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BRIEF BIBLICAL MESSAGES FROM

THE WORD OF TRUTH MINISTRY

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IDENTIFICATION WITH THE HOLY SPIRIT

It is my conviction that there is no phrase in the Bible that has been more misused, abused, and misunderstood than John's simple promise concerning the Lord Jesus Christ: "He shall baptize you with the Holy Spirit and with fire" (Matt. 3:11). Of course much of this has arisen out of the fact that the word *baptizo* has not been translated. It has simply been transliterated (carried over) from the Greek by changing the final letter. This has allowed men to take this phrase, run riot with it, and make it to mean whatever they desire it to mean.

The history of religion will reveal that it has ever been the tendency of men to work up and produce some grandiose and pretentious emotional experience, then give it the name of something else that is set forth in the Word of God. Others will start with some word or phrase in Scripture, work it up into some fleshly, emotional experience, then declare with much bombast that this is what the word means; insisting also that all should seek to duplicate it.

For example, they have taken the word "repentance," then disregarding altogether that this is a horrendous mistranslation, worked it up into a theatrical, emotional experience wherein one is seized by such strong guilt feelings that he writhes and weeps in sorrow over past sins. This they call "repentance," and consider it to be more real and effective if it happens after hearing a super-charged, emotional message.

Even so it is with the phrase "baptism in the Holy Spirit." Many indeed have led themselves to believe that this phrase is the promise of an unusual, highly emotional, religious experience that comes to men, bringing to them some great, out-of-this-world power resulting in such manifestations as making unintelligible sounds, having convulsions of the flesh (head jerking, eye rolling), falling over in a faint, all of which are supposed to result in a victory over sin so complete that one will never sin again.

It is also claimed that this promise of John was one of a new blessing that none had ever experienced before, unknown in previous times even by the greatest men of God. This is a monumental error. When John announced that the Lord Jesus would baptize with the Holy Spirit, those who heard his words knew exactly what he meant. The word "baptism" had become familiar to them. It spoke to them of being identified with, being merged with, being related to the Spirit of God. This was not a new experience.

Many will insist that this was the promise of something new that none had previously experienced inasmuch as it is the first time that the word "baptize" has been used in connection with the Holy Spirit. However, when one comes to the New Testament imbued with the truth revealed in the Old concerning the Holy Spirit, he will know that identification with the Holy Spirit was a blessing that many had experienced in the history of Israel.

Consider for a moment the thirty-nine books which make up that precious possession we call the Old Testament. Where did these come from? How were they produced? The Apostle Peter gives us a direct answer: "**Holy men of God spake as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit**" (2 Peter 1:21). He identifies the utterances of these men as being from the Holy Spirit made by men who were permeated by the Spirit of God, even as the dye permeates the cloth into which it is dipped. The writers of the Old Testament were identified with the Spirit of God in their utterances.

Even as far back in history as the days of Joseph in Egypt we read of one who was obviously filled with the Spirit of God. After Joseph had declared that the meaning of Pharaoh's dream was that there would be seven years of plenty followed by seven years of famine, this benevolent ruler knew that he needed to find a man who could administer a program of preservation and disbursement. So he asked of his servants: "**Can we find such a one as this is, a man in whom the Spirit of God is?**"

This was no great problem, since there was one available whom all recognized as one identified with the Spirit of God. **Thus Joseph became prime minister of Egypt, with a position that was out of Pharaoh, in which he served the people as a man related to God's Holy Spirit** (See Gen. 41 :38).

In Exodus 31:3 we have God's word for it that He had filled Bezaleel with the Spirit of God. This was what made him the artisan and craftsman that he was. This man was identified with the Holy Spirit and the beautiful things he made were the work of God's Spirit (Ex. 35:31). In Judges 3:10; 6:34; and 14:6,19 we find that Othniel, Gideon, and Samson were identified and merged with the Spirit of God, and it was

this relationship that made them able to do what they did as judges in Israel. It was God who raised them up and it was God who identified them with His Spirit.

Notice in Mark 12:36 how the Lord Jesus revealed David's relationship to the Holy Spirit when He said: **"For David himself said by the Holy Spirit, the Lord said to my Lord, Sit thou on My right hand, till I make thine enemies thy footstool."** From this we know that David in the words he wrote was identified with God's Spirit.

It is from these divine revelations that we learn of the relationship of the Holy Spirit to men in Old Testament times. Identification with the Holy Spirit had been the privilege of many. Thus when the people of Israel heard John declare that the Lord Jesus would baptize (identify) them with the Holy Spirit, they knew what He was promising them. They too would enjoy the same blessing, and it would be from the Lord Jesus.

They, of course, were not told what the manifestations in their lives would be from this relationship to the Spirit of God. However, a few years later they learned what one of the results would be. The Lord Jesus announced to them: **"Ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Spirit 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).

If all the Biblical truth is considered it is evident that the Spirit of God comes upon men, is put within them, fills them, and becomes identified with men in order that these men may do the work God wants done or accomplish the purpose He has in mind. If all facts are faced, we must admit that God's Spirit may even come upon evil men for a time in order to accomplish the divine purpose. See 1 Sam. 19:20,23.

When men were identified with the Holy Spirit they could speak and act on behalf of God. They became His representatives, His deputies. They were mediators between God and men. Of course, this was not in an unlimited way. Obadiah was related to the Spirit of God and he produced a book of one short chapter. Isaiah by the Spirit of God produced a book of sixty-six chapters. Both did what God wanted done.

Under God's present administration of grace, identification with God's Holy Spirit is a blessing that is not available to men today. Such identification always has and always will make men mediators between God and men. If such a relationship were possible today, it would cancel out and make void one of the most important and significant truths of this dispensation - **"One mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus"** (1 Tim. 2:5). (See Issue No. **SB017**.)

This identification is even as no one can be an apostle today; no matter how much he wants to be or even claims to be. This privilege and honor is not open to anyone today.

Clear examples of men being identified with the Holy Spirit can be seen in action throughout the Acts period. When the 120 disciples were identified with the Holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost, God made this fact and relationship manifest by a sound (blast) from heaven, and individual tongues like as of fire. This company, being filled with the Holy Spirit, began to witness, speaking in the various languages that were common to the devout Jews who were out of every nation (Acts 2:5). This amazed all the people and prompted them to inquire as to what all this meant, Peter supplied the answer by declaring that Jesus whom God had raised from the dead had received the promise of the Holy Spirit and had shed forth that which they were now seeing and hearing (Acts 2:33). The results were the proof that these 120 disciples were individually and personally identified with the Spirit of God.

In Acts 15 when a dispute arose in Antioch concerning the practice of circumcision, it was determined that a small company led by Paul and Barnabas should go up to Jerusalem and lay the matters in question before the apostles and elders. When all questions had been discussed and agreement reached, the apostles and elders wrote a letter to the brethren in Antioch in which they said: **"It seemed good to the Holy Spirit, and to us, to lay upon you no greater burden than these necessary things"** (Acts 15:28). Thus these men identified themselves with the Holy Spirit, which they had every right to do. He had spoken to them and they in turn were speaking for Him. If they had not been speaking the truth, this being the Acts period, they would have died then and there, even as Ananias and Sapphira in Acts 5.

There are many who will say that 1 Cor. 12: 13 is the most important passage in Scripture in connection with the baptism with the Holy Spirit. However, with this I cannot agree. This passage declares: **"For in one Spirit are we all baptized (merged) into one body. . . and are all made to drink of one Spirit."** Theologians having worked out a doctrine concerning the body of Christ, which they define as being composed of all believers, lay hold of this passage and work out of it the idea of being baptized by the Spirit into one body. By this baptism they say we obtain membership. The truth declared in the promise **"He shall baptize you in the Holy Spirit"** and the truth declared in the words "In one Spirit are we all baptized in one body," are not the same. The first has to do with Jesus Christ identifying men with the Holy Spirit, and the second has to do with the fact that those "Identified in one Spirit" are merged in one body. This passage is worthy of further consideration which will be forthcoming.

End Issue No. SB138

