

Sabbath School Today
With the 1888 Message Dynamic

The Holy Spirit and Spirituality
Lesson 5. The Baptism and Filling of the Holy Spirit

Paul inspired and trained other fellow-laborers. None were jealous of him and he never shows the slightest envy of their success. For once, in the story of his labors in Ephesus, we see a clear demonstration of what the special love of Christ known as *agape* did for a group of workers. There was Apollos, himself “mighty in the Scriptures” and “an eloquent man,” but Paul worked with him smoothly and in love (Acts 18:24). There were Priscilla and Aquila who were also imbued with the same spirit that motivated Paul (Acts 18:26).

Apollos was from Alexandria, the second most important city in the Roman Empire. Highly educated, a Jew converted to the baptism of John the Baptist, he was an eloquent preacher. But he knew nothing of the baptism of the Holy Spirit and he needed to be instructed in the way of Jesus.

Then dear Aquila and Priscilla, in a kind and courteous way, told him what he needed to know, and thank God, Apollos listened! Sometimes ministers may not be deficient in the same way that Apollos was, but there are also empty places in their knowledge. The Lord then sends someone to correct us and instruct us and fill in the gaps.

But we are painfully aware that sometimes our dear ministering brethren in the past 1888-era were not like Apollos: they may have been “mighty in the scriptures” and could argue, and like him had gaps in their understanding that the Lord in His great mercy sent His messengers, A. T. Jones and E. J. Waggoner, to fill in, but they were not like Apollos; they were not ready to listen and learn. In a great degree, history has told us, they resisted and even rejected the light that God would have them accept.

Now we “Laodiceans” have come collectively to the very end of time, and where “we” have corporately failed in past times we must now overcome. Time is getting short. Jesus counsels us to “anoint thine eyes with eyesalve, that thou mayest see” (Rev. 3:18). Now may we let the baptism of Holy Spirit get through to us!

All the wonderful promises that Jesus made before His death must and will be fulfilled. But there is one great promise that has not yet been fulfilled, and many Christians think it never will be. They are wrong! He will not fail.

That great promise is in John 16:13: “When He, the Spirit of *truth*, is come, He will guide you into *all truth*.” We usually think of the Holy Spirit as giving us happy feelings, or great power in witnessing and producing baptisms; we think that understanding “all truth” is of lesser importance. But over 200 times the Bible speaks of the importance of

truth. In ordinary life, law courts, juries, judges, seek constantly to know the truth. Jesus says that it is so important that “the *truth* shall make you free” (John 8:32).

In His same promise that the Holy Spirit will guide us “into all truth” Jesus promised, “He will show you things to come.” The wording is very similar to the opening of the Book of Revelation, “the revelation ... of things which must shortly come to pass” (Rev. 1:1). The Book of Revelation was the fulfillment of Jesus’ promise! And yet Christian people go in different directions in understanding what Revelation is saying!

Likewise, there is confusion in understanding Daniel’s prophecies; yet God commanded the angel, “Gabriel, make this man to understand the vision,” and later the angel said to him, “I will show thee the *truth*” (Dan. 8:16; 11:2). Paul spoke of his message as “the *truth* of the gospel” (Gal. 2:5). There is as much division in understanding that as there is in understanding Daniel and the Revelation!

What can bring about a unity and clarity of understanding these important truths? Surely when that great fourth angel of Revelation 18:1-4 begins to “lighten the earth with glory,” the message that calls every sincere person “out of Babylon” will be a message of pure, unadulterated truth. We pray daily for the baptism of the Holy Spirit.

An excellent place to begin finding the answer to that prayer is in honest, sincere, and humble listening to the Bible to permit it to tell us what the truth is in all these contested areas. Jesus did not promise, “The Holy Spirit will *try* to lead you into all truth,” or “He wishes He could lead you into all truth.” No, He said He *will* do so. The Holy Spirit right now is “leading” us into the truth that will bind us together in loving harmony of belief. Let’s listen to Him!

Ellen White agrees with Jesus and the Scriptures. “God is the mighty, all-powerful agency in the work of transformation. By His Spirit He writes His law in the heart. Thus divine relationship is renewed between God and man. ... The religion of Christ means more than the forgiveness of sin; it means that sin is taken away and that the vacuum is *filled with the Spirit*. It means that the *mind* is divinely *illuminated*, that the heart is *emptied of self* and filled with the presence of Christ.” [1]

Is it not dangerous to be so determined to receive the power of the Holy Spirit apart from truly analyzing our denominational sin of unbelief and lukewarmness? Merely repenting of some individual sins amongst us as individuals is good work, but it clearly doesn’t go far enough toward preparing the way for the outpouring of the Spirit in the true latter rain.

Ellen White wrote: “Christ has promised the gift of the Holy Spirit to His church, and the promise belongs to us as much as to the first disciples. But like every other promise, it is given on conditions. There are many who believe and profess to claim the Lord’s promise; they talk about Christ and about the Holy Spirit, yet receive no benefit. They do not surrender the soul to be guided and controlled by the divine agencies. We cannot use the Holy Spirit. The Spirit is to use us. Through the Spirit God works in His people

'to will and to do of His good pleasure' (Phil. 2:13). But many will not submit to this. They want to manage themselves. This is why they do not receive the heavenly gift. Only to those who wait humbly upon God, who watch for His guidance and grace, is the Spirit given. The power of God awaits their demand and reception. This promised blessing, claimed by faith, brings all other blessings in its train. It is given according to the riches of the grace of Christ, and He is ready to supply every soul according to the capacity to receive." [2]

Is the "demand and reception" of which she speaks merely our determined assumption that we have it? Again, to illustrate, would our lukewarmness be overcome simply by assuming through "faith" that we had overcome it? What is the faith which *works*—by love?

In the 1893 *General Conference Bulletin*, A. T. Jones quoted from a Spiritualist magazine as follows: "Let Thursday be your day for declaring your faith. Say, 'I do believe that God is now working with me and through me and by me and for me;' say it with a sure certainty, for it is true."

What would be the difference between that doctrine and the doctrine that we have the power of the Holy Spirit simply because we believe with certainty that we do?

At the 1893 General Conference session, Elder W. W. Prescott preached a series of sermons on the Holy Spirit. He closed by appealing to the brethren to believe that they had the power of the loud cry (since Sister White had said that it had begun at Minneapolis), and together go out determined to give it. If they only would believe it, that they had it, it would be so. They all agreed, said, "We are ready." But—it didn't come, Why? Further, he went so far as to predict unqualifiedly that from that day forth there would never be another hypocrite enter the Adventist church, for they were now determined to go from that session with the power of the Holy Spirit in the loud cry. History proves that that was a false prophecy. Was not his doctrine of believing that they had the Holy Spirit when they didn't, equally false?

If the reception of the Holy Spirit depends upon an *act* of our minds in assuming that we have it, call it "faith" if we wish, would that not actually in the final analysis, be receiving the Spirit by *works*? An act of believing that we have the Spirit is a *work*. Paul made it plain (Gal. 3:2) that the true Holy Spirit is not received that way.

Paul, in great weakness, proclaimed to the Galatians this new covenant good news, and all they did was *listen with faith*: "O foolish Galatians, who hath bewitched you, ... before whose eyes Jesus Christ hath been evidently set forth, crucified among you? ... Received ye the Spirit by the ... hearing of faith?" (Gal. 3:1, 2). That was one time in history when the "formula" was proven completely true: "the gospel preached ... profit[ed] them, ... being mixed with faith in them that heard it" (Heb. 4:2).

Another time in history when the same "gospel preached" was "mixed with faith," was Abraham's experience. All that God did was simply proclaim to him His marvelous

promises known as the new covenant, no threatened “curses” mixed in on pain of disobedience. Abraham simply “listened with faith” to this almost incredible good news (just what Paul told the Galatians was “the hearing of faith”). He too, like the Galatians, “received the Spirit.” His faith was counted to him for righteousness (Gen. 15:6).

—Paul E. Penno

Endnotes:

[1] Ellen G. White, “The Promise of the Spirit,” *The Review and Herald*, June 10, 1902.

[2] Ellen G. White, *The Desire of Ages*, p. 672.

Notes:

Pastor Paul Penno’s video of this lesson is on the Internet at:

https://youtu.be/hP7_Gm_c_Bs

You may subscribe to the e-mail version of *Sabbath School Today* by sending a request to sabbathschooltoday@1888message.org