

The New Birth: Born Again.

Today, it is "cool" and acceptable if you claim to be a "Born again Christian," but I can remember when it was not so. People who made such pronouncements some years back were considered fanatics, holy rollers, snake handlers, pew jumpers, tongue talkers, ignorant and unlearned trash. Well, maybe it wasn't quite that bad, but it certainly wasn't the "in" thing back then. The "holy rollers" (as I used to call them) that I knew were looked down upon. Most of us dirt farming hick kids thought we were so much better than their kids. We would make fun of them on the school bus and wouldn't let them sit beside us or anything like that. They were poor (we were too but nobody had told us yet) and some of our threads were a little bit better than theirs (but not enough to make much difference). Anyway, the term "Born again Christian" is so common today until it seems that everyone is claiming to be one.

Some people think that they are "born again" the moment they just think in their mind or say under their breathe that they accept the Lord as their personal saviour. POOF! Just like that they have been born again, yet they never develop a love and hunger for God's precious Word and you may have difficulty remembering sometimes that they are Christians by the words, deeds and attitudes that pop up every now and then (some more frequent than others). Granted, none of us are "perfect" and we all are subject to "dropping the ball" every once in a while, but a "born again" Christian certainly is not going to be running with the ball in the wrong direction! You may think I am kidding (and I say this to my shame), but I actually had a fellow bar patron give me this rope looking thing with a card which had a prayer on it that you could read when you needed to or felt like it. I took it to keep from offending them, but it went out the window the minute I hit the highway. Folks, it is wacky out there, I am telling you. It seems some folks have absolutely no fear of (or reverence for) God, or anything else related to serving Him or applying His Holy Word to their life.

Some may think that they are "born again" at the precise moment they are baptized. Still others may think receiving the Holy Ghost (or Holy Spirit - for you uppity folks) is like optional equipment on your car. You can take it or leave it, and it comes in any number of versions, styles and colors (so to speak). The fact of the matter is, as we're going to see, this "NEW BIRTH" according to documentation in the Bible was (and is) an ESSENTIAL part of the APOSTLES' One God Monotheistic Doctrine, plan of salvation. It can occur before or after baptism, but NEVER before repentance!

Receiving the Holy Ghost with the evidence of speaking with others tongues, as the Scriptures teach, IS the rebirth of the Spirit, or being born again and this is what Jesus was making reference to in St. John 3:5, and in Mark 16:16&17. If you have been taught (like most of us were) that you are born again of the Spirit without the Biblical evidence of speaking with tongues as the Spirit of God gives the utterance, or if you have not had this experience, then it is most likely that you have been exposed to the traditions of the man-made doctrines of religion that evolved from the Council of Nicaea in 325 A.D., and not from the Apostles' One God Monotheistic Doctrine found in the Word of God. It is possible for a person to be like Cornelius in Acts Chapter 10, a devout person with many, many godly attributes and characteristics, but still not have the Holy Ghost the way the Scriptures teach. Don't settle for anything less than the Apostles' "One Way" Plan of Salvation, and that is: Repentance, Water Baptism by immersion in the precious name of Jesus for the remission of sins and infilling of the Holy Ghost evidenced by speaking with other tongues as the Spirit of God gives the utterance. PLEASE, let the Word of God minister to you and become an obedient DOER of the Word and simply obey Acts 2:38, which is the ONLY plan of salvation ever ordained by Jesus for His New Testament Church, and it is for EVERYONE! Continue to read on for more Truth and more scriptural references.

Just because someone repents doesn't mean that they automatically have received the Holy Ghost. With all that has been said (and as the Bible will soon verify) it is possible for one to repent and not receive the Holy

Ghost, and it is possible for one to be baptized and not receive the Holy Ghost. Furthermore, it is possible for one to "believe," pray a lot and be extremely generous to others and still not have the Holy Ghost. The Bible will verify all of this beyond any doubt.

Deuteronomy 6:6 "And these words, which I command thee this day, shall be in thine heart:"

Jeremiah 31:34 "After those days, saith the LORD, I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts; and will be their God, and they shall be my people."

Ezekial 36:26-27 "A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you: and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you an heart of flesh. And I will put my spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes, and ye shall keep my judgments, and do them."

Joel 2:28-29 "And it shall come to pass afterward, that I will pour out my spirit upon all flesh; and your sons and daughters shall prophesy, your old men shall dream dreams, your young men shall see visions: And also upon the servants and upon the handmaids in those days will I pour out my spirit."

Matthew 3:11 "I indeed baptize you with water unto repentance: but he that cometh after me is mightier than I, whose shoes I am not worthy to bear: he shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost, and with fire."

St. John 3:5 "Jesus answered, Verily, verily, I say unto the, Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God."

St. John 3:8 "The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth: so is every one that is born of the Spirit."

St. John 7:38-39 "He that believeth on me, as the scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water, (But this spake He of the Spirit, which they that believe on Him should receive: for the Holy Ghost was not yet given; because that Jesus was not yet glorified.)"

St. John 20:22 "And when he had said this, he breathed on them, and saith unto them, Receive ye the Holy Ghost."

Luke 24:45-53 "Then opened He their understanding, that they might understand the scriptures, and said unto them, Thus it behoved Christ to suffer, and to rise from the dead the third day: And that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in His name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem. And ye are witnesses of these things. And, behold, I send the promise of my Father upon you: but tarry ye in the city of Jerusalem, until ye be endued with power from on high. And He led them out as far as to Bethany, and He lifted up His hands, and blessed them. And it came to pass, while He blessed them, He was parted from them, and carried up into heaven. And they worshipped Him, and returned to Jerusalem with great joy: And were in the temple, praising and blessing God. Amen.

Acts 1:4-5 "And, being assembled together with them, 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. For John truly baptized with water; but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost not many days hence."

Acts 1:12-15 "Then returned they unto Jerusalem from the mount called Olivet, which is from Jerusalem a sabbath day's journey. And when they were come in, they went up into an upper room, where abode both Peter, and James, and John, and Andrew, Philip, and Thomas, Bartholomew, and Matthew, James the son of Alphaeus, and Simon Zelotes, and Judas the brother of James. These continued with one accord in prayer and supplication with the women, and Mary the mother of Jesus, and with His brethren. And in those days Peter stood up in the midst of the disciples, and said, (the number of names together were about an hundred and twenty,)"

THE BIRTH OF THE CHURCH:

Acts 2:1-18 "And when the day of Pentecost was fully come, they were all with one accord in one place. And suddenly there came a sound from heaven as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting. And there appeared unto them cloven tongues like as of fire, and it sat upon each of them, And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance. And There were dwelling at Jerusalem Jews, devout men, out of every nation under heaven. Now when this was noised abroad, the multitude came together, and were confounded, because that every man heard them speak in his own language. And they were all amazed and marvelled, saying one to another, Behold are not all these which speak Galilaeans? And how hear we every man in our own tongue wherein we were born? Parthians, and Medes, and Elamites, and the dwellers in Mesopotamia, and in Judaea, and Cappadocia, in Pontus, and Asia, Phrygia, and Pamphylia, in Egypt, and in the parts of Libya about Cyrene, and strangers of Rome, Jews and proselytes, Cretes and Arabians, we do hear them speak in our tongues the wonderful works of God. And they were all amazed, and were in doubt, saying one to another, What meaneth this? Others mocking said, these men are full of new wine. But Peter, standing up with the eleven, lifted up his voice, and said unto them, Ye men of Jerusalem, be this known unto you, and hearken to my words: For these are not drunken, as ye suppose, seeing it is but the third hour of the day. 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 on flesh: and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, and your young men shall see visions, and you 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:

PETER'S FIRST HOLY GHOST ANOINTED SERMON:

Acts 2:22-36 "Ye men of Israel, hear these words; Jesus of Nazareth, a man approved of God among you by miracles and wonders and signs, which God did by him in the midst of you, as ye yourselves know: Him, being delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, ye have taken, and by wicked hands have crucified and slain: Whom God hath raised up, having loosed the pains of death: because it was not possible that he should be holden of it. For David speaketh concerning Him, I foresaw the Lord always before my face, for he is on my right hand, that I should not be moved: Therefore did my heart rejoice, and my tongue was glad; moreover also my flesh shall rest in hope: Because thou wilt not leave my soul in hell, neither wilt thou suffer thine Holy One to see corruption. Thou hast made known unto me the ways of life; thou shalt make me full of joy with thy countenance. Men and brethren, let me freely speak unto you of the patriarch David, that he is both dead and buried, and his sepulchre is with us unto this day. Therefore being a prophet, and knowing that God had sworn with an oath to him, that of the fruit of his loins, according to the flesh, He would raise up Christ to sit on his throne; He seeing this before spake of the resurrection of Christ, that his soul was not left in hell, neither his flesh did see corruption. This Jesus hath God raised up, whereof we all are witnesses. Therefore being by the right hand of God exalted, and having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Ghost, He hath shed forth this, which ye now see and hear. For David is not ascended into the heavens: but he saith himself, The LORD said unto my Lord, Sit thou on my right hand, Until I make thy foes thy footstool. Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly, that God hath made that same Jesus, whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ.

BECAUSE OF THE CONVICTION THEY FELT, THEY ASKED THIS QUESTION:

Acts 2:37 "Now when they heard this, they were pricked in their heart, and said unto Peter and to the rest of the Apostles, Men and brethren, what shall we do?

PETER USES THE "KEYS" - GOD'S ORDAINED PLAN OF SALVATION GIVEN FOR THE FIRST TIME:

Acts 2:38-39 "Then Peter unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the Remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost. For the promise is unto you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call."

CAUSE AND EFFECT, THE END RESULT:

Acts 2:40-47 "And with many other words did he testify and exhort, saying, Save yourselves from this untoward generation. Then they that gladly received his word were baptized: and the same day there were added unto them about three thousand souls. And they continued steadfastly in the APOSTLES' DOCTRINE and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers, And fear came upon every soul: and many wonders and signs were done by the apostles. And all that believed were together, and had all things common; And sold their possessions and goods, and parted them to all men, as every man had need. Any they, continuing daily with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, did eat their meat with gladness and singleness of heart, Praising God, and having favour with all the people. And the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved."

PHILIP'S REVIVAL AT SAMARIA, AFTER RECEIVING THE HOLY GHOST:

Acts 8:1-25 "And Saul was consenting unto the his death. And at that time there was a great persecution against the church which was at Jerusalem; and they were all scattered abroad throughout the regions of Judea and Samaria, except the apostles. And devout men carried Stephen to his burial, and made great lamentation over him. As for Saul, he made havock of the church, entering into every house, and haling men and women committed them to prison. Therefore they that were scattered abroad went every where preaching the word. Then Philip went down to the city of Samaria, and preached Christ unto them. And the people with one accord gave heed unto those things which Philip spake, hearing and seeing the miracles which he did. For unclean spirits, crying with loud voice, came out of many that were possessed with them: and many taken with palsies, and that were lame, were healed. And there was great joy in that city. But there was a certain man, called Simon, which beforetime in the same city used sorcery, and bewitched the people of Samaria, giving out that himself was some great one: To whom they all gave heed, from the least to the greatest, saying, This man is the great power of God. And to him they had regard, because that of long time he had bewitched them with sorceries. But when they believed Philip preaching the things concerning the kingdom of God, and the name of Jesus Christ, they were baptized, both men and women. Then Simon himself believed also: and when he was baptized, he continued with Philip, and wondered, beholding the miracles and signs which were Done. Now when the apostles which were at Jerusalem heard that Samaria had received the word of God, they sent unto them Peter and John: Who, when they were come down, prayed for them, that they might, receive the Holy Ghost: (For as yet He was fallen upon none of them: only they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus.) Then laid they their hands on them, and they received the Holy Ghost. And when Simon saw that through laying on of the apostles' hands the Holy Ghost was given, he offered them money, Saying, Give me also this power, that on whomsoever I lay hands, he may receive the Holy Ghost. But Peter said unto him, Thy money perish with thee, because thou hast thought that the gift of God may be purchased with money. Thou hast neither part nor lot in this matter: for thy heart is not right in the sight of God. Repent therefore of this thy wickedness, and pray God, if perhaps the thought of thine heart may be forgiven thee. For I perceive that thou art in the gall of bitterness, and in the bond of iniquity. Then answered Simon, and said, Pray ye to the Lord for me, that none of these things which ye have spoken come upon me. And they, when they had testified and preached the word of the Lord, returned to Jerusalem, and preached the gospel in many villages of the Samartians."

THE GENTILES ALSO RECEIVE THE HOLY GHOST:

Acts 10:1-6 and Acts 10:44-48 "There was a certain man in Caesarea called Cornelius, a centurion of the band called the Italian band, A devout man, and one that feared God with all his house, which gave much alms to the people, and prayed to God alway. He saw in a vision evidently about the ninth hour of the day an angel of God

coming in to him, and saying unto him, Cornelius, And when he looked on him he was afraid, and said, What is it, Lord? And He said unto him, Thy prayers and thine alms are come up for a memorial before God. And now send men to Joppa, and call for one Simon, whose surname is Peter: He lodgeth with one Simon a tanner, whose house is by the sea side: he shall tell thee what thou oughtest to do." . . . "While Peter yet spake these words, the Holy Ghost fell on all them which heard the word. And they of the circumcision which believed were astonished, as many as came with Peter, because that on the Gentiles also was poured out the gift of the Holy Ghost. For they heard them speak with tongues, and magnify God, Then answered Peter, Can any man forbid water, that these should not be baptized, which have received the Holy Ghost as well as we? And he commanded them to be baptized in the name of the Lord. Then prayed they him to tarry certain days." (Did Peter's formula of baptism change between Acts 2:38 on the day of Pentecost and here? I think not!)

DISCIPLES OF JOHN THE BAPTIST.. RE-BAPTIZED & RECEIVE HOLY GHOST:

Acts 19:1-7 "And it came to pass, that, while Apollos was at Corinth, Paul having passed through the upper coasts came to Ephesus: and finding certain disciples, He said unto them, Have ye received the Holy Ghost since ye believed? And they said unto him, We have not so much as heard whether there be any Holy Ghost. And he said unto them, Unto what then were ye baptized? And they said, Unto John's Baptism. Then said Paul, John verily baptized with the baptism of repentance, saying unto the people, that they should believe on him which should come after him, that is, on Christ Jesus. When they heard this, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. And when Paul had laid his hands upon them, the Holy Ghost came on them; and they spake with tongues, and prophesied. And all the men were about twelve.

We have covered a lot of territory so far, but I hope there are several things that are becoming "crystal" clear:

According to Jesus' own words in St. John 3:8 there would be a sound associated with every one who is born of the Spirit. In three out of the four instances above the Bible SPECIFICALLY says they "spoke in tongues," and in the other instance the Bible says that when Simon SAW (or witnessed) it, he offered the apostles money. Since God had already ordained "tongues" as the outward "SIGN" of an inward work, I have no doubt at all that what Simon witnessed was people receiving the Holy Ghost and speaking in "tongues." Except for the Apostles' One God Monotheistic Doctrine, "tongues" is probably the next most misunderstood subject in the Bible. Since many don't understand the purpose of tongues or their operation, have never spoken in tongues themselves, don't know anyone else who has spoken in tongues and have had their "well poisoned" by someone who said tongues is of the devil, it is no wonder why many people are so cross threaded about this issue. The reason I know this is because that is EXACTLY the way I felt years ago. Why did God choose tongues as the "sign," (seal or evidence) that one has received the Holy Ghost? I'm not certain, except that I do know that the Bible says in James 3:1-18 that the tongue is the most unruly member of our body, than no man can tame it (so obviously only God can), and that it is a fire, a world of iniquity that defiles the whole body. Why did God choose circumcision (ouch!) as an outward "sign" of acceptance with Abraham? God is God. He can do whatever He pleases without consulting with you and me. Also, we are told "tongues" are a "sign to unbelievers" in 1 Corinthians 14:22. It certainly was on the Day of Pentecost, and even in Acts Chapter 10 with the Jews who doubted that God would bestow the Holy Ghost on "unclean" Gentiles. Those who forbid tongues and speak evil of tongues need to be aware that they are violating 1 Corinthians 14:39 where Paul says "forbid not to speak with tongues." And if they aren't careful they may also be in violation of Mark 3:29 where Jesus said, "He that shall blaspheme against the Holy Ghost hath never forgiveness, but is in danger of eternal damnation:" Now having said that, I want to tell you that everyone who jabbars is not speaking in "tongues" as the Spirit gives the utterance, which is ordained of God. Just as God allowed the magicians of Egypt to counterfeit a lot of what He was doing through Moses, God is allowing some to counterfeit the operation, gifts and fruit of the Spirit in the religious world today. In so doing, millions are being mislead. That is why is so ESSENTIAL for us to be able to "try" the Spirits whether they are of God or not.

We have learned from the above accounts that even though the characteristics and traits of being devout, being a believer, being very generous, praying a lot and even getting baptized are all very desirable and very worthy characteristics and traits, they are NOT "signs" which confirm someone has received the Holy Ghost (or been born again) "the Bible way."

We have also seen how it is possible for some to receive the Holy Ghost prior to baptism, while others receive the Holy Ghost after Baptism. Therefore, the Holy Ghost is NOT automatically imparted at baptism as some would suggest.

There are many reason why the "infilling" of the Holy Ghost is ESSENTIAL:

1. We can't enter into the kingdom of God without it. St. John 3:5
2. Without it we can't even legitimately claim to belong to Christ. Romans 8:9
3. It is to be our ever abiding "Comforter" and teacher. St. John 14:26
4. It is what "sanctifies" the believer and makes us acceptable to God. Romans 15:16
5. It is the "earnest" (down payment, portion, taste) of our inheritance. Ephesians 1:13-14
6. It is the "seal" (official documentation, stamp of approval) of God. Ephesians 4:20
7. We MUST have it to meet the Lord when that trumpet sounds. Romans 8:11
8. We can't even "effectively" pray without it. Romans 8:26
9. We can't understand who Jesus is, to call Him Lord, without it. 1 Corinthians 13:3
10. We can't live victoriously without it. Romans 8:1
11. When it is in control, it keeps us from sin. 1 John 3:4-10
12. When we pray in the Spirit, our spirit speaks directly to God. 1 Corinthians 14:2,14,15.

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