



GOD'S GIFT AND GOD'S PROMISE

GOD'S GIFT

“For God so loved the world that he gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.”

John 3:16

Jesus satisfies those who believe in Him, meeting the deep-seated longing of the human heart for God. He is God's great gift to us, to be received humbly and gratefully. John 1:12 tells us “as many as received Him, to them gave He the power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on His name.” Believing in Jesus and receiving Him are one and the same thing. Also in Revelation 3:20 Jesus makes us a lovely promise – “Behold I stand at the door and knock. If any..hear my voice and open the door, I will come in.” So vary many have found this to be true, as they have asked Him into their heart and life.

Two of the great blessings which follow this are, first, Forgiveness of sins and second, Eternal life. St Paul says, as he writes to fellow Christians in Ephesians 1:7 – “In whom we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of His grace.” That means forgiveness now, not at some far off future date. Then St John makes it clear that those who trust in Jesus have a place in that heavenly home He has prepared for those who love Him.

In 1 John 5:11,12 he says “This is the record, that God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in His Son. He that hath the Son hath life; and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life.” That life is a spiritual life in Jesus, which begins now and goes on for ever. A deep peace of heart follows, as by His death on the Cross, we know that Jesus has paid the price for our sins. How precious to us is God’s gift of a Saviour!

But Jesus is not only our Saviour, He is also our Baptiser in the Holy Spirit. Here, as always, we are to take Scripture as it stands, not adding to it or taking away from it. John the Baptist says in Matthew 3:11 and also in each of the other gospels – He shall baptise you with the Holy Ghost and with fire.” One of the main reasons for His ascension into Heaven, was to send the Holy Spirit in power. – “If I go not away, the Holy Spirit will not come to you but if I go away, I will send Him unto you.” John 16:7. Not that the Holy Spirit was not already at work in believers, for as St Paul says, “If any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of His.” Romans 8:9.

Is there then a need for anything further?

Jesus thought so, even though the disciples were already Christians. For example, St Peter had acknowledged Jesus as the Christ in Matthew 16:16 – “Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God” and St Thomas, in John 20:28 – “My Lord and my God” to which Jesus replies, “Because thou hast seen me thou hast believed.” Many of the disciples were exercising a significant ministry in preaching, healing and casting out demons, yet they needed further empowering by the Holy Spirit.

In His last words on earth, Jesus told them to wait in Jerusalem for the ‘Promise of the Father.’ He says “I send the promise of my Father upon you, but tarry in the city of Jerusalem until you are endued with power from on high.” – Luke 24:49 and “Wait for the promise of the Father.” – Acts 1:4.

GOD’S PROMISE

What is the promise of the Father?

Jesus Himself calls this the Baptism with the Holy Spirit. “You shall be baptised with the Holy Spirit not many days hence.” – Acts 1:5. The promise of the Father is the Baptism with the Holy Spirit, and the Baptiser, as we have seen, is Jesus our Saviour.



For whom is this Holy Spirit Baptism?

According to St Peter, as he preaches on the day of Pentecost, it is for every Christian. “For the promise is unto you, and your children, and to all that are far off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call.” – Acts 2:39. That means every person who puts his or her trust in Jesus, including Christians of today. Later in his ministry, as he speaks to the family and friends of Cornelius, St Peter also says, “God is no respecter of persons.” – Acts 10:34. This blessing is for all who believe. What does Scripture say about how Jesus baptises with the Holy Spirit?

In Acts 2:4 we are told that, “They were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak with other tongues” – experienced by all the 120. In Acts 10:44,46 we read, “The Holy Spirit fell on all them which heard the word...For they heard them speak with tongues.”

In Acts 19:6 we read, “The Holy Spirit came on them, and they spoke with tongues and prophesied.”

That is how Scripture says Jesus baptises with the Holy Spirit. Those who receive speak in tongues (or have the ability to do so).

What about exceptions to this None are stated in Scripture.

Some may say that no mention is made of tongues in the account of the revival in Samaria in Acts 8, when the apostles sent Peter and John to the new Christians. Verses 16 and 17 tell us “For as yet He (the Holy Spirit) was fallen upon none of them; only they were baptised in the name of Lord Jesus. Then laid they their hands on them, and they received the Holy Spirit.” We are not told that they spoke in tongues, nor are we told that they did not speak in tongues. Yet for what was Simon the magician willing to pay money, if not for something very unusual? Again in Acts 9, after St Paul’s conversion, Ananias laid hands on him to be “filled with the Holy Spirit.” Tongues are not mentioned, yet St Paul says in 1 Corinthians 14:18 – “I thank my God, I speak with tongues more than you all.”

Further Fillings

The initial filling with the Holy Spirit, or Baptism, as Jesus calls it, will be followed by other fillings. We are told in Acts

4:31 that the disciples, very soon after Pentecost, were again filled – “And when they had prayed, the place was shaken where they were assembled together, and they were all filled with the Holy Spirit, and they spoke the word of God with boldness.” So successive fillings can be experienced after the Baptism. Indeed, St Paul says in Ephesians 5:18 “Be filled with the Spirit” or “Be being filled with the Spirit.” This may or not be Revival, but it is certainly very close to it.

Tongues and Tongues

It is said sometimes that tongues are the least of the gifts and don't really matter too much. Yet speaking in tongues is the only gift of the Spirit not mentioned throughout the whole of the Old Testament. It is new to the New Testament, and surely, therefore, must be very significant in God's purpose.

Maybe it has been belittled because, with interpretation, tongues comes at the end of the list in 1 Corinthians 12, but that could just as easily signify its importance. It does seem too, that tongues is the most used of all the gifts of the Spirit.

Maybe tongues are belittled because of how St Paul speaks about their misuse in the church. In 1 Corinthians 14:19 he is quoted as saying “I had rather speak five words with my understanding...than ten thousand words in an unknown tongue.” Yet he also says in the previous verse, “I thank my God I speak with tongues more than you all.” And in verses 4 and 5 “He that speaks in an unknown tongue builds himself up.” – “I want you all to speak with tongues.” In a few verses he is deliberately contradicting himself, unless he is speaking of two different things.

The key words “in the church” show that this is so; personal speaking in tongues for one’s own spiritual edification or build up, is quite different from giving a message in tongues “in the church”. Very few will be moved to give a message in tongues in the congregation, but it is open to all Spirit-filled Christians to use tongues in their own personal and devotional life.

Through disregard or lack of the use of tongues, many Christians are robbing themselves of a wonderful means of grace and strengthening, of not only spirit, but mind and body.

Tongues can be used when we don’t know just how to pray, or when English is just not sufficient for our praise of Jesus. When we pray in tongues, we can be certain of praying right in the centre of the will of God, for we use the words the Holy Spirit gives, and satan is powerless to interfere with them.

If we need guidance and use tongues, so often a word of knowledge will come. Indeed, it has been said that tongues are the gateway into other gifts of the Spirit.

The use of tongues cleanses and heals, makes Jesus more real to us, and increases our love for Him, building us up in Him. This was very important to St Paul, for he used tongues a great deal and writes – “I will pray with the Spirit (tongues), and I will pray with understanding also.” 1 Corinthians 14:15. That does mean tongues, for we cannot pray in or with the Spirit without tongues.

Further, in Ephesians 6, he tells us to put on the whole armour of God, and pray “with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit.” In the letter of Jude verse 20, he tells us in this general letter to the whole Christian Church, “Praying in the Holy

Spirit, keep yourselves in the love of God.” Here are strong encouragements, if not commands, to pray in the Spirit.

Are you losing out on this great blessing?

Have you been baptised with the Holy Spirit? Do you use tongues in prayer and praise? You can, because this is for every Christian. David Wilkerson, the author of “The Cross and the Switch Blade”, found that even repentant drug addicts came into blessing, and those same addicts, using tongues, came off drugs without pain. Jackie Pullinger, who wrote “Chasing the Dragon”, had the same experience in Hong Kong.

The Rev. Dennis Bennett has taken a leading part in the Renewal movement since its earliest days. He says in his book “The Holy Spirit and You” – “We are convinced, from the Scriptures, and after praying with thousands of people to receive the Baptism in the Holy Spirit...that there is no believer who cannot speak in tongues, if he or she is properly prepared, and really ready to trust the Lord.”

Are you thirsty for blessing, wanting all that Jesus wants you to have?

Maybe you are a bit fearful, but you can know that if you ask for this blessing God is not going to give you something that is bad. Jesus tells us in Luke 11, verses 11-13 “If a son shall ask bread of any of you that is a father, will he give him a stone? Or if he ask a fish, will he for a fish give him a serpent? Or if he shall ask an egg, will he offer him a scorpion? If ye then being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how

much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him?"

Maybe you are afraid of being taken over, or of being made to speak in tongues when you don't want to. Be assured that it is not like that. We decide when to start speaking and when to stop. The gift is subject to the believer. It has been said that the Holy Spirit is a gentleman. He does not force Himself upon us and interfere with our free will.

How do you receive this Holy Spirit Baptism and the accompanying Holy Spirit language?

Of course you need to have received Jesus into your heart as Saviour, and as we have seen, you can then be sure of forgiveness and everlasting life. If you have had any occult involvement such as yoga, ouija, spiritism, fortune-telling, horoscopes, etc, it must be renounced.

Then dedicate yourself to the Lord with such a prayer as;

**“Lord, I repent of all my sins;
I renounce all evil,
I dedicate myself completely to You, Amen.”**

Follow this with a request for Jesus, who is the Baptiser, to baptise you with the Holy Spirit, as:

**Lord Jesus, please baptise me with the Holy Spirit;
giving me another language to praise You.
Amen”**

What next? In faith you are to speak out aloud in praise – not in English – and the Holy Spirit will give you the words to speak. But you will have to speak out, for if you don't speak out, nothing will happen. There are two parts to speaking in tongues, your part and the Holy Spirit's part.

Without the Holy Spirit you will not speak in tongues; and without you the Holy Spirit will not speak in tongues. The miracle is not in speaking, (on the day of Pentecost even they had to begin), but in what is spoken. That is from the Holy Spirit and is holy, whatever it sounds like. We are on holy ground, as we speak out in the language He gives.

Satan hates tongues, because he cannot interfere with the language of God the Holy Spirit. He will try and make you doubt for he is in the negative, doubting business. Do not listen to him, but continue in faith, being blessed, and being a blessing to others.

As a Christian, this is your heritage; the promise is for you – Acts 2:39. Why not enter into it? You have nothing to lose, and so much to gain. It can be a real help and encouragement to have one or two Christian friends lay hands on you and praise God in tongue with you, though it is not absolutely necessary.

Don't be afraid; launch out in faith, and when you receive, use your gift as much as you can each day, as well as your prayers in English. Any gift is useless to us if we don't use it. Then let others know what has happened to you, so that they too may enter into their heritage.

Step out and let Jesus Bless You with the fullness of His Spirit.

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