the effects of this trauma and sense of failure around with them.

When they were baptized with the Holy Spirit and began praying in tongues, something very special began happening on the inside. The Holy Spirit began performing Divine therapy to heal them of the traumatic scars

and the sense of failure. The infilling of Divine power exploded in a powerful experience of the joy of the Lord, which overrode the trauma and sense of failure and resulted in the speaking forth of a language that the mind could not contain because it was so powerful and expressive of what was being experienced. The result was the first manifestation of speaking in tongues. The Holy Spirit was reaching into all the bad areas and scars and removing them, and Jesus, as it were, was whispering to them, “It’s OK. I AM the Lord and I love you.”

In Acts 2:14-16, Peter addresses the crowd. He assures them not to worry; it’s too early to get drunk (9 a.m.). The crowd had assembled, heard the noise, and heard the 120 praying in tongues. Now everything has become quiet. Simon Peter begins the first sermon ever preached in the Christian Church and he begins to tell the crowd, here on the Day of Pentecost, what it all means.

This so-called uncouth peasant Simon Peter has the power and anointing of the Holy Spirit come upon him and he quotes the prophecy in Joel, Chapter 2 (Acts 2:17-21). The Old Testament prophet Joel had foretold a great day in the future when after the Redeemer and Messiah came, God would pour out the Holy Spirit and give His power to whoever sincerely asked for it. Peter announces this day, the Day of Pentecost, is that day. “This is that...” Peter says. It begins the time when anyone, male, female, young, old, any race, would have access to God’s power through faith in His Son Jesus Christ, *not* on the basis of following religious rules and regulations. Peter goes on to say that Jesus had been crucified but He had risen. His physical body had actually risen from the dead and He had now poured out the Holy Spirit. This sermon deeply moved the crowd (Acts 2:37) and they asked, “What must we do to be saved?”

Peter responds in Acts 2:38. Peter’s first word was, “Repent.” This shows how important repentance is in God’s thinking. Repent means to have a change of heart, turn from our old ways, and start going in a new way toward God. It means to be sorry for the wrong we’ve done and to now desire to please God. It means we ask God for forgiveness of sins.

Second, Peter told the crowd to start putting their faith and trust, to even entrust their very lives to a PERSON named Jesus Christ. True salvation is in a person – JESUS. At the moment of our commitment, the resurrected, unlimited Christ enters our spirit with His eternal new life. Our spirit is reborn, BORN AGAIN. We literally become a brand new person, a *new creation* in our inner person (2 Corinthians 5:17). We may look the same on the outside, but on the inside, we’ve been restored to the image and likeness of God.

Upon receiving the new birth we become candidates for the Baptism with the Holy Spirit where two things happen:

1) We receive a spiritual immersion in the *power of the Holy Spirit*. This Baptism with the Holy Spirit enables us to *Pray in Tongues* or *Pray in the Spirit* from our spirit. Our spirit can directly communicate with God in a language we did not learn with our mind, but which comes out of our inner being by the leading of the Holy Spirit. We bypass the limitations of our mind and human understanding which has become so cluttered with things that hinder our walk with God; we can pray from our heart to God's heart. It's really the Holy Spirit praying in us and through us.

2) With the Baptism with the Holy Spirit will come God's help and God's power to become a disciple, a daily follower of Jesus as He commands us in Luke 9:23. We receive our salvation in a moment of time. But the rest of life is spent becoming a follower or disciple of Jesus, and this can only be accomplished with the help and power of the Holy Spirit. We come to the cross and John 3:16 begins the wonderful gift of eternal life through our new birth. We come to the Day of Pentecost and Luke 3:16 empowers us to grow into conformity to the image of the One Who loves us and gave Himself for us (Galatians 2:20; Romans 8:29).

[For a full discussion of "Praying in Tongues," write for the free book *The Gifts of the Holy Spirit* which is available through:

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PO Box 3182
Fall River, MA 02722]

THE GIFTS OF THE HOLY SPIRIT 4

Welcome to our special study on the Gifts of the Holy Spirit. In Ephesians 4:8, we read that when Jesus ascended into heaven after His resurrection, He gave supernatural spiritual gifts to mankind. It's important for us to realize that in Jesus Christ, God became a man. God became one of us. John 1:14 states, "And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us." That could also be translated, "God build His house in our neighborhood." Jesus' body was conceived miraculously, by the power of the Holy Spirit, in the womb of a young virgin. Although He was divinity, Jesus was also fully human. Jesus knows what it's like to be human. That should be comforting because we are

human 24 hours a day. Jesus knows what we need. We really need the power of the Holy Spirit in our lives. We need the life of Jesus reproduced in us and through us. Jesus led the perfectly obedient, sinless and successful life. His power and His gifts help us become like Him. We always remain human, but through the Holy Spirit we become God-gifted humans.

One of the most common problems people suffer from is an *inferiority complex* (the “I can’t do it...” syndrome). Our human tendency is to look down on ourselves as fragmented inferior people when God really wants to lift us up and make each of us count for something good.

God accomplishes this through the power of the Holy Spirit and the Gifts of the Holy Spirit. Some people don’t believe God wants to give people supernatural gifts today. They say, “Maybe He did in Bible times, but not today. Others believe God does do supernatural things today, but not for them. They say, “God’s too busy for me” or “I’m not important enough.”

On the Day of Pentecost we saw that Peter proclaimed that the power of the Holy Spirit was available to anyone who comes to God, repents of sin, and believes in the Lord Jesus as their Savior. Once a person becomes a Christian, they can then receive the experience of the Baptism with the Holy Spirit where they are “baptized” or “dunked” in the power of the Holy Spirit. Such a person is then in a position to be used by God in the church, in the Body of Christ, with one or more of the supernatural gifts of the Holy Spirit listed in 1 Corinthians 12.

The New Testament Greek word for gifts is *charis*. This is where we get the English word *charisma* or *charismatic*. Our modern understanding of the word is usually inaccurate. We think of *charisma* as a special ability arising from an individual’s own personal strength: a politician, actor, or athlete is said to have *charisma*. That, however, is actually the opposite of the Bible meaning. The Bible meaning of *charisma* is that God places a gift of His power upon an ordinary or even weak person so they may use supernatural power to be a blessing to other people. The gift comes from God, not from the person’s own strength or own holiness. It’s God smiling on an ordinary person so they can smile on someone else.

Before we discuss the Gift of the Holy Spirit, we must emphasize two things: 1. All Christians, whether baptized with the Holy Spirit or not, *have* the Holy Spirit within them if they truly believe in Jesus as their Lord. We are all “born again” through the life and power of the Holy Spirit. 2. The common meeting ground of all Christians is the *person* of Jesus Christ. Praying in tongues or praying for healing is not the most essential thing or what makes a Christian a Christian. A personal relationship with Christ is more important than *anything* else. Having the risen Christ in our heart is

what makes a Christian a Christian. Christ within us is what makes us brothers and sisters in Christ and children of God the Father.

With that said, however, it must also be emphasized that the power that comes through the Baptism with the Holy Spirit is absolutely essential for the fully victorious spiritual walk that God wants us to have. Spiritual warfare can be very wearisome and strenuous for the Christian who is not empowered through the Baptism with the Holy Spirit. God has given and has made available to His Church, supernatural gifts and supernatural power to help, build up and bring healing to the hurting people in the Church and in the world.

If we read 1 Corinthians 12:1-11, we see listed nine special gifts:

1. Word of Wisdom
2. Word of Knowledge
3. Gift of Faith
4. Gifts of Healing
5. Working of Miracles
6. Prophecy
7. Discerning of Spirits
8. Speaking in Various Kinds of Tongues
9. Interpretation of Tongues

These gifts are simply the risen Jesus Christ continuing His ministry on earth through His people. All these gifts are just Jesus doing again what He did when He walked the earth. He does it through you and me by the same power of the Holy Spirit which He operated in during His earthly ministry.

The Apostle Paul starts off 1 Corinthians 12 by reminding the Corinthian Christians that at one time they were held spiritually captive in spiritual darkness. Corinth was a rich commercial city, but it was also a morally wild and wooly city. Every kind of evil and degrading excess existed there. They were into idolatry and worshiping false gods. They had “temple prostitution.” Temple prostitutes would hang out at a big fountain in the center of the city where local and visiting businessmen would go and pay them to perform adulterous sex as part of their religious worship at the pagan temple in Corinth. There was substance abuse, alcohol abuse and drugs. They were into the strange and degrading world of psychic and occult phenomena. The city was morally rotten at its foundation. Human dignity was degraded in every possible way. Human dignity was being dragged through the mud.

In the middle of this, Paul came and preached about Jesus, the cross and the resurrection. The power of the Holy Spirit came upon many and set them free. As they were converted and believed in the Lord Jesus Christ, they

were also baptized with the Holy Spirit and the supernatural gifts began working in their midst to build people up, heal them and set them free.

The spiritual gifts are for the common good of the Body of Christ. There are nine gifts, but there's only one purpose: the common good of all the people in the Body of Christ, to build them up, heal them and restore their human dignity.

Let's close this chapter by re-emphasizing that God wants all Christians to receive the Baptism with the Holy Spirit and to pray for the healing of the sick. God wants the Gifts of the Holy Spirit to operate in all churches and through all Christians. We live in a world that desperately needs the healing ministry of Jesus. It is through the Gifts of the Holy Spirit that Jesus brings His ministry to this world. The Church is the Body of Christ. It's imperative that the very life of Jesus Christ comes to this world through His Body.

We need Jesus now more than ever.

[For a definition and description of each of the nine Gifts of the Holy Spirit, write for the free book *The Gifts of the Holy Spirit* which is available through:

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JOHN 3:16

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The salvation and wholeness that Christianity offers to people does not come through religious observance, philosophical or psychological discussion, or through any kind of human wisdom. Rather, our salvation, wholeness, and total well-being come from an absolute faith in, and total surrender to, a person, Jesus Christ. No matter what we may face, the answer and solution is found in the *person* of Jesus of Nazareth, the Lord, the Christ, the Son of God. Our unashamed laying hold of Him in our heart is what brings His salvation and power into our lives.

Perhaps the most preached scripture for salvation is John 3:16: "For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believes in Him, will not perish, but have eternal life."

Why were we created? We were created to have a relationship with the

living God. You and I were made for God and until we have that relationship, our lives will never have meaning.

The problem we face as humans, however, is that we are all sinners (Romans 3:23) and our sin separates us from God. Our very nature, fallen as it is, willingly goes away from God. A holy God, however cannot accept sin into His presence. Also a just God must require a penalty for the evil of sin. Furthermore, since our fallen nature loves sin, we do not have the spiritual strength to come back to God on our own.

But God has an answer. A holy God also has redeeming love in His heart and wants us back, reconciled to Him. So, God sent His Son Jesus to earth. God became a man. First, Jesus came to show and restore us to God's way and His truth. Secondly, He paid the price for our sins by offering His suffering and death on the cross as payment and punishment for our sins. He had no personal sin yet He bore our sins for us (2 Corinthians 5:21). He made salvation available for us. We receive a total pardon and forgiveness for our sins by repenting for them with godly sorrow and He promises us a new power for living, the power of the Holy Spirit within us through the new birth (John 3:3; John 3:8).

Are you in a position today where you feel there is no hope for you or no answer for your problem? You must remember John 3:16.

FOR GOD - The One, True Living God, creator of all things...

SO LOVED - He loved "so much" - with a passionate redeeming love. He made a decision to act in a way that would bring about our absolute best, regardless of what it might cost Him (Love = *agape* love).

THE WORLD - the negative, evil world system that trapped people in sin, destruction, hate and death. The world that smelled with a disgusting spiritual smell to Him; the world that was like a spiritual garbage dump, God chose to love. Even in our sins, God chose to extend an opportunity to each and every person for redemption.

THAT HE GAVE - God put His love into action. Love is not fully love until it acts on behalf of the one who is loved.

HIS ONLY BEGOTTEN SON - God gave His very best. His Son Jesus was not created but "begotten" or birthed out of God's very own being. Since God is perfect and does everything perfectly, He could only beget *ONE* Son, a perfect image of Himself.

THAT WHOSOEVER BELIEVES IN HIM (JESUS) - Whoever will commit themselves and their whole life to Jesus, without reservation - not halfway but with a full choice.

SHOULD NOT PERISH BUT HAVE ETERNAL LIFE - Those who

commit their life to Jesus Christ will no longer face separation from God and an eternity in hell, but would have God come live in their heart, in their inner man, their spirit. They will possess a new kind of life, a life that will never end and will also bring a new *quality* of existence to their life here and now on earth.

Because of the event of Pentecost and the outpouring of the Holy Spirit and His power, we must go beyond seeing salvation as only a judicial acquittal for the guilt of our sins (as wonderful as that is), but rather see salvation as God's healing and restoration of the entire person to wholeness.

The Greek word for salvation is *sozo*; it is also the word for "healing" in the Greek version of the gospels. So, the early church equated the forgiveness of sins with the subsequent manifestations of healing and wholeness for the individual. The very *quality* of eternal life presupposes a healthy and whole life because of the restorative power of redemption and forgiveness.

The salvation that Jesus brings in the gospels includes the redemption and healing of sin, failure, poverty, sickness, addiction, demonic possession, frustration, loneliness and despair.

We must see John 3:16 as intimately linked with Jesus' own mission statement in Luke 4:18,19:

The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor; he hath sent me to heal the brokenhearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised, To preach the acceptable year of the Lord.
(Luke 4:18,19, KJV)

Jesus was anointed (empowered) to heal the every aspect of our humanity that had been damaged by sin and the law of sin and death. His mission was to destroy the works of the devil (1 John 3:18) and bring healing and wholeness and the restoration of each human life to God's purpose and plan for them.

The Day of Pentecost and the outpouring of the Holy Spirit and His power was God's confirmation that He wanted Jesus' own healing ministry to continue through His church.

The full salvation and total redemption and restoration of believers would vindicate the life of Jesus. As healings and restoration take place –

- Jesus is glorified (Acts 3:13).

- Proof is manifested that Jesus is alive and has power and authority (Acts 3:15).
- People are *SAVED* and set free (Acts 4:4).
- People are blessed (Acts 4:9).
- The power of Jesus' ministry silences the critics (Acts 4:14).

Thus, we must see John 3:16 as the doorway to the blessings of Pentecost. Luke 4:18,19 tells us *what* Jesus does (forgives, heals, redeems) and *how* Jesus does it (through the anointing of the Holy Spirit). John 3:16 tells us why Jesus does it (He loves us!).

LUKE 3:16

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“John answered and said to them all, ‘As for me, I baptize you with water, but One is coming who is mightier than I, and I am not fit to untie the thong of His sandals; He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and with fire.’” (Luke 3:16)

Thus spoke John the Baptist when people asked him if he was the Messiah. He flatly denied he was; in fact, John was the one who was to prepare the way for “He Who Is To Come.”

In His own denial of the Messiahship, John also gave a clear statement of what the Messiah's role would be. John's own role was to prepare Messiah's way, point Him out when He came, and then “decrease.” John's ministry of preparation was to call people to repent from sin and then baptize them in water as both a washing clean and a dying and burial of their old life but also a rising to a new life lived in expectation of Messiah's coming as they arose out of the water.

John answered, however, that there was a second baptism which only the Messiah could give. It was a baptism with the Holy Spirit and with fire. Both John's baptism and the Messiah's baptism involved an immersion or dunking into a substance that would saturate a person. But there was a significant difference in those substances. It is at this point that we see the essential contribution of what we call “the Pentecostal experience.”

The Messiah (Jesus) would baptize or “dunk” or immerse people in the Holy Spirit and fire. People, “whosoever will,” would receive an anointing and power that could only come from the person of the Holy Spirit. Throughout Old Testament times, the Holy Spirit had been responsible for

bringing order into creation, performing miracles and signs and wonders through the prophets, and guiding and directing God's people. Now, through Jesus, the Messiah, the Christ, this very same person of the Holy Spirit and His power would be available to all believers who desired it.

Biblically, it's one thing to be forgiven and justified by grace. It's another thing to be empowered. We **MUST** see this or we miss the fullness of God's blessing and power for His people. We **MUST** understand the two-fold action of grace upon the believer or we frustrate God's full plan for His people. **GOD WILL ONLY PERFORM HIS WORD - HE WILL NOT ACCOMODATE THE FAULTY THEOLOGY OF MEN, NO MATTER HOW WELL-MEANING THEY MAY BE!**

All four gospels and the Book of Acts of the Apostles speak of the necessity of the experience of the Baptism with the Holy Spirit (Matthew 3:11; Mark 3:8; Luke 3:16; John 1:33; Acts 1:5). This experience is so vital to the victorious Christian life, that after His resurrection, Jesus commanded His apostles to **NOT** perform ministry **UNTIL** they were baptized with the Holy Spirit:

And behold, I am sending forth the promise of My Father upon you [the Holy Spirit]; but you are to stay in the city until you are clothed with power from on high [baptized with the Holy Spirit and fire]. (Luke 24:49)

Jesus warned His own apostles and disciples, who were *already* believers and who *already* had received the new birth through the Holy Spirit on the evening of Resurrection Day (John 20:22) that there was a second dimension of the Holy Spirit they *needed* or their attempts at ministry would be fruitless and frustrating. They experienced that **SECOND** dimension on the Day of Pentecost. The Apostles and disciples were not saved at Pentecost; they were already saved believers. They were **EMPOWERED** at Pentecost.

We see the two-fold action of the Holy Spirit (new birth *and* baptism with the Holy Spirit) throughout the New Testament. The very ministries of John the Baptist and Jesus are prototypes of the ministry of salvation followed by baptism with the Holy Spirit. The post-resurrection experience of the apostles on the evening of Resurrection Day (John 20:22 new birth) and Pentecost (Acts 2) reflect the Spirit's two-fold action. The experience of the Samaritans in the Book of Acts, Chapter 8 again shows this two-fold action when Samaritans believed and were baptized in Jesus' name by Philip but did not receive the Baptism with the Holy Spirit until Peter and John prayed for them. Even the sacramental system of some later denominational churches (such as Catholics, Lutherans, Presbyterians) bears witness to this

same two-fold action of the Holy Spirit through the sacraments of baptism and confirmation, although these are mere echoes and fossilized ceremonies of what were once vital experiences of grace.

John the Baptist stated the Messiah (Jesus) would baptize with fire. Why did he refer to fire? Fire has two main purposes: 1) It burns and destroys what is useless; 2) It can also supply heat and power (most engines operate through combustion or small explosions of fire).

The fire that would come with the Baptism of the Holy Spirit would provide a supernatural cleansing of sin and iniquity in the life of the believer. This is what John the Baptist was referring to in Luke 3:17:

And His winnowing fork is in His hand to thoroughly clear His threshing floor, and to gather the wheat into His barn; but He will burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire.

A winnowing fork was a tool a farmer could use to separate the useless part of the wheat harvest (chaff) from the living vital part that would be fruitful and of use. The chaff would be burned up and destroyed and the useful part would remain for productive use. Pentecostal theologians have argued whether sanctification or holiness can be achieved apart from the Baptism with the Holy Spirit. However, one might believe, **IT IS AN INESCAPABLE TRUTH THAT THE BAPTISM WITH THE HOLY SPIRIT BRINGS WITH IT A SUPERNATURAL CLEANSING AND VICTORY OVER SIN AND INIQUITY IN THE LIFE OF THE BELIEVING RECIPIENT.** Victory over besetting sin and habit comes through the purifying power of the Holy Spirit's fire.

For the unbeliever, God's fire brings total destruction and judgment (2 Thessalonians 1:5-8; 2 Peter 3:7; Revelation 19:20; 20:14-15). For the believer, however, God's fire only destroys the useless part (sin and iniquity) but does not destroy the eternal life; thus, the purifying effect of fire on the believer. (See also the judgment seat of Christ - 1 Corinthians 3:11-15).

The fire of the Baptism with the Holy Spirit would also provide energy for spiritual empowerment in the same manner that natural fire provides heat and energy for dynamic work in the natural realm. It was after the Holy Spirit rested upon the 120 in the Upper Room in the form of tongues of fire that they began effective, world-changing ministry. The tongues of fire were a special impartation of the glory of God Himself and His supernatural, dynamic, creative power.

Jesus Himself said:, "I have come to cast fire upon the earth, and how I wish it were already kindled! But I have a baptism to undergo, and how

distressed I am until it is accomplished.” (Luke 12:49)

Jesus knew the purpose of His own ministry even better than John the Baptist did. Jesus came to cast the fire of the Holy Spirit upon believers so that they would be cleansed and empowered. He was distressed, constrained, and felt unfulfilled until He would be in a position to pour out the Holy Spirit and fire upon His own people. He knew the necessity of this power - He Himself received it from the Father at the moment of His own water baptism by John (Luke 3:21-22). Throughout His earthly ministry, Jesus looked forward to the time when, after His suffering, death, resurrection and ascension, He could finally enter His ultimate destiny and priestly ministry and cast the fire of the Holy Spirit upon His people. This fire came down on the Day of Pentecost (Acts 2).

The fire of the Holy Spirit is a fire the Church of Jesus Christ must never let go out. It is a fire that we can allow to get low and we must rekindle it through a renewed relationship with the giver of that fire (2 Timothy 1:6). It is a fire we can quench by neglecting and despising the moving of the Holy Spirit. But ultimately, it is a fire we cannot do without. It is the fire of Pentecost and it still burns today.

PRAYER REQUESTS

We invite you to send your prayer requests to us at:

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PO Box 3182
Fall River, MA 02722