

Sabbath School Lesson #5 – The Baptism and Filling of the Holy Spirit – 28 Jan-3 Feb 2017

Christ who breathed on His disciples saying, “Receive ye the Holy Spirit” (John 20:22), wants us to receive the same “Spirit of Christ” which was in all the prophets (1 Peter 1:11), because “if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of His” (Romans 8:9), which Spirit is Christ Himself, as “the Lord is that Spirit” (2 Corinthians 3:17), for Christ being “the last Adam was made a quickening Spirit” (1 Corinthians 15:45) and “because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of His Son into your hearts” (Galatians 4:6), and for these reasons, let us have Christ; as Ellen White says, “It is not safe to catch the spirit from another. We want the Holy Spirit, which is Jesus Christ” {Lt66-1894 (April 10, 1894) par. 18}.

The memory text for this lesson reads: “The thief cometh not, but for to steal, and to kill, and to destroy: I am come that they might have life, and that they might have *it* more abundantly” (John 10:10). Immortality, or eternal life, is conditional upon a person’s belief in Christ, for “the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord” (Romans 6:23); it is the doctrine that Christ taught to Nicodemus: “He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life; and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him” “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 3:36, 16). He taught Nicodemus that he must be born again, baptized with the Spirit. What is the baptism of the Holy Spirit?

In the first place, it must be borne in mind that “baptism” always and everywhere means immersion, and that only. John baptized in “Aenon near to Salim, because there was *much water* there” (John 3:23). Without going further into detailed proof, let it be remembered that whenever a person is said to be baptized in any substance, the person baptized is wholly enveloped in the substance. To be baptized with the Holy Spirit is therefore to be immersed in the Holy Spirit, and to be filled by the Holy Spirit is to be fully controlled by the Holy Spirit.

Christ told Nicodemus, “Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God” (John 3:3). The new birth is necessary, not merely that one may enter heaven, but that one may be a Christian. The kingdom of God is here and now. John on Patmos was “in the kingdom and patience of Jesus Christ” (Revelation 1:9). God our Father has “made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light; who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of His dear Son” (Colossians 1:12-13). Christ has “loved us, and washed us from our sins in His own blood, and hath made us kings and priests unto God” (Revelation 1:5-6). But the kingdom has no sort of connection with the kingdoms of earth. Christ admitted to Pilate that He was a King, but He said, “My kingdom is not of this world; if My kingdom were of this world, then would My servants fight, that I should not be delivered to the Jews; but now is My kingdom not from hence” (John 18:36). So little harmony is there between the kingdom of God and this world, that “the friendship of the world is enmity with God; whosoever therefore will be a friend of the world is the enemy of God” (James 4:4). In order to belong to that kingdom, or even to see it, a man must be made over entirely new; he must be a new creature, fashioned and controlled wholly by the Spirit of God. “If any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of His” (Romans 8:9).

“I give you to understand that no man speaking by the Spirit of God calleth Jesus accursed; and that no man can say that Jesus is Lord, but by the Holy Ghost” (1 Corinthians 12:3). Flesh and blood cannot reveal the Son of God, nor can flesh and blood comprehend the things that pertain to His kingdom (Matthew 16:16-17; 1 Corinthians 2:9-12). “Flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God, neither doth corruption inherit incorruption” (1 Corinthians 15:50). In order therefore to be really a subject of the kingdom of God, one must be delivered from the flesh. For “the carnal mind is enmity against God; for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be. So then they that are in the flesh cannot please God. But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you. Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of His. And if Christ be in you, the body is dead because of sin, but the Spirit is life because of righteousness. But if the Spirit of Him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, He that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by His Spirit that dwelleth in you” (Romans 8:9-11). “They

that are Christ's have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts. If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit" (Galatians 5:24-25). "I am crucified with Christ; nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave Himself for me" (Galatians 2:20).

What have we in all this? Just this, that to be a Christian indeed, which is the same as entering the kingdom of God, one must be as much different from what he is by nature as what he is by nature is different from what he was before he had any existence. Think of the body as literally dead, and awaiting burial. Now it has no connection whatever with anything in this world. Its life is ended; its love, and hatred, and envy are now perished (Ecclesiastes 9:6). Now think of the coming of the Spirit of God, and entering that body. "The body is dead because of sin, but the Spirit is life because of righteousness" (Romans 8:10). The Spirit now makes that body alive, but its life is wholly that of the Spirit. The Spirit having rescued it from death, has sole control of it. It is animated and moved by the Spirit alone. It breathes only the atmosphere of heaven. It is evident that such a body would be indeed a new man, and its life would be perfectly pleasing to God. The flesh is the same that it was before, but it is kept under by the Spirit. The man no longer fulfils the desires of the flesh, for dead flesh cannot assert itself. Instead of being subject to "the prince of the power of the air," "the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience," it is wholly guided by the Spirit from above. The only question is, 'Is it possible for the Spirit of God thus to take possession of and control a body herein this world?' The answer is found in the life of Christ. The Spirit of the Lord was upon Him, "the Spirit of wisdom and understanding, the Spirit of counsel and might, the Spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the Lord," so that He breathed in the fear of the Lord (Isaiah 11:2-3). 'But can any other person have the same experience?' Yes, most certainly; for Christ came for that very purpose. He did not need to come to this earth on His own account. The fact that the Spirit had complete possession of His body, which was just the same as the body of any other person born of a woman, shows that the Spirit can dwell in and control anybody that is willing. He has "power over all flesh" (John 17:2).

As to the making a new man, that is taught to us in nature every day. Every day our bodies are throwing off old substance, and new matter is taking its place. Thus our youth is renewed. Some one may say, 'That is only a physiological change.' True enough, but it is a change effected only by the power of the life of God. In everything that is made, the everlasting power and Divinity of God are seen, and He is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, *according to the power that worketh in us* (Ephesians 3:20). If we are willing that the work should be done, that power which works in us day by day, to keep us in life, will work far above the highest flights of imagination, to make us wholly new creatures in Christ. The power is present, and all that is necessary is that we yield to it.

'Why,' says one, 'I thought that it was a mystery!' So it is. Do you understand the mystery of life and growth? "As thou knowest not what is the way of the Spirit, nor how the bones do grow in the womb of her that is with child; even so thou knowest not the works of God who maketh all" (Ecclesiastes 11:5). Jesus told Nicodemus that the work of the Holy Spirit in the new birth is as the wind blowing. "The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, nor whither it goeth; so is every one that is born of the Spirit." Nicodemus, a master in Israel, did not know these things. Strange that the wise men who are continually observing the working of God in nature, should stumble over the question of the new birth. "If I have told you of earthly things, and ye believe not, how shall ye believe, if I tell you of heavenly things?" Are you filled of the Holy Spirit?

Baptism and filling of the Holy Spirit ought to be inseparable. Not necessarily to the exact minute in point of time, for we read of some who received the Holy Spirit before they were baptized, and of others upon whom He came just afterward. But the two are a part of one and the same work, for whoever believes from the heart that Jesus is the Son of God is a candidate for baptism (Acts 8:36-37), and the Holy Spirit is given to all who truly believe in Jesus (John 7:39; Ephesians 1:13). Let Paul's question come home to each one of you personally: "Have ye received the Holy Ghost since ye believed?" (Acts 19:2). If not, there must be a lack in your belief. Search the Word, the living Word of the living God, see it active in creation, and you will experience the power of the words, "Receive ye the Holy Spirit."