

POWER FROM ON HIGH

Act 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.

The apostles had been with the Lord Jesus for three years. They had reached the limit of what was possible for the human condition to know and experience. Let us remember that these were people of tremendous faith and prayer. In addition, they had several gifts and talents but without the power of the Holy Spirit they would utterly fail. Three years of college education in the University of Jesus had now come to an end. Graduation was to be filled with the Holy Spirit. Graduation day was called the Day of Pentecost. This is the difference between academic graduation and Christian graduation: the Christian's learning experience must be "consumed" by the fire of God just as the offering of Gideon was consumed or approved of God. "Then the angel of the LORD put forth the end of the staff that was in his hand, and touched the flesh and the unleavened cakes; and there rose up fire out of the rock, and consumed the flesh and the unleavened cakes. Then the angel of the LORD departed out of his sight" (Judges 6:21).

Life teaches us to wait. We wait for many things in this life – some waiting is voluntary, but much waiting is involuntary. Research has shown that children who are able to delay instant gratification today for something better tomorrow are more successful in life. We exercise patience for a better education, spouse, house, etc. Abraham waited for Isaac for twenty-five long years, Joseph waited for twenty-three years before his dream was fulfilled and his family bowed to him, and Moses waited for forty years before he returned to Egypt to lead Israel to the Promised Land. Israel's first king, Saul lost his kingdom because he did not discipline himself to wait. Consider now that the apostles had to wait for only ten days for the greatest gift that humanity has ever received from God. "For the vision is yet for an appointed time, but at the end it shall speak, and not lie: though it tarry, wait for it; because it will surely come, it will not tarry" (Habakkuk 2:3). Is there anyone I am speaking to who has quit waiting on the Lord to give you the Holy Spirit? Please return to the Upper Room – the Lord will fulfill his promise to you.

Pentecost was actually the day of the harvest. We are the Lord Jesus' harvest. Until the time you are filled with the Holy Spirit, we are like the crops out in the field. The Lord

invests much labor upon us. Just as the farmer tills the land, sows seed, fertilizes and waters the crops, the Lord Jesus teaches, instructs, corrects, loves and guides us. However, there must come a day when the crop must be harvested. That is the day when the farmer gathers the crops and brings them into his house. That is the day we truly become his. “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” (Ephesians 1:13,14). It is when we receive the Holy Spirit that we cry Abba, Father. “And because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father” (Galatians 4:6).

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

Act 2:3 And there appeared unto them cloven tongues like as of fire, and it sat upon each of them.

See how eager the Lord was to fill them with the Holy Spirit! He came as a rushing mighty wind. He was in a hurry to do his work, and he is indeed mighty to accomplish his purposes. The Lord moved both quickly and mightily: from Jerusalem to Judea, Samaria and the ends of the earth, while he also turned Jerusalem, Philippi and Corinth upside down with his mighty works. Acts 2:3 also states that the cloven tongues of fire sat upon each of them. Thank God the Spirit of God does not just hover over our heads – Jesus came to dwell in us, not visit us. I trust the throne of your heart is reserved for Jesus alone. If it is, the tongues of fire will sit upon this throne. “Forasmuch as ye are manifestly declared to be the epistle of Christ ministered by us, written not with ink, but with the Spirit of the living God; not in tables of stone, but in fleshy tables of the heart” (2 Corinthians 3:3).

We cannot know what our potential in God is without first receiving the Holy Spirit. Consider the apostle Peter. Before he was Spirit-filled, the Devil sifted him like wheat, he lived by the sword and cursed the Lord, among others. Once he was filled with the Spirit, he fearlessly challenged the priests and Pharisees, never employed violence and died a glorious death for Jesus. Without being filled with the Holy Spirit we can never know what mighty deeds we can accomplish for the Lord. Do not die without discovering the Spirit-filled version of yourself! Ananias could not see the new, Spirit-filled apostle Paul; he could only see the old Saul of Tarsus. “Then Ananias answered, Lord, I have heard by many of this man, how much evil he hath done to thy saints at Jerusalem: And here he hath authority from the

chief priests to bind all that call on thy name. But the Lord said unto him, Go thy way: for he is a chosen vessel unto me, to bear my name before the Gentiles, and kings, and the children of Israel: For I will shew him how great things he must suffer for my name's sake" (Acts 9:13-16).

Finally, the timing of the Day of Pentecost was perfect. It all transpired to coincide with the Great commission. "Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost" (Matthew 28:19). Many earthly tongues were present in Jerusalem that day. Jesus wanted to anoint these tongues with fire. "Parthians, and Medes, and Elamites, and the dwellers in Mesopotamia, and in Judaea, and Cappadocia, in Pontus, and Asia, Phrygia, and Pamphylia, in Egypt, and in the parts of Libya about Cyrene, and strangers of Rome, Jews and proselytes, Cretes and Arabians, we do hear them speak in our tongues the wonderful works of God" (Acts 2:9-11). Everyone loves his or her language. Wouldn't it be more wonderful to speak your language as it is anointed with the fire of Jesus? Human words communicate to the mind, emotions and heart. But the words which are spoken with the fire of Jesus go straight to the soul and spirit. "For the word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any twoedged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart" (Hebrews 4:12).

If you desire to receive the Holy Spirit, you must first believe that Jesus is God and Savior. "Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ" (Titus 2:13). What did he come to save us from? The answer is sin. We are all sinners who come short of the glory of God, and the wages of sin is death, according to the Bible. "For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord" (Romans 6:23). Next, you must be baptized in Jesus name for the remission of sins. "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" (Acts 2:38). This is God's plan of salvation which Peter preached immediately after he was filled with power from on high. May the tongues of fire sit upon you!