

Hebron Messenger

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AUGUST 11, 2002

NO.16

WHAT HAPPENED ON THE DAY OF PENTECOST? —4

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?

(1) 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 fulfilment 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 foreshadow 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 Saviour, 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 be came partakers of His sufferings, and endured persecution for Christ's sake.

(To be contd.)

C.E.D.

LETTER FOR PRAISE AND PRAYER

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17-7-2002

Dear Fellow-Believers in Christ,

Greetings in the precious and prevailing Name of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, the Lamb without blemish,

without spot, foreordained before the foundation of the world for our redemption but was manifest in these last times for us (1 Pet.1: 19,20). Praise be to Him, Who is the Lord of lords and King of kings, Who shall overcome the kings with the 'beast' that make war with Him as we read in Rev .17: 13,14. As called and chosen, we may be found faithful and true followers of Him, and share His victory and coming reign.

We read in Eph.6: 12 concerning this spiritual we are against spiritual wickedness in high places, and 'we are called to be strong in the Lord, putting on the whole armour of God. We need the Holy Spirit's inward strengthening, with prayer and supplication in the Spirit (Eph.3: 16; 6:18) to fit us for this warfare, which is no doubt intensifying, as the coming of the Lord draweth nigh. Hence we may continue our thoughts of the previous issue, speaking about our willingness to be wholly surrendered to God and His will.

This is true again in the REVELATION of His Word, which makes it fully clear. Paul again and again calls himself the "bond slave" of Christ, yielded to Him wholly to do His will, not his own. " I beseech you therefore: brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice" - unto God. (Rom.12: 1). Paul is thus exhorting the believers; "Yield yourself unto God ...Neither yield unto sin". "...to whom ye YIELD yourselves servants to obey, His servants ye are" (Rom.6:16). "...as ye have YIELDED your members servants to uncleanness and to INIQUITY...even so NOW YIELD your members servants to righteousness unto holiness" (v.19). 'But now being made free (Greek) from sin, (God's act in Christ) and become servants to God, (your act of surrender, needful to make you realise that freedom in Christ), ye have your fruit unto holiness" (v.22), i.e. you know the power, blessing, fulness and fruitage of the Holy Spirit, to whom ye have now yielded. The repetition in Romans 6 is significant, and the significant position of this exhortation to yield. It follows the 5th chapter of Romans. That is, as soon as the believer is justified by faith and receives the Holy Ghost (v.5) he is urged to yield himself to God. Wholly and absolutely. Why is this? Because Paul knows the twofold nature of the believer -knows that with whatsoever he would be filled, to that he must yield. He would have us know that if we would be filled with the Spirit, we must yield to Him, otherwise we would go on living in the power of the flesh. Thus the absolute yielding of our lives to God is the first great step after conversion urged in the Word, the Word of revelation, besides understood by reason.

Upon every convert having received the Spirit, while his heart is glowing with the love of Christ Who has saved him, should be pressed home, earnestly and tenderly, the claim of that Christ upon his REDEEMED LIFE, and His loving call to him to yield to Him in absolute unreserved surrender. There is no other way in reason, in revelation or in practice. Many a time we fail in counseling our born again believers. Invariably they are exhorted to study the Word, to be diligent in prayer, to abound in good works, to give of their substance to the Lord, to be faithful in Church services, and to busy themselves in her countless round of activities. But in omitting the one supreme condition, which God reveals, we fail to lift the single floodgate, which alone will let into our lives His coveted fulness. Thus this act of surrender is the pivot upon which the gate of His fulness swings open.

Whether long years in coming to this experience, or reaching it at single bound, every consecrated child of God knows that this act of surrender to God was the supreme step that brought him into fulness of a closer walk with God. Our experience may have been complicated, confused, difficult to interpret, but this act of surrender was the culmination of it all. This fulness of the Spirit, the outcome of such an act, is God's response of grace to that act, all will testify. The lives of such men as Carey, Paton, Living stone, vividly show forth this truth. The fulness and power that marked their lives from the divine side, went hand in hand on the human side, with an unqualified, unwavering surrender of life in its full sweep, to do the will of Him that sent them. Only such can bring His fulness. God helping we may continue the meditation of this subject in our next issue.

We are grateful to the Lord and thankful to the saints and brethren in the ministry in the church at Hebron for their incessant prayers, as well as heir Joint -labours, in helping forward the completion of the new temporary structure with asbestos sheets to cover an area of 65 ft. by 110 ft. in Hermon compound. As directed by the court order we had to make alternative arrangement for our gatherings and meetings, until we can get the favourable verdict of the Judiciary, for the restructuring and renovation of the Hebron church hall. Let us pray for the speedy sanction of the same, so that we may be enabled to continue our services unhindered in the same Hebron premises, dedicated for worship and services by His servant, late Bro.Bakht Singh. Until then we have no other alternative but make use of the newly built structure in Hermon. Pray that the Lord may abundantly reward the labours and timely and sacrificial services of many at all levels for the above.

Please pray for Bro. Kenneth Timothy, (son-in-law of Bro.K.Phillip) as he has suddenly developed Cardiac problem during his recent visit to India. God willing he has to undergo open heart surgery at Madras Medical Mission Hospital on 5th of August.

God's servant Bro. M. Paul and saints at Tuticorin covet our prayers for the dedication of their newly built place of worship, to be named Rehoboth with a thanksgiving service, God willing on 13th August. Also pray for the marriage of Bro. J. Robinson with Sis. D. Priscilla, on 14th August God willing, in the same place of worship, as they have been called into the service of the Lord.

Praying that we all be led into the enjoyment of the fulness of life in Christ, as we seek to abide in Him and be filled with His Spirit,

I remain,
Yours in His grace,
K.PHILLIP

Eph. 3 .16; Eph. 5: 18; John 15: 1-5, 16

I HAVE OVERCOME THE WORLD—6 BAKHT SINGH

The Lord Jesus Christ will make you free from your sinful life. When, you let Him pour the living water into you, that living water will make you free automatically from shameful and defiling habits. No one can deliver you. Only the Lord Jesus can do it by pouring that new life into you. New life brings true worship. That is why in John 4:14, our Lord spoke about the living water, and in verse 24, He spoke to her as to how she should worship in 1 spirit and in truth. The secret of knowing how to worship the Lord in spirit and in truth, will automatically change you, transform you, and deliver you.

God is a Spirit, and in our spirit, and by our spirit, we can touch Him, feel Him, speak to Him, and be governed by Him, and by that we can get divine life day by day. Then automatically, you will find that same life coming out like a bubbling river. In a short time our Lord delivered that woman from her sinful life, and taught her how to worship God in spirit and in truth. God is a Spirit and His Spirit can come into our spirit. Every human being is composed of three things: spirit, soul and body. There are three parts in the human body; bones, muscles and blood make the body. Affection, emotion and will- power make the soul. Similarly, we find three things in the spirit; conscience to hear the voice of God and to discern between good and evil, a longing to know God and also intuition. Because of sin we have a dead spirit, a darkened soul, and a defiled body. That is why God's power must come into us. God is a Spirit, and He can only come into our spirit, not into our bones or brain. If you want Him to live in you, you must have a clean and purified spirit.

The Lord Jesus Christ is the King of kings. He cannot live in our filthy hearts. We are so defiled that unless the Lord Jesus Christ undertakes to cleanse us with His blood, we cannot become clean. He cannot do it by compulsion. We have to say, "Lord, wash me and come into me. Forgive me of all my sins, and transform me and make me such a well", and then He comes in. Then you will find a threefold change coming into you. Your dead spirit becomes a quickened spirit, the darkened soul becomes an enlightened soul, and the defiled body becomes a cleansed body. Then the light of God will shine upon your face.

The power of God will work in and through you day by day, and wherever you go, the same power will be at your disposal to give you victory: victory over your temptations, victory over every tribulation, victory in family, nakedness, sword and persecution, and in the same way, victory over habits of sin. There are some who are slaves to cigarette and tobacco. They do not smoke openly but secretly. One can see it from their faces mouths and lips. They are defiled people, miserable people, rotten people, ruined people, bound like slaves. Come now to the Lord Jesus for complete deliverance, and that will be your victory. "These things I have spoken unto you, that in me ye might have peace. In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world" (John 16:33)."

(Concluded)

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NO.17

WHAT HAPPENED ON THE DAY OF PENTECOST? —5

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 a 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 "baptised 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: never- theless 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 marvellous 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. (To be contd.) C.E.D.

LETTER FOR PRAISE AND PRAYER

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13-8-2002

Dear Fellow -Believers in Christ,

Greetings in the precious and mighty Name of our Lord Jesus Christ, of Whose fullness we have received grace that brings us into the enjoyment of His salvation, at the same time teaching us or disciplining us, that we should live soberly, righteously and godly in this present world, looking for the glorious appearing of our great God and Saviour Jesus Christ. May the Lord enable us all, according to the measure of the gift of Christ by the same grace to serve Him and His Church, to attain to this glorious goal (Titus 2:11-13; John 1 :16; Eph.4:7).

Apostle Paul mentions in Eph.3:7 that he was made a minister according to the gift of the grace of God given unto him -that he should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ (v.8). Later in verses 14-17 he gives himself to prayer that the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, would grant to His whole family, in heaven and earth, according to the riches of His glory "to be strengthened with might by his Spirit in the inner man"

This strengthening by His Spirit in the inner man is thus a pre-requisite to all that follows, related to the profound statement of divine blessing -in v.19, "filled with all the fulness of God"- to be the enjoyment of His saints. Since we have been considering some aspects related to the fulness of the work of the Holy Spirit in our lives in the previous issues, the consideration of these verses may add to the practical out-working of the same in our lives. All this enrichment of heart was before the mind of the Apostle, when he prayed thus for the Ephesian saints (Eph.3: 16-19).

The first word for strength, "that ye may be strengthened with might, or power" has the sense of strength to rule, to suppress, and to dominate. It covers that work of the Holy Spirit by which evils that would rise up and flood the heart with wickedness are effectually hindered from doing so and the cleansing already experienced may be maintained by the Spirit's almighty energy. This cleansing is a means to a positive work that Christ may dwell in our hearts by faith...in love.

The Spirit of God dwelling in the body of the believer is one thing, and most blessed and indispensable. CHRIST DWELLING in the HEART is another and consequent matter. As to the former, the Apostle had already said of these believers, that having believed they were sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise (Eph.1 :13); so this was a fact of their experience, though not on that account to be assumed to be true of all who profess to believe; yet subsequently he is asking that Christ may dwell in their hearts. It is therefore evident that this latter might not be the case, for if the indwelling of Christ in the heart were an inevitable accompaniment of regeneration, the petition would be out of place. The possibility of not being so is revealed as a fact in the Galatian disciples. For their conversion Paul laboured much in body and soul, and so effective was the working of God in them that the apostle could write of them as having suffered many things for Christ, and that they had been running well (3:4, 5:7). Yet much later he said with sorrow, "My little children,...I travail in birth again until Christ be formed in you" (Gal.4:19).

We have to admit that the subsequent experience of believers has been more or less on this line. Many looking into their heart find there habitually, thoughts, feelings, resolves which are of the flesh, not of Christ. Drawing aside the veil that we might see His own inward life, Christ said; "I am meek and lowly in heart" (Matt. 11 :29) ; whereas too often we, His followers have to confess, "PROUD am I, and SELF-WILLED in HEART"

The Holy Spirit dwells as a Person in that believer who by faith has received Him, but Christ as a Person is at the right hand of God the Father. It is morally that Christ indwells the heart, by His moral qualities being REPRODUCED in us by the HOLY SPIRIT. As far as His purity, meekness, lowliness, gentleness, restfulness, love, devotion to the will of God, boldness in witness, patience under trial and other such features mark us as they marked Him, so far He indwells us and no further. The Holy Spirit is indeed within that this process may go on in the believer, but this work may be arrested and even undone -one who in some definite measure was Christ like turning to evil, as did David and Demas, and the beautiful lineaments of Christ fading from the heart and life, to be replaced by the former un Christ like features. May the Lord enable us all to co-operate and be committed to the voice of the Holy Spirit day by day, for the FORMATION of CHRIST in our INNER MAN, in fuller measure, strengthened by His might.

Let us pray for our country, and all who are at the helm of affairs for its proper governance as it crosses over into another year of its independence on August 15th, that we may live peaceably with freedom for the worship of our Lord Jesus Christ. as well as sharing His faith.

Please pray for the Special gatherings for Youth as well as the church as a whole, arranged in various assemblies particularly the following places -Bro.Paul Sudhakar at Beersheba Cuddapah, Bro. Theodore Reginald at New Jerusalem, Tirupati. Also the Gospel raid to be held at Porur, outskirts of Chennai the same day in which about 500 or so will be participating, God willing.

Pray for the comfort of God's servant Bro. Prabhudas of Bethany, Gudur, as his wife, Sis.(Mrs.) Vajramma was called to Glory on 8th August. Also pray for the treatment and plastic surgery of Sis.

(Mrs.) Vasanthakumari (daughter- in -law of God's servant, Bro. Sathyanandam of Varagani) God willing in Chennai.

Bro. Kenneth Timothy had a successful operation and is discharged from M,M.M. Hospital and convalescing in Chennai for six weeks. We, as a family are grateful for the prayers of many for his recovery.

Bro. Rajendra, God's servant at Miraj has been suffering from Cancer and hospitalised there. Pray for him and family as his case is very critical, doctors not giving much hope.
Praying that we all may come into the grace and goodness of Apostle Paul's prayer in Eph.3:14-19, to press on unto His fulness -the fulness of God,

I remain,
Yours in His grace,
K.PHILLIP

Eph. 3:16; Eph. 5:16-21; Rom. 8 : 2, 16, 28-30

SECRET OF A HAPPY HOME

BAKHT SINGH

Scripture Reading: Eph. 5: 22,28; 6:17 1 Pet. 3: 1-7

In these verses from Ephesians and 1 Peter, Apostles Paul and Peter reveal the great secret of a very happy home for those who are joined by God. If God's Word is followed as it is, then all those who are joined by Him can enjoy God's favour in fulness. Many people want to marry only for the sake of happiness and honour. They have no real interest in the Word of God. They are more concerned about their own ideas than God's Word. In many cases marriages are a failure, because they depend upon their cleverness, wisdom, family or property. Howsoever clever one may be, one can be blessed only by obeying the Word of God. God knows the end from the beginning. "Declaring the end from the beginning, and from ancient times the things that are not yet done, saying, My counsel shall stand, and I will do all my pleasure" (Isa.46:10). That is why we are given God's Word for instruction, inspiration and guidance. Knowing beforehand all the problems which we have to face upon the earth, God has given His Word to us. He knows us from the very beginning of our lives. He knows us before we were conceived. "Before I formed thee in the belly, I knew thee; and before thou camest forth out of the womb I sanctified thee, and I ordained thee a prophet unto the nations" (Jer.1 :5). He knows all about us. He knows our past and He knows our future. He knows our name and He knows exactly what we are. Our safety is in being governed by Him by His Spirit and by His Word. We will never know what will happen tomorrow. But He knows exactly what will happen tomorrow. That is why we are given the Word of God to guide us day by day and help us in every situation.

Marriages are arranged by God from the beginning of the creation. That is why to God marriages are very sacred. "And the LORD God said, It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him an help meet for him"(Gen.2:18). God gave to the first man dominion, power and authority over the whole creation and also gave him a very healthy body. At that time, there was no sin, sickness or curse. Though God had given health, wisdom, strength and all things, yet there was something lacking in Adam's life. His joy was not full. So God wanted to give him a help meet for companionship, friendship and fellowship. God had planned that whatsoever He had given to Adam he might enjoy it through his companion and through his life-partner. That is why we find, to God marriage is a very sacred relationship. Those who want a happy married life must be governed by the Word of God, and not by

their own wisdom or cleverness or talents or qualification. We are given this wonderful Book to solve all our problems, and meet all our needs. The Holy Spirit helps us to understand the Word of God. We need heavenly wisdom to understand heavenly things, not worldly wisdom. Before we can understand the Word of God we must have the Spirit of God. See 1Cor.2: 14. "But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned". That means, by our natural wisdom we cannot understand or enjoy the Word of God. Though we may be very highly qualified in worldly knowledge, yet we can be a failure.

I met a man some years ago who had traveled round the world seven times. He wrote about 32 books. He built a nice house with every kind of high-class furniture. Going by his testimony, his marriage was a failure. Anyone could see from his face that he and his wife were not happy. With all the knowledge of 32 books he never knew how to have a happy home. The same thing happens with others also. With all their knowledge and fame, their home is an unhappy one. They may be clever in earning money and multiplying it, but we find that their homes are unhappy. There is no oneness between husband and wife and no real happiness between them. We see this in many parts of the world.

We see from God's Word that He is a living God and wants us to have full joy and happiness. That is the purpose of God and that is why the Lord Jesus came into this world. See John 16:24 and 15:7. "Hitherto have ye asked nothing in my name: ask, and ye shall receive, that your joy may be full". "If ye abide in me, and my words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you". God's desire is to make our joy full. We know clearly from God's Word that our loving and living God wants us to have full joy, abundant joy and great joy. That is the very same message which was brought to the earth at the birth of the Lord Jesus Christ. "And the angel said unto them, Fear not: for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people"(Luke 2:10). That goes to show that God wants us all, whoso ever we are to have great joy all the time. "Rejoice in the Lord always: and again I say, Rejoice". Even in poverty and in our earthly trials we can have joy. To make Adam's joy full, the Lord gave him a wife who was his companion, friend, and partner.

We find from the verses quoted above, the secret of a very happy married life. First of all, we read in Eph,5:17, "Be ye not unwise, but understanding what the will of the Lord is"

(To be contd.)

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