

WHAT HAPPENED ON THE DAY OF PENTECOST?

INTRODUCTION

Nowadays more and more people everywhere especially among those who have accepted Christ as their Savior, ask this question, "What exactly happened on the Day of Pentecost and what does it all mean to me today?" Many things will depend upon the answer to this question. From the account given in the Word of God in Acts chapters 2 and 3, we can distinguish eight things that happened on that day:

1. A sound came from heaven (Acts 2:2);
2. Cloven tongues like as of fire came down and sat upon each of the disciples (Acts 2:3);
3. They spoke with other tongues (Acts 2:4);
4. They received the promise of the Father on that day (Acts 1 :4);
5. They were baptized with the Holy Spirit (Acts 1 :5);
6. The Holy Spirit came upon them (Acts 1 :8);
7. They were filled with the Holy Spirit (Acts 2:4);
8. The prophecy of the Old Testament prophet Joel (the relevant part of it) was fulfilled on that day (Acts 2:16).

These eight features easily fall into three categories: Outward features of symbolic significance (items 1-3); Inward work of the Holy Spirit (items 4-7), and Old Testament Scripture fulfilled (item 8). Let us consider them one by one. Outward features of symbolic significance a sound came from heaven *"And suddenly there came a sound from heaven as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting"* (Acts 2:2).

1. A sound came from heaven (Acts 2:2)

(i) "...A sound..." The sound from heaven is first spoken of in Genesis 1:3, at the creation of the world, when God's voice sounded upon the face of the deep, "Let there be light". Now in Acts 2:2 it is heard again to bring forth a new creation: "If any man be in Christ, he is a new creation" (2 Cor. 5:17). This sound indicates the "Word of God". The Oxford English Dictionary gives the meaning of "word" as "a sound or combination of sounds conveying an idea". So a word is a sound with a meaning. This sound from heaven was not a meaningless sound. It was full of meaning and is a symbol of "the Word of God" bringing forth anew creation. The Lord Jesus is called the Word of God. He is the beginning of all things. On the Day of Pentecost He began His new work. A new creation in Christ

(ii) "...from heaven..." The words "from heaven" indicate that God had now begun to work from heaven in a new way. During the whole period of the Old Testament the preparation for God's wonderful work of salvation had been going on. The coming of the Messiah had been foretold again and again, and various details beginning from His birth to His death, burial and resurrection had been given. The people of Israel had been chosen and prepared so that the Messiah, the Savior of the whole world, might be born among them. Then all that had been foretold concerning the Messiah had been fulfilled. The Messiah had been born in Bethlehem; He was crucified and died upon the cross; He had risen from the dead and had been exalted to the right hand of God. Fifty days had also passed since the resurrection of the Lord Jesus.

Everything appointed by God had been fulfilled to the letter, and therefore now the pre-appointed day, the Day of Pentecost was "fully come ". God began His mighty work of salvation, to bring out a people for His Name from every tongue and nation. In the Old Testament, God had taken out a people from the family of Abraham. Now He was taking out a people in the New Man, in Christ, from every nation under heaven.

Oh! What a glorious work that is! Those who are saved know it from their own experience. "The Lord hath made bare his holy arm in the eyes of the nations: and all the ends of the earth shall see the salvation of our God" (Isa.52: 10). Till now God's arm had been covered as with a full sleeved shirt or coat, and only his hand could be seen. But now this whole arm was uncovered and became visible to the sons of men. Oh! What a holy arm it is! When you see it, you will fall down and worship the mighty God our Savior. Now, not only the chosen people, the children of Israel, but people of all nations in the whole world were going to see how the mighty God could take a beggar like you or me from the dunghill and make him to inherit the throne of glory (1 Sam. 2:8). That is why this sound came, not from the east or west, but from heaven!

(iii) "...as of a rushing mighty wind..." The 'wind' is a symbol of the Holy Spirit (John 3:8); 'rushing' indicates quickness of movement; and 'mighty' means powerful. In one day 3000 souls were saved. In one moment Saul the persecutor became a believer. So the rushing mighty wind represents the quick, powerful movement of the Holy Spirit, by which He converts a stubborn, blind and filthy sinner into a holy man or woman of God.

(iv) "...and it filled..." The Lord Jesus Christ died for our sins and rose again. He is worthy that He should fill all things. "He that descended is the same also that ascended up far above all heavens, that he might fill all things" (Eph.4:10). The Holy Spirit has been sent to bring Him to that place of pre-eminence amongst His people.

(v) "...the house..." We read that the mighty rushing wind came and filled the entire house. The 120 disciples were gathered in the upper room, but the Holy Bible says the rushing mighty wind filled all the house' where they were sitting. By using the word house here, we are definitely made to think of the House of God, which House we are (1 Peter 2:5; Heb.3:6). God's eternal purpose is to fill the House of God with His glory, and make it His glorious Church without spot or wrinkle (Eph.5:27). When Moses had set up the Tabernacle, the glory of the Lord filled the Tabernacle (Exo.40:34). When Solomon had built the Temple at Jerusalem and brought the Ark of Covenant into the appointed place, the glory of the Lord filled the House of the Lord (1 Kings 8:2). Now that the Church came into being, immediately "the house" was filled.

(vi) "...where they were sitting..." It so happened that when the appointed time came, the disciples were not on their knees, but were sitting, and they received the Holy Spirit. In the house of Cornelius all those who received the word through Peter received the Holy Spirit while Peter was yet speaking (Acts 10:44). The posture of the body is not a condition, but rather the posture of the heart; that is, it must be ready with repentance and faith by the Holy Spirit.

2. Cloven tongues like as of fire

"And there appeared unto them cloven tongues like as of fire, and it sat upon each of them"(Acts 2:3).

(i) "...cloven..." According to the Mosaic Law the children of Israel were permitted to eat the flesh of cloven-footed animals only (Lev.11:3). This restriction reminded them that they were to be separated from sin and defilement, "...ye shall be holy; for I am holy..."(Lev.11:44). Fire represents the unapproachable holiness of God (Heb.12:29). Thus these cloven tongues like as of fire indicated that the Holy Spirit had come to dwell in the disciples to enable them to lead a separated life. This enabling is the outward work of the Holy Spirit.

(ii) "...tongues like as of fire..." In his vision Isaiah saw the seraphim taking a live coal and laying it upon his mouth and saying, "Lo, this hath touched thy lips; and thine iniquity is taken away, and thy sin purged" (Isa.6:7). In the same way, when these cloven tongues of fire touched the disciples it meant that the Holy Spirit had come to witness to them that, by the efficacy of the precious blood of Christ, their sins had been taken away (John 1:29), and their conscience had been purged from every guilt of sin and condemnation, (Heb, 9:14), This inward witness in us is the inward! Work of the Holy Spirit.

(iii) "...and it sat..." The Holy Spirit rested upon each of the disciples, When the Lord Jesus was baptized, the Holy Spirit of God descended like a dove and alighted upon Him; the Father was fully satisfied and the Holy Spirit of God rested fully upon Him. In the Old Testament we read that when Noah sent out a dove it could not find any resting place, because everywhere it saw only dead bodies; floating upon the waters (Gen,8:9), After the new vegetation began to appear, Noah sent out the dove a second time and the dove returned to Noah it with an olive leaf because it could not find a resting place, The third time it found a resting place in the new vegetation and did not return again to him (Gen,8:10-12), As it was with Noah's dove when it was sent out the second time, the Holy Spirit came upon the Old Testament prophets and apparently rested upon them for a time, But now on the Day of Pentecost, as a result of Christ's finished work of redemption, the Holy Spirit came and rested upon the disciples fully to dwell in them In a special way peculiar to New Testament believers (John 14:17).

(iv) "...upon each of them..." Each one of the disciples was accepted individually, there is no such thing as mass conversion, when a whole community or family is converted en-masse, and each one has to make an individual, personal decision. If the father believes, the whole family is not accepted by God, but only those in the family who have made intelligent decisions for Christ from their hearts (Acts 16:32-34; 18:8) .God does not go by round numbers, if one of the 120 had not repented and had not accepted Christ as his personal Savior, then, only 119 would have received the Holy Spirit, even though that is not a round figure, But in this case all 120 were disciples who had repented and believed in Christ with all their hearts, and that is why the cloven tongues of fire came and rested upon each one of them.

3. THEY SPOKE WITH OTHER TONGUES

"And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance" (Acts 2:4).

(i) "...They were all filled with the Holy Spirit..." God wants His House to be filled with His glory. He begins with filling us individually. Individually we must be filled with the Holy Spirit, and then we shall be filled with the virtues of Christ and the fruit of the Holy Spirit (Gal.5:22). We are exhorted to be filled with the Holy Spirit (Eph.5:18).

In the first place, the disciples were filled with the Holy Spirit on the Day of Pentecost when they were born -again and became a new creation. Secondly, they were filled with the Holy Spirit on special occasions: for example, we read, Peter was filled with the Holy Spirit when he stood before the eminent men among the Jews (Acts 4:4,5,8); the disciples were filled with the Holy Spirit when they were praying (Acts 4:37); and when they were persecuted (Acts 13:52). Thirdly, we read that Stephen was a man filled with the Holy Spirit in a general way in every day life (Acts 6:7). In the same way you also should be filled with the Holy Spirit right at the beginning of your Christian life, and on special occasions of testimony, trial, fervent prayer and ministry, and also in general, every day life. Whenever you feel the work of the flesh is trying to dominate you, and your joy, zeal and boldness for the Lord become cold. Go and wait upon the Lord with fresh repentance and faith, and your strength will be renewed (Isa.40:31).

Many believers are not filled with the Holy Spirit. Very often they are filled with anger, hasty words, unclean thoughts, jealousy, covetousness and ill- feeling towards others. They give room to their old weaknesses, and are overcome by carnality and become carnal believers.

Waiting upon the Lord

The remedy is, they should wait upon the Lord with repentance and faith. "But they that wait upon the LORD shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run, and not be weary; and they shall walk, and not faint" (Isa.40:31). Have you experienced the joy of waiting upon the Lord till you are conscious of communion with Him? In this way have you overcome your discouragement, sorrow, disappointment, fear, jealousy and carnal desires? If not, seek Him with all your heart and you will surely find Him (Jer.29: 13).

Some people wait in prayer with wrong motives -to speak in tongues and to have feelings of emotional ecstasy. First of all, these motives are unscriptural and wrong. There is no mention anywhere in the Bible that we should all speak in tongues at least once in our life, and that this is the proof that we have received the Holy Spirit. Secondly, the method of repeating some words like 'Praise the Lord' dozens of times with increasing speed advocated by some people called Pentecostals is a mechanical method and not a spiritual method. Thirdly, it IS against the Spirit of Christ to declare that all those who have not spoken in tongues have not received the Holy Spirit, thus condemning many true children of God and even devoted servants of God from Martin Luther's and John Wesley's times till today. The very fact that many souls have been saved through these men of God is a proof that God has accepted them and has used and is using them for His glory. Wherefore by their fruits ye shall know them", (Matt.7:20). How wrong it is to say they have not received the Holy Spirit because they have not spoken in tongues! Vain Repetitions

When you go on repeating the same words again and again your mind will become blank. Psalm 136 is full of praise to God, and every verse gives a reason for praise, and is intelligent praise.

But if you repeat words like 'Praise the Lord' or 'Halleluiah' a hundred times at high speed without mentioning any reason for your praise, that will not be intelligent praise and your mind will become practically blank. Waiting upon the Lord does not mean waiting with a blank mind. In fact an empty mind can easily give room for the enemy to work. The man whose mind was empty was attacked by eight demons and his last state became worse than the first (Matt.12:43- 45). Non-Christian religions have advocated keeping the mind blank and repeating certain words rapidly, as helpful spiritual exercises, but the Holy Bible rather than advocating such exercises condemns them. The Lord Jesus said, "But when ye pray, use not vain repetitions, as the heathen do..."(Matt.6:7). Even though a person may appear to be spiritual, when he advises you to say, "Praise the Lord" in quick succession, or "Glory to God", or "Halleluiah", and keep on increasing the speed until you burst into "tongues", you can easily discern that this is not the Spirit of Christ, but another spirit, and this is an angel of light come to lead you astray.

(ii) "...And Began to speak..." The disciples' tongues were loosened, and freed from Nervousness and fear. Many of them had been only fishermen and not scholars, and had no training in public speaking. But now they were granted divine enabling to speak for the Lord. If you are born again the Lord will grant you also such divine enabling, no matter what your physical or educational handicaps may be. "But when they deliver you up, take no thought how or what ye shall speak: for it shall be given you in that same hour what ye shall speak. For it is not ye that speak, but the Spirit of your Father which speaketh in you" (Matt.10:19, 20).

Speaking for the Lord is very essential as you can see from Rom.10:9, 10. "That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation ". So dear child of God, by faith let your tongue be loosened for the Lord. Speak for Him at every opportunity: (1) to unbelievers in testimony; (2) to God, in prayer; and (3) in the House of God (in the congregation of the saints) in church - prayer, in worship and according to His will in the ministry of the Word. Do not allow your talent to lie hidden for lack of diligence in you.

(iii) "...with other tongues..." The 120 disciples did not speak with the tongues of angels (1 Cor.13:1); nor in an unknown tongue; but they spoke with 'other tongues' which could be understood by the people who were gathered around them. They did not speak in a language, which no one could understand and be benefited by.

The people standing around the disciples were unbelievers, who were now filled with wonder as to how these unlearned men of Galilee could speak in the language of other countries. Besides this, they were also impressed by their zeal in declaring the wonderful works of God (Acts 2:11). Thus their hearts were prepared by the Holy Spirit to receive the Gospel, and when Peter gave the word, three thousand souls were converted and testified in the waters of baptism. Their speaking in "other tongues" was blessed by God and made profitable to many. "Wherefore tongues are for a sign, not for them that believe, but to them that believe not" (1 Cor. 14:22).

THE TOWER OF BABEL

The New Testament miracle of tongues on the day of Pentecost is the counterpart of the Old Testament miracle of tongues at the Tower of Babel (Genesis 11); and it sounded the end of the curse and confusion which came upon the men who wanted to make a name and fame for themselves, and did not want to give God the glory. But sad to say, we are rather slow to learn this lesson properly, and we serve the Lord with imperfect service unconsciously seeking some glory for ourselves. Even servants of God seek name and fame for themselves, and say, "Otherwise how will people know to which group or denomination we belong? How will they know that this work is our work, and these converts are our converts?"

Some are very bold and frankly say, "This work is my work and I am the Founder - President", Others do not like to brazenly take glory to themselves personally, and prefer to do so for their "group" or "church" or "denomination"; and to make it sound good and honorable take the name of some great man like Paul, Peter, Apollos, Martin Luther or John Wesley (1 Cor. 1: 13). Some theories like this, "We know all about 1 Cor. 1:12 and 13. But there are many wrong doctrines; therefore we must have a name to identify our group in order that people may know what we stand for. So what harm is there in saying, I am of Paul?" Thus they make the Word of God of none effect (Matt. 15:6). Thank God there are some who in spite of everything are satisfied to be called "Christians" according to Acts 11:26. But let such also be watchful lest Satan tempt them and they become the proudest of all, like the fourth group in 1 Cor. 1:12!

The Holy Spirit of God has come to teach us how to give all the glory to Christ. Who alone is worthy? And be completely delivered from all the confusion of Babel and Babylon, the synonyms of self-glory. "Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come...He shall glorify me" (John 16:13, 14). At the Tower of Babel God wrought a miracle and made the people to speak in different tongues so that they could not understand one another's speech, and they were scattered abroad upon the face of all the earth (Gen. 11 :8). That very thing happened to them which they had wanted to avoid. Their unity could not keep them united.

On the Day of Pentecost exactly the opposite phenomenon happened. Every man heard the disciples speaking in his own language, describing the wonderful works of God and giving all the glory not to man but to God. Although they spoke various languages they realized that they were one family in Christ. Soon after. There arose great persecution because of which they were scattered physically but were united in their love for the Lord (Acts 8:4).

Three kinds of "Tongues"

There are three kinds of tongues mentioned in the Word of God.

(1) "Other tongues" which did not need any interpretation as every one present heard the message in his own language in a miraculous way (Acts 2:4).

(2) "A tongue" (1 Cor. 14:27) which needed interpretation as it was not understood by those present. Of this the Apostle Paul has laid down by the Holy Spirit as follows: "If there be no interpreter, let him keep silence in the church" (1 Cor. 14:28).

(3) "A tongue spoken not to man but to God" "For he that speaketh in an unknown tongue speaketh not unto men, but unto God: for no man understandeth him; howbeit in the spirit he speaketh mysteries".

For such cases also it is laid down, "let him keep silence in the church; and let him speak to himself, and to God" (1 Cor.14:2, 28). If you go against what is clearly laid down in the Word of God, you disobey at your peril! One peril is this, you will fall an easy prey to deceiving spirits who come in the form of an angel of light.

Beware of those who speak in "a tongue" in a manner which does not fall under any known Scriptural category, but show marks of confusion and disorder such as:

1. More than two or three speaking in tongues at a gathering (1Cor.14:27);
2. Many speaking in tongues at the same time (1 Cor.14:27);
3. Speaking in tongues without interpretation (1Cor.14:27);
4. Saying, "Our spirit cannot be controlled, and we cannot control ourselves from speaking even though it is in a disorderly way" (1Cor. 14:32);
5. Causing confusion in the assembly even to the knowledge of unbelievers (1 Cor.14:33);
6. Women speaking in tongues in the church, which is unscriptural whether with or without interpretation. (1 Cor.14:34).

Finally in this connection, "If any man think himself to be a prophet, or spiritual, let him acknowledge that the things that I write unto you are the commandments of the Lord. But if any man be ignorant, let him be ignorant" (1 Cor.14:37, 38).

(iv) "...as the spirit gave them utterance..." There was no effort on the part of the disciples to speak in "other tongues"; apparently they had no previous conception of it, and never expected it, nor did they seek it; it was a sovereign act of God and the Spirit Himself gave them utterance.

The Word of God never exhorts us anywhere to expect it or seek it. On the other hand we are exhorted not to speak in tongues, because even though we speak with the tongues of men and angels and have not love, we would only be like a sounding brass or a tinkling cymbal; and so we should seek not to speak in "a tongue", but rather to love and to prophesy (1Cor.14:1-3).

How sad and how dangerous it is to seek those things which God does not want us to seek! Let us beware of committing this serious blunder. When the 120 disciples spoke with "other tongues" on the Day of Pentecost it was with a meaning and a purpose, and it was in the perfect plan of God, Who is always wonderful in counsel and excellent in working (Isa.28:29). Of all that happened at that time there was nothing irrelevant, extra or unnecessary. The more enlightenment we receive, the more intelligently we will be able to say that as always, so also on the Day of Pentecost "He hath done all things well" (Mark 7:37).

INWARD WORKING OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

We have considered some features, of what happened on the Day of Pentecost, which could be heard and seen. The Word of God tells us that at the same time the Holy Spirit of God wrought a fourfold inward work in the waiting disciples. Although this was a fourfold work it was one work.

Let us humbly seek God's enlightenment as we study His Word.

4. They received the promise of the Father

"And being assembled... with them (Jesus) commanded them that they should not depart from Jerusalem, but wait for the promise of the Father; which, saith he, ye have heard of me" (Acts 1: 4). Evidently this promise was fulfilled to the disciples on the Day of Pentecost. What is this promise of the Father? Please read the following scriptures: (1) John 14: 16-18. The promise of the Father was to send to them the Comforter, Who would abide with them forever, so that they would not be left as orphans; (2) John 14: 17. The Comforter; the Holy Spirit was already with them, but from the appointed day, He would be in them. The disciples were promised the indwelling of the Holy Spirit. This was the promise of the Father, and by this promise they became His children, and received the right to call Him "Father" (Rom.8: 15).

The condition for receiving the Holy Spirit is repentance and faith. The 120 disciples had already fulfilled these conditions, but because the Day of Pentecost, the appointed day, was not yet fully come they had to wait for ten days. In our day, those who repent and believe do not have to wait, but receive the Holy Spirit the moment they hear the Word of God and believe it with all their heart. Like the people in the house of Cornelius, we receive the Holy Spirit the moment we hear the Word of God and believe it with all our heart. When we are born again we receive the promise of the Father, that is the indwelling of the Holy Spirit, and now we also can call Him our heavenly Father according to Romans 8:15. Thus we see, on the Day of Pentecost, the disciples received the indwelling of the Holy Spirit.

5. They were baptized with the Holy Spirit

"For John truly baptized with water; but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost not many days hence" (Acts 1: 5). The Lord Jesus spoke these words before His ascension. It is quite clear that this promise of the Lord Jesus was also fulfilled to the disciples on the Day of Pentecost. What does this "Baptism with the Holy Spirit" mean? John the Baptist referred to this "Baptism with the Holy Spirit", as recorded in Matt.3: 11; Mark 1: 8; Luke 3: 16; and John 1: 33. Joined to Christ, and Joined in Christ.

The Lord was preparing the disciples for an event very great in the plan of God. It was the long awaited fulfillment of the promise God had made to Abraham, "In thee shall all families of the earth be blessed". For many centuries only the family of Abraham had been enjoying this blessing. Now the time was come when all families of the earth were going to be blessed in Christ, as it is written, "There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus" (Gal.3: 28). "For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free; and have been all made to drink into one Spirit. For the body is not one member, but many" (1 Cor.12: 13, 14). The Body of Christ, the Church, was to come into being on the Day of Pentecost.

This is a tremendous event as you will realize when you understand (1) that the Church is for all nations, and in the Church all the believers are one; (2) that the Church is the Bride of Christ (Rev.19: 7), for whom God and all creation are waiting (Eph.5: 25-27); and (3) that it is through this Church the manifold wisdom of God has to be manifested according to God's eternal purpose (Eph.3: 10,11).

That is why this Baptism has been foreshadowed in many ways from the beginning; for example, when the children of Israel crossed the Red Sea it was a fore-shadow or figure of the Baptism of the Holy Spirit. They "were all baptized unto Moses" and "did all drink the same spiritual drink" (1 Cor.10: 2, 4). they all became one body of people because they all had a common spiritual experience, and a common future hope of the Land of Promise. They had all been slaves in Egypt, all had been saved by the blood of the Passover Lamb, and all had the same spiritual meat and same spiritual drink. In Christ we also by one Spirit have been baptized into one body and have been all made to drink into one Spirit. We have "One Spirit" dwelling in .us all, and this implies that we are all "one body". The children of Israel "were all baptized unto Moses in the cloud and in the sea" and this is a figure of believers being baptized unto Christ by the Baptism of the Holy Spirit: that is, they are joined to Christ and identified with Christ, and also joined to one another and identified with one another.

(2) Christ's Baptism in water sheds light upon this Baptism of the Holy Spirit (Matt.3: 1 -17). United with Christ in His Death, Burial and Resurrection John the Baptist preached, "Repent ye; for, the kingdom of heaven is at hand" (Matt.3: 2) .Many went to him and repented and were baptized by him in the river Jordan. Then the Lord Jesus also went to him for baptism. There is some common meaning in the baptism of repentant sinners and in the baptism of Jesus. For the Lord Jesus, it meant this; "Father, I am ready for the great baptism You have appointed for Me: that is, I am ready to die in the sinner's place and go through the ordeal of suffering and atoning death; ready for the burial; and ready to be raised by You". For us it means, "I believe that by repenting and accepting Christ as my own personal Savior, I have been united with Christ; that is to say, by the Baptism of the Holy Spirit I have been united with Him in His death, burial and resurrection. Now with a good conscience I give witness to this symbolically by being baptized in water.

(3) Christ's reference to His own sufferings, death, burial and resurrection as "Baptism" sheds more light on the "Baptism of the Holy Spirit". We are made partakers of His sufferings and His Baptism has become our Baptism. When the word "baptism" is used by the Lord Jesus in other contexts like Matt.20: 22 and Luke 12:50,"8vidently the purpose is to shed more light from various aspects upon the meaning of the great experience of "the Baptism of the Holy Spirit".

Lord Jesus said to Zebedee's sons James and John, "Ye shall... indeed be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with" (Matt.20:23). First of all, what did He mean by "the baptism that I am baptized with?" It is clear that He was referring to His own sufferings, culminating in His death, burial and resurrection. We know that Christ's death, burial and resurrection, are central to the Gospel, in the fullest sense, and absolutely central to our salvation (1 Cor.15: 3, 4). No doubt, that is why Christ is referring to it again and again as "His baptism". When John the Baptist baptized Him in the river Jordan that was only a figure of this "Baptism" that was awaiting Him.

Secondly, what did the Lord Jesus mean by saying, "Ye shall indeed...be baptized..? This statement must have been fulfilled to these disciples at sometime after it was spoken. When was that? It was fulfilled on the Day of Pentecost when these two disciples, James and John along with others, were baptized with the Holy Spirit. At that time by the inward work of the Holy Spirit, the death, burial and resurrection of the Lord Jesus became their own; His Baptism became their Baptism;

and they were transformed and became a new creation, so that they could say, "We are risen with Christ!" and from that day onwards they became partakers of His sufferings, and endured persecution for Christ's sake.

HOW MANY BAPTISMS OF THE HOLY SPIRIT ARE THERE?

Some Pentecostals say that "Baptism with the Holy Spirit" (Matt.3: 11), "Baptism by the Holy Spirit" (1 Cor.12: 13), and "Baptism with the baptism of the Lord Jesus" (Matt.20: 22; Luke12: 50) are not one but different experience. And then besides these the term prepositions "by", "with", and "of" do not seem to indicate to see only two Baptisms; one a spiritual experience and another testimony to be given before others by immersion in water.

Usage of the word "by": This indicates that the Baptism of the Holy Spirit is not given by John the Baptist or by any servant of God, but "by" the Holy Spirit. Usage of the word "with": The Baptism of the Holy Spirit is not "with" water but "with the Holy Spirit". Usage of the word "of": Those who were baptized by John the Baptist are said to have been "baptized of John" (Matt.3:6). According to this usage "Baptism by the Holy Spirit" can also be called "Baptism of the Holy Spirit".

(4) Romans 6:3 sheds more light upon the Baptism of the Holy Spirit. "Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death?" (Romans 6:3). The meaning of the words "baptized into Jesus Christ"

This cannot mean strictly all who have been baptized by immersion in water, because we know there are many who have been baptized in water but are not born again. Mere baptism in water does not have spiritual significance. It is more appropriate to say that "baptized into Jesus Christ" means "all who are united in the death, burial and resurrection of Christ by the inward working of the Holy Spirit". By the baptism of the Holy Spirit normally all such should have given testimony to this by being baptized in water; both in Apostle Paul's time and also in our time. But even those who have not been so baptized in water, if they are truly born again it is true that they have been "baptized into Christ" and "baptized into His death".

When Paul left Jerusalem for Damascus he had started out as terrible as the raging dragon of Greek legend which breathed out fire and smoke from its nostrils; only Saul "was breathing out threatening and slaughter" upon Christians. When he saw the great light he fell down upon the earth; and when he rose up he was a new man. Was it an emotional change, or was it will -power? No, it was the inward work of the Holy Spirit which he describes later, "*I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not " but Christ liveth in me"* (Gal.2:20). That very moment he died to his old I life; his old nature was buried in the burial of Christ; and he rose up a new man, risen with Christ by the power of Christ's resurrection working in him. This was his inward spiritual experience, the baptism of the Holy Spirit.

This baptism was followed soon after by baptism in water. Baptism in water without the baptism of the Holy Spirit is a dead ceremony, like a corpse without life. The meaning of the baptism of the Holy Spirit is explained by baptism by immersion in water. "Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death? Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so

we also should walk in newness of life. For if we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection:" (Romans 6:3-5).

Union of Believers in the Body of Christ

5) "For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free; and have been all made to drink into one Spirit" (1Cor.12:13).

This verse sheds still more light on the Baptism of the Holy Spirit. As a result of our unification with the death, burial and resurrection of the Lord Jesus, we are dead to our old life, old relationships and old loyalties; we are no longer Jew or Gentile, bond or free, but have been all united in the Body of Christ.

The human body is the most perfect example of unity. Closest friends may fallout, and brothers may be divided; but the different members in a human body work together in marvelous harmony. In a similar way, born again children of God will live together and work together if they are 100% under the Lordship of Christ, and hold Him as the Head (Col.2:19). Perfect oneness of believers as members in the Body of Christ is a great mystery and can be understood only by the grace of God. To this perfection God is leading us. Let us not say it is impossible, there are lions on the way. Let us not be slack like those who did not believe and could not enter into God's promises, but died on the way, "whose carcasses fell in the wilderness" (Heb.3:17); but let us humbly and diligently press on to perfection (Heb.6: 1,2), as Abraham pressed on to the Heavenly City (Heb.11 :10).

Secondly, we see that on the day of Pentecost the disciples were baptized by the Holy Spirit into one body by identification with Him in His death, burial and resurrection and the Church which is the Body of Christ came into being.

6. THE HOLY SPIRIT CAME UPON THEM

But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth" (Acts 1: 8).

(i) "...ye shall receive power..." Having received the Holy Spirit, Who had come to dwell within them, making their bodies the temple of the Holy Spirit (1Cor.6: 19) and the temple of God (1Cor.3: 16), and having been united with Christ in His death, burial and resurrection by the Baptism of the Holy Spirit, and been brought into a new relationship with Christ, and made members of one another in the Body of Christ of which Christ Himself is the Head, the next essential thing, which was already provided for the disciples on the Day of Pentecost, was endowment with power from on high. The Lord Jesus referred to this endowment in Luke 24:49. From the Day of Pentecost they were to be His mighty witnesses. Very soon people would be saying of them, "These... have turned the world upside down" (Acts 17:6). Christ working in them, that is in the Church, would be like the stone cut without hands, which reduced to powder the great image of Nebuchadnezzar and then filled the whole earth (Dan.2: 34,35). That is why it was essential for the Lord to endue the disciples with power from on high for their Herculean task.

This endowment with power is provided in Christ for all believers, and it can be appropriated and enjoyed by them from the day they are born again (Isa.41: 15; Eph.1: 3). If they wait upon the Lord and claim these promises by faith, they can enjoy them in their daily lives (Isa.40: 31).

(ii) "...after the Holy Spirit is come upon you..." Please note the words, "upon you"; they indicate the anointing of the Holy Spirit upon them. The Holy Spirit came to be in the disciples on the Day of Pentecost by the indwelling of the Holy Spirit, like the oil in the cakes of the meat offering made of fine flour mingled with oil; and besides this, the anointing of the Holy Spirit would also be upon them, like the oil in the unleavened wafers anointed with oil (Lev.2: 4). By virtue of this anointing upon them, the disciples were able to preach the Gospel boldly and clearly, beginning from Jerusalem and reaching to the uttermost parts of the world.

This is true for us also. On the day of our new birth we have been anointed by the Holy Spirit. "Now he which stablisheth us with you in Christ, and hath anointed us, is God" (2 Cor. 1: 21). Let us look at Aaron's anointing. Only Aaron's head was anointed. By remaining under his head, his whole body, including his beard, received the benefit of the anointing. "It is like the precious ointment upon the head, that ran down upon the beard, even Aaron's beard: that went down to the skirts of his garments" (Psa.133: 2). we would not say that Aaron's head was anointed, but rather, Aaron was anointed. Our Head is Christ. He is the Anointed One. The very word "Messiah" in Hebrew, or "Christos" in Greek means, "The anointed One". When Christ the Head of the Body is anointed, that means the whole body is anointed; and by virtue of being members in His Body we also come under His anointing. However we should not accept it passively, but strive to remain under His Headship in all things, in our every day life and ministry. As we remain under Christ's Headship, like Aaron's beard, we shall enjoy the anointing oil running down all over us.

Evidently, Aaron was not anointed with a teaspoonful of oil, but rather with a large bucketful of oil, poured on his head and drenching his whole body, thus representing the Lord Jesus Christ, our great High Priest, Who is anointed with the oil of gladness above His fellows (Heb.1 :9). "...for God giveth not the Spirit by measure unto him" (John 3:34).

How we should long to remain under His Lordship, and enjoy His anointing in our personal experience! "But the anointing, which ye have received of him abideth in you, and ye need not that any man teach you: but as the same anointing teacheth you of all things, and is truth, and is no lie, and even as it hath taught you, ye shall abide in him" (1 John 2:27). Obey Him, abide in Him, learn from Him, and be used by Him as His anointed messenger.

Thirdly, we see that ON THE DAY OF PENTECOST THE DISCIPLES WERE ANOINTED BY THE HOLY SPIRIT TO BE HIS WITNESSES.

7. THEY WERE FILLED WITH THE HOLY SPIRIT

(i) and they were all filled with the Holy Ghost..." (Acts 2:4). It is inconceivable that God will require us to give Him three -fourths of our lives and leave one -fourth to other gods. He has redeemed us with the precious blood of the cross and He is worthy that we give Him all. He gave all for our sakes, and He demands all from us. It is a normal Christian life to be filled with the Holy Spirit from the time we are born again.

This means that we should never compromise with the old nature and never allow any room for it in our daily activities, like giving in to a little grumbling, a little quarrelling, a little bad temper, a little unclean friendship, a little defiling thought, and so on. We should resist the old nature at every step. "Resist the devil, and he will flee from you" (James 4:7). We should pray fervently with the longing to be filled with the Holy Spirit.

To be filled with the Holy Spirit means to be filled with Christ, to be filled with the fruit of the Holy Spirit, with joy, peace, long suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness and temperance (Gal. 5:22,23).

On the Day of Pentecost Peter was filled with the Holy Spirit, but when he went to Antioch (Gal. 2:11), he withdrew from eating with believers who were once Gentiles. He feared the Jews and dissembled (Gal.2: 12, 13). There is no doubt that at that moment he was not filled with the Holy Spirit. Once filled does not mean always filled. So we need to be filled with the Holy Spirit again and again, and also endeavor to be like Stephen who was always filled with the Holy Spirit (Acts 6:5).

(ii). "...by their fruits ye shall know them" (Matt.7:20). Please remember that the shaking of the body, feeling an electric shock passing through your body, and your lips moving in an uncontrollable way, are not called the fruit of the Spirit. When you are filled with the Spirit, you will be filled with Christ and with the fruit of the Spirit. When you are born again, as a vessel your capacity will be small. Yet you must be filled with the Spirit. When you grow spiritually your capacity will increase, and to be filled with the Holy Spirit will have a greater meaning for you, and implies greater obedience in proportion to what you have received from the Lord.

(8) THE PROPHECY OF THE OLD TESTAMENT PROPHET JOEL WAS FULFILLED ON THE DAY OF PENTECOST

"But this is that which was spoken by the prophet Joel; and it shall come to pass in the last days, saith God, I will pour out of my Spirit upon all flesh: and your son's and your daughters shall prophesy, and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams: And on my servants and on my handmaidens I will pour out in those days of my Spirit; and they shall prophesy" (Acts 2:16-18).

Here we have a prophecy that the Holy Spirit will be poured out, not just sprinkled; and this word "poured out" signifies generous giving to all, sons and daughters, young and old, even men servants and women -servants. This has been fulfilled from Pentecost onwards, and will continue till the Rapture. Note the words, "whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be saved"(v.21). This is the subject of many Old Testament prophecies. This prophecy in Joel is only an example.

Conclusion:

The door of salvation was opened wide to all nations on the Day of Pentecost. Thus we have seen what happened on the Day of Pentecost. Firstly, certain features accompanied the outpouring of the Spirit which are of symbolic significance; happened on that day, as on other important occasions, like the giving of the laws to Moses and the children of Israel, the birth of Christ, His baptism, His death upon the cross, and His Resurrection. These features do not have to be repeated in our experience today; however, their spiritual significance is true for us also.

Secondly, on the Day of Pentecost (1) the disciples received the indwelling of the Holy Spirit, (2) were anointed and endued with power from on high, and (3) were baptized of the Holy Spirit into the Body of Christ, which is the Church. All this happens to us also when we repent and believe and are born again.

On that Day the disciples were filled with the Holy Spirit, but they had to be filled again and again. We also need to be exercised in the spirit to be filled. Whereas there is no exhortation to the believers to wait in prayer to receive the Holy Spirit, or the Baptism or the Anointing of the Holy Spirit, there is an exhortation to be filled with the Holy Spirit (Eph.5: 18). However, we have to remember that to be filled with the Holy Spirit is not a physical experience on some particular day, but it means to be filled with the fruit of the Holy Spirit (Gal.5: 22). It means revealing the nature of Christ even during times of great temptation or spiritual strain.

Thirdly, all Scriptural prophecies concerning this great salvation, which God has prepared for us through His Beloved Son, the Lord Jesus Christ, were fulfilled on the Day of Pentecost and are continuing to be fulfilled in our experience also.

We are blessed with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ (Eph.1: 3). May the Lord help us to appropriate all these blessings by faith, and thus enjoy our spiritual inheritance to bring glory and honor to His Name. Amen.