



Too good to pass up

*The baptism
in the Holy Spirit*

By Charles T. Crabtree

While the world denies our Lord Jesus and marshals a hundred arguments for not believing in His saving power, millions are meeting the living Savior in a life-changing experience based on the written Word and the finished work on Calvary.

While many well-meaning ministers and faithful church members are denying the baptism in the Holy Spirit in the Pentecostal sense, millions throughout the world are claiming the promise of the Father and entering a spiritual dimension in Christ that was previously unknown to them. As a result, they are receiving power for witnessing and for living the Christian life.

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At the point of my need, it was enough for me to realize that God has promised the gift of eternal life through His Son Jesus. I certainly did not understand all the mechanics of salvation (and I still don't), but I knew I needed it. When I accepted God's promised salvation, I received the gift of eternal life.

In the same manner, I learned that God the Father has given His children a promise. Before He left His disciples, Jesus told them: "Behold, I send the Promise of My Father upon you; but tarry in the city of

Comforter; and the Bible promised that, in the last days, God would pour out His Spirit upon all flesh. According to the Book of Acts, the sign of speaking with other tongues at Pentecost was of God. So I decided to ask God for the baptism in the Holy Spirit.

I didn't ask my parents; I didn't ask my church; and I didn't ask my friends. I asked my Heavenly Father, in Jesus' name, to give me the baptism in the Holy Spirit with the evidence of speaking in tongues.

Without anyone praying for me, and without others talk-

body of Christ.

When people are born of the Spirit, they thirst for more of God. Jesus promised an outpouring of spiritual power from within the believer that could only be compared to rivers of living water (John 7:37,38).

If the baptism in the Holy Spirit is not distinct from the baptism into the body of Christ, why did Jesus tell His disciples, who were certainly born again, to go and wait for the Holy Spirit to come? Why did Paul ask the Ephesians if they had received the Holy Spirit since, or after, they had believed (Acts 19:2)? Why did Jesus encourage us to ask the Father for the gift of the Holy Spirit? (See Luke 11:13.)

New life by the Spirit of God makes us alive to God, but the new birth also brings a new hunger. God has promised to satisfy that hunger by the gift of the Holy Spirit, which was promised by the Father and given at Pentecost: "Repent, and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins [the new birth]; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit" (Acts 2:38).

Peter assured the believers, "For the promise is to you and to your children [not just the apostles], and to all who are afar off" (v. 39). He made this promise to multitudes of people, not just a few, and to all believers in the future.

We believe on the basis of God's Word that the child of God may ask for and receive

the gift of the Holy Spirit. This endowment of power is distinct from and subsequent to the ministry of the Holy Spirit at the time of salvation.

The Baptism is for all believers

Many ask if all believers are promised the baptism in the Holy Spirit with the evidence of speaking with other tongues. Let us remember what happened at Pentecost.

The disciples were told to go to Jerusalem and wait for the promise of the Father. The Bible says: "They were all filled with the Holy Spirit" (Acts 2:4). Who were these people? They were the church.

The Bible teaches that God will give the Holy Spirit to those who ask Him. Jesus said: "I send the Promise of My Father" (Luke 24:49). In Joel 2:28, God says: "I will pour out My Spirit on all flesh." At Pentecost, God did not send the Holy Spirit to just the disciples, but to the Church.

The Scriptures nowhere indicate that God decided to discontinue the baptism in the Holy Spirit, or withhold His gifts when the last apostle died. On the contrary, the Bible clearly tells us there will be an acceleration of the Spirit's activity in the last days.

Those who use the phrase "whether there are tongues, they shall cease" from 1 Corinthians 13:8 as a proof that tongues have ceased in this generation, fail to read the next part of the verse: "Whether

there is knowledge, it will vanish away." They use this verse to try to prove tongues have ceased, but they are not ready for one moment to try to prove that knowledge has vanished away.

The baptism in the Holy Spirit was given to the Church, and I am part of the Church. The gift of the Holy Spirit was given to all God's children because it is the promise of the Father, and I am God's child. The Holy Spirit is promised to those who ask. I asked, and I received because God keeps His promises.

Why should every believer ask for and receive the baptism in the Holy Spirit with the evidence of speaking in tongues?

The baptism in the Holy Spirit is a promise from God (Acts 1:4), who knows what is best for us and provides the gifts needed for His children. It is a bit surprising to see born-again Christians who are not hungering and thirsting to receive all God has offered to them. This promise is from our wonderful Heavenly Father, not some far-out church group or wild-eyed prophet.

Can you imagine how it must grieve God when His children do not ask for and receive His gift? Imagine if your father excitedly promised you a very special gift, but then you never seemed to care enough to ask him for it.

Some of God's children are so filled with fear they actually believe if they ask their Heavenly Father for the infill-

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Jerusalem until you are endued with power from on high" (Luke 24:49, NKJV).

The Bible assures us that our Heavenly Father knows how to give good gifts to His children: "If you then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children; how much more will your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask Him!" (Luke 11:13).

I wanted everything God had for me. I learned that God the Father had promised me the gift of the Holy Spirit; Jesus, the Son, had promised to send the

ing in tongues around me, I received the promise of the Father. I was filled with the Holy Spirit and spoke with other tongues as the Spirit gave me utterance.

The Baptism is not the new birth

The baptism in the Holy Spirit with the evidence of speaking in tongues is distinct from and follows the new birth. Every born-again believer has the Holy Spirit dwelling in him or her. We are adopted and baptized by the Spirit into the

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ing of the Holy Spirit, they might receive something from the devil. The devil is delighted by this terrible misconception.

The Bible says if we ask our Father for bread, He will not give us a stone, or if we ask for a fish, He will not give us a serpent. It is almost blasphemous to even suggest that a person who honestly claims a biblical promise, a promise from God, is in any danger from the devil. The fact that there is a spiritual battle is simply proof we are making the enemy angry — not that we are on the enemy's side.

We must not let some well-in-

The ultimate purpose for seeking the fullness of the Spirit is to be a witness for Christ in every part of life.

tioned preacher keep us from claiming, asking for, and receiving all God has promised us.

Results of receiving the Baptism

The baptism in the Holy Spirit is power from God. The *dunamis*, or dynamite, of God is made available through the Church and to the Church.

We are in a spiritual conflict; we wrestle against principalities and powers. Satan has growing power in this world. The church of Jesus Christ needs to take authority over the devil, but none of us is naïve enough to believe the devil is afraid of the Church in and by itself. The Church must ask for and receive the power of the Holy Spirit in order to destroy Satan's kingdom.

whom we come in contact.

The Baptism will enhance our witness for Christ through our lives, our words and our works. There has never been a time when the need was greater for the supernatural power of the Spirit to work in and through the body of Christ. We must, as His body, be anointed to be witnesses of Christ so people everywhere may come to know God and glorify Him on earth. **tpe**

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E-mail your comments to tpe@ag.org.

ABCs

OF SALVATION

To know God and be ready for heaven, follow these steps:

A. Admit you are a sinner.

"There is no one righteous, not even one ... for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God." Romans 3:10,23 (See Romans 5:8; 6:23.)

Ask God's forgiveness.

"Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved." Romans 10:13

B. Believe in Jesus (put your trust in Him) as your only hope of salvation.

"For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life." John 3:16 (See John 14:6.)

Become a child of God by receiving Christ.

"To all who received him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God." John 1:12 (See Revelation 3:20.)

C. Confess that Jesus is your Lord.

"If you confess with your mouth, 'Jesus is Lord,' and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved." Romans 10:9 (See verse 10.)

For further help, contact the Assemblies of God church near you.

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