

The Three Baptisms

Foundational Truth Volume 2

By Johann Melchizedek Peter

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PREFACE

The foundational truths of what it means to be born again, water baptism and the baptism in the Holy Spirit are a must to all Christians. These are the basic tenets of the Christian faith. To fail to understand them is to be like the man who built his house on the sand.

Many Christians believe in these basic tenets but they cannot verify from the Bible an apologetics for their faith. It is a common experience to meet a Christian who speaks in tongues but who cannot show from the Bible why tongues is essential. This book seeks to meet that need of teaching and grounding in these areas.

They are the 'bare essentials' for the Christian life. There is a great need for Christians to be taught the whole counsel of God (Acts 20:27).

Johann Melchizedek Peter

CHAPTER 1

THE SEVEN BAPTISMS IN THE BIBLE

There are seven baptisms in the Bible of which only four apply to the believers in the New Testament. Out of the four, three apply generally to all believers and one specifically to those called to the ministry.

The seven baptisms as recorded in the Bible are as follows:

1. John's baptism in water in the Name of God (Matthew 3; Luke 3; Acts 1:5; John 1:31, 34).
2. Baptism in water by Christ's disciples in the Name of the Father (John 3:22, 23; 4:1-2; 5:43; 10:25).
3. Moses' baptism in the cloud and in the sea (1Corinthians 10:2).
4. The baptism of suffering (Luke 12:50; Matthew 20:22, 23).
5. Baptism into Christ and into His body, the church (Romans 6:4; 12:4, 5; 1 Corinthians 10:17; 12:13; Gal. 3:27; Ephesians 4:5; Col. 2:12).
6. Christian water baptism (Matthew 28:19; Acts 2:38).
7. The baptism in the Holy Spirit (Acts 1:5, 8; 2:4).

The Baptism of Suffering

Jesus, in speaking to the disciples James and John, asked them whether they could be baptized with the same baptism He was baptized with and to drink the same cup from which He drank? (Matthew 20:22, 23). Jesus was definitely referring here to the baptism of suffering. To the answer that they were able, Jesus even agreed with them that they shall indeed be baptized with the baptism of suffering.

The call to the Christian ministry is also a call to suffer for Him. Of course, some people suffer for their own sins and mistakes and call it persecution but true bona fide Christian suffering is suffering for being like Christ. Peter speaks of Christian suffering as being persecuted for righteousness and not for unrighteousness (1 Peter 4:15, 16).

The apostle Paul made an astounding statement when he said, in reference to his ministry, that his sufferings in the ministry were to fill up what is lacking in the afflictions of Christ, for the sake of the body, which is His church (Col. 1:23-25). How could anything be lacking of the sufferings of Christ? Surely, Christ's suffering is complete and no one can claim that it was incomplete.

What Paul is referring to is not in regard to the atonement work of Christ which is complete and totally finished by His one act at Calvary. But rather, Paul is referring to the sacrifices and sufferings in seeking to be a perfect servant and representation of Christ to the church and to the world.

Jesus Christ lived and died in the flesh about two thousand years ago in the nation of Israel. He was the manifestation of the love of God to the people he met and ministered to. Today Christ is raised and seated at the right hand of God. Jesus needs human vessels today to be channels and manifestations of the love of God to the present people of the world who cannot see Him. When He calls and chooses a person for His ministry, He expects the vessel to be an instrument and visible manifestation of Him to the world.

In doing so, the chosen vessel will have to be prepared to go through the same hardship and rejection that He went through. The vessel would have to be baptized with the same baptism He was baptized with and drink the same cup of suffering which He drank. John and James were later persecuted and suffered for their ministry in Christ.

It would be wonderful if people responded to the love of Jesus and to demonstrations of spirituality positively. But Jesus has proven the fact that the people in the world many times walk in darkness and cannot tolerate the light. As such they would sometimes prefer to mock, ridicule and kill those who identify with Christ.

The Persecutions of Paul

Paul, who wrote the major part of the New Testament, had many glorious and wonderful results in the ministry - signs, wonders and miracles. Many souls were won to Christ through his ministry and many churches were founded. However, the sufferings and persecutions he received were also directly proportional to the massiveness of his results.

He tells us that he was in labours more abundant; in stripes above measure, in prisons more frequently, and in deaths often. Five times he received forty stripes minus one. Three times he was beaten with rods. Once he was stoned and three times shipwrecked. A night and a day he has been in the deep. He has been in perils from all kinds of people and in all types of situations. In weariness, in toil, in sleeplessness, in hunger and thirst, in fasting, in cold and in nakedness, he has remained faithful to the call of God on his life (2 Corinthians 11:23-28).

Why did Paul go through all that? What did he gain from it all? He could have had a comfortable life, being highly educated and skilful in making tents. The only reason we can find is the call of God in his life and his understanding that the ministry was a call to suffer for Jesus that others may reap the results of his sacrifice. Yet Paul continues to say that in all these things he would gladly spend and be spent for souls, for he loves abundantly (2 Corinthians 12:15).

Paul understood that in the ministry, you don't get something for nothing. Somebody has to suffer the difficulty and pay the price that others may receive it easier. In the ministry, it is none other than the minister who should pay this price. Paul said that he was always carrying about in his own body the dying of the Lord Jesus (the baptism of suffering), that the life of Jesus also may be manifested in his own body (2 Corinthians 4:10). His analogy of the baptism of suffering is that death works in him that life may work in others (2 Corinthians 4:12).

The Call to Ministers

If only ministers today would understand that God did not call them to a life of ease, comfort and professionalism, there would be more done than what has been done thus far. Imagine if all ministers would live sacrificially as an example of Jesus and pay the price for the sheep they minister to, to be blessed, the world would be shaken by the impact of the church today. The sad story is that there are too many who want the results without paying the price for the results.

The baptism of suffering imparts the grace of God, the anointing of God and the ability of God to rejoice in the sufferings. The sacrifices and the burdens of the ministry become no longer a burden but a joy and a privilege. Being in the ministry is like living in a glass house - your life is watched constantly as an example. Living in this manner can be uncomfortable for those new in the ministry but a good dose of the baptism of suffering will impart the grace to live the exemplary life.

We need to be able to say like Paul, 'I rejoice in my sufferings for you.' Jesus, who for the joy that was set before Him, endured the suffering of the cross (Hebrews 12:2). Some ministers, while paying the price for the ministry, look like they have been baptized with vinegar when what they need is a baptism of suffering and of joy.

Ministers need to learn the art of dying that others may live (2 Corinthians 4:12). The call to the ministry is a call to sacrifice, to inconvenience ourselves, to immolate, to yield, to dedicate, to consecrate, to donate and to

give of ourselves to the body of Christ that others may receive the blessings of our sacrifice.

Our ministry is like that of John the Baptist; preparing the way, smoothing out the rough ways, levelling the hills and mountains that others may find it easier to come to Christ. We pour our blood, sweat and tears, picking up the stones and rocks along the way that others will not be blocked or hindered in any way from coming to Him.

The drinking of the cup of suffering would also be applicable to anyone who in some way, whether fulltime or not, be involved in Christian ministry. All of Christian ministry must be viewed as a choice to give of our best to the Master - our spirits, souls and bodies. The eternal rewards are immeasurable when we all reach the shores of eternity and receive from Him crowns for all our sacrifices and service to others.

CHAPTER 2

BAPTISM INTO THE BODY OF CHRIST

Baptism into the body of Christ is known as being ‘born again’. When we are born again, God places us into the body of Christ. We become a part of God’s family with God as our Eternal Father. This baptism takes place spiritually when we ask Jesus to come into our lives as our Lord and Saviour. Note the difference in the following three baptisms:

In body baptism, the Holy Spirit (the baptizer) takes us (the subjects) and places us into the body of Christ (the medium) (1 Corinthians 12:13).

In water baptism, the minister (the baptizer) takes us (the subject) and places us into water (the medium).

In the baptism in the Holy Spirit, Jesus (the baptizer) takes us (the subject) and places us into the Holy Spirit (the medium).

The term ‘body baptism’ is not too familiar with the average Christian because today the terms ‘born again’ and ‘converted’ are more commonly used. However, the terms ‘baptized into the body’ are common terms used by the people in the New Testament. The apostle Paul used this term very often in his writings in the epistles (Romans 6:3-6). In this study, please note that the terms ‘baptized in the body’ are synonymous with the terms ‘born again’ and ‘converted.’

The Experience of Being ‘Born Again’

The experience of being ‘born again’ is a spiritual experience and not a mental experience. For some people the emotional feelings that accompany the experience may not be visible. A spiritual experience may be tangible or intangible to the senses of the body depending on the side effects of the work of the Holy Spirit on different individuals. Some cry when they are born again. Others remain quiet in worship. Some bubble with hilarious joy. All these emotional experiences vary as much as our finger prints. However there are some common denominators in all experiences which all must have as evidence of the born again experience.

1. There is an experience of being loved by God. The gospel is the love of God extended to mankind through Jesus. To receive the gospel is to receive the love of God and experience His unconditional love (John 3:16). The love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Spirit (Romans 5:5).

2. There is an experience of being forgiven of all our sins (Ephesians 1:7). The conscience which has convicted us of sin in our lives is cleansed by the blood of Jesus Christ (Hebrews 9:14). A cleansed conscience experiences peace with God (Romans 5:1).
3. There is an experience of the assurance of eternal life (Romans 6:23). The fear of death and the next life is completely eradicated (Hebrews 2:14).
4. There is an impartation of a measure of the faith of God into our lives (Romans 12:3). This measure of faith needs to be nurtured and increased through meditation on the Word of God (Romans 10:17).
5. There is a new nature imparted. The seed (nature) of God has been implanted within us when Jesus came into our lives as Lord and Saviour (1 John 4:9). We are now a new creation (Greek - new species) (2 Corinthians 5:17).
6. There is the experience of a new purpose and meaning to life (Ephesians 1:9, 10; 2:10). Life does not consist in merely working, eating, sleeping and pleasure anymore (Romans 14:17). There is an eternal purpose to all of creation.
7. There is an experience of the anointing within (1 John 2:27). The Holy Spirit now lives within you (1 John 3:24). The Holy Spirit in you bears witness with your spirit that you are now a child of God (Romans 8:16).

Continuing the Spiritual Growth

After reading the above list, some Christians would probably wonder whether they have really been born again. Don't worry. You have, if you have made a decision to accept Christ as your Lord and Saviour. What you lack is teaching to help you understand what has happened in that 'born again' experience.

We need to continue in our spiritual growth after this experience. In order to grow spiritually, we need to understand the areas of ourselves that pertain to the spiritual world. Our physical bodies consist of our organs, tissues and cells which altogether help us experience the physical world around us through the five senses of smell, taste, touch, sight and hearing.

Our souls consist of our mind, emotions and will. All these three areas of the soul need to be subjugated to the spirit man. Our spirit consists of our conscience, intuition and communion. These are the three areas that need to

be highly developed in order to function in the spirit realm and in order to take control and train our souls in spiritual things.

Paul speaks of the importance of the conscience in his spiritual life and ministry. His conscience was highly trained to bear witness with the Holy Spirit (Romans 9:1). He served God with a pure conscience (2 Timothy 1:3). A good conscience prevents spiritual shipwreck (1 Timothy 1:19).

The intuition is the inner sense of knowing that is beyond and above the mind. As Christians, we can know some things without understanding them. We can 'sense' the rightness or wrongness of some things before our minds pick up the understanding of why it is wrong. Our spirit can 'perceive.' Paul could sense that the journey was in danger of being aborted but the centurion was not persuaded (Acts 27:10). The centurion and the helmsman went by the natural sense knowledge and to their minds it was the best time to travel (Acts 27:11, 12). The intuition can be trained (Hebrews 5:14).

Communion is the ability to be conscious of the presence of God and to worship Him. The consciousness of the presence of God needs to grow and develop in our lives through worship, prayer and meditation. Some Christians are so fearful and demon conscious that communion is not developed properly in their lives. Others are so involved in the affairs of this life that communion is weak in their lives. In the midst of the arguments and gnashing of the Pharisees, Stephen had developed such a strong communion that he was only conscious of God and of Jesus Christ (Acts 7:54, 55). Communion is developed through fellowship with the Holy Spirit (2 Corinthians 13:14).

The baptism into the body is only the beginning of a new walk and a new life (Romans 6:4). We should understand all that it involves and press on into deeper spiritual growth.

CHAPTER 3

BAPTISM IN WATER

Baptism in water is purely a symbol and it does not save us. However, as we will see, obedience in this ordinance brings many blessings. In the early days of Christianity, altar calls were not made by the raising of hands or the calling forward to the front. These are methods which have been adopted by the modern church to help a person act out his decision. They are good and should be encouraged.

In New Testament days, the indication that people had made a decision to follow Christ was through water baptism. It was the method by which people could act out their faith that they had accepted Jesus Christ as Lord and Saviour. Because of the adoption of methods today, like raising of hands and coming to the altar area, as an indication of accepting Christ, modern Christians tend to think that they have demonstrated their decision already and consequently, do not continue in water baptism thus missing the blessings involved.

Water Baptism as an Ordinance

Some misguided Christians think that water baptism is necessary for salvation. If that is so, the thief on the cross would not have entered paradise for he had no opportunity to be baptized in water (Luke 23:43). Nor would the Scriptures be consistent, for Cornelius and his household received the baptism in the Holy Spirit (a reception possible only after salvation) before they were baptized in water (Acts 10:44-47).

Such Christians quote Mark sixteen saying that Jesus said that only those who believed and were baptized shall be saved (Mark 16:16). They forget to quote the other half which says that those who do not believe shall be damned. Damnation or judgment to eternal death only takes place when we do not believe and not when we are not baptized. Jesus did not say that those who are not baptized shall be damned but He only said that those who do not believe shall be damned.

If a person is not born again and gets baptized in water, he will still be a sinner - a wet sinner. Peter writes in his epistle saying that water baptism does not remove the filth of the flesh but is the answer of a good conscience toward God (1 Peter 3:20, 21). We are not saved by outward ordinances but rather by our faith in the Lord Jesus Christ.

The Mode of Baptism

The word 'baptize' literally means 'immerse' in the Greek New Testament. There are four main reasons why the New Testament points to immersion as its mode of baptism. The first as we have seen is the meaning of the root word for 'baptize' - 'baptizo.' 'Baptizo' literally means to dip, to sink, plunge, immerse, submerge and cover wholly with the element used in baptism.

The second reason is that when water baptism was performed in the New Testament, there was always the necessity for much water. John the Baptist chose a place with much water for baptizing (John 3:23). If water baptism had been by any other mode but immersion there would not have been the necessity for much water.

Thirdly, the phraseology in describing water baptism points to immersion. Jesus after His water baptism came up out of the water (Mark 1:10). The Greek New Testament actually uses the two phrases 'up' and 'out of' together indicating that Jesus had been immersed. The Ethiopian eunuch had to go 'down into' the water and 'up out of' the water (Acts 8:38, 39).

Finally, water baptism is to show forth our death, burial and resurrection in Christ Jesus (Romans 6:4, 5). What better way is there than immersion to show forth all three aspects of the work of Christ in our lives? When a person dies, we don't just sprinkle them with sand. We bury them.

The Formula for Water Baptism

In the New Testament, we see that Jesus gave the command for water baptism as 'baptizing them in the Name of the Father, and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit' (Matthew 28:19). In the book of Acts, we see the disciples baptizing in the Name of the Lord Jesus Christ (Acts 2:38; 8:16; 10:48; 19:5). Some Christians insist that only baptism in the Name of the Lord Jesus is the correct formula claiming that the Name of Jesus Christ is the only Name for all the Trinity.

If you ever encounter this group, understand that the basis for their insistence is not just because of their desire to be biblical but rather this same group who teach thus do not believe in the Trinity at all. (We will teach on the Trinity under Volume 13 of this series).

Actually both formulas should be acceptable because both have its basis on the Scriptures. However to tie both portions of Scriptures together, I

personally baptize using the formula ‘in the Name of the Lord Jesus Christ into the Name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.’

The Importance of an Ordinance

The Lord’s Supper and baptism in water are known as Christian ordinances. Some Christians think that they are not important just because they are symbols. That would be falling on the other extreme. Apparently, keeping the Lord’s Supper unworthily can bring death (1 Corinthians 11:27-30).

In the Old Testament, God told the Israelites that if they obeyed His voice, His commandments and His statutes they would never be sick (Exodus 15:26). Obeying His voice means obeying the leadings of His Spirit. Obeying His commandments means keeping to all His moral and absolute commands in His Word. Obeying His statutes means obeying all the religious symbolism that God had ordained. For the Israelites keeping the symbol of the Passover was one of the statutes (Exodus 13:10). There is a blessing in keeping God’s statutes.

For New Testament saints, the statutes of God involve keeping the Lord’s Supper and water baptism. Water baptism does not determine salvation but it sure does determine the blessings. You may be a good Christian obeying His moral laws and doing your best to obey His Spirit. But if you have not been baptized in water, you are not obeying His statutes. Let us be complete in our obedience to the Lord Jesus Christ.

CHAPTER 4

THE BAPTISM IN THE HOLY SPIRIT

The doctrine of the baptism in the Holy Spirit has often been confused with the doctrine of the baptism into the body. As a result, some teach that when a person has received the born again experience, he has automatically received the baptism in the Holy Spirit. Contrary to what is taught, the Bible shows forth very clearly that the baptism in the Holy Spirit is not an automatic experience. Sometimes people received it at the same time as the born again experience but many times they do not because of a lack of teaching.

Five Incidents of Spirit Baptism

The disciples of Jesus Christ had received the born again experience and the indwelling of the Holy Spirit before the day of Pentecost. Jesus breathed into them and opened their understanding to the Word of God (John .20:22; Luke 24:49). It was only forty days later that they received the baptism in the Holy Spirit with the speaking of tongues (Acts 1:5-8; 2:4).

The Samaritans received Jesus Christ as Lord and Saviour and were even baptized in water by Philip (Acts 8:12). It was some time later that Peter and John came from Jerusalem and got them baptized in the Holy Spirit (Acts 8:17).

Paul was born again on the road to Damascus. He had to be born again because Jesus commissioned him to the ministry (Acts 26:16). Jesus will not commission someone who is not born again. Moreover, Paul in his encounter with Jesus called Him 'Lord.' (Acts 9:5). Paul in giving his personal testimony traces the beginning of his Christian life and ministry to the heavenly vision he received on the road to Damascus (Acts 26:19). Moreover, Ananias called him 'Brother Saul.' (Acts 9:17). It was only three days after his conversion that Paul received the baptism in the Holy Spirit (Acts 9:9).

Cornelius and his whole household received the baptism in the Holy Spirit and the born again experience at the same time (Acts 10:44-46). The Jews were convinced that the Gentiles had received because of the evidence of tongues (Acts 10:46). This was the only case of people receiving the conversion experience and the baptism in the Holy Spirit simultaneously. It was more an exception rather than the norm. The reason for this was the tremendous spiritual hunger demonstrated by Cornelius (Acts 10:1, 2).

The fifth and final incident of people receiving the baptism in the Holy Spirit was the Ephesians. Paul baptized them in water first (Acts 19:5). After that Paul laid hands on them to receive the baptism in the Holy Spirit (Acts 19:6). Whether Paul laid hands on them immediately after the water baptism or they came out and changed their clothes first, there was a time lapse of several minutes.

In the above study, we see that in four out of five incidents, people received the baptism in the Holy Spirit after the born again experience and it was definitely not taken to be one and the same experience. Nor was it an automatic occurrence. Even in the case of Cornelius, the time he had spent in spiritual hunger, prayer and fasting had brought the special move of the Holy Spirit among his household.

We have seen people baptized in the Holy Spirit simultaneously in our meetings but this has been more the exception than the norm. To those critics who claim that they had the Cornelius experience, my question is why didn't they speak in tongues like Cornelius?

The Evidence of the Spirit Baptism

In Jerusalem, one hundred and twenty disciples all spoke in tongues when they were baptized in the Holy Spirit (Acts 2:4). Cornelius and his whole household spoke in tongues (Acts 10:46). The Ephesians spoke in tongues (Acts 19:6). Paul was a tongue-talker (1 Corinthians 14:18). Even though there was no record of tongues in the case of the Samaritans, there was evidence that could be seen and heard (Acts 8:17, 18). To be consistent with the Bible the evidence that could be seen and heard points back to the same evidence on the day of Pentecost which Peter says could be seen and heard (Acts 2:33). The baptism in the Holy Spirit does result in the speaking of tongues.

Some people say that the fruit of the Holy Spirit is the evidence of the Holy Spirit. We have nothing against the fruit of the Holy Spirit (In fact it will be covered in Volume 11 of this series) but we must be Scriptural in regard to the doctrines we hold. It was certainly not the fruit of the Holy Spirit that the people in Jerusalem saw in the one hundred and twenty disciples, it was tongues! (Acts 2:7, 11). Neither was Simon the magician watching the fruit of the Holy Spirit in the lives of the Samaritans, it was a visible evidence that was demonstrated and immediately tangible! (Acts 8:18).

It takes time to see the fruit of a life. Sometimes we even have to live with a person and watch them react to the circumstances of life, to conclude that

the fruit of the Holy Spirit is present in their lives. The fruit in our lives is the result of our close walk with the Lord Jesus and a demonstration of the transformation and maturity in our Christian lives. The baptism in the Holy Spirit can and should lead us to a closer walk with the Lord. But if we judge the evidence of the baptism by fruit, then we can only conclude that the Corinthian church were not baptized in the Spirit because of the lack of fruit in their lives, which would not be true (1 Corinthians 1:11).

Concerning the household of Cornelius, it was definitely not the fruit in their lives that convinced the Jews that the Gentiles had received the baptism in the Holy Spirit. Anyway, there was not enough time to observe for fruit for they hardly knew them then. However Peter concluded that they had definitely received the baptism in the Holy Spirit in the same manner as at Pentecost (Acts 11:15-17). It was the tongues that convinced them (Acts 10:46).

Yet some others say that power is the evidence of the baptism in the Holy Spirit. Again we point out to these people that in the case of the one hundred and twenty disciples, there was no evidence of a single miracle being performed and yet they were definitely baptized in the Holy Spirit (Acts 2:33). The Samaritans did not demonstrate any miracle and yet Simon the magician saw that they received the baptism in the Holy Spirit (Acts 8:18). Neither did Cornelius demonstrate any miracle in his life and yet the Jews acknowledged that they had been baptized in the Holy Spirit (Acts 10:47).

The reason why Christians do not show power is because many times they are ignorant of the gifts of the Holy Spirit (1 Corinthians 12:1) and not because they were not baptized in the Holy Spirit. A lack of teaching and grounding in the Word is the cause for the lack of fruit and power and not the lack of the baptism in the Holy Spirit. The Bible standard of the baptism in the Holy Spirit is the baptism in the Holy Spirit with the speaking of tongues.

The Two Types of Tongues

The confusion of many Christians in the realm of tongues is that they do not realize the two types of tongues. One is the speaking of tongues (praying in tongues) unto the Lord which does not need interpretation. After all, God understands every tongue. The other is the speaking in tongues (a ministry gift of the Holy Spirit) which needs interpretation.

The speaking in tongues (prayer in tongues) unto the Lord is praying in the spirit. It is our spirit man praying (1 Corinthians 14:14, 15). Every born again Christian needs to allow their spirit man to pray. And when their spirit

man prays, according to the apostle Paul, their understanding will be unfruitful as it will be in unknown tongues (1 Corinthians 14:14). This means that it is the speaking of unknown tongues (prayer in tongues) each time the spirit man prays. All Christians have a spirit man and their spirit man needs to pray; and when the spirit man prays, prayer is in unknown tongues (implying that every Christian can pray in tongues although every Christian might not have the gift of speaking in tongues in public).

On the other hand, there is the speaking of diverse tongues in the church which is a gift that only some will manifest (1 Corinthians 12:10, 28, 30). This manifestation of tongues needs to be interpreted because it is not speaking unto the Lord but it is speaking for the Lord unto men. Since men do not understand tongues (unless as in some cases, the tongue is in a known language to the hearer although unknown to the speaker), we need to allow this gift of tongues to function in an orderly manner with interpretation in our Christian services.

The Importance of Speaking in Tongues

Many Christians, after they have been baptized in the Holy Spirit, do not continue exercising prayer in tongues because they are not taught the benefits. Remember that Paul said that praying in tongues is praying in the spirit (1 Corinthians 14:14). When we pray in tongues, we are spending time in the spirit realm and therefore are growing more sensitive to the spiritual world.

In the early days of my ministry, I did not realize the benefits of speaking in tongues until I had a spiritual experience in the spiritual realm in regard to tongues. I was praying in tongues one day while seated on a balcony in a flat. I prayed for about one hour when suddenly I felt difficulty praying in tongues. Every word I spoke felt artificial and it was only with great effort that I managed to pray. However I persisted in praying in tongues and after some time it was easy again to pray.

I did not understand that experience but that night the Lord showed me in a dream, the exact picture of me praying in tongues on the balcony. I saw myself praying in tongues with ease. Then suddenly a black hairy demon came and went round and round me saying, 'Yakity, Yakity, Yak, Yak.' Of course I did not realize that the demon was there in the day time as I did not see it. But there it was, the same incident replayed for me like a movie with the spiritual dimension added.

It was no wonder then, why I experienced difficulty praying in tongues with that hairy demon running round and round me. As I observed, I saw

myself continue praying in tongues although it was a struggle. Suddenly, out of my lips came a white light that looked like a laser beam and it knocked the demon out. The demon screamed and slowly crawled away from me in fear. Immediately, I got up and heard the Lord speak to me about the importance of speaking in tongues and the impact it has on the spiritual world.

In another vision, I saw the world covered by a dense thick cloud of darkness. From the earth I could see powerful beams of light breaking through the darkness and reaching to the Throne of God in heaven. In the vision I saw that the beams of light were the prayers of Christians, many of them praying in tongues.

From these two experiences, I began to seriously pray long hours in tongues. I noticed that when we pray long hours in tongues, there is a moment when our mind suddenly becomes still. When we reach that point, the awareness of the presence of God in our lives is heightened. At first it may take us six to eight hours of prayer to reach that stage but as we become familiar to the experience of God's presence, we will take a shorter and shorter time to reach it. With experience, we reach the quietness of mind within five minutes. It is also in this quietness of mind that the inner voice of God seems loud and clear.

In one of my spiritual experimentations, I prayed in tongues non-stop for forty-eight hours. I was in a different realm by that stage. I literally saw into the spiritual world as if they were natural objects. The full benefit of praying in tongues has yet to be tapped by the church of Jesus Christ.

It is important to spend at least an hour of prayer in tongues every day. One hour seems to be the break-even point of the spirit realm over the soul and body. Jesus asked His disciples if they could wait in prayer an hour (Matthew 26:40, 41). If you have never experienced the stillness of mind yet, take time off to spend a whole day in prayer in tongues.

Ten Benefits of Praying In Tongues

The following are ten reasons why we should pray in tongues:

1. When we pray in tongues, it is our spirit man that prays (1 Corinthians 14:14). Our spirit man is activated and dominates our whole being as we pray in tongues.
2. Our spirit man is built up and energized when we pray in tongues (1 Corinthians 14:4).

3. When we pray in tongues, we are speaking unto God and magnifying Him (Acts 10:46; 1 Corinthians 14:2).
4. Praying in tongues, which is praying in the spirit, is a part of our spiritual weapon against Satan (Ephesians 6:10-18).
5. When we pray in tongues, we are built up on our most holy faith (Jude 20).
6. Prayer in tongues helps us in our prayer life (Romans 8:26).
7. Prayer in tongues is prayer in the perfect Will of God (Romans 8:27).
8. Prayer in tongues helps us against infirmities (Romans 8:26). The word 'infirmity' is the same word that is used when Jesus is said to have borne our infirmities and sicknesses (Matthew 8:17). Praying in tongues creates a spiritual force in and around us that makes us immune to sicknesses.
9. When we pray in tongues, we enter our spiritual rest (Hebrews 4:8-10; 1 Corinthians 14:21; Isaiah 28:11,12).
10. Praying and singing in tongues helps us to worship God at a higher level than our understanding permits (1 Corinthians 14:15; John 4:23, 24).

CHAPTER 5

DIFFERENT MEASURES OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

The most remarkable quality of the Holy Spirit is the quality of being measured. The Holy Spirit was given in measures in the Old Testament. Elisha had a double portion of Elijah's anointing (2 Kings 2:9). Moses had the measure of the Holy Spirit upon him taken and divided to the seventy elders (Num. 11:17). Some say that we cannot divide the person of the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit is at the moment dwelling in the spirits of born again Christians. We do not understand how He could be in our hearts and yet in another Christian's heart. But we do know that He can be omnipresent.

The Salvation Measure

When a Christian is born again he receives a measure of the Holy Spirit that we shall call the 'born again measure.' Some Christians say that at that time a Christian only has the Holy Spirit with them but not in them (John 14:17). However, Jesus was referring only to the disciples who were not born again yet. They only had the Holy Spirit in the Old Testament sense.

When they were born again, the Holy Spirit could now dwell in their new spirits. Whoever confesses that Jesus is the Son of God, God abides in him and he in God (1 John 4:15). And by this we know that He abides in us, by the Spirit whom He has given to us (1 John 3:24). The Holy Spirit definitely dwells in us when we are born again (Romans 8:9-10).

Paul prayed for the Ephesians to receive the Spirit of wisdom and revelation even though the Ephesians were born again and baptized in the Holy Spirit (Ephesians 1:17, 18). We can receive progressive measures of the Holy Spirit. As we grow measure by measure, we will reach the full measure and stature of Jesus Christ (Ephesians 4:13).

The Baptismal Measure

Jesus said that whoever drinks of the water that He gives will never thirst but it shall become in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life (John 4:14). I believe that this refers to the salvation measure of the Holy Spirit.

Jesus also said that if anyone is thirsty, let him drink and out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water (John 7:37, 38). Rivers convey the meaning

of a greater measure of water than a well. Here Jesus is referring to the baptism in the Holy Spirit. The baptism in the Holy Spirit is a clothing and an immersion in the Holy Spirit (Luke 24:49). Not only is the Holy Spirit in us but He is upon us (Acts 1:8).

When a person is baptized in water, he gets wet. There is evidence of his being baptized in water. When a person is baptized in the Holy Spirit, there will be an evidence of his being baptized in the Holy Spirit. To be baptized in the Holy Spirit is to be controlled by the Holy Spirit. Since the tongue is the control centre of our beings, it would be natural for the Holy Spirit to first take control of our tongue when He controls us (Jam. 3:2-7).

If James were to write his epistle today, instead of comparing the tongue to a ship's rudder or a horse's bridle, he would have compared the tongue to the steering wheel of a car (Jam. 3:3, 4). If we want to take control of a car, it would be most natural to take control of the steering wheel. Therefore, when the Holy Spirit controls and fills our lives, one of the first things He does is to take control of our tongues.

The Holy Spirit Baptism of Jesus

There is a difference between Jesus' baptism in the Holy Spirit and ours. When the Holy Spirit came upon Jesus, He came in the form of a dove and Jesus did not speak in tongues (Luke 3:22). When the Holy Spirit came upon the disciples, He came in the form of fire and they spoke in other tongues (Acts 2:3,4). John the Baptist testified that Jesus shall baptize with the Holy Spirit and with fire (Luke 3:16).

There are two differences between Jesus and us: Jesus had no sin nature and no unrenewed mind. All of us have a sin nature and an unrenewed mind prior to conversion. Therefore when we are baptized in the Holy Spirit, the Holy Spirit's fire purifies us and continues to burn in our lives preserving us from the weaknesses inherent in our sin nature. We are also given an ability to pray bypassing the limitations of our mind, which is still in the process of renewal. When we pray in tongues, our understanding does not comprehend what we are praying (1 Corinthians 14:14, 15).

God has equipped us with spiritual weapons to overcome our sin nature and our unrenewed mind in order that we can be like Jesus when He was manifested on this earth.

Increasing Measures of the Holy Spirit

Charles G. Finney in his book 'Revival Fires' speaks of continual baptisms in the Holy Spirit. I believe that we receive the baptism in the Holy Spirit once and after that we can continue to receive greater and greater measures of the Holy Spirit. The disciples in the book of Acts, upon being persecuted, turned to God in praying and asked for boldness to speak the Word (Acts 4:29). God answered their prayer by filling them with a greater measure of the Holy Spirit even though they were already baptized in the Holy Spirit.

The disciples were filled afresh and spoke the Word of God with boldness (Acts 4:30). Note how the Bible records that they witnessed with great power (Acts 4:33). A greater measure of the Holy Spirit produced an increased measure of power.

The Ephesians who were already born again and baptized in the Holy Spirit were prayed for by Paul that they might receive the Holy Spirit of wisdom and revelation (Ephesians 1:17). Paul prayed that God would give them the Holy Spirit even though they already had received the Holy Spirit. Paul was praying for an increased measure of the Holy Spirit in their lives.

The Holy Spirit in Heaven

The Apostle John saw a vision of Jesus Christ and the seven Spirits before the throne (Rev. 1:4; 4:5; 5:6). The very manifestation of the Holy Spirit in heaven speaks to us of the fact that the Holy Spirit has the peculiar quality of being measured. It is beyond doubt that the Holy Spirit is the third person of the Godhead. But being a person does not limit Him from the ability to be measured as shown in His work through human vessels all through the Bible.

The number seven represents the full measure of the Holy Spirit which Jesus had. It is the Will of God that the church of Jesus Christ receives the full measure of the Holy Spirit. The church is destined to reach the full measure of the stature of Jesus Christ (Ephesians 4:13).

Understanding the person and quality of the Holy Spirit would help us to humble ourselves at the feet of God constantly so that we learn to ask for and receive measure upon measure of the Holy Spirit. Don't stop where you are. Press on deeper into the fullness of God. Press on deeper into the greater measures of the Holy Spirit.

CHAPTER 6

Baptism in Love

The born again experience is referred to in the Bible as baptized (or immersion) into the body, the experience of water baptism is symbolic of our baptism unto the death and resurrection of Christ and the baptism in the Spirit is our experience of immersion into the Holy Spirit. Each of these is a special and unique experience and must be appreciated and meditated upon. We have lost some of the meaning of being baptized into the body of Christ when we keep using the word 'born again' to refer to our initial acceptance of Christ. Although baptism into the body of Christ and water baptism are theologically grouped together for both are based on the redemption and atonement of Christ, for the sake of describing these experiences separately, we will isolate them into separate experiences. For the modern Christian is not like the New Testament Christians who generally immediately baptized in water as a sign of accepting Christ rather than putting their hands up and praying the sinner's prayer. At Peter's first sermon in Jerusalem three thousand souls were saved and accepted Christ through water baptism (Acts 2:38-41). When Philip shared Christ through the book of Isaiah to the Ethiopian eunuch, the eunuch accepted Christ through water baptism (Acts 8:37-38). When Paul preached Christ to the Ephesian followers of John the Baptist, they indicated their acceptance of Christ through a second water baptism under the name of Jesus Christ (Acts 19:3-5).

Immersion into the body of Christ

The acceptance of Christ into our hearts or what we call the born again experience is described as baptism into the body of Christ (1 Corinthians 12:13; Galatians 3:27). In a technical sense, we became identified with Christ's death, burial and resurrection which is what is expressed in water baptism. For this reason, water baptism was the method by which the New Testament Christians had people accept Christ into their hearts. However, this is not the only understanding that the New Testament Christians had. Paul expounds very clearly that this included a 'baptism into the body of Christ' which is Christ's church or gathering of local believers. In 1 Corinthians 12:13, he made mention of Jews and Greeks, slaves and free all being made to drink from one Spirit. In Galatians when he spoke of being baptized into Christ, and the importance of putting on Christ, he also spoke of their no longer being Jew or Greek, slave or free, male or female, for they are all one in Christ (Galatians 3:27-28).

In Paul's understanding, being baptized into the body of Christ included being placed into a local body of believers! This is the part that many Christians fail to see. They think that they can be 'lone ranger' Christians or isolate themselves away from other believers and seek to grow by themselves with God. There is a place and time to be alone with God for Paul himself was in Arabia and Damascus three years before he met with the apostles (Galatians 1:15-18). However, the emphasis is to not confer 'immediately' as opposed to not conferring 'at all.' Paul was not against the private seeking of God and private study but rather he speaks of the necessity to have fellowship and discussion but each person must first do their homework of having a relationship with God. In the same epistle, Paul himself spoke of communicating his revelation of the gospel to the apostles lest he might run, or had run, in vain (Galatians 2:2). Since at that time of his first meeting, he was a junior to all the apostles, Paul actually spoke of him checking with them his revelations (that he had in his three years) in case he is wrong in his understanding of the gospel! He said he communicated privately to those who were of reputation lest he had run (or progressed in his own revelations) in vain (or wrongly).

Corporate Progress in Revelation

Every new revelation that God gives has to firstly be supported by the whole written Word of God, and then it must also be supported by new revelation thus far. That is if new revelations were given, it cannot be contradictory to other new revelations because if all the new revelations were from God, then they should complement one another just as the Word of God given to Bible people spanning thousands of years complement one another. New revelations are built upon the written word of God (without contradiction to any inspired Scripture) and complement other accepted new revelations. God cannot be saying something contradictory to what He has said the day before, or the week before, or the month before; and definitely not what He has been saying for thousands of years in the Scripture. True prophets cannot contradict one another. True apostles cannot contradict one another. True teachers, evangelists or pastors cannot contradict one another. Where they contradict, only one can be correct. Styles and methodology may differ but doctrine must adhere to only one common Truth that is supported by the Scriptures. Sometimes what is spoken by one man or woman of God is not fully understood by another but that does not mean there is a contradiction. Peter found it hard to understand Paul's revelation but yet he supported Paul's theology for he recognized that Paul had the revelation of the gospel (2 Peter 3:15, 16).

Note how the whole church of Jerusalem with representatives from Antioch church, to mediate through the controversy of Gentile converts – to

make them Jews or to leave them as believers in Christ without Jewish laws (Acts 15). After much fierce debate, the whole church agreed to a common doctrine and from thus forth, the church progressed. It took the whole body of Christ coming together to move forward in the new revelation and doctrine for the Gentiles. It will take believers who are walking with God to lay hold of all the width, the length, the depth and the height of God's love and revelation (Ephesians 3:18). The early church subscribed to the apostles' doctrine and fellowship (Acts 2:42). The end time glorious church, will need all the true apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors and teachers to come together to build the church until the church is no longer swayed by every wind of doctrine (Ephesians 4:13-14). This is the church on a planetary scale, the church needs all the true leaders of God to gather together to perfect the church.

On a personal level, every believer needs to be part of a fellowship. Without fellowship, the believer will never grow in their soul and their understanding. It is in fellowship that our minds grow in doctrine, our souls grow in agape love and our wills are humbled by our interaction with other free will. The church in the book of Acts became one soul (Acts 4:32). Without immersing oneself into a local fellowship or body, a Christian can never grow in the training of the soul. We purify our souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit in sincere love of the brethren in local fellowship (1 Peter 1:22). Love cannot be acquired by being alone. Thus the experience of being baptized into the body of Christ must be continued as the baptism or immersion into a local fellowship for one to grow into Christ's fullness. It is only by not forsaking the assembling of believers that we can stir up love and good works (Hebrews 10:24-25). Immerse your souls into a good fellowship, invest your time to fellowship with good and spiritual Christians that your spirits may be refreshed (Acts 18:5; 1 Corinthians 14:32; Philemon 1:20)

The Glorious Church is a Church Perfected in Love

The vision of the end time church is a vision of a church completely made one in unity like the oneness of the Trinity (John 17:21). Jesus prayed and paid the price of the cross for the unity of the church. We must seek the oneness of the body of Christ as Jesus sought it. When all the men and women of God begin to walk in the great commandment of Jesus to love one another, it will be the beginning of the glory that Jesus spoke about in John chapter seventeen. It begins now in our lives as individuals for the body of Christ is made of individuals. We don't get to choose who to love but are exhorted to love all who are born again (1 John 4:21).

We need to grow in love through being part of a local fellowship:

1. We know we have passed from death to life because we love the brethren (1 John 3:14).
2. He who does not love his brother abides in death (1 John 3:14).
3. He who does not love does not know God for God is love (1 John 4:8).
4. Beloved if God so loved us, we also ought to love one another (1 John 4:11).
5. If we love one another God abides in us and His love is perfected in us (1 John 4:12).
6. God is love, he who abides in love abides in God (1 John 4:16).
7. If someone says, I love God, but hates his brother, he is a liar (1 John 5:20).
8. He who does not love his brother whom he has seen, how can he love God whom he has never seen (1 John 5:20).

Let us all be part of a local fellowship and allow God's love to grow within us. Amen.