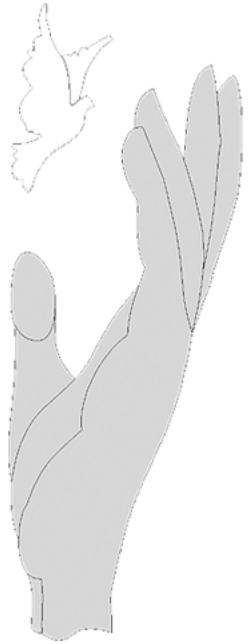


PROPHETIC REVELATION

THE TRUE EVIDENCE OF THE HOLY SPIRIT BAPTISM



The
gift of
speaking
in tongues...or
receiving the Word?

He that hath an ear, *let him hear!*

THE TRUE EVIDENCE OF THE HOLY SPIRIT BAPTISM



Richard I.s.Gan

Back in the 1980s, I was given a tract that questioned the evidence of the number of disciples that actually received the baptism of the Holy Spirit on the Day of Pentecost. I never did pursue that question with a study on it. Being a Pentecostal, before I received the message of God that calls the elect back to His Original Word, I had heard and read the many opinions of Christians in the Pentecostal movement. Now, the same subject seems to be of great interest among many believers of the *Endtime Message* of William Branham.

The actual number of disciples being baptized on the Day of Pentecost with the sign of speaking in tongues is not as important as the purpose of God giving the gift of the Holy Spirit. However, what is the purpose of God giving the disciples the baptism of the Holy Spirit? And what is the true evidence of one receiving the Holy Spirit baptism?

To better understand the doctrine we need to rightly divide the Word of Truth. Let's begin in the Book of the Acts of the Apostles written by Luke, a physician (cf. Col.4:14). It was written to his friend Theophilus and is a sequel to his Gospel account of the events that surround the life of Jesus Christ and His ministry.

Christ and His Apostles

Acts 1:1: *The former treatise have I made, O Theophilus, of all that Jesus began both to do and teach,*

2: *Until the day in which he was taken up, after that he through the Holy Ghost had given commandments unto the Apostles whom he had chosen:*

3: *To whom also he shewed himself alive after his passion by many infallible proofs, being seen of them forty days, and speaking of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God:*

If we accept Luke to have written an orderly account to Theophilus of the events that transpired concerning the Gospel that was brought

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to the saints at that time (Lk. 1:3-4), then his account of the beginning of the Church of Jesus Christ until the ministry of Paul must likewise be recorded in the same manner. Our observation is therefore called to his recollection of the events which took place prior to Christ's ascension as he began his account on the beginning of the acts of the Holy Spirit in the Apostles whilst establishing the Church. Notice that Luke clearly stated that the Lord Jesus was with His Apostles and that He was "*seen of them forty days*" as He assembled together with them. No doubt Jesus must have showed Himself also to His other disciples during those days but certainly not as **exclusively** as He did with His eleven Apostles.

Luke continues:

4: *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.*

5: *For John truly baptized with water; but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost not many days hence.*

6: *When they therefore were come together, they asked of him, saying, Lord, wilt thou at this time restore again the kingdom to Israel?*

7: *And he said unto them, It is not for you to know the times or the seasons, which the Father hath put in his own power.*

8: *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 Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth.*

Now, the commandment was given to the Apostles that they should *not* depart from the City of Jerusalem until they have received the promise of the Father — "*ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost*". This commandment was certainly *not* issued to the other disciples of Christ. Nevertheless, if the other disciples did tarry for the Holy Spirit it must be that the Apostles had given them the information. But there is no such record.

9: *And when he had spoken these things, while they beheld, he was taken up; and a cloud received him out of their sight.*

10: *And while they looked stedfastly toward heaven as he went up, behold, two men stood by them in white apparel;*

11: *Which also said, Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into heaven? this same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven.*

12: *Then returned they unto Jerusalem from the mount called Olivet, which is from Jerusalem a sabbath day's journey.*

13: *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*

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Thomas, Bartholomew, and Matthew, James the son of Alphaeus, and Simon Zelotes, and Judas the brother of James.

14: These all continued with one accord in prayer and supplication, with the women, and Mary the mother of Jesus, and with his brethren.

After the Lord had ascended into Heaven, the Apostles went back to Jerusalem to an upper room where they were staying. Apparently the place where they were staying could not be the home of the eleven Apostles with their families all in one place. They did not live there, they only stayed there. Tradition has it that the upper room was the room where the Last Supper of the Lord was held and it is believed to be a monastery outside of the Old Jerusalem City some 1.4km southwest from the Temple Area. Of course, nobody can really verify the fact.

Now, the next verse states:

15: 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,)

This particular verse has been taken at face value by many Christians to **imply** that about 120 believers were gathered together with the womenfolk in the upper room to “wait for the promise of the Father” for some 10 days. The average upper room of a Jewish house could not have housed that many people unless they were packed like sardines in a tin. (Note: Because Mark 14:15 and Luke 22:12 described a “large room” where the Last Supper was held, some Christians believe the “upper room” was really “large” as large is.)

In the Scripture, when a number of persons is mentioned, the number reflects only the men; the women and children are not included. (See Matt.14:21; 15:38.) If the women and children were numbered in the gathering together, it would probably come to more than double the amount of 120.

We must realize that Luke was giving an historical account. He was recording only the events that were of significance and therefore real time in between events were compressed. Read verses 14 and 15. In verse 14, we see the time flowed from the Apostles returning to Jerusalem (from Mount Olivet) to the upper room was an account of an event. However, the beginning phrase of verse 15: “*And in those days*” shows that the event next described did **not** immediately follow the event of verse 14. It only tells us that some time during that period of the Apostles returning to the city Jerusalem (and not specifically the upper room) to “wait for the promise of the Father”, which they received on the Day of Pentecost, that the selection of a disciple of Christ to replace Judas Iscariot took place.

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Now, that the Apostles **did** gather together with the other disciples and the women is clear. However, to **imply** that **all** of them were together in an upper room at any one time is an exaggeration. That the Apostles would have gathered in other places for prayer and supplication is clear from what is recorded in verse 15. And in this particular period, the large group of believers, both men and women, could have only gathered in an open courtyard, perhaps beneath the upper chamber of that apartment or that of some other apartments.

The Election of An Apostle

16: *Men and brethren, this scripture must needs have been fulfilled, which the Holy Ghost by the mouth of David spake before concerning Judas, which was guide to them that took Jesus.*

17: *For he was numbered with us, and had obtained part of this ministry.*

18: *Now this man purchased a field with the reward of iniquity; and falling headlong, he burst asunder in the midst, and all his bowels gushed out.*

19: *And it was known unto all the dwellers at Jerusalem; insomuch as that field is called in their proper tongue, Aceldama, that is to say, The field of blood.*

20: *For it is written in the book of Psalms, Let his habitation be desolate, and let no man dwell therein: and his bishoprick let another take.*

21: *Wherefore of these men which have companied with us all the time that the Lord Jesus went in and out among us,*

22: *Beginning from the baptism of John, unto that same day that he was taken up from us, must one be ordained to be a witness with us of his resurrection.*

23: *And they appointed two, Joseph called Barsabas, who was surnamed Justus, and Matthias.*

24: *And they prayed, and said, Thou, Lord, which knowest the hearts of all men, shew whether of these two thou hast chosen,*

25: *That he may take part of this ministry and apostleship, from which Judas by transgression fell, that he might go to his own place.*

26: *And they gave forth their lots; and the lot fell upon Matthias; and he was numbered with the eleven Apostles.*

As the assembly of disciples (and women and children) gathered Peter stood up “*in the midst of the disciples*” and addressed particularly to the men – “*men and brethren*”. Remember that the Word of the Lord comes to the Church (feminine) through the Ministry of

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Christ (masculine). Read 1 Cor.14:34-36. Peter brought up several prophecies of King David and expounded on them (Psa.41:9; 69:25; 109:8). He then proceeded to bring about the fulfillment of Psalm 109:8. That's Peter, always quick to jump ahead of situation. Surely the number 12 had always been Israel's number of good governance. There were more than a hundred disciples of Christ but Peter offered his criteria for the one who would be most suited to take the place of the dead bishopric, Judas Iscariot. Together with the other Apostles (and certainly the other disciples were not involved as they were not Apostles), Peter then narrowed down to two candidates – Barsabas and Matthias. Either one could be **“an apostle”** numbered with the eleven. That's the dilemma. So, sincere prayer was offered to the Lord before the Apostles cast their votes. (It is unlikely that all the other disciples cast their vote in the matter.) Matthias was chosen and was numbered with the eleven Apostles.

Suffice to say that the Holy Spirit had chosen to show the working of men in their **“doing what they think is best”** for the Ministry and the Church of God. Most Bible students believe that Matthias was “chosen” of God just because the saints prayed before the lots were cast and that the Bible said *“he was numbered with the eleven Apostles”*.

That Matthias was *“numbered with the eleven Apostles”* is a fact for after all he was chosen by the Apostles to be numbered with them. What and how else could it not be? However, he was certainly **not** “chosen” by God. The gifts and callings of God are not something set upon men by a means of the casting of lots. If God was in such a man-made approach to appoint Matthias and not Barsabas, how many votes did Matthias received out of the 11 Apostles? Did Matthias get to be *“numbered with the eleven Apostles”* by having an advantage of one vote over Barsabas or did he get all the votes?

We read in many places in the Bible that when God appointed a man to a ministry He personally called and dealt with that man. The 5-fold ministry is Christ's Ascension Gifts to the Church for *“the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ: Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ: That we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive”* (Eph.4:12-14). No man, no system and no education can ever give any of the Ascension Gifts to a man and put him into a God's given ministry in the Church. Only Christ can give certain men certain ministries because they are His gifts. And the one who truly took the place of Judas Iscariot was Paul.

The Outpouring of the Holy Spirit

Acts 2:1: *And when the Day of Pentecost was fully come, they were all with one accord in one place.*

2: *And suddenly there came a sound from heaven as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting.*

3: *And there appeared unto them cloven tongues like as of fire, and it sat upon each of them.*

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

Some ten days later, after the ascension of our Lord Jesus Christ and perhaps a week after the election of Matthias, “*they were all with one accord in one place*” when the Holy Spirit came into “*the house where they were sitting*”. Licks of fire rested upon each one of them and “*they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance*”.

Who are the “**they**” whom Luke referred to in his writing? Luke, who prided himself in having perfect understanding and being orderly in his account of the events in the life of Christ and His ministry to Theophilus (Lk. 1:3) could only have referred to the Apostles. Reading the account from the beginning of the Book of Acts the “**they**” could not have referred to the entire assembly of the 120 plus the women.

The place mentioned in Acts 2:1 could not have been the same place (the courtyard) where the choosing of an apostle to replace Judas Iscariot took place. The Scripture states that “*they were all with one accord in one place*” and this “*one place*” is not mentioned as the “*upper room*” where they abode. During that period of time, after the election of Matthias, all the Apostles were waiting for the promise of the Heavenly Father. However, they did **not** tarry in a long drawn out prayer as some theologian seems to suggest. They certainly did **not** just stay in a room 24 hours a day praying but continued going about their daily chores. The Lord did **not** tell them to stay in a room till the promise come, rather He told them **not to depart** from Jerusalem but to stay in Jerusalem and wait for the promise.

Obviously, the Apostles were often in prayer as they gathered together. They might meet together in an upper room with the other disciples and the women. At times they might be together all by themselves in some other dwelling places. But they were always prayerfully waiting for the promise of the Father.

Now the event that took place could be in a house just outside the Temple ground or at a covered area within the Temple ground itself. It certainly could not have been in a place far from the Temple. (The upper room where the event was traditionally believed to have taken place is some 1.4kilometers away from the Temple area.) Read what the following verses state:

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Acts 2:5: *Now there were dwelling in Jerusalem Jews, devout men, from every nation under heaven.*

6: *And when this sound occurred, the multitude came together, and were confused, because everyone heard them speak in his own language.*

This record tells us that when the Holy Spirit came in as a “*rushing mighty wind*” and anointed the Apostles, who began to speak with other tongues, and that “*when this sound occurred*”, multitudes of Jewish immigrants of different tongues drew close. It is obvious that the outpouring of the Holy Spirit could not have taken place in an upper room or a house far away from the Temple vicinity. It had to be a place where multitudes of **Jewish men** (note that the Scripture states “**devout men**”) gathered themselves together in close proximity to where the Apostles themselves gathered. That place is the Temple vicinity.

The **Feast of Pentecost** is one of the three important feasts in which all the adult males must gather before the Lord. “*Three times in a year shall all thy males appear before the LORD thy God in the place which he shall choose; in the feast of unleavened bread, and in the feast of weeks, and in the feast of tabernacles: and they shall not appear before the LORD empty*” (Deut.16:16). As devout men themselves, the Apostles could not have gathered themselves in some secluded house or place during that important Feast of Weeks (Pentecost). They knew the Scripture and they would certainly seek to fulfill it as their Master did. On such a day, beginning from the previous evening (as the Jews reckon a day from sunset to sunset), devout Jewish men would have come to present themselves before the Lord at the Temple. These devout men would sit in groups in some dwelling places in the Temple vicinity, the evening before, and most probably to study and meditate on the Law and the Prophets. In the morning, they would then proceed to the Temple nearby to fulfill the festive law. It would not be unusual to see immigrant Jews of the same nation gather themselves together. Those from Parthia would group together as they have certain things in common from whence they came. That goes for the others as well, each to their own – “*the Medes and Elamites; residents of Mesopotamia, Judea and Cappadocia, Pontus and Asia, Phrygia and Pamphylia, Egypt and the parts of Libya near Cyrene, Rome (both Jews and converts to Judaism); Cretans and Arabs*”.

Now notice what is written.

Acts 2:12: *And they were all amazed, and were in doubt, saying one to another, What meaneth this?*

13: *Others mocking said, These men are full of new wine.*

14: *But Peter, standing up with the eleven, lifted up his voice, and said unto them, Ye men of Judaea, and all ye that dwell at Jerusalem,*

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be this known unto you, and hearken to my words:

15: For these are not drunken, as ye suppose, seeing it is but the third hour of the day.

Why would some of the spectators make such a remark that the Apostles were drunk with new wine? Judging by such a remark, it must be that wine and unleavened bread were available among the men where they were sitting together in fellowship. In defense, Peter **stood up** to speak. The eleven also **stood up**. This shows a fact that the rest of the 120 disciples were **not** in this particular event. If they were, they would all have stood up with Peter to identify with him. (Read Jhn.18:5; 18:18; 2 Tim.4:16-17.)

The Pentecostals and the Charismatics teach that unless a believer speaks with “tongue” he does not have the Holy Spirit. They believe that all the 120 disciples plus the many women, mentioned in the 1st chapter of Acts, were together with the 12 Apostles where they were sitting and that each and every one of them spoke with tongues. They are actually forcing Scripture to suit their doctrine of the importance of “**glossolalia**”. Read what the Word says in Acts 2:7-8.

Acts 2:7: And they were all amazed and marvelled, saying one to another, Behold, are not all these which speak Galilæans?

8: And how hear we every man in our own tongue, wherein we were born?

All the Apostles were Galileans, mostly fishermen and largely unlearned. The angels called them “**men of Galilee**” (Acts 1:11). Those devout men from Judaea (Acts 2:9) could tell the difference between a Galilean and a Judean. Were the rest of the 120 disciples plus the women all from the region of Galilee where Christ spent some 30 years of His life? The answer is an obvious **NO**. Mary, Martha, and Lazarus of Bethany were **not** Galileans nor was Joseph of Arimathea. And therefore Acts 2:7 has no reference to them and does not include them.

Sign

When our Lord Jesus instructed the Apostles about the promise of the Father, He mentioned nothing about speaking with tongues. Instead he said this:

Acts 1:8: 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 Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth.

However, when the Spirit of God was come the Apostles spoke with other tongues. Is this God’s “**evidence**” to show that the Apostles

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had the Holy Spirit and that all born again Bible Believers must likewise have the same “**sign**” of speaking with other tongues as evidence of having the Holy Spirit? **To teach that because one spoke with tongues therefore the rest must have also spoken with tongues is stretching the Bible.** That tongue-speaking is the evidence of having the Holy Spirit is a false teaching. Tongue speaking was never taught by the Apostles as being the evidence of the Holy Spirit baptism.

The Scripture states clearly the outpouring of the Holy Spirit took place on the Day of Pentecost as He came upon the Apostles. This should suffice that the rest of the disciples and women (wherever they were) had also received the same baptism. Whether or not they spoke with other tongues is not the issue.

What then is the evidence of the Holy Spirit baptism? Is the Scripture clear on the issue? The answer is **YES**. We will see what it is as we study the various Scripture passages related to this topic. But first let's examine why the Almighty God caused the Apostles to speak with other tongues as He gave them utterance. Remember, the Day of Pentecost is an important feast of Yahweh. There were thousands of devout Jewish men gathered in and around the vicinity of the Temple on that day. The Apostles had absolutely no idea what was to take place. In order to draw the attention of those Jewish men to hear the Gospel, God had to create a “**sign**”. From the Scripture we know that the Jews seek after **signs** as oppose to the Gentiles who seek after **wisdom** (cf. Matt. 12; Jhn. 2; 1 Cor. 1:22). It seems that **until they see a sign, they would not believe the Word**. This is one reason why God chose to use “sign” when it came to the children of Israel. Secondly, it had been prophesied by the prophet Isaiah that the Lord would use “*stammering lips and another tongue*” to teach His people. (Read Isaiah chapter 28.) Therefore, God fulfilled His own Word on that particular Day of Pentecost.

Prophecies

Christians who believe that the evidence of one having the baptism of the Holy Spirit is “**speaking with other tongues**” have Scripture verses to **only imply**, not support, such a teaching. The languages (tongues) that the 12 Apostles spoke were not unknown languages (tongues) but known languages (tongues). Acts 2:7 tells us that the Apostles were Galileans and as such their common vocabulary were Hebrew and Aramaic. However, when the Holy Spirit came upon them they were speaking more than a dozen known languages of other nations. Jews who had returned from those nations to live in Judea heard the Apostles proclaim the wonderful works of God in their own native tongues (Acts 2:8-11). This truly fulfilled the words of the prophet Isaiah (chapter 28).

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When Peter stood up to explain what was taking place, he recalled the prophecies of Joel the prophet to the thousands of Jewish people who were gathered around him and the other Apostles. (Remember that the historical accounts are condensed. I believe that the preaching of Peter lasted long (cf. Acts 2:40). As the crowd swelled to thousands, the preaching could have taken place right in the Temple ground, an area of about 144,000 sq. meters.) He expounded:

Acts 2:16: But this is that which was spoken by the prophet Joel;

17: *And it shall come to pass in the last days, saith God, I will pour out of my Spirit upon all flesh: and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams:*

18: *And on my servants and on my handmaidens I will pour out in those days of my Spirit; and they shall prophesy:*

19: *And I will shew wonders in heaven above, and signs in the earth beneath; blood, and fire, and vapour of smoke:*

20: *The sun shall be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood, before the great and notable day of the Lord come:*

21: *And it shall come to pass, that whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be saved.*

Notice that the prophecies of Joel **extended beyond** the event that actually took place on the Day of Pentecost. How much of **“this”** which took place on that Day of Pentecost was **“that”** which Joel spoke of? Why did Peter mention about *“wonders in heaven”, “signs in the earth”, “blood, and fire, and vapour of smoke”, “sun shall be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood”* when none of that took place on that Day of Pentecost? Also, were there any young men who saw visions and were there any old men who *dreamt dreams*?

What happened was but only a foretaste of a greater blessing for Israel when the Messiah comes for them. Peter was telling the people about the Spirit of God that had just been poured out and given to mankind to bring about redemption for His people. Notice also that the prophecies of Joel mentioned nothing whatsoever about “tongues”. Instead Joel spoke of *“your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams”* when the Spirit is poured out. Prophecy was prophesying in known tongues rather than mere speaking with unknown tongues on that Day of Pentecost. Nevertheless it would have been more appropriate if Luke had supplemented the following words of Isaiah seeing that 3000 of those Jews believed the Gospel.

Isa 28:9: *Whom shall he teach knowledge? and whom shall he make to understand doctrine? them that are weaned from the milk, and drawn from the breasts.*

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10: *For precept must be upon precept, precept upon precept; line upon line, line upon line; here a little, and there a little:*

11: *For with stammering lips and another tongue will he speak to this people.*

12: *To whom he said, This is the rest wherewith ye may cause the weary to rest; and this is the refreshing:*

Again, let me reiterate that **“speaking with other tongues”** is **not** the evidence of receiving the Holy Spirit. What took place on the Day of Pentecost happened to a people that were completely Jewish. They needed signs and they got a sign. Truly Paul said the truth that **“tongues are for a sign, not to them that believe, but to them that believe not:”** (1 Cor.14:22a). Also, notice that there is no mention that the 3000 Jewish converts spoke with tongues, only that they gladly received the Word, repented and were water baptized in the Name of the Lord Jesus Christ for the remission of their sins. After that they continued in the Apostles’ doctrine, in fellowship, in breaking of bread and in prayers, and had things common. Read Acts 2:38-47.

Sign Again

Now examine what happened when Cornelius and his household heard the Gospel.

Acts 10:44: *While Peter yet spake these words, the Holy Ghost fell on all them which heard the word.*

45: *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.*

46: *For they heard them speak with tongues, and magnify God. Then answered Peter,*

47: *Can any man forbid water, that these should not be baptized, which have received the Holy Ghost as well as we?*

48: *And he commanded them to be baptized in the name of the Lord. Then prayed they him to tarry certain days.*

How were Peter and the Jewish believers who accompanied him to minister to Cornelius’s household convinced that the Gentiles had also received the gift of the Holy Spirit? Simply because **“they heard them speak with tongues, and magnify God”**. This was **not** an (or the) evidence to show that the Gentiles had the baptism of the Spirit, but rather it was a **sign** to show to the Jewish Apostles and the Jewish believers that upon the Gentiles was the same Holy Spirit of Life also given. The Jews considered the Gentiles as dogs and would not have thought that the Gospel of their God and Saviour could be given to them. Our Lord even had to give a vision to Peter to prepare

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him for what he was to encounter involving the Spirit pouring out His grace on Cornelius's household. Moreover, God chose to use the **same** sign so that it could and would be understood by Peter and the rest of the Jewish believers (cf. Acts 11:15). Without this "sign" the Jewish believers would have had difficulty accepting the fact that "*the Gentiles had also received the Word of God*" (Acts 11:1).

What were the "tongues" (languages) spoken by the members of Cornelius's household when the Holy Spirit gave them utterance? Obviously they had to be languages that were **unknown** to their understanding but **known** to the Jews who were standing by. They had to be languages that were familiar or native to the Jews, such as Hebrew and Aramaic. If the "tongues" were completely unknown languages, how were Peter and the Jews with him to know that they were actually magnifying God? Truly, Christians should consider well the words of the apostle Paul in 1 Cor.14:2-11.

Just to state here: the so-called "**upper room experience**" as taught by many Pentecostals and Charismatics is **not** supported by Scripture. To believe that 120 men plus an uncounted number of women were all in an "upper room" speaking with tongues on the Day of Pentecost is stretching the Scripture. All the Scripture tells us is that the **APOSTLES** were told that "**they should not depart from Jerusalem, but wait for the promise of the Father**". Whether the rest of the disciples and women spoke with tongues is of no consequence. The fact is that after the Holy Spirit was poured out, the promise of the Holy Spirit baptism is given to **all** that believe the Word. This is Peter's words:

*Acts 2:38: Then Peter said 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.*

*39: 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.*

All the rest of the disciples and women definitely received the Holy Spirit. Undoubtedly, all of them (including the Apostles themselves) went into the water and were baptized in the Name of the Lord Jesus Christ just as Cornelius and his household did after they believed the Word and received the Holy Spirit.

Believing The Word

How does one know that he has received the Holy Spirit baptism, that he is born again and that he is a part of the Body of Christ? Of course, **different** organized churches will give slightly **different** answers. From certain followers of the message of William Branham one will be given answers based on statements from his sermons, such as:

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“At the instant of receiving the Holy Ghost, or the baptism of the Holy Ghost, is there a difference? Does a person speak with tongues? If not always, what manifestation is known?”

*Well, could you imagine a mother giving birth to a baby and not knowing it? She'd have to be unconscious not to know it. Neither can you receive the Holy Ghost without knowing it. There's something takes place in you. See? There's something that changes you. Your whole system, your whole spiritual system is made new again, and you become a new creature in Christ, as the Bible puts it, a new creation in Christ. You know it. Now, you say, 'Brother Branham, then you don't believe that a man should speak with tongues to receive the Holy Ghost.' Not to prove he's got the Holy Ghost... I would that every member of my church spoke with tongues. **I would like for them to do that, and if – I believe if you ask God, God will grant it to you. But let me tell you; I know plenty people that speak in tongues and hasn't got the Holy Ghost.**”*

[Questions and Answers 2, Jeff. Ind. 08-23-64]

*“But one day the Lord in a vision straightened me out, and He said that the evidence of the Spirit was those who could receive the Word, neither love nor speaking in tongues, but **it's receiving the Word.**”*

[Broken Cisterns, Jeff. Ind. 07-26-64]

Okay, let's search the Scripture. (Remember 2 Tim. 2:15? It states: *“Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing [straight cut/dissect/expound] the word of truth.”* Are you ashamed of doing that?) According to the Bible, there are 3 classes of people – Jews, Gentiles and Samaritans. *“Glossolalia”* Christians believe the Samaritans had also received the Holy Spirit in similar manner like the Jews and the Gentiles by speaking with other tongues, not by believing and receiving the Word of the Gospel of Jesus Christ and being water baptized. However, these are the words of Luke:

Acts 8:12: 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.

13: 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, according to the words of William Branham, the Samaritans must have received the Holy Spirit because they believed the Word preached by Philip and they were also baptized. The question is: did they really believe? **Did the group of Samaritan believers have the Holy Spirit?** If so, **why** did the Apostles in Jerusalem need to **send**

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to them Peter and John so that they might be prayed for to receive the Holy Spirit?

Acts 8:14: *Now when the Apostles which were at Jerusalem heard that Samaria had received the word (LOGOS) of God, they sent unto them Peter and John:*

15: *Who, when they were come down, prayed for them, that they might receive the Holy Ghost:*

16: *(For as yet he was fallen upon none of them: only they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus.)*

17: *Then laid they [their] hands on them, and they received the Holy Ghost.*

18: *And when Simon saw that through laying on of the Apostles' hands the Holy Ghost was given, he offered them money,*

19: *Saying, Give me also this power, that on whomsoever I lay hands, he may receive the Holy Ghost.*

20: *But Peter said unto him, Thy money perish with thee, because thou hast thought that the gift of God may be purchased with money.*

21: *Thou hast neither part nor lot in this matter: for thy heart is not right in the sight of God.*

22: *Repent therefore of this thy wickedness, and pray God, if perhaps the thought of thine heart may be forgiven thee.*

23: *For I perceive that thou art in the gall of bitterness, and [in] the bond of iniquity.*

24: *Then answered Simon, and said, Pray ye to the Lord for me, that none of these things which ye have spoken come upon me.*

It is **very erroneous** for the Branhamites to simply pull a phrase or statement out of the sermons of William Branham such as the one quoted – **“it’s receiving the Word”**, or some other similar phrase(s) or statement(s) to build a doctrine about the baptism of the Holy Spirit. There is more to this than what Bro. Branham had said and emphasized concerning the baptism of the Holy Spirit.

Now, when the Samaritans received the Holy Spirit, what **sign** was there? What did Simon Magnus see? Was it the “sign” of the believers speaking with other tongues? Most Pentecostal and Charismatic Christians believe it was. Perhaps, it was and more.

Simon wanted to buy **“this power”**. Did Peter and John pray for Simon when they came to pray and lay hands on the believers in Samaria (cf. Acts 8:15 – “prayed for them”)? If they did, did Simon receive the Holy Spirit baptism and speak with tongues? If he had, then surely the gift of “speaking with tongues” did him no good. Why would a convert seek to buy “power” just to give to another person the gift of “speaking with other tongues”? Or was there more to the

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gift of “*speaking with other tongues*”, perhaps something that excited Simon? I believe there were, for example prophecies, discernment, great joy, exuberance and dancing in the spirit too.

The desire of Simon (a converted sorcerer) did **not** reflect the spirit of one who is born again and has the Holy Spirit. Luke recorded that Simon “*received the Word of God*” and “*was baptized*”. That would make Simon a “**believer**”, won’t it? But his heart had **not** been changed. Being a magician, the “**sign**” that he witnessed was to him a “*magic*”, a “*craft*” that intrigued him greatly, so much so that he wanted to purchase it. He wanted “**this power**” (Grk: *exousia* - privilege, ability) to enhance his position as a man who could do what the Apostles did. But Peter, who saw that his heart was full of bitterness and still a captive to sin, rebuked him and called him to repent. Whether or not Simon repented is not known though he asked for prayer.

Receiving the Word

What is meant by “**receiving the Word**”, a phrase commonly used by the Branhamites?

Let’s look closely what Luke recorded in Acts 2:37-38.

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?*

38: *Then Peter said 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.*

“**Men [and] brethren, what shall we do?**” It was a simple question. A simple answer was given: “**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.**” There is no mention about “*speaking with other tongues*” or “*prophesying*”. Just a simple commandment is all that Peter gave. He mentioned nothing about a sign or any sensation that was to accompany the gift of the Holy Spirit.

A true believer will obey the commandment. Then, if God wants to He could do Acts 2:4. He could give the believer utterance to speak with other tongues, or to prophesy, or to see vision, or the power to heal the sick, or whatever He sees fit to give (cf. 1 Cor.12). Sometimes the believer might just be filled with ecstatic joy or just shouting and dancing in the spirit.

Now, the 3000 souls who obeyed and followed the instructions of Peter were added to the church (cf. Acts 2:41). They had gladly received the Word and followed through in obedience to the Apostle’s

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words but did they speak with other tongues? (Read 1 Cor.12:30.) Obviously, they did **not**. Nonetheless, they **did** receive the Holy Spirit for Luke recorded that **“they continued steadfastly in the Apostles’ doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers.”** That’s what receiving the Word of God means. The “speaking with other tongues” or “prophesying” does not constitute that one is Holy Spirit baptized. Demon-possessed men can also speak and prophesy in other languages.

Joel 2:28: And it shall come to pass afterward, that I will pour out my spirit upon all flesh; and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your old men shall dream dreams, your young men shall see visions:

29: And also upon the servants and upon the handmaids in those days will I pour out my spirit.

To gain eternal life all true worshippers must be Holy Spirit baptized. The pouring out of the Spirit of God upon all flesh on the Day of Pentecost is **not** to be equated to the baptism of the Holy Spirit. With the phenomenon of speaking with other tongues, God was able to get the attention of the Jews. As the Gospel went forth, signs and wonders were manifested. In the early 20th Century, the Christians saw a similar outpouring where the speaking with tongues was again manifested. Then other signs and wonders followed with the preaching of the Gospel. The Holy Spirit of God is poured out, like rain, upon all flesh – the just and the unjust as God wills, “for he maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust” (Matt.5:45). And “the gifts and calling of God are without repentance (are irrevocable)” (Rom.11:29). **Anyone can receive an anointing. But an anointing is not a baptism.** That’s why it is important to note that a person does not necessary have the baptism of the Holy Spirit and/or that he is born again just because he has one or all of the following manifestations:

- 1) *Experience in speaking with other tongues.*
- 2) *Possesses one or more of the 9 spiritual gifts of 1 Corinthians 12.*
- 3) *Has a ministry.*
- 4) *Has visions and dreams.*
- 5) *Possesses good fruits – love, godliness, joy, patience, etc.*

Balaam was called to prophesy. He was anointed. However, he was not steadfast in walking with the Truth but brought forth his own doctrine that fornicated against God’s Word (Num.22-24; Rev.2:14). Then there was Caiaphas, the high priest, who accurately prophesied concerning the death of Jesus Christ (Jhn.11:49-51). Yet he had a hand in crucifying Him who was the Word of God manifest. He had no revelation of the Truth. He had not received the Word. Listen to what Jesus said:

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Matt 7:21: Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven.

22: Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works?

23: And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity.

Oft times when I read those words I wonder how many men and women, who are working actively in some Christian ministries, ever examine themselves closely concerning their relationship with the Word. Some are busy with their religious programs promoting their “kingdoms”. Others are using the Name of Christ for their ungodly gains. I shudder to think of the number of “Gospel workers” who will stand to hear these words of the One whom they serve on Judgment Day: *“I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity.”*

In the United States of America there are certain cultic groups that go into extremism to prove that they have the Holy Spirit. To prove their faithfulness in the Gospel of Christ and that they are holy, they would pick up venomous snakes. If a believer is bitten and lives, then he is said to have the Holy Spirit and the power of God. However, if he dies then the congregation is taught to believe that the person has not been living holy or that he has not repented of his secret sins. The passage of Mark 16:15-18 is often used and applied to their faith.

Mark 16:15: And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature.

16: He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned.

17: And these signs shall follow them that believe; In my name shall they cast out devils; they shall speak with new tongues;

18: They shall take up serpents; and if they drink any deadly thing, it shall not hurt them; they shall lay hands on the sick, and they shall recover.

However, for the Pentecostal and Charismatic people, they would take a part of Mark 16:17 – **“they shall speak with new tongues”** – and leave out the others, as added support to their doctrine for the evidence of having the Holy Spirit. Mark 16:15-18 has its share of debates over its authenticity because of the phrase *“they shall”* which has led some to believe that all those signs and powers must be performed or fulfilled by all believers. Truly, signs shall follow the believers but it is not the believers who perform them as they please. Believers cannot tempt God to prove Himself. It is the Holy Spirit who moves to perform, as He wills, the signs and gifts of God

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(cf. 1 Cor.12:11). We do not read in the Scripture that all the early Christians went throughout all the known world to demonstrate publicly the power of the Holy Spirit in their lives by speaking with other tongues, casting out demons, picking up venomous snakes, taking poisoned drinks and laying hands on all the sick. Instead we read that it was the Apostles who were greatly used by God to found the Church. In its birth and infancy, God used many signs, miracles and wonders by which many souls were convinced of the Gospel of Life in Christ Jesus.

If this passage is **simply taken** to mean that **all** who believe **they all** will **speak in tongues**, will heal the sick, will cast out devils, will take up venomous snakes and drink poison without harm, then the need to ask in faith is **not** required, and Matthew 21:21-22 would be a contradiction.

Matt 21:21: Jesus answered and said unto them, Verily I say unto you, If ye have faith, and doubt not, ye shall not only do this which is done to the fig tree, but also if ye shall say unto this mountain, Be thou removed, and be thou cast into the sea; it shall be done.

22: And all things, whatsoever ye shall ask in prayer, believing, ye shall receive.

Gifts

There is no spiritual gift, be it a sign or a power, which can be the evidence of one having the baptism of the Holy Spirit. We understand that the Lord God used a sign to speak to His people Israel (for they were a people who looked for signs). He chose "tongues" so as to fulfill the prophecy that He had the prophet Isaiah uttered some 750 years earlier - "**For with stammering lips and another tongue will he speak to this people**" (Isa.28:11). This happened on the Day of Pentecost when He poured out His Spirit upon the Apostles. Thousands gathered around the Apostles to hear the exposition of the Word by Peter and three thousands souls were saved. Not very long after that, Peter was led by the Spirit to a Gentile home. Being obedient to the vision, he preached the Gospel to the household of Cornelius. God again used "tongues" as a sign to Peter that the Holy Spirit was also poured out upon the Gentiles. None of the Apostles could deny that fact for the sign was the same as when they received it. Lastly, God dealt with the Samaritans. Again Peter witnessed with his eyes that, indeed, the Holy Spirit was also given to these people. The sign was indisputable.

The case of the believers in Ephesus (Acts 19:1-7) is **unique**. This is a case in point that unless a believer is baptized into Christ he cannot receive the Holy Spirit. However, if he does have the Holy Spirit, then he should be baptized in the Name of Jesus Christ just

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as Cornelius and his household were. There are no two ways about it. The twelve believers in Ephesus were disciples of Apollos who was a disciple of John the Baptist. They were all baptized according to John's baptism of repentance and were told to believe in the One who was to come after John, that is, Christ Jesus. The Gospel of John the Baptist was "*to give knowledge of salvation unto his people by the remission of their sins*" (Lk.1:77). It had been some 25 years that they were baptized and had kept their faith. Nevertheless, they had not received the Holy Spirit because they were not baptized into Christ. **Only in Christ is the Holy Spirit given.** They had believed unto salvation but they were not born again of the Spirit of Christ. Because they were foreknown of God, God sent Paul to them to address the need that they should go through another baptism, this time a baptism in the Name of the Lord Jesus Christ for the remission of their sins. When they received the Word, they obeyed and were re-baptized, and after Paul laid hands on them, they received the Holy Spirit and "*spake with tongues, and prophesied*".

God's Way

Regardless of the association with any true servant of the Lord Jesus Christ a believer chooses to make, he needs to realize that he must come God's way in order to receive the baptism of the Holy Spirit. Before the Church began on the Day of Pentecost, the ministry of John the Baptist had produced a group of disciples. After his death, his more active disciples continued his ministry by keeping his message alive and they made more disciples. Such a man was Apollos (Acts 18:24-28). While Christ was preaching the Gospel, the disciples of John were keeping and following John's teachings. There were the disciples of John and there were the disciples of Christ. And they had some small areas of differences. (Read Matt.9:14; Lk. 11:1; Jhn.4:1-2.) But in the end, after the Holy Spirit was poured out and the Church began, the disciples of John, including Apollos, had to come God's way. They were instructed in the Truth that they might understand the Plan and Purposes of God more accurately. Amen. God cares for His own.

Similarly, in this Laodicean Church Age, God had sent a prophet-messenger, William Branham. Like John the Baptist, he pointed to the One who is The Way, The Truth and The Life, and he proclaimed that all true disciples should come into that marriage feast with the Christ. Hence, if you are a disciple of William Branham (or a disciple of any true servant of Christ), you need to realize that you must come God's way by coming back to His Apostolic Word before you can be prepared and made ready as a part of the Bride-Wife of our Lord Jesus Christ.

What Then Is The [Initial] Evidence of The Holy Spirit baptism?

How does one know that he is born again, that he has the Holy Spirit?

This is the evidence: ***“The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God”*** (Rom 8:16). What other evidence does one require when one has the witness of the Holy Spirit? The witness of the Holy Spirit is the initial evidence *per se*. If one does not have this witness, then there is no evidence of having the baptism of the Holy Spirit.

For illustrations, here are two scenarios:

i) A young child is kidnapped and taken away from his mother. After a separation of many years and a searching that brings them together, how will the child, who is all grown up, feel when he comes face to face with his mother? How will he know that the woman is his mother? Well, all he needs to do is listen to her voice, watch and feel the love, joy and life of the spirit of the woman. Because of her voice and a blood link he will feel a kinship spirit with her. It's her spirit that binds with his, and he will know.

ii) A man undergoes general anesthesia for a major surgery. After the anesthesia takes its full effect, the man is “dead” to all physical senses. Now, how does he know that he is “all right” and alive when the general anesthesia wears off after the surgery? Simple, he is able to feel all his senses and is aware of his surrounding.

Likewise, being born of the Spirit and the Word, the Spirit of God binds His children to Him and they are aware of His Voice and His Presence, and His Life and Love in them. They are aware that they are blessed with every spiritual blessing and are seated with Christ in Heavenly places (Eph. 1:3; 2:6).

I remember the day I gave my life to the Lord. I was 12 years old (in 1960). There was a Baptist Church holding evangelical meetings. I attended. It was on the second meeting, as I recall, that the Spirit of God was tugging at my heart throughout the preaching of the Word. When the altar call was made, I could not help but go forward in repentance. At the altar I gave my heart to the Lord Jesus and received Him as my Saviour. To this day, I remember that I had an experience right there and then. I had a witness in my spirit that I was a child of God. Love flooded my soul. My life was changed. I was not what I used to be. However, due to some general negative remarks made by a school teacher about teenagers, when I entered Secondary (High) School, I began to backslide. For about two years I stayed away from church. In those years I have never denied the Lord. Then came a day when the Lord used a sinner to get me back to church. I was led to worship and fellowship in an Assembly of God church. It was there that I received the baptism of the Holy Spirit. I spoke in tongues.

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I prophesied. But I was baptized in the triune title of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

If you ask me as to whether I really have the Holy Spirit baptism even though I was not baptized right accordingly to Acts 2:38, my answer is YES. I had the witness of God's Spirit that I am His child, even at that time when I first gave my heart to Him. Like Cornelius who received the baptism of the Holy Spirit before he was baptized in the Name of the Lord Jesus Christ, I did too, only much later when the Message of the Seventh Church Age Messenger reached me. Like the twelve believers in Ephesus who knew only John Baptist's teaching and baptism, so was I who knew only the teachings of the Baptist and the A.o.G. denominations. Like the Truth came to them and they were re-baptized, so was I when the Message came to me in 1971. I was re-baptized – in the Name of the Lord Jesus Christ.

More Evidences

Acts 1:8: *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 Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth.*

Consider and weigh out carefully these two words – “**power**” and “**witnesses**”. The Greek word for “**power**” is “**dunamis**”, meaning force or miraculous power. The Greek word for “**witnesses**” is “**martus**”. It is literally means a witness, or by analogy (figuratively), a martyr. It is thus clear that when the Holy Spirit comes upon a believer, he is given power and he is to be a witness – a witness of what he knows, what he receives, from God. He will have the strength and intensity to stand up for the Truth he received. He will bear witness to the Truth. He will be true to the facts. He will be a martyr for the Truth he possesses. He will die for the Truth.

But firstly, what is this power?

The miraculous power given is **not** to cause the believer to speak in tongues, prophesy or perform signs and wonders. **It is essentially a power to quicken and miraculously transform a believer to become a son of God.** Amen. The Scripture says:

John 1:12: *But as many as received him, to them gave he **power to become the sons of God**, even to them that believe on his name:
13: Which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.*

Rom 1:16: *For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the **power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek.***

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1Pet 1:3: *Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to his abundant mercy hath begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead,*

4: *To an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you,*

5: *Who are kept by the **power of God through faith unto salvation** ready to be revealed in the last time.*

2Pet 1:2: *Grace and peace be multiplied unto you through the knowledge of God, and of Jesus our Lord,*

3: *According as his **divine power hath given unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness**, through the knowledge of him that hath called us to glory and virtue:*

4: *Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and **precious promises**: that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust.*

The **divine power** of God coming upon a believer is what Jesus Christ was precisely referring to when He said: **“He that believeth on me, as the scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water”** (Jhn.7:38). And the Apostle John recorded: **“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”** (Jhn.7:39). See? It is the LIFE of the Spirit of God coming into the believer and within his heart will flow streams of living water. Remember that the Word of Life is seated in the heart of a son of God. **“A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you”** (Ezek.36:26a cf. Rom.10:8). It is the same Spirit of the Word of LIFE that was present with the disciples when Jesus was with them. Christ the Word of Life **was dwelling with them** but He **came to dwell in them** on the Day of Pentecost after His glorification (cf. Jhn.14:15-17). **The Holy Spirit is the Spirit of Christ and He is the power of God unto salvation.** One cannot be born again without the baptism of the Spirit and without the new birth one is not a child of God. Apostle Paul wrote:

Rom.8:9: *But you are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if indeed the Spirit of God dwells in you. Now if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he is not His.* (NKJ)

Hence how then could any preacher make this sweeping statement that's often heard: **“To be born again is to have salvation, eternal life, whereas to be Holy Spirit baptized is to receive power for service.”** (Acts 1:8 and Luke 24:49 are often quoted to show that when the Holy Spirit comes upon a believer, the believer is endued with power for service.) **To teach that being born again is not the same as the baptism of the Holy Spirit is a fallacy. It is**

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also often uttered that believing in Jesus Christ is being born again, and that is the same as being baptized in the Holy Spirit. This is also a fallacy. To believe in Jesus Christ is to believe for salvation, **but** until the power of God comes to circumcise the heart there will be no rebirth; simply there is no life. It is like a woman who has conceived with child. Until a birth takes place and air (life) is taken in by the child, there will be no life. See? **A conception is not a life.** A woman may have a conception and if it is a stillborn child it is not a life; the child must breathe the life.

Secondly, as **a believer who is born again by the power of the Spirit of God, he is to be a witness, a martyr, for the One who is THE WORD Himself, the One who gave His Life for him.** And so, **how important is the Word then?** Read these spoken words of our Lord:

Matt 7:15: *Beware of false prophets, which come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves.*

16: ***Ye shall know them by their fruits.***

How can a man tell apart the wolves from the real sheep when they come among sheep, look like sheep, smell like sheep, and practically their every action are that of sheep? So what is this about being able to **“know them by their fruits”?** **What are these fruits?** The following two passages of Scripture will provide the answer.

Luke 6:43: *For a good tree bringeth not forth corrupt fruit; neither doth a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit.*

44: *For every tree is known by his own fruit. For of thorns men do not gather figs, nor of a bramble bush gather they grapes.*

45: *A good man out of the good treasure of his heart bringeth forth that which is good; and an evil man out of the evil treasure of his heart bringeth forth that which is evil: for of the abundance of the heart his mouth speaketh.*

Matt 12:33: *Either make the tree good, and his fruit good; or else make the tree corrupt, and his fruit corrupt: for the tree is known by his fruit.*

34: *O generation of vipers, how can ye, being evil, speak good things? for out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh.*

35: *A good man out of the good treasure of the heart bringeth forth good things: and an evil man out of the evil treasure bringeth forth evil things.*

36: *But I say unto you, That every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give account thereof in the day of judgment.*

37: *For by thy words thou shalt be justified, and by thy words thou shalt be condemned.*

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From the passages, it is obvious that the “**fruits**” are **not** some works that are manifested. Rather, being that men are as “**trees**” the “**fruits**” are the **words uttered**, the treasures brought forth, out of the abundance of the heart. Whatever the faith, whatever the treasure, kept in the heart, it will come forth out of the mouth. As long as the false prophets, who are wolves in sheep’s clothing, open not their mouths, they will not expose themselves as false prophets. But once they open their mouths to speak, they expose themselves and “the game is over”. Wolves growl and howl. They are not like sheep who bleat. Hence, the flock of sheep will know who they are. No good treasure, no true confession, will come forth out of the hearts of wolves because they are as corrupt trees and thus their “**fruits**” are evil. Truly, we are either justified or condemned by the words we utter and every one will have to give an account of the words they utter.

Unethical Equation

Let me highlight again this *erroneous* statement that’s so often made: “*Being born again of the Spirit and the Word **is not** the same as being baptized with the Holy Spirit, for to be born again **is** to have salvation, eternal life, whereas to be Holy Spirit baptized **is** to receive power for service.*” If this statement is true then the **whole household** of Cornelius, family members and all servants, men and women of all ages, were **called into services** for the Lord Jesus Christ by one sweep of the Holy Spirit baptism while they were hearing the Word of God preached. Is this true? Moreover were **all** those in Samaria (Acts 8) and those twelve disciples of Apollos in Ephesus (Acts 19:1-7) who received the baptism of the Holy Spirit received it **for the service** of the Lord? Or were they all actually baptized into one body by the selfsame Spirit of God? “**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**” (1 Cor.12:13). **To drink of the Spirit of God is eternal life.**

Consider this passage of Scripture on the events in Jerusalem on the Day of Pentecost:

Acts 2:38: *Then Peter said 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.*

39: *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.***

40: *And with many other words did he testify and exhort, saying, **Save yourselves from this untoward generation.***

41: *Then they that gladly received his word were baptized: and the same day there were added unto them about three thousand souls.*

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Notice what Apostle Peter said concerning the gift of the Holy Spirit: **“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”**. Now, are the “many as the Lord our God shall call” **called to receive the promise of a gift to do services for Him? Or are they called to receive the promise of the gift of the Holy Spirit that their souls might be quickened to eternal life because they believe and receive the Word?** Bear in mind that Peter exhorted his hearers about the fact of **salvation**. And were not 3000 souls baptized and added to the Church? Were they not added to the Church because they were **saved**? If they were **saved** were they not **baptized** into the body of Christ by the **Holy Spirit**?

A fact remains that Acts 1:8 and Luke 24:49 have been stretched to extremes to indicate that a Holy Spirit baptized believer is different from a born again believer because only the former has received power to do service for God, to overcome sins, to perform miracles, and etc.

Identification: Word, Spirit, Life

Tit 3:3: For we ourselves also were sometimes foolish, disobedient, deceived, serving divers lusts and pleasures, living in malice and envy, hateful, and hating one another.

4: But after that the kindness and love of God our Saviour toward man appeared,

5: Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost;

6: Which he shed on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Saviour;

7: That being justified by his grace, we should be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life.

Eph 5:25: Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it;

26: That he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word,

27: That he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing;

Paul's words, in these passages of his epistles, speak clearly of God's mercy towards saving us (the saints). This was done by the power of the Holy Spirit as He renewed us through a washing process. This washing was done with “*the washing of the water by the word*” (i.e. through the hearing of the Word preached, faith is given, Rom.10:17; Gal.3:2) that resulted in us having a **renewal** within our spirit, thus giving us a **rebirth**. We were born again of the Word (cf. 1 Pet.1:23). And this Word abides and remains in us forever

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(cf. 1 Pet.1:24-25; 1 Jhn.3:9). With that we are assured of **eternal life** because we have the **witness of the Spirit** (cf. Acts 15:8).

The Holy Spirit comes to identify the Word that is received by the true worshippers. He powers that Seed Word so that the true worshippers would bear witness of the Truth. And as long as the Spirit and the Word are in one accord in the hearts of the true worshippers, they will grow and come into perfection as complete mature men and women of God.

What has LIFE?

John 6:63: *It is the spirit that quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing: the words that I speak unto you, they are **spirit**, and they are **life**.*

John 14:26: *But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he **shall teach** you **all things**, and **bring all things** to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you.*

John 16:13: *Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he **will guide** you into **all truth**: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak: and he **will shew** you **things to come**.*

These three verses of Scripture presented by John concerning what Jesus said, speak volumes. There are three elements that are in accord: **the Spirit, the Word and the Life** (cf. 1 Jhn.5:8 – Spirit, water and blood). Our Lord and Saviour carried the revelation of God and the words He uttered are spirit and life. The WORD (LOGOS) is the revealing of THE CHRIST. And like all the Apostles, John the beloved knew, perhaps more, the importance of the **utterances** of His Master. In his Gospel, John revealed that **God** and His **Word** are **ONE**. He recorded where Jesus once said “**God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth**” (Jhn.4:24). The Spirit of God will identify with His Own Word (Truth). Hence, the witness of the Spirit comes – **always** – with His Word, never without it. He stands with His Own Word – **always**. He comes to teach the true worshippers and guides them into all things that are Christ’s, and will show them the things to come.

How important then it is for the true believers to realize that **the LIFE of the Spirit is with His WORD**. And that all who have the LIFE of the Spirit will naturally and spiritually feed on His WORD. It is the SAP in them that not only gives them the Life but also causes them to grow spiritually bearing the good fruits of the Word.

Bro. Branham himself made clear the need of feeding on the Word. He said:

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*“... And that Word is God, and God was made flesh in the Person of Jesus Christ, which that is the Gate. ‘There’s the Gate I meet you in to worship when you follow the commandments of God.’ Therefore, if you’ve tonight, just come and said, ‘I offer Jesus Christ my life,’ and you’re never received the Holy Ghost, come into It. You must do it. You must grow into It. **Ask God to pile Word on top of Word like that until you become the full statue of a son of God or a daughter of God.** Taking the things of the world... I John says, ‘If you love the world or the things of the world, it’s because the love of God’s not even in you.’ You’ve been deceived.”*

[Things That Are To Be. Rialto, Ca.,12-05-65]

The Holy Spirit brings the Word to the hearer. When the Word is received by faith, It quickens the soul, regenerating and renewing the spirit. The old heart melts away as the Word creates a new birth and baptizes the person into the Body of Christ. Being omnipotent and omniscient, God knows the end from the beginning and therefore foreknows and foreordains only those that will receive the Word. They are the elected ones. They are predestinated by God’s foreknowledge to be conformed to the image of His Son, Jesus Christ. Thus, only true seeds will receive the Word Seed to be quickened and born again. The Word then abides in the believers whose souls draw the sap of the Word, the life of the Spirit, and feeds on It to manifest the fruit of the Life of God.

Pharisaical Spirit

2Cor 3:15: *But even unto this day, when Moses is read, the veil is upon their heart.*

16: *Nevertheless when it shall turn to the Lord, the veil shall be taken away.*

17: *Now the Lord is that Spirit: and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty.*

18: *But we all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord.*

The Pharisaical spirit is always around where the true believers are found. It will come head on against the Present (Day) Truth. It came against John the Baptist and Jesus the Christ when the Gospel of Grace was being preached in their days. It was also in the days of the Apostles. As it were in the past, so is it in the present. The Pharisaical spirit is **always about “the prophets” and their words**. In the synagogue, on every Sabbath (and every festive) day, the words of the prophet Moses or one of the other prophets would be **read and heard**. However, the veil of **darkness** covered the hearts of all the

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hearers. **They could not receive the light because of the traditions they held.** There was a specific message in every age when God dealt with His people. Though the message may differ one from the others, yet the **essence** of each is that **GOD IS LIGHT AND IN HIM IS NO DARKNESS.**

There is no darkness (tradition) in Yahweh. He is Light; He is Truth; He is Life. Indeed, any carnal hypothesis about the Word of God is darkness, falsehood and death. The words of the prophet(s) may be read and quoted. However, if they are done **piously** because of a **tradition** that is passed down by some **religious elders**, then all that the believers have are the **letters of the Word**. And *“the letter killeth”* (cf. 2 Cor.3:6). **To worship the prophets of God and their words bring only death. Without a revelation of the prophetic words the believers have only a tradition.** Such tradition has but a self-righteous spirit in its proclamation: **“We have Abraham. We have Moses the prophet. And we have their words and we have read them all.”** Be that as it may, a cover of darkness remains upon the hearts of all who refused to turn to the One Who is **THE WORD**.

The apostle Paul states **“the letter killeth, but the spirit giveth life”** (cf. 2 Cor.3:6). He is the one who said that he would not hesitate to declare to the saints the whole counsel of God (cf. Acts 20:27). He declared that it is **THE WORD** that is the Face and the Glory of Yahweh. It is the Face of Christ that we behold and we **“are changed into the same image from glory to glory”** by the Spirit of the Word. This is the prerogative and the mandate of the Apostolic Ministry that God had set in the Church by whom the Spirit of God seeks to bring Truth and Life to the true worshippers. All secrets and shameful ways would be exposed. Christ would not allow any deception or distortion in the handling of His Word. This is what Paul said:

2Cor 4:1: Therefore seeing we have this ministry, as we have received mercy, we faint not;

2: But have renounced the hidden things of dishonesty, not walking in craftiness, nor handling the word of God deceitfully; but by manifestation of the truth commending ourselves to every man's conscience in the sight of God.

So be it. Such strong words of Paul show that there were certain men, in his days, who were crafty and who went about distorting the Word of God in their secret and shameful ways. As it was in the past, so is it today. Therefore, are today's Endtime Message ministers really walking right in the ways of Paul's revelation? Do they really have the Holy Spirit baptism? I ask these questions because, often times this is what I have heard said:

“We don't need to know what Bro. Branham did not preach. What he did not preach is not important to us. We need only to stay with the

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Message, to study the messages. We need to just say what the tapes say so that the people would not get confused on what he said."

Such confession is a lie. In "saying what the tapes say" and **not** "saying what the Bible says" many different views and doctrines have been propagated. A preacher stands at the pulpit and proclaims, "**I am saying what the prophet said**". Then he reads a list of quotes taken from the different sermon tapes of Bro. Branham and gives his interpretation and says, "**See. Bro. Braham very clearly taught that a believer has two souls.**" Another preacher comes to the pulpit with a stack of THE SPOKEN WORD books. He says, "**I will show you where Bro. Branham said that he will fulfill his Tent Vision**" and he takes statements out of the different sermon books to prove his so-called revelation of a Return Ministry of William Branham. He concludes his preaching and proclaims, "**See. Bro. Branham will have to resurrect and go round the world preaching the Gospel once again in a tent. Amen. I'm saying exactly what the tapes say and anyone who does not believe in a return ministry of the prophet is a make-believer of his message.**" Still another preacher says, "**Let's say what the tapes say about Marriage and Divorce**" and he quotes various statements related to the subject, especially on the 'second covenant', and says, "**See. Bro. Branham taught that a believing man can have more than one living wife.**"

Well, needless to say that there are many other "say what the tapes say" preachers and all of them have their own ideas of what the tapes say. So, **is it really true** that by "saying just what the tapes say" all believers will be in one accord, have the same common doctrines, and there will be no confusion? Far from it, the answer is clear for all honest and sincere truth seekers to see for themselves. **If the BIBLE is not the TOOL** for God's servants, then what is? Those who use tools other than the BIBLE are cultic leaders who are just "religious parrots". They are all in Babylon, contributing in building a tower that God hates. Such servants are rebels.

Some believers have retorted against me, saying, "*Look, the organized churches use the Bible and still they have different views of doctrines.*"

True, the denomination leaders claim the BIBLE as THE ABSOLUTE. They claim that they are saying what the Bible says. However, are they **really using the Bible**? Or are they **using their CREEDS and DOGMAS**? They may stand to preach and teach with the Bible in their hands but their minds are on the **TRADITIONS OF THEIR SYSTEMS**. They are each to their own cultic religious group - Anglican, Lutheran, Baptist, Methodist, Presbyterian, Assemblies of God, etc., and to their own doctrines. They claim the Bible but they interpret their **ELDERS** (i.e. the traditions of the Elders handed down

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in the religious systems). Certainly, to use THE BIBLE to try and correct false doctrines among these people in their systems would be futile. Will they accept the correction? Of course they will not. They will use their own creeds (and traditions of the Elders) to support their faith. It is the same with the many preachers in the Endtime Message Churches. They claim the Bible but they quote their prophet, William Branham, even word for word. And to use THE BIBLE to try and correct their false interpretations of the prophet would just be as futile, perhaps more so. They will take the tapes and books of Branham to support and argue their interpretations to the hilt. How true, just like the denominational cults, each of them to their own – the preachers of the “Two Souls” doctrine to their own, those of the “Return Ministry of Branham” to their own, etc., and all of them using the prophet’s words.

Paul admonished his co-labourer Timothy to be diligent to present himself approved unto God (cf. 2 Tim.2:15). As a workman the WORD and the WORK of God are all important and he should not be ashamed to rightly divide the Word of Truth. That’s right; a servant of God should never be ashamed to rightly divide the Word of Truth. As workman he may make mistakes, unintentionally of course, for to err is human. (Tell me whether there was ever a workman who had NEVER MADE MISTAKES in working with his tools?) Nevertheless, learning from his mistakes and with repentance to His Teacher, the Holy Spirit, he hones his skills in dividing the Word of Truth as the Spirit leads and guides him. So, as preachers, the **tool of our trade** to bring out the revelation of Truth is THE HOLY SCRIPTURE. We may make a mistake and may not realize it until later. But by God’s grace when we see the mistake we should be quick to learn and correct it, using the SAME TOOL.

Now, the tapes/books of Bro. Branham are **not** THE TOOL. They are **not** TOOLS as some claim they are. Each sermon of Branham is a **product, result, effect**, that Bro. Branham brought forth BY THE TOOL OF GOD (that is, THE HOLY BIBLE). After hearing a sermon, I see the “product”, let’s figuratively say that it’s a cupboard. The cupboard as a whole is truthful as a cupboard should be. (Remember that each sermon of Bro. Branham was preached correct in its own context.) However, there maybe some slight rough edges, or maybe a door that’s too tight. But such minor things (mistakes) are not the problems. A true believer should be able to recognize such when they search the scripture to see if the “product” was true to the pattern of the Sacred Scripture (cf. Acts 17:11). The Spirit of God in His Own TOOL (THE SACRED SCRIPTURE) will correct and adjust it. He will use HIS OWN TOOL to correct errors. ***“All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works”*** (2 Tim.3:16-17). ***“For whom the LORD loveth he correcteth; even***

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as a father the son in whom he delighteth. Happy is the man that findeth wisdom, and the man that getteth understanding"
(Prov.3:12-13).

The same Spirit upon Paul and Branham is the same Spirit upon any TRUE SERVANT of God. Therefore Bro. Branham made no mistake in saying that the Spirit of God will pile word upon word on the saints who desire it. And the Spirit of God is doing just that through the 5-fold Ministry (cf. Eph.4).

Believing the Message

Many have claimed to have the Holy Spirit just because they believe the Message of William Branham but that's not necessarily the evidence. Consider Simon the sorcerer — was he saved?

Acts 8:20: *But Peter said unto him, Thy money perish with thee, because thou hast thought that the gift of God may be purchased with money.*

21: *Thou hast neither part nor lot in this matter: for thy heart is not right in the sight of God.*

22: *Repent therefore of this thy wickedness, and pray God, if perhaps the thought of thine heart may be forgiven thee.*

23: *For I perceive that thou art in the gall of bitterness, and in the bond of iniquity. [cf. Isa.58:6]*

24: *Then answered Simon, and said, Pray ye to the Lord for me, that none of these things which ye have spoken come upon me.*

Judging from what was recorded by Luke, was Simon genuine in his request? Consider first his covetous attitude whether he had the Holy Spirit baptism. What about Demas who forsook Paul and followed the present world (2 Tim.4:10)? Wasn't he walking with Paul's message? What about Hymeneus and Alexander, who for a time were members of the true church, yet they had but a bare profession is clear, seeing afterward they made shipwreck of their faith (1 Tim.1:19, 20).

I have personally encountered several believers who were bewitched and some of them in turn are bewitching others with the same spirit. The fruits, manifested by the gateway of their mouths, show clearly what seeds they are of.

The Scripture lays down the roadmap for a true worshipper's journey in the Faith he has taken up. The beginning of the Church had the standard of the Faith established by the Apostles and it should be our paradigm.

Acts 2:41: *Then they that **gladly received** his word were **baptized**: and the same day there were added unto them about three*

thousand souls.

42: *And they **continued steadfastly** in the **Apostles' doctrine and fellowship**, and in **breaking of bread**, and in **prayers**.*

44: *And all that believed were **together**, and had all **things common**;*

45: *And sold their possessions and goods, and parted them to all men, as every man had need.*

46: *And 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,*

Notice that **all who gladly received the Word of Truth were water baptized**. There was no contention over the fact of taking the Name of the Lord Jesus Christ by identifying with Him in death, burial and resurrection. After that **they continued steadfastly** in these four building blocks: firstly, **the Apostles' doctrine**, secondly, **the fellowship**, thirdly, **the breaking of bread** and fourthly, **the prayers**. They were **all together** and had **all things common** because of the love of God. They moved in **one accord** because of the four basic dynamic factors. Discount the first and the Church will crumble, for *"God hath set some in the church, first Apostles, secondarily prophets, thirdly teachers, after that miracles, then gifts of healings, helps, governments, diversities of tongues"* (1 Cor.12:28). The saints *"are built upon the foundation of the Apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone"* (Eph.2:20). How important then are the foundational stones of the Apostles (cf. Rev.21:14)?

Next, consider **the importance of fellowship**. It is in fellowship that the breaking of bread, that is the breaking of the Word of Life and the partaking of the Bread and Cup of the Lord, is realized and appreciated. *"And let us consider one another to provoke unto love and to good works: Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another: and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching"* (Heb.10:24-25). And as the saints come together, prayers are offered up to the Lord. Prayers are our lifeline to the Almighty God, our Father. It is a spiritual relationship in the Faith that sustains our walk with Him, individually and collectively as an assembly of believers. *"Draw nigh to God, and he will draw nigh to you"* (Jam.4:8a). Besides prayer is the exercise of the presence of God. *"Be careful for nothing; but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God. And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus"* (Phi.4:6-7). *"Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints"* (Eph.6:18). *"But the end of all things is at hand: be ye therefore sober, and watch unto prayer"* (1 Pet.4:7).

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The Revelation of The Word

Not all teachings need a revelation. Often I have heard this utterance: **“What you said from the Scripture is correct. But we need to pray for the revelation of it.”** How silly. If one can testify it is correct and true, does one still need to pray for a revelation? When the Bible says that God is love, does one need to pray for a revelation of it? When the apostle Peter proclaimed the truth to the question put forth by those who heard his exposition, *“Repent and be baptized in the Name of the Lord Jesus Christ for the remission of your sins”*, did those devout Jewish men say, *“You are right, Peter. But we have to have a revelation first about this water baptism issue before we take the plunge”*? Certainly, they did not. They didn’t first seek a revelation about water baptism. It is a clear and direct commandment. They first needed to obey for obedience is important right after they received the Word of the Christ. Then, by and by, they came to understand the significance of water baptism as they walked in the Truth of the Gospel of Life.

In the Scripture, there is but **only one great and important revelation** that you and I definitely must have, and it is to this question of Jesus – **“WHO DO YOU SAY THAT I THE SON OF MAN AM”?** This is a question. It is not a command or a statement of Truth. When the revelation to this question is given to us and we receive it into our hearts, we will confess Him. **Being born again by the Spirit of Christ, we will associate with the Word of Life and live It.** We will ground ourselves to the Truth. We will secure ourselves in It. More importantly we are to be one with the Word; otherwise we will be as lost as nominal Christians are to the plan and purposes of God. Like the Pharisees, the denominational Christians are now wondering what lies ahead of them as they look to the Coming of the Saviour. They cannot see what is going on right now in the Plan of God. On the other hand, the Branhamites are just going about preaching the messages of the prophet and stressing the people to *“stay with the message”* and *“study the message”* instead of moving on with the Lord in the Present Truth under the Present Ministry of the Ascension Gifts (cf. Eph.4).

When the Branhamites confess that they are *“staying with the message”* and *“studying the message”* they are contradicting the Word. They should be **“staying with the Word”** and **“studying the Word”** instead. It is written (in the Scripture):

1Jhn 1:5: *This then is the message which we have heard of him, and declare unto you, that God is light, and in him is no darkness at all.*

2Tim 2:15: *Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.*

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16: *But shun **profane and vain babblings**: for they will increase unto more ungodliness.*

17: *And their word will eat as doth a **canker**: of whom is Hymenaeus and Philetus;*

18: *Who concerning the truth have erred, saying that the resurrection is past already; and overthrow the faith of some.*

See? The message of God is that He is **Light** and in Him is **no darkness, no adumbration, no tradition**. He is the Way, the Truth and the Life. The Word rightly divided will reveal Him. But we are to avoid **vain, pointless and foolish discussions** over mere words – *quote, quote, quote; blah, blah, blah*; talk nineteen to the dozen – as Paul warned Timothy for such **babbling** message is cancerous. Hymenaeus and Philetus were two of such **cancerous babblers** who taught the people that the resurrection was already past. The erroneous teaching spread like cancer upon the people and destroyed the faith of some. This is exactly similar to the teaching of some “message” preachers who teach that the Rapture has already taken place, the “Millennium” is here and therefore feet-washing and communion are unnecessary while they wait for the change of the body.

When I warn believers about certain cancerous babblers and their teachings I get criticism from some. Why? Didn't Jesus do it? Didn't He warn His disciples about the leaven of the Pharisees? (Was any disciple so lovely in spirit as to tell Jesus, “*Why are you criticizing the Pharisees? They are good people. They believe the prophets too.*”) Didn't Paul do it? Didn't he warn his followers of those devious wolves which came in among them in sheep's clothing? Saints, we speak the truth in love. We do not condemn. We commit righteous judgment according to the Word of Life. **As watchmen on the wall overseeing the flock of God, it is our duties to cry wolf when we see one.** Any sheep who fails to heed the warning has his own blood on his own hands.

The Real Life

The Holy Spirit baptism is effective only on the true seeds because they are the only ones that can believe and receive the real Word of truth that's rightly divided. The baptism is a gift that puts the genuine life on such and takes them to fruition to be one with the Father and our Lord Jesus Christ. And the Spirit does it by watering the Word that's greatly treasured in the heart of the believers. **The Spirit will never deviate from His own Inspired Word.** Jesus said, “*All that the Father giveth me shall come to me; and him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out*” (Jhn.6:37). Truly, the apostle Peter revealed the same concerning the Word:

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1Pet 1:23: *Being **born again**, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever.*

24: *For all flesh is as grass, and all the glory of man as the flower of grass. The grass withereth, and the flower thereof falleth away:*

25: *But the word of the Lord endureth for ever. And this is the word which by the gospel is preached unto you.*

Signs and wonders are done to draw people's attention to the Almighty God as He fulfilled His promises. God does **not** put emphasis on signs and wonders as He does upon His Word. The faith of His people is not based upon signs and wonders but upon His Word, not something that is physically seen but something that is spiritually revealed (cf. 1 Cor.2:10-16; 2 Cor.4:18). Bro. Branham's emphasis had always been on the Word:

*"See? If you still have the love of the world, want to act like the world and do like the world, you're trying... You're yet... You're in the church, but a cocklebur in the patch with the wheat: shout with the rest of them; rejoice with the rest of them; all the spiritual blessings is right upon you. You say, 'Well, I prophesy.' So did Caiaphas; so did Balaam. That has nothing... 'I got the baptism of the Holy Spirit.' That still has nothing to do with it. That's just only a **temporal gift** for you. **The real gift is your soul down in there (See?) that was born of God, and that controls the whole thing to the Word of God and the will of God; and there you grow up. See?**"*

[Things That Are To Be, Railto, Calif. 12-05-65]

That's right. **Down in the soul is where the Word resides:** *"Thy word have I hid in mine heart, that I might not sin against thee" (Psa.119:11). "The law of his God is in his heart; none of his steps shall slide" (Psa.37:31).*

God used tongues as a sign to draw the people. He used other gifts too. But He is not into appeasing our physical senses. Signs, wonders, prophecies and other gifts and manifestations are pieces and puzzles of God's working to point the elect to the ONE who is PERFECT, the ONE who is THE WORD. When the Perfect Man comes to His Church that is perfected by His Word, then all temporal gifts will be done away (cf. 1 Cor.13:10).

Satan can and will impersonate every gift of God possible to mislead people and throw them off the Word. He, as an angel of light, will bring forth death. Therefore he cannot bring the true revelation of the Word to God's children and cause them to live the life of the Spirit of the Word, from Truth to Truth. He cannot bring the glory of the Word. In the first place, he cannot even bring the soul to the life of the Word. He is a Deceiver and a Fornicator of the Word of Truth. He is a Destroyer.

Feeding on the Word - God is Love

The real life will feed on the real food. *“For wheresoever the carcase is, there will the eagles be gathered together”* (Matt.24:28). The branches cannot but draw the sap from the vine and produce fruits. *“I am the vine, ye are the branches: He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without me ye can do nothing”* (Jhn.15:5). The true saints will always partake of the Bread and the Cup of the New Covenant of our Lord Jesus Christ. How then can the saints confess anyone but Jesus the Christ. **Whoever confesses a servant of Christ above his Master is antichrist and a liar and has not the true faith. Whoever is ashamed to confess his faith in Christ according to the Written Word is not worthy of Christ. Whoever confesses his faith in Christ but according to the traditions of men is not worthy of the Gospel of Christ.** Read Rom.10:9-11; Matt.10:32; Rev.3:5; 19:10.

Now, before someone can be born again, he first has to die. The *“old man”*, that *old nature*, must be surrendered to Christ and die — crucified with Him. Once he is born again, he is free even though he is a prisoner of Christ.

Rom 6:6: *Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin.*

7: *For he that is dead is freed from sin.*

8: *Now if we be dead with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with him:*

9: *Knowing that Christ being raised from the dead dieth no more; death hath no more dominion over him.*

10: *For in that he died, he died unto sin once: but in that he liveth, he liveth unto God.*

Rom 8:10: *And if Christ be in you, the body is dead because of sin; but the Spirit is life because of righteousness.*

As I have aforementioned, **“agape”** is the first thing I experienced when I gave my heart to the Lord. *“Heaven came down and glory filled my soul”* goes the song. It was an experience that’s unmistakably from the Lord. That’s what a true child of God will experience when he receives the life of the Spirit of God. A spiritual bond takes place between the child of God and His Father the Saviour. A person may confess that he is born again but without God’s love he has nothing. Read 1 Cor.13:1-12. **“And now abideth faith, hope, charity, these three; but the greatest of these is charity”** (1 Cor.13:13).

What is true LOVE? Because God is true Love, His Word is corrective. God and His Word are ONE. And also because God is

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Light, there is no tradition, no obscurity and no murkiness. His Word is pure and true, giving light and life. However, the “love” among the Endtime Message believers has created many divisions among the people. They love only their own and speak falsely of others not in the circle of their faith and revelation. Speaking truthfully of others in love is a rare thing. Because of the fear to speak the truth, the love is often two-faced, very hypocritical. Such love is actually an ecumenical love. It is just an act to satiate one another. Consequently real Truths are forsaken. Read 1 Jhn.3:18; 2 Jhn.1:1; Eph.4:25. Even though they know that the Word of Truth cannot be compromised many, especially the preachers, seek recognition and acceptance by floating along with the different groups of Branhamites. Some perch on the fence and watch the goings-on. They attach to a group only when they can avail themselves some material benefits. They listen and they ape, speaking like everyone in the group. When someone utters a quote of Branham they shout “*amen*” with great enthusiasm and often respond to it with another quote. There is no maturity and growth in the Word of God but only in the sermons of William Branham. Some even boast how many times or how **many years** they had **spent reading, studying, re-reading and re-studying** the more than 1000 messages of Branham. They **boast** as if such a thing gives them the authority to interpret doctrines or that they have a great understanding of what Bro.Branham meant. Well, they may have their doctrines but certainly **not** the necessary doctrines of Christ. They are just like the Pharisees who read, studied, re-read and re-studied their prophets’ words in their synagogues and temples and yet their doctrines were leaven. They have nothing but tradition and doctrines of men that made the Word of Truth useless to their listeners. Woe unto you, Pharisaical Branhamites! Woe unto all you who go in the way of Cain and Balaam!

Paradigm of A True Baptism of the Holy Spirit

In wrapping up the study, let’s review the Scriptural approach of how the Holy Spirit works in taking the Word of Truth to His elect and what He will manifest in a believer who has received the baptism of the Spirit.

1. A person needs to hear the Word. Therefore the Gospel of Christ must be preached; the Word of Life is sown in the heart of the hearers (cf. Matt.13). *“So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God”* (Rom.10:17).

2. Grace is given to one who takes diligent heed to the hearing of the Word. *“But we believe that through the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ we shall be saved, even as they”* (Acts 15:11). The hearer believes the Word. *“For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek”* (Rom.1:16).

PROPHETIC*REVELATION

3. The believer receives the Word. True faith is a fact and an act. *"He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved"* (Mk.16:16a). True faith obeys the Word and the believer acts accordingly; *"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"* (Acts 2:38). He who truly receives the Word has true faith.

4. When the believer receives the Holy Spirit he is baptized into the Body of Christ (cf. 1 Cor.12:13) and becomes a son of God. *"But as many as received him, to them gave he power [the privilege] to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name: Which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God"* (Jhn.1:12-13). He also has the witness of the Spirit within his spirit – *"The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God"* (Rom.8:16). With this testimony of God the believer is sealed for he has a witness, he has the baptism of the Spirit, he is endowed with the divine power of God and is a son of God with eternal life. *"In whom ye also trusted, after that ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation: in whom also after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that holy Spirit of promise, Which is the earnest of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, unto the praise of his glory"* (Eph.1:13-14).

5. Then comes a love awareness upon the believer – *"Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God: therefore the world knoweth us not, because it knew him not"* (1 Jhn.3:1).

6. Being clothed with the power of the Holy Spirit to become a son of God the believer is now a witness (anal./fig. a martyr) for Christ and His Word – *"But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me"* (Act.1:8). Like Stephen, the believer stands without fear to identify himself with Christ. He takes side with Jesus and His Word. He accepts no recognition of men. He does not side with men who are wolves in sheep's clothing. The Holy Spirit does not even side with the words of any man. He is in His Own Word. Now the *"fruit"* (confession) is all important to the *"tree"* (believer) – *"For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation. For the scripture saith, Whosoever believeth on him shall not be ashamed"* (Rom.10:10-11). The believer will concede to it for whatsoever comes out of the mouth, it comes from the heart. If the believer has a new heart, it is because the Spirit of Life has made it new to reside in there. The believer, as a tree, then feeds on the Sap (Word) of Life. The fruit he bears is identical to what he feeds on – the same Word of Life. *"For a good tree bringeth not forth corrupt fruit; neither doth a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit. For every tree is known by his own fruit. For of thorns men do not gather figs, nor of a bramble bush gather they grapes. A good man out of the good treasure of his*

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*heart bringeth forth that which is good; and an evil man out of the evil treasure of his heart bringeth forth that which is evil: for of the abundance of the heart his mouth speaketh” (Luk.6:43-45). [Note: This **fruit** of the tree is **exclusive** from all the fruits of the Spirit in a believer. This one comes forth from the heart and it bears the Word of Truth and Life.]*

7. As the believer bears witness of the Truth, with the guidance of the Holy Spirit, he will recognize the move of God – *“Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak: and he will shew you things to come” (Jhn. 16:13)*. The believer will realize the plan and the purpose of God. He will move along with the Spirit in the present ministry because God is always in the present. Until the fullness of the Gentiles comes in, the Spirit will not stop revealing His Word to the saints. The believer recognizes that fact (and that Bro. Branham did not reveal all mysteries). This is the harvest time and the Lord’s precious fruits of the earth are being mellowed down under the *“early (teaching) rain”* (that the bride (-wife) might be made ready) before the *“latter rain”* comes.

8. The believer will be diligent to present himself as one approved to God. This he does by being a workman who is not ashamed in rightly dividing the revelation of God’s Word, with a true understanding and not with presumption – *“Study to shew thyself (Be diligent to present yourself) approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth” (2 Tim.2:15)*.

9. In learning the believer is teachable and is able to receive correction. *“All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works” (2 Tim.3:16-17)*. He will not justify any falsehood that he may have brought about by misrepresenting the Truth for he knows the judgment of God. He will not harden his heart. *“O LORD, are not thine eyes upon the truth? thou hast stricken them, but they have not grieved; thou hast consumed them, but they have refused to receive correction: they have made their faces harder than a rock; they have refused to return. Therefore I said, Surely these are poor; they are foolish: for they know not the way of the LORD, nor the judgment of their God” (Jer.5:3-4)*.

10. Last but not least, the believer, having the baptism of the Holy Spirit, knows the need of being filled with the Spirit (Eph.5:18) so as to live and walk in the Spirit (Gal.5:16,23). He has a repentant spirit towards sin. He is quick to repent. He has the fruits of the Spirit (Gal.5:22-23; Eph.5:8-9; 2 Pet.1:4-8) *plus* sincerity, integrity, honesty, uprightness and faithfulness (to God and to the Church). He will speak the truth in love and judge righteous judgment – *“Judge not according to the appearance, but judge righteous judgment” (Jhn. 7:24)*.

Epilogue

All true believers are always growing in the grace of God. None can say that he is already perfect. Yet we see many believers claiming the evidence of the baptism of the Holy Ghost (because of their receiving the message of Branham) being left far behind in the Word for this hour. The Word of God for this hour is brighter than the message for Bro. Branham's hour, since the Day Star has risen, and the seven evening stars have faded away. So, are the people in the Endtime Message Movement in the Truth or are they falling away from the FAITH? Many do not even bear the fruits of the Spirit. Few, especially the preachers, are even speaking the truth, be it concerning the Word or concerning their stand and motive. Many lack sincerity and integrity. Real love and Truth are not found in most of them. The reason is that most only received the dead letters of the message, having no baptism of the Holy Spirit. Christ is simply not in them. What they have is the cultic spirit of an "*ism*". And until they tear away the spirit of **Branhamism** out of themselves they will not receive the baptism of the Holy Spirit. That's the truth.

The message of Malachi has been preached for the last 50 years and more, during which time the threshing floor of Christ has been much purged to gather in only the wheat (cf. Luk.3:16-17). Out of the "*wheat*" we have the "*wise virgins*" and the "*foolish virgins*" but only the wise ones are making it into the Marriage (Wedding) Feast and the foolish ones are being left out in the darkness. So, where do you stand and which one are you?

*"Wherefore I will not be negligent to put you always in remembrance of these things, though ye know them, and **be established in the present truth**" (2 Pet.1:12). Amen. Let us hold fast the Present Truth that is already revealed to us, and let us also not harden our hearts if God should reveal to us today a new thing. Let us not just hear it, but to receive it and also to walk and live in It.*

Heb 6:4: *For it is impossible for those who were once enlightened, and have tasted of the heavenly gift, and were made partakers of the Holy Ghost,*

5: *And have tasted the good word of God, and the powers of the world to come,*

6: *If they shall fall away, to renew them again unto repentance; seeing they crucify to themselves the Son of God afresh, and put him to an open shame.*

7: *For the earth which drinketh in the rain that cometh oft upon it, and bringeth forth herbs meet for them by whom it is dressed, receiveth blessing from God:*

8: *But that which beareth thorns and briers is rejected, and is nigh unto cursing; whose end is to be burned.*

