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JESUS THE SAVIOUR

My relationship with the Holy Spirit began in the early 70's. The turbulent 60's had taken their toll on my life. For nearly five years I burned myself out experimenting with drugs. The pleasures of sin only last for a season, however.

I became disillusioned with the drugs and started to search for reality. I sought answers through various religions and philosophies of life. I was captivated by the Hare Krishna's and became somewhat involved in their movement. But chanting, eating certain types of food, and living a rigid lifestyle did not do away with my nagging, guilty conscience. After months of searching, I finally found what I was looking for when, in August 1973, I was confronted with the Holy Spirit. My relationship with Him began at that time. This particular night my fiancé and I were going for a walk on the lakefront in New Orleans and we heard several young people singing and playing guitars. Although the music was not exceptional, there was something in these young peoples' lives that kept drawing us to them. They began to tell us that Jesus loved us. This simple, yet profound message cut deep into my heart. I was pierced by the Word of God and the Person of the Holy Spirit.

I received Jesus Christ into my life that night and since then I have never been the same. The nagging guilt was gone, my sins were forgiven and the Holy Spirit came to live within my life.

Little did I know the journey I began that night. I started a

relationship with the Holy Spirit that will last for eternity. This relationship was made possible to me because of Jesus' redemptive work at the cross. The Holy Spirit is the third Person of the Godhead. His role regarding our salvation is to draw us to Jesus. He shows us who Jesus is and what He has accomplished for us.

Jesus is the Saviour of mankind. He saved the world from sin and death. His death and resurrection brought new life into the world, freeing us from Satan's grip. Now, we have access and communication with the Father and are no longer separated from Him.

IN THE BEGINNING

God loves to display His glory. Creation itself is a manifestation of the attributes of God. God created man in His own image as the culmination of His plan. We were created to glorify God in a way greater than all of the rest of creation. We were created to have an intimate relationship with Him and our satisfaction in this relationship would bring glory to God. The Bible says in Genesis 1:26-27 *"Then God said, "Let us make man in our image, after our likeness. And let them have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over the livestock and over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth." So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them."*

We read further in Genesis 3:8 that Adam and Eve could even hear the sound of the Lord God walking in the garden in the cool of the day.

God gave man everything he could have ever wanted in the Garden of Eden. Genesis 2:15 says that God took man and put him into the Garden of Eden to cultivate it and keep it. He created Eve for Adam. Adam had rule over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the sky, and over every living thing that moved on the earth [Genesis 1:28]. God did however, make one command to Adam and Eve. He told them to stay away from one particular tree in the garden.

Genesis 2:16-17 says “And the LORD God commanded the man, saying, “You may surely eat of every tree of the garden, but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you shall surely die.”

As you read further in Genesis, you will see that indeed Eve, after being tempted by the serpent, the devil, did take of the fruit from the tree of knowledge of good and evil and gave some to Adam and he ate. First Timothy 2:14, “*and Adam was not deceived, but the woman was deceived and became a transgressor.*” Eve was deceived and listened to the lie of the devil, Adam, though not deceived, *willfully* partook of the transgression thus sinning. As a result of deception and disobedience, sin entered the heart of man. Consequently, they were driven out from the Garden of Eden and separated from God and His provision. Sin cannot exist in God’s Presence. Because of their willful sin, death entered into the world, both spiritually and physically.

Even though Adam and Eve lived physically for many years, from the moment they sinned, their spirits died. Simply stated, spiritual death is being separated from God.

All mankind comes initially from Adam and Eve, and thus the sin nature resulting from their sin is passed through the ages to every single one of us. This sin nature must be taken care of, or the result will be spiritual death, condemnation, and hell.

JESUS CHRIST, OUR SAVIOUR

The good news is that God made provision for the sin nature and for all sin to be dealt with. He sent His only Son, Jesus Christ, to die on the cross for you and me, carrying the sin of Adam and all of our sins as well.

John 3:16, “For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life.”

When Jesus bore man's sins on the cross, He conquered sin entirely, making it possible to once again be with Him, and fellowship with Him as He had intended from the beginning. This saved us from death and destruction. Because of this, we need not be sentenced to hell and can live eternally with Him in heaven. We need to be assured that sin is taken away and that we will live with Him forever in heaven. Romans 10:9-10 tells us how: *"9because, if you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. 10For with the heart one believes and is justified, and with the mouth one confesses and is saved."*

Salvation or wholeness comes when you believe with your heart that Jesus Christ came and died on the cross for you and that He rose from the dead. It comes when you receive Jesus Christ into your heart willingly as your Lord and Saviour and make this confession with your mouth.

THE NEW BIRTH

When you believe with your heart, you open yourself up to receive the Word of Christ. God's Word comes inside of your heart and it changes your nature. You no longer have a nature of sin following in the course of this world, nor are you a child of disobedience being led by the spirit of disobedience. But now Christ Himself comes to live inside of you and changes your nature from a child of disobedience to a child of God, from a child of wrath to a child of the King.

You will be born again, not of a natural birth as when you were born from your mother. But you will be born again of a spiritual birth, born a second time of your spirit, thus sin being removed. Being born again is our only solution to the state of being separated from God.

The term "born again" comes from a conversation between Jesus and a Jewish teacher by the name of Nicodemus. Nicodemus was asking Jesus questions about the kingdom of God. Jesus

answered by saying, *“Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born again he cannot see the kingdom of God.”* (John 3:3) This statement was puzzling to Nicodemus. How could a person be born a second time? Jesus responded to Nicodemus’ questions by talking about the Holy Spirit. Jesus told him that to be born again means to be born of the Spirit. This new birth is how we are totally changed. Before our conversion none of us has the capacity to change our lives. We recognize the problems and the inconsistencies in our lives but we are powerless to change. Sin has our wills twisted and controlled by the lust for satisfaction in this world.

My personal bondage was alcohol and drugs. I knew what I was doing but I enjoyed my vices and was unwilling and unable to change.

All of this changed the night I accepted Christ. When those teenagers shared with me about the love of God for me, Jesus suddenly became real to me. I opened my heart to Him and His love became more real and more precious than anything I have ever tasted.

That night my life was changed. How was it changed? My desires were changed. The things I loved were changed. I lost my taste for worldly pleasures, they were replaced in my life. Now, I actually wanted to read the Bible. I wanted to go wherever Christians were gathered. My taste for music changed. I fell in love with worship music. Jesus became the love of my life. This is what it means to be born again. It is impossible for you to change yourself. All of us have tried and failed. Only when you accept Christ in your heart are your desires changed. When your desires change your lifestyle will change and you will be on your way in this awesome Christian life. The next day, I sought fellowship with other Christians and shared with them what had happened. I told them I had knelt down and asked Jesus into my life and they said, “You’ve been born again!” I began telling others how my life had been changed. I said, “Jesus is my Lord. I’m a new person and things have changed in me.” The confession I was making with my mouth had happened in my heart, and it began to change my experience to where I experienced God.

A NEW CREATION

Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come. (2 Corinthians 5:17)

When you believe with your heart and confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and that He rose from the dead, the old things pass away and you become a new creation. The old things are areas of your life controlled by the desires of the flesh and mind. When you become born again, that old nature of unbelief, selfishness, hatred, and hopelessness sheds from you in the same way a snake sheds its skin. The old nature was crucified with Christ. Paul said in Galatians 2:20, *“I have been crucified with Christ. It is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me. And the life I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me.”*

The moment you accept Christ as your Saviour, all of God’s faith, hope, and love are planted inside of you in that *new* nature you receive.

When Christ comes into your life, you receive first, eternal life in heaven with Him. But in the meantime there is a vital change taking place on the inside of you.

RIGHTEOUS BEFORE GOD

Second Corinthians 5:21 tells more about this change and what Jesus accomplished in redemption. *“For our sake he made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.”*

In other words, God the Father made Jesus the Son to become sin so that we could become righteous. Righteousness is the ability to stand before God without inferiority, guilt or shame. God declared us righteous by faith when His Son offered His blood before His Father’s throne and sat down at the right hand of God.

When you become a new creature, by faith you become righteous in the eyes of God. Thanks to Jesus wearing our sins on

the cross, we wear His righteousness and have free access to the Throne Room of God, uninhibited and set free. He opened the veil for us to come into His Presence. As a result, we can confidently pray, *“Father, I thank You my sins are forgiven. I thank you Lord, your blood is upon me and I can come freely and boldly before Your Throne of Grace without having to shrink back. Thank You, Lord, I have fellowship with You.”*

Isaiah 54:14 says, *“In righteousness you shall be established...”* That means settled, planted and grounded. We are established in God and His righteousness and we are not going to be shaken or sidetracked! When you are born again, you are established in Him.

There was a purpose in God’s plan of redemption. He was trying to bring man back to a place where he could be declared righteous again and have fellowship with a righteous, holy God.

RECONCILED TO GOD - FORGIVEN

Second Corinthians 5:18-19, “All this is from God, who through Christ reconciled us to himself and gave us the ministry of reconciliation; that is, in Christ God was reconciling the world to himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and entrusting to us the message of reconciliation.”

By Jesus wearing man’s sins on the cross, God was reestablishing man to Himself. Through Christ, when you are born again, you are dead in your sins and made alive in Christ, reconciled to God.

When I came to Christ, I realized the things I had done in my past before I was saved were now on Christ. I know I have been forgiven.

Jesus did that for me and He did that for you. He died and our sins were taken by Him on the cross and He’s not holding them against us. Hebrews 9:26 says, *“for then he would have had to suffer repeatedly since the foundation of the world. But as it is, he has appeared once for all at the end of the ages to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself.”* Jesus says in Luke 24:47, *“...and that*

repentance and forgiveness of sins should be proclaimed in his name to all nations, beginning from Jerusalem.”

We have been given what is called the Ministry of Reconciliation¹ God (in you) is reconciling or reestablishing your relationship to Him. I firmly believe God has people reading this book who have been away from the Lord. You must realize He is not mad at you. He’s calling you. He says, “Be reconciled to Me. Walk in My love and let Me fellowship with you.”

I’m certain there are some of you who have never made decision to reconcile with God. Jesus is drawing you unto Himself. He wants to become real in your life. John 5:24 says, *“Truly, truly, I say to you, whoever hears my word and believes him who sent me has eternal life. He does not come into judgment, but has passed from death to life.”*

The moment we accept Christ as our Saviour and make Him Lord of our lives, we pass out of death into life.

Have you accepted Christ? If you were to die, or if Jesus were to return today, are you ready? Are you certain you’ve been born again and will spend eternity in heaven with Jesus? You can be. It is the most important decision of your life.

The Bible says in John 1:12, *“But to all who did receive him, who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God...”*

In the next moment I want you to pray a simple prayer. When you pray, God Himself will come and live inside of you and begin a change, something brand new in your life. What He requires of you is to believe that His Son, Jesus Christ, died for you. He took the punishment for the things you’ve done in your past that were wrong, so you don’t have to. You can have His love in your life. Pray loud enough for yourself to hear. You are going to ask Christ to come into your life and begin that work, that change, inside of you.

“Heavenly Father, I thank You for loving me and that You loved me so much You sent Your Son, Jesus Christ, to die for me on the cross. Lord Jesus, I thank You for taking my sins and punishment so I could be forgiven.

¹Please see Romans 5:11 for additional scripture reference.

Lord, I turn away from sin. And now Lord Jesus, I ask You to wash away my sins and come into my life. Live in me and be my Lord. From this day on I will follow You. I thank You that my old life has passed away, and Your life has begun in me. In Jesus' name, Amen."

When you received Jesus Christ into your life right now a new life for you began! You have become a spiritual child. From this point on you will make important steps of growth.

Spend time in God's Word. Pray, and start growing in Him. One of the most important steps in your growth is your involvement in a good church and fellowship with other believers. Seek out a church where the Word of God is preached in an uncompromised manner, in all its fullness, and look for fellowship with other believers.

Well, praise God! You've made the first step on your way to the greatest journey ever!

2

THE BAPTISM WITH THE HOLY SPIRIT

Several years ago I read a book about the winds of revival or the Baptism with the Holy Spirit. Since that time God has been dealing with me about certain things He wants to see happen before Jesus returns. Our generation has only seen glimpses of what God can and wants to do before Jesus returns. We haven't seen the kind of movements which took place in the Book of Acts or the power of God that was released in the early 1900's in this country. In both instances, the Holy Spirit was poured out mightily and forever changed mankind.

It is the Baptism with the Holy Spirit that releases the power to change our world. God is the same yesterday, today and forever and He is going to move again mightily through the power of His Spirit. He wants a people who have the inside desire that says, "Lord, I want to see Your Spirit move in our city and in our world!"

WHAT IS THE BAPTISM WITH THE HOLY SPIRIT?

The word *baptizo* in the Greek means to be saturated or immersed. The Baptism with the Holy Spirit is a saturation or immersion in the Holy Spirit. It is a distinct experience, separate from the new birth. When you accept Jesus Christ as Lord, the Holy Spirit comes to dwell inside you. He dwells within you.² When you are Baptized with the Holy Spirit, you are filled to overflowing with the power of God. This is often times known as the infilling of the Holy Spirit or

²John 4:13-14

the Holy Spirit coming “upon” you.³

The Baptism with the Holy Spirit is the empowering of the Holy Spirit as He comes and equips us to live the kind of life that Jesus lived. We receive power, *dunamis*, to fulfill the Great Commission. Acts 1:8, “*But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth.*” John the Baptist and Jesus spoke of this Baptism in the Gospels as well as in Acts 1:5,8.

The difference between initially receiving the Holy Spirit is seen in the following Scriptures. John 20:19-22 refers to the day Jesus rose from the dead, Easter Sunday. This event takes place in the Upper Room, the same place where the disciples were on the day of Pentecost.

“On the evening of that day, the first day of the week, the doors being locked where the disciples were for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood among them and said to them, “Peace be with you.” 20When he had said this, he showed them his hands and his side. Then the disciples were glad when they saw the Lord. 21Jesus said to them again, “Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, even so I am sending you.” 22And when he had said this, he breathed on them and said to them, “Receive the Holy Spirit.”

He breathed on the disciples and said, “Receive the Holy Spirit.” They received the Spirit of God into their lives, becoming born again of the Spirit, or the dwelling place of God Most High. Some forty days after this, Jesus told them to wait in Jerusalem to receive the Baptism with the Holy Spirit.

Acts 1:4-5, “And while staying with them he ordered them not to depart from Jerusalem, but to wait for the promise of the Father, which, he said, “you heard from me; 5for John baptized with water, but you will be baptized with the

³John 7:37-39

Holy Spirit not many days from now.”

Luke 3:16, “John answered them all, saying, “I baptize you with water, but he who is mightier than I is coming, the strap of whose sandals I am not worthy to untie. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and with fire.”

That Sunday evening, although the eleven disciples had received the Spirit of God into their lives, they were told by Jesus, “There’s something else you need, POWER to preach the Gospel and touch the world in which you live. Don’t leave Jerusalem until the power of the Holy Spirit comes upon you.”⁴

The disciples did just that. They returned to Jerusalem from the mount called Olivet and entered the Upper Room where they were staying (Acts 1:12-13). Acts 2:1-4 describes what took place next, on the day of Pentecost, when the disciples were Baptized with the Holy Spirit and fire with the evidence of speaking in other tongues.

Acts 2:1-4, “When the day of Pentecost arrived, they were all together in one place. 2And suddenly there came from heaven a sound like a mighty rushing wind, and it filled the entire house where they were sitting. 3And divided tongues as of fire appeared to them and rested on each one of them. 4And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues as the Spirit gave them utterance.

So we see in the second chapter of Acts the disciples receiving the Baptism with the Holy Spirit as evidenced by speaking in other tongues. In the tenth chapter of Acts the Gentiles also received the Baptism with the Holy Spirit as evidenced by speaking in other tongues.

Acts 10:44-47, “While Peter was still saying these things, the Holy Spirit fell on all who heard the word. 45And the believers from among the circumcised who had come with Peter were amazed, because the gift of the Holy Spirit was

⁴Please see John 4:13-14 and John 7:37-39 for additional scripture reference.

*poured out even on the Gentiles. 46*For they were hearing them speaking in tongues and extolling God. Then Peter declared, *47* “Can anyone withhold water for baptizing these people, who have received the Holy Spirit just as we have?”⁵

After we receive the Baptism with the Holy Spirit, a new avenue for God to operate in our lives is opened.

A prayer language is given to us when we “speak” in other tongues” as a means to pray under the guidance of God.

It must be stressed that while the Baptism with the Holy Spirit is evidenced by speaking in other tongues, tongues is only a part of it.

An incredible power source is made available through the Baptism with the Holy Spirit. This power source is *crucial* for us as believers in order to change this generation for God. God wants us to tap into this source as the church, and as the people of God.

HOW IMPORTANT IS THE BAPTISM WITH THE HOLY SPIRIT?

Matthew 3:13-17, “Then Jesus came from Galilee to the Jordan to John, to be baptized by him. 14 John would have prevented him, saying, “I need to be baptized by you, and do you come to me?” *15*But Jesus answered him, “Let it be so now, for thus it is fitting for us to fulfill all righteousness.” Then he consented. *16*And when Jesus was baptized, immediately he went up from the water, and behold, the heavens were opened to him, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and coming to rest on him; *17*and behold, a voice from heaven said, “This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased.”

If you study the ministry and life of Jesus, you will see that the power did not begin until His experience of being Baptized with the Holy Spirit. He didn’t do miracles as a little boy because He didn’t have

⁵Please see Acts 8:1-17 for additional scripture reference.

the anointing of the Holy Spirit yet. He was the last Adam, a man born without sin and born of a virgin. God was indeed His Father and He was the Son of God, but until He received the Baptism, He was just like you and me, only without sin.

However, it was when He received something supernatural in Matthew 3:16 that He was clothed with “power from on high” and His miracle ministry was birthed. This power or anointing is what equipped Jesus to minister the last three years before to be with the Father. Signs and wonders, healings and miracles took place.

If Jesus needed the power of the Holy Spirit upon Him to minister to the sick, how much more do you and I need it? How much more does the church need it? We need to be endued with God’s power flowing out of us to effectively minister to this world.

WHO CAN RECEIVE THE BAPTISM WITH THE HOLY SPIRIT?

Acts 1:12-14, “Then they returned to Jerusalem from the mount called Olivet, which is near Jerusalem, a Sabbath day’s journey away. 13And when they had entered, they went up to the upper room, where they were staying, Peter and John and James and Andrew, Philip and Thomas, Bartholomew and Matthew, James the son of Alphaeus and Simon the Zealot and Judas the son of James. 14All these with one accord were devoting themselves to prayer, together with the women and Mary the mother of Jesus, and his brothers.”

Acts 1:12-13 is referring to the apostles after Jesus told them to go and wait in Jerusalem for the promise of the Father and not to leave Jerusalem until they received this.

Acts 1:4-5, “And while staying with them he ordered them not to depart from Jerusalem, but to wait for the promise of the Father, which, he said, “you heard from me; 5for John baptized with water, but you will be baptized with the

Holy Spirit not many days from now.”

As we saw in Acts 2:1-4 all who were waiting in the Upper Room received the promise from the Father; the Baptism with the Holy Spirit.

Just who were some of these who were in this Upper Room when the miracle happened?

Simon Peter was up there. I want you to imagine this. You are a bystander in Jerusalem and you came for the day of Pentecost. You had heard that Simon Peter had been with Jesus. The whole town is in a stir. Jesus had been crucified. There were rumors He had risen from the dead, and Peter supposedly has seen Him.

You see Simon Peter coming down the street and going into the Upper Room. You stop him and ask “Peter, why are you going to the Upper Room? Why don’t you tell me what Jesus has done?” He answers, “I can’t right now. I’ve got to go up into this place, this Upper Room, and receive what the Father has promised. I need to receive what John talked about, this mighty Baptism with the Holy Spirit.”

There are two ways you can look at Peter. You can look at him as a mighty man of God because, prior to this time, he had miracles that happened when he was with Jesus. He had walked on water as well as other amazing things.

You can also look at him another way, however. He had also done some terrible things. Fifty days prior to this time, the night before Jesus was crucified, he denied the Lord. But now here was Simon Peter going up to that room.

Imagine what the slave girl, who had been there when Peter denied the Lord, would say if she had watched Peter entering the Upper Room. “Who do you think you are, Peter?” Do you think you qualify to receive this mighty power of God? Do you think you qualify to receive the anointing that was on Jesus, the Holy Lamb of God?” Do you know what Peter could have replied? “I am a new creation in Christ Jesus. All my sins have passed away. I’m going up there to be clothed with power from on high, so I can go into all the world and preach the Gospel!”

Thomas was going up there, too. What do you think about him? To this day he has a handle on him – “doubting Thomas.” How would you like for people to call you that? Well, “doubting Thomas” was there, and he wasn’t doubting anymore. He had met Jesus. He had seen the One risen from the dead Whose hands and side were pierced. Thomas had fallen to his knees and declared, “My Lord and my God!” He was now going upstairs saying he needed the power of the Baptism with the Holy Spirit for God to move in his life to fulfill His promise.

Others included Mary Magdalene, whom Jesus cast out seven demons. “Who do you think you are?” (can you imagine the Pharisees), a “woman like you expecting to get anointed like the Rabbi Jesus was? You are a woman of ill repute.”

Her response could have been much like Simon Peter’s. “I’m a new creation in Christ Jesus. All my sins have been washed away and I’ve been born again. I’ve met the Saviour, and now I’m going to be clothed with power from on high so I can go and declare the resurrected Christ with power, signs and wonders following!”

Also present were James and John. You don’t see any major problems in their lives. Yes, they wanted to sit at the left and the right hand of Jesus, but these were men of God who needed to be Baptized with the Holy Spirit.

There was someone else in that room—Mary, the mother of Jesus. She was a woman of God and a woman of faith. She faced ridicule, condemnation and mockery because she was carrying a child in her womb out of wedlock. That was sin guilty of death in the Jewish culture. The people could have stoned her to death for the accusations they brought against her. But what Mary was declaring by her very presence in that room, was, “I need to know Jesus not only as my Saviour, but also as a Baptizer with the Holy Spirit.”

Mary, the mother of Jesus, came out of that room filled with the Holy Spirit, speaking in other tongues. She was declaring, “I may be the mother of Jesus and I may be a woman of faith, but I need my Saviour and I need my Lord. I need His power. I need the Holy Spirit in my life.”

The people going into that room were normal people. But they

came out of that room a different people! They weren't denying the Lord anymore or ashamed of the Gospel. They were Baptized with the Holy Spirit and with a fire burning on the inside that permeated their hearts, catapulting them to go out and proclaim the good news!

There were at least five hundred people Jesus told to go to that room, but only one hundred and twenty showed. The other three hundred and eighty thought they had a better way. But these one hundred and twenty who found their way to that room, prayed and got the power operating in their lives.

The day of Pentecost wasn't the only day the power of the Holy Spirit operated in their lives. That was just the beginning. If you go through the Book of Acts, you'll find many times where they gathered together and prayed and the Bible says, "they were filled with the Holy Ghost." What resulted was a people who trembled under the power of God, who went out and spoke the Word of God with boldness.⁶

You and I qualify to sit in that room. The Holy Spirit is a free gift to you and me. As long as you have repented of your sins and received Jesus Christ as your Saviour and Lord of your life, you can receive the Baptism with the Holy Spirit. He is there for the asking. Just receive Him.

CAN ANYTHING HINDER YOU FROM RECEIVING THE BAPTISM WITH THE HOLY SPIRIT?

Once again, looking in the Book of Acts 1:14, we read, "*All these with one accord were devoting themselves to prayer, together with the women and Mary the mother of Jesus, and his brothers.*"

I like the first part of that verse where it says, "with one accord were devoting themselves to prayer."

In other words, there was no finger-pointing. John and James weren't saying to Peter, "You blew it, Peter. You denied the Lord." No one was pointing a finger at Mary Magdalene saying, "You blew it, Mary. You were outside weeping thinking Jesus hadn't really risen from the dead." No one criticized Thomas when he didn't believe. And Matthew wasn't being reminded by others of all the

⁶Please see Acts 2:38-39 for additional scripture reference.

people from which he had stolen money. You also don't see anyone pointing fingers at Jesus' brothers who didn't believe in Him until the resurrection. Instead, they were all there, saying and believing the same thing with one accord. There was no complaining or criticizing. Rather, they were praying and seeking God.

What will keep the power from operating, and is hindering it right now in the body of Christ, is division, discord, unforgiveness and bitterness. What will keep you from receiving the Baptism with the Holy Spirit is unforgiveness in your heart toward someone who has hurt you.

When you forgive those who have hurt you, you will flow in unity with the other brethren, whether you agree with them 100% or not.

There are many differences of beliefs within the body of Christ. Many of these beliefs are not as significant as we make them out to be. We must be bigger than our differences and concentrate on flowing with God. Unity is the key to the power of the Holy Spirit.

God wants to birth His power in us and we've been stopping it. The time for "churchianity" is over. It's to move into Christianity and into God's power. God is waiting on us.

HOW TO RECEIVE THE HOLY SPIRIT

We see in Acts 2:37-38 Peter addressing the men of Israel regarding the message of Jesus' death and resurrection.

"Now when they heard this they were cut to the heart, and said to Peter and the rest of the apostles, 'Brothers, what shall we do?' And Peter said to them, 'Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins, and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.'"

The first qualification to receive the Baptism with the Holy Spirit is repentance. Every one of us needs to turn away from our own self-centered ideas, lusts and distractions in the world. You

may need to repent of something that isn't necessarily sin, but nonetheless, is a distraction hindering you. Lack of repentance will keep God from pouring out His Spirit in your life.

In Acts 2:33, we read the second qualification to receive the Baptism with the Holy Spirit.

“Being therefore exalted at the right hand of God, and having received from the Father the promise of the Holy Spirit, he has poured out this that you yourselves are seeing and hearing.”

In this passage of Scripture, Peter is talking about the Baptism with the Holy Spirit. Jesus received the promise of the Holy Spirit from God the Father. He then poured out His Spirit on those in the Upper Room.

Peter says, “What you have heard and seen are the results of the Baptism.” There were Jews who were living in Jerusalem at the time from every nation in the world. They were amazed because they were hearing their native languages being spoken by those in the Upper Room, a room filled with people from Galilee.

The people in the Upper Room were speaking with other tongues as the Spirit of God was poured out upon them. They were speaking in other tongues because Jesus had been seated at the right hand of God the Father and had been glorified. The people in the Upper Room were glorifying Him.

When you repent and turn your back on sin, the only other thing you need to do to receive the Baptism with the Holy Spirit is to glorify Jesus Christ. Recognize He has been glorified. He is seated at the right hand of God.

Simply lift your hands and begin to adore Him and worship Him.⁷ Worship and praise will bring you directly into the Presence of God. Praise God, and lift up your voice.

Why don't you do that right now if you have never been Baptized with the Holy Spirit?

First, make sure you have accepted Jesus Christ as your Saviour. Now pray and ask the Lord to fill you with His Holy Spirit. Lift your

⁷Psalms 134:1

hands and begin to worship God out loud. Say whatever comes to your mind. It could be something like, “Lord, I love and praise You. I glorify and honor You. I worship You, Jesus.”

Luke 11:13 tells us it is God’s desire to give you the Holy Spirit. *“If you then, who are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will the heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask him!”*

Once again we look at Acts 2:14-19, But Peter, standing with the eleven, lifted up his voice and addressed them:

“Men of Judea and all who dwell in Jerusalem, let this be known to you, and give ear to my words. 15 For these people are not drunk, as you suppose, since it is only the third hour of the day. 16 But this is what was uttered through the prophet Joel:

17”’And in the last days it shall be, God declares, that I will pour out my Spirit on all flesh, and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams;

18 even on my male servants and female servants in those days I will pour out my Spirit, and they shall prophesy.

19 And I will show wonders in the heavens above and signs on the earth below, blood, and fire, and vapor of smoke;”

It hasn’t happened in our generation like that yet, but it can and will happen again. The church must rise up and cry out, “God, we want it to happen now! We’ve had enough of building our stained glass buildings and criticizing other ministers and ministries. We want to forgive and love one another. We want to pray and call on You, Lord, and see a mighty move of the Holy Spirit in our generation!”

That is the only thing that must happen before Jesus returns. He is coming back soon, but He is waiting for a great surging move of the Holy Spirit that will shake cities right down to their foundations!

3

WATER BAPTISM

The word baptism comes from the Greek word *baptizo* which means to immerse, submerge; to make overwhelmed. Just as the vessels of the temple in the Old Testament were cleansed for God's use, so we are cleansed and made ready for God's use in baptism.

In the Bible there is a distinction between water baptism and the Baptism with the Holy Spirit.

Mark 1:8, "I have baptized you with water, but he will baptize you with the Holy Spirit."

Acts 11:15-16, "As I began to speak, the Holy Spirit fell on them just as on us at the beginning. And I remembered the word of the Lord, how he said, 'John baptized with water, but you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit.'" [[GET TLB for this]]]

Even further, we see a difference between John's baptism of repentance and being baptized in Christ.

Acts 19:3-5, "And he said, "Into what then were you baptized?" They said, "Into John's baptism." 4 And Paul said, "John baptized with the baptism of repentance, telling the people to believe in the one who was to come

after him, that is, Jesus.” 5 On hearing this, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus.” [[GET NKJV for this]]

The baptism in Christ is a death to your own will, a burial of the past sinful life and a resurrection of life in Christ. When we are baptized, we identify with His death, His burial and His resurrection, which also points to our salvation. We are not saved by our own works, but by the work He did on Calvary.

Romans 6:3, “*Do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death?*” By dying with him we surrender our will to the Father, just as Jesus did. In baptism we are publicly declaring our surrender and starting our faith in Christ.

In the New Testament, anyone who came to Christ was baptized. This was done openly in public so that everyone in town knew that this person was a disciple of Christ. Often this meant disinheritance by their family. They would sometimes go as far as declaring the new convert dead because it was seen as a betrayal of Jewish faith and tradition. So in water baptism we are publicly dying to all that was important in our life before we knew Jesus.

Romans 6:4 says, “*We were buried therefore with him by baptism into death, in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we too might walk in newness of life.*” By being buried with Him in baptism, we are burying our past. Jesus took our sins to the grave with Him. The Bible says God has cast our sins “as far as the east is from the west.” We are no longer accountable for our past because it is now under the blood of Jesus.

In Colossians 2:12 we see that we are “*...having been buried with him in baptism, in which you were also raised with him through faith in the powerful working of God, who raised him from the dead.*” When we rise out of the water we are resurrected with Him. We “put on Christ” so that when the Father now sees us, He sees Jesus. Just as He said to His Son after His baptism in the Jordan River, He now says to you, “This is my beloved son in whom I am well pleased.”

So we have died with Him, been buried with Him and risen

with Him – all through baptism. This is the baptism into Jesus that we saw earlier in Acts 19:5, *“On hearing this, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus.”*

Jesus Himself illustrated this identification with His death, burial and resurrection when He said to His disciples in Mark 10:38-39, *“Jesus said to them, “You do not know what you are asking. Are you able to drink the cup that I drink, or to be baptized with the baptism with which I am baptized?” And they said to him, “We are able.” And Jesus said to them, “The cup that I drink you will drink, and with the baptism with which I am baptized, you will be baptized...”*

So, water baptism is much more than a baptism of repentance, but a burial of your old life, identifying with Jesus and receiving His resurrection life.